

*KEEPING IN TOUCH!!!
NOVEMBER 2021*

The First Community Church of Southborough

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THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Everyone!

This communication marks the launch of our new on-line newsletter, through which we will be reaching out to you every month. (Actually, there is no independent entity that could be called “we” to reach out to you; each and every one of us is part of the “we” that is our church—so we are actually reaching out to each other! But that’s not the point.)

We have just concluded four months of meeting as the “gathered church” for worship in our sanctuary on Sunday mornings (our first meeting was June 27). It has felt so good to be in each other’s presence, to feel connected, to extend greetings to each other (at a distance and through masks), and to welcome new attendees with open arms (and virtual hugs)! It has felt so good to join in the rituals of worship that have come to mean so much to us over the years, over the decades. It has felt so good to have Michael back at the organ—and at the grand piano that

was graciously donated to our church by David Park, a relatively new "friend of the church." We also welcome Jim Duncan and his wife, Linda, to our fellowship; Jim fills in as organist on those Sundays when Michael is away.

I have been pleasantly surprised (as an introvert) to rediscover how much our worship as the gathered church has meant to me. We have simplified the worship service somewhat out of our commitment to an abundance of care, concern, and caution, and we still don't feel comfortable gathering downstairs for our coffee hour after worship, but it just feels so good to be back! Sunday morning worship is definitely one of the cornerstones of our identity as a church, one of the cornerstones of our fellowship. If you haven't yet returned, I encourage you to do so! Sometimes we don't know the value of an action, a gathering, until it is taken away—and then returned to us!

For the first fifteen months of the COVID-19 pandemic, we basically hunkered down as a church. Not much changed from week to week, from month to month. Now we are beginning to explore what it will mean to open up again--step by step, a little at a time! We are looking at "the numbers" in addition to our own comfort level with exposures, with participation in church activities that we previously took for granted. We are watching what other churches in our area are doing and not doing, and we are listening carefully and lovingly to each other as we slowly, incrementally move back to church-as-normal.

I am so proud of how we have handled this pandemic as a church! I am in regular communication with pastors of several different denominations, and, believe me, I have heard some horror stories! As I am sure you have noticed, there is a lot of free-floating anger out there, anger that is sometimes displaced or misplaced on

the waitstaff of restaurants, clerks in grocery stores, flight attendants on airplanes, and even church staff. Perhaps it is because we in this church have a long history of working from a base of consensus rather than a majority vote in deciding what we do and don't do as a church, but you have been exceptionally patient, reasonable, and considerate as we negotiate our way through a terrain that we have never traveled before.

I am putting together a list of what church activities we need to consider as we move back to normal. If you are like me, you may be surprised at the number of items on this list! For a little church, we do a lot! Together we can go over the list, which I will have for you next month, add items I may have missed, and dialogue with each other about what our next step will be and when we should take it.

We are entering into an exciting time in the church year! Through this monthly newsletter we will be keeping in touch, keeping you apprised of all that is happening and will be happening in our little church! We pray that you will be with us in person as well as in spirit in the days to come.

Faithfully yours,

Paul Sanderson

*"Christ could be born a thousand times in Galilee—
But all in vain until He is born in me."*

(Angelus Silesius)

LOOKING AHEAD...

REFORMATION SUNDAY—OCTOBER 31

On the last Sunday in October, Protestant churches throughout the world celebrate the anniversary of the date when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the front door of the cathedral in Wittenberg, challenging the institutional church to a debate or dialogue about the ways in which its practices were in need of reform. As we celebrate this central part of our identity as Protestant Christians, we consider how we as individuals and as a church are in constant need of reform, a re-formation that is guided by the Holy Spirit. Be with us tomorrow morning as we sing "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," which was written by Martin Luther, and as we celebrate our heritage. The liturgical color for the day is red, so, if you are so inclined, please wear something red.

ALL SAINTS/ALL SOULS SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 7

On the first Sunday in November, which is a communion Sunday, we observe a combination of All Saints and All Souls Days. At the beginning of the worship service, we distribute 3x5 cards to everyone. You are invited to *print legibly* the names of three persons, loved ones who have passed on, whom you would like us to hold in our prayers. During the Service of Remembrance and Celebration, the Pastor will read the names from the cards, giving us time to both remember these special people and give thanks for what they shared with us and with the world through their lives.

This is a special observance this year, as we remember several members of our church family who entered into the nearer presence of God this past year:

Pat Grogan

Ursula Guenon

Bud Hubley

Gil Joe

Don Jolie

Rae Kay

They are all deeply missed. Our prayers are with their loved ones in their time of grief.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 21

Stewardship Sunday will once again be celebrated in conjunction with Thanksgiving Sunday. On this day we consecrate our pledges of financial support to the General Fund, the operating expenses of our church. Your pledge, the sharing of your time, talent, and treasure, makes you a fundamental part of our life and mission as a church. You will be receiving a missive from the Stewardship & Growth Committee as well as a pledge card prior to Stewardship Sunday. We can't emphasize enough how much we need your help as we try to emerge from the difficult year that has passed.

THE ADVENT SEASON—BEGINS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28

The first of the four Sundays of Advent is the Sunday after Thanksgiving Sunday this year. The traditional themes of the Advent season, a time of preparation for the birth of the Christ child in our lives and in the world, will be the gifts of hope, peace, love, and joy, symbolized in the four candles in our Advent wreath.

This is a beautiful time of year. Please join us as we sing the Advent hymns and Christmas carols during the four weeks leading up to our beautiful and deeply meaningful Christmas Eve candlelight service. It will be so nice to be together for this service this year!



Birthdays

Ava Willman	1 st
Tim Deschamps	8 th
Mitchell Hilbert	14 th
Lisa Nelson	17 th
Beth Hook	25 th
Bob L'Heureux	30 th

Anniversaries

Karin & Bob Farmer	8th
Susan & Lou Elias	9th



Birthdays

Shirley Hutchinson	4 th
Beverly Lees	12 th
Mackenzie Renaud	13 th
Austin Renaud	13 th
Dennis Roy	20 th
Ann Deschamps	26 th
Sharon Willman	26 th

Anniversaries

Diane & Ron Sickles	8 th
Darlene & Paul Sanderson	18 th

"Are you looking for me?"

I am in the next seat.

My shoulder is against yours.

You will not find me in the stupas,

nor in Indian shrine rooms,

nor in synagogues,

nor in cathedrals:

not in masses,

nor kirtans,

not in legs winding around your own neck,

not in eating nothing but vegetables.

*When you really look for me,
you will see me instantly—
you will find me in the tiniest house of time.*

Kabir says: "Student, tell me—what is God?"

He is the breath inside the breath.

(Kabir)