

**The First Community Church of Southborough
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March 21, 2021 – The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Keeping in Touch

Concerns:

We hold in prayer:

- Our country. We stand in need of prayer for healing, for an end to the hatred that has polarized our people around political and social issues. Our tribalistic mentality needs to be replaced with a new, more inclusive, more enlightened vision of who we are as Americans, and we need the patience and dedication to make the true American way of life a reality for all people.
- Our world. We stand in need of a vision of world community, a world where people care about each other and where we know deep down that we are all in this together. Most of the problems that the peoples of the world face are solvable, if only we put our minds and our tremendous resources to work on them.
- Nature. Our environment. The world in which we live. Approximately 1,000,000 little and some big animals are in danger of extinction. The melting ice cap. Climate change. Our little planet is in need of healing and tender-loving care.
- The 1 in 10 American children who live in poverty, who are food insecure, under constant threat of eviction, and who may be stressed by the threat of neighborhood violence.
- Those of all ages who have become seriously ill though having contracted COVID-19; families that have lost loved ones to this virus; and all those whose lives have been disrupted in serious ways because of the pandemic restrictions. BTW, being asked to wear a mask and socially distance does not qualify one to receive intercessory prayer.
- The helpers. The front-line workers. The doctors and nurses. Medscape, a resource website for health care professionals, reports that every day, one doctor in the United States dies by suicide. The Emotional PPE Project (which provides free psychotherapy), Project Semicolon (a suicide prevention initiative), and other organizations that are trying to help the helpers.
- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, our President and Vice President, and their new administration and cabinet. The rebuilding of our government so it can serve the function that is its charge: increasing the safety, security, and well-being of all our citizens, and being a shining light, a model of true functional democracy to the world.
- Asian Americans that are the latest target of racial/ethnic hatred stoked by our former president. Violence against this community is not new—see the Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese internment camps. Well before the murders of Asian-American women in Georgia, attacks that probably were directed as much toward women in general as Asian women in

particular, Asians throughout the United States have been spit on, insulted, threatened, and assaulted. When are we going to stop this politics of division and hate??

- Sheila (a colleague of Dianne Simmons), her husband Danny, and their two sons. Danny, who contracted COVID-19 in December and who recently suffered a fall, has been working hard with physical therapy and is now able to stand on his own. However, he still remains on Hospice Care. The family thanks us for remembering them in our prayers.
- Ursula Guenon, who has been released from the hospital but is still in need of healing. Let us keep Bill and Ursula in our prayers.
- Darlene asks us to keep Marilyn Page, one of her dearest friends now living in Seattle, in our prayers. Marilyn is undergoing intensive treatment for multiple myeloma.
- Paul and Darlene's daughter-in-law, Ann-Marie, is still struggling with the aftermath of her bout of COVID-19. Please keep her in your prayers. Emily Kate is doing better.
- Evelyn Till has informed us that her son, Eddy, who lives in South Carolina, was admitted to the hospital this past Saturday with a stroke. According to Evelyn, his speech has already improved significantly and they have found the source of the blood clot. Let us keep both Evelyn and Eddy in our prayers.

(If you are in need of prayer or if you know of someone who stands in need of prayer, and you would like to ask us to pray for them/you, please let me know.)

Thank you to:

- Those who have already turned in their 2021 pledges to the General Fund, and those Friends of the Church who have either already sent or pledged a special gift to support us financially in the year to come.
- Many thanks to Sandy McKeen and Beverly Lees who are responsible for organizing and printing our 2000 Annual Report. You can pick up your copy at the church. If you are one of the few people members of our church who does not have a key to our church, please let me know and we will find a way to get you a copy.

COVID-19 and Sunday Worship as the Gathered Church

Even though I would like to resume worship either outdoor or in our sanctuary, we still have to be careful. I am particularly concerned with the effects of COVID-19 on what has come to be called "long haulers." Long haulers are those who have seemingly recovered from the virus but who have ongoing, sometimes debilitating symptoms. Approximately 10% of those who contract COVID-19, including those who are relatively young and healthy, become long haulers.

Shelby Hedgecock, a 29-year-old woman from Los Angeles, who had no health issues prior to her diagnosis last April, has written the following:

My life has done a complete 180. I was hospitalized in May after losing feelings in my legs. Now, almost ten months later, I have cardiac problems, crushing fatigue, cognitive difficulties, and debilitating pain.

Doctors say that it is too early to know whether or to what extent these troubling symptoms will become permanent.

Let's also watch what happens over the next few months, especially with the efficacy of the vaccines with the South African, British, and Brazilian variants. Let's be sure to be safe, sensible, cautious, and get fully vaccinated. And let's think positive! Let's think forward to when

we can resume not only the family gatherings but also the church gatherings that mean so much to us!

<i>Birthdays</i>	
Rowena Robertson	4 th
Dorothy Larson	5 th
Emily Hite	10 th
Walter Hite	11 th
Susan Elias	12 th

Audio Weekly Worship Service

We are offering an abbreviated weekly worship service on our “Pod Cast” site. There is a link to it on the Home page of our church website: www.firstcommunitychurch.com. It can also be accessed from a link at the top of the Sermons page. On the Pod site, each service is listed by date. The reflection/homily is the same reflection that is sent to those on our expanded church contact list, a list that is comprised of church members, members of our larger church family, and friends of the church who have asked to be put on our contact list. The pastor’s reflection is also accessible in printed form on our website in the sermon section.

If you would like to have a copy of the audio service/reflection (or this newsletter/reflection) emailed directly to you when it is recorded and printed (usually Saturday night or Sunday morning) rather than when it gets posted on our website (which can be several days later), please send an email to Reverend Sanderson and he can make it happen!

Quote/Thought of the Day on Patience

*“Patience is not only the ability to wait,
but also
the ability to maintain a good attitude while waiting.”* Anonymous

A Second Quote/Thought of the Day

“It’s like déjà vu all over again.” Yogi Berra
Was Yogi really talking about our time?!

A Third Quote/Thought of the Day

Israeli archeologists recently unearthed a fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls that dates back approximately 2,000 years. The scrolls contain the earliest known copies of parts of the Hebrew Bible; they also shed light on the history of early Christianity. The latest fragment was found in the so-called Horror Cave in the Judean desert. It contains the following quote from the prophet Zechariah (8:16-17):

These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to one another; render true and perfect justice in your gates. And do not contrive evil against one another, and do not love perjury, because all these are things that I hate—declares the Lord.

If you have any doubt about the relevancy of biblical teaching, take this passage of scripture to heart!

Attention-Grabbling Church Signs

*You Have a New
Friend Request
From Jesus*

Kids Say the Darndest Things!

“A Christian can have only one wife. This is called monotony.”

Worship Service Music

The Prelude for this week's devotional service is "The Model Church" sung by the Bluegrass Album Band. It is from their album *The Bluegrass Album*.

If you are simply reading this printed version and have not actually listened to this bluegrass gospel song, please go to our website, download the audio version of this week's newsletter/reflection, and listen to it. It is a beautiful, beautiful hymn!

BTW, if you would like me to send you a copy of the audio worship service as soon as I complete it every week, please email me.