

# The Old Sloop's Log

A Monthly Publication of  
The First Congregational Church of  
Rockport, UCC, The Reverend Derek  
Van Gulden, Pastor



## Our Covenant

We the members of this congregation welcome you with gladness into our lives. We renew our covenant of faith and offer you our support, encouragement and love to the end that all of us may grow in the boundless mercy of God. By loving and being loved, forgiving and being forgiven, serving and being served, let us go forward together with courage as Christ's disciples glorifying God by being fully alive.

## Open and Affirming Statement

We the members of the First Congregational Church of Rockport are called upon to love one another as God loves us, freely and unconditionally. Therefore, we covenant to be an Open and Affirming congregation welcoming persons of every age, ability, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, nationality, ethnicity and immigration status into full membership and participation in our community life and ministry. We embrace and support those who experience rejection and exile from spiritual community and commit ourselves to the struggle against injustice.



Beloved,

Advent is the preparation for the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. But there is a third Advent which I feel we often leave out. That is the gift of Jesus' presence in our lives today. Though we wait to celebrate his birth and return we need to celebrate the fact that Christ is here with us now.

How can we celebrate Jesus in our lives right now? An easy place to start would be to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus' message has always been about love, God's love for us and how we can show our love for God by loving our neighbor. Remember what Jesus says in Matthew 25:40; "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

During this Advent season as you go about celebrating the holidays in whatever traditional way your family does, try something a little different. Reach out to

someone in need, set an extra place at the table and invite someone for dinner. Bring groceries to those in need. Pass out those extra blankets you keep in the closet or share your overabundance of coats and shoes. Give money in a loved one's name to a local or global relief organization. Spend less but give more of yourself! Amen! *The crowds asked him, "What then should we do? He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same." (Luke 3:10-11)*

\*The following is an Advent prayer for shopping I wrote a few years ago. I tend to share it every year with you as I continue to use it throughout my Christmas shopping. It is easy to get caught up in the lights, shopping and parties. Just remember that Christmas lives in the hearts of all people.

### **A prayer for shopping**

Loving God, before we purchase any Christmas gifts this holiday season help us to pray for each person on our shopping list. We pray that the light of your love will shine bright in them. We pray that they will find ways to share that love with everyone they meet. We pray that the radiant light of your love will illuminate our communities both locally and globally.

Gracious God, help each of us find a way to keep a balance on our spending. We often get caught up in the buying season instead of the season of love and joy. Help us rein in our spending. Let us remember all those whose needs are greater than our own. Teach us new ways, we pray, of giving gifts which will help those in need.

God of Advent Hope, keep us focused on what this season is all about. Remind us again and again that the gifts of friendship, charity, compassion, justice, and love cannot be bought in a store. We know deep down in our hearts that these are the gifts everyone needs the most and yet they seem to be the hardest ones to give. Today we pray for the courage to give the simple gifts which can mean so much, a helping hand, a smile, a prayer. Amen.

I wish you all an Advent filled with  
blessings of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,  
Shalom,  
Rev. Derek





## How to celebrate

### Advent with an Advent wreath

Advent (from Latin, *adventus*, meaning “coming towards”) is a four-week season of preparation for Christmas. The First Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the church’s year. Advent and Christmas both focus on the past—the coming of Jesus as an infant born into poverty in Bethlehem, and the future—the coming of Christ in glory to fulfill God’s loving purposes for humanity. This past and future orientation is reflected in the readings appointed in the church for each Sunday of Advent.

From ancient times, one way to celebrate Advent—not only in church but also at home—is by lighting candles on an Advent wreath. The wreath was widely used in northern Europe long before Christianity as a symbol of life and hope. Made of evergreens, it symbolized the circle of the year that would turn from winter to spring, from shadows to light. During the Middle Ages, Christians adopted this symbol and reinterpreted its meaning: the lighted candles symbolized the light of Christ shining in the night, and the evergreens represented the new life that Christ brings into the world.

The Advent wreath is placed on a table or other surface. Four candles are placed inside or next to the greens in a circle; a fifth candle (the “Christ candle”) is at the center. The first four candles correspond to the four Sundays of Advent: they are lit Saturday or Sunday night and can be relighted with an appropriate prayer before the evening meal on any day of the week, or during a time of private prayer at the end of the day. The “Christ candle” is lit Christmas Eve and can be relighted along with the four Advent candles on any or all of the subsequent Twelve Nights of Christmas until Epiphany (January 6).

Three of the candles are purple—traditional color of symbolizing the sovereignty of Christ. One candle is pink or rose, symbolizing the light of early dawn. The Christ candle is white—symbolizing daylight and celebration. Some churches use blue as the

Advent color: blue is the Mary, and symbolizes the night sky as it lightens towards dawn.

### **A Blessing of the Candles**

Source of all Light, we celebrate the coming of your Word made flesh, your Light of Life to dwell among us. Bless these holy flames that in their glow we may be blessed by your grace and abiding love. As these candles grace our tables and our homes, let them remind us of your constant presence and your unwavering care. Bless us, that we might reflect the Light of Christ in our daily lives and in our world so desperate for the love, peace, hope and joy you bring. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world! Amen

Rev. Derek

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### **CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

Old Sloop Christmas Bazaar is Saturday, December 7, 2019 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Greetings to All,

Our Old Sloop Christmas Bazaar Bake Table is in need of yummy treats as always. Would you please consider baking?

Bake what you enjoy baking, have time to bake and wish to bake. All contributions will be appreciated. Items in the past include candies, cookies, pies, bread, biscotti, cakes, coffee cakes, jellies, apple sauce, bars, Christmas cookies, and so much more! We always sell out and will move items to the snack bar as needed.

**Drop off times are as follows:   Friday, December 6, from 2pm to 4pm  
  Saturday, December 7, from 7am to 9am**

These times will allow us to price and tag. Please call a friend to pick up if you are unable and don't forget to treat yourself to a special treat. Baked goods are great gifts! Thank you in advance,  
Barbara Reed and Sue Morris

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### **Christmas Fund 2019 for the Veterans of the Cross**

Every year our church takes an offering for the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ, which supports retired clergy and others employed by UCC churches, either retired or working and experiencing emergencies. Last year First Congregational Church of Rockport was the eleventh top-giving Christmas Fund church in the Massachusetts Conference.

Christmas Fund began in 1902 as an outreach of Congregational Churches of America to struggling retired pastors.

Most of Christmas Fund goes to retirees living on the margins, with pension supplementation for basic needs like food, utilities, living or medical expenses, health insurance premium supplementation, emergencies such as paying for funerals, or helping a spouse who couldn't afford lodging close to her husband, a retired pastor, having surgery far from home.

All retired UCC clergy and lay employees receive a gift check at Christmas from the UCC Pension Boards thanks to your offering. This year 460 people will get Christmas Fund checks.

Christmas Fund is a way for us to show gratitude for those who have shepherded us in good times and bad, and now have extraordinary financial stresses in or near retirement. Please give generously. You will find the offering envelope in your bulletin at Sunday worship.



### It's Poinsettia Time!

It is time to start thinking about the beautiful poinsettias, which will augment our worship experiences on December 22, and Christmas Eve. You can help in two specific ways:

1. Donate a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of a special person. Starting Sunday Dec. 1 and until Sunday, Dec. 15, the Flower Committee will be accepting donations for Christmas poinsettias. Check out their table in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour. If you would prefer to mail your donation directly to the office, keep in mind that there is a ***deadline of December 15.*** Make all checks payable to 'First Congregational Church of Rockport' and put 'Flower Fund' in the check memo. Please include the names of those you would like to honor or remember.
2. If you know of someone who would like a little Christmas cheer in the form of a poinsettia, please contact Celene Lyon. Help with poinsettia delivery may be needed after church on Dec. 22.

Please use this form when making your donation. Thank you!

**IN MEMORY OF** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN HONOR OF** \_\_\_\_\_

**GIVEN BY** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please use this form to sign up after service or mail it to the church office: FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 12 SCHOOL STREET, ROCKPORT, MA 01966**

## CABINET

### Meeting Minutes November 17

#### Subject to Approval

**Present:** Jack Reed, Moderator, chair, and Christian Education Committee; Rev. Derek van Gulden, Pastor; Sue Herron, Diaconate; Bruce Coates, Treasurer; Lou Cannon, Personnel Committee; Bob Cannon, Music Committee; Bonnie Gray, Trustees; Stephen Kalaghan, Christian Outreach Committee; Jim Schell, Membership Committee; Liz Rice-Smith, Historian and Old Sloop Fleet; Jan Goodwin, visitor; and Geof Lyon, Clerk and recording secretary.

**Handouts:** Agenda, Cabinet Meeting Nov. 17; Minutes, Cabinet Meeting Oct. 20; Year-to-date Operating Summary and Cash and Investment Summary

#### Action, Discussion, and Follow-up Items

##### **Declaration of a quorum, approval of minutes.**

Moderator Jack Reed observed that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Rev. Derek van Gulden led the assembly in prayer.

The minutes of the October 20 meeting were reviewed and approved as submitted by voice vote.

##### **Rainbow Flags**

Jan Goodwin requested that the cabinet consider placing rainbow flags in front of the sanctuary and at the School Street entrance. In addition to being an important symbol for members of the LGBTQ community, rainbow flags signify welcome to all. It was suggested that we fly an American flag too. There may be town signage regulations or historic district restrictions that have to be considered. Liz Rice-Smith made a motion that that we bring to the Trustees our request that we establish two flags: one by 12 School Street and one by the front of the church with consideration of an American flag and a rainbow flag as an expression of our biblical love. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

##### **Safe Church Policy**

Jack Reed wondered whether the Critical Incidents Committee would make a recommendation about controlling access to the building while it is occupied. There was discussion as to whether this matter should be addressed by the Safe Church Policy or the Critical Incidents Policy. Bob Cannon will draft a document about the matter.

##### **Committee Replacements**

Jack Reed reported that the Nominating Committee requests approval for two committee vacancies: Karen Hurst for the Christian Education Committee and

Rhiannon Hurst for the Music Committee. The nominations were approved by voice vote.

### **Handel and Haydn Society**

The Handel & Haydn Society will perform Handel's Messiah December 2 at the church. This is a Rockport Music event, and they are handling most of the logistics. Rev. Derek is their contact. He will open and close the church and take care of the heat and lights.

### **Officer Reports**

**Treasurer:** Bruce Coates referred to the financial report summaries handout. He reported that net income is \$740 better than budget. If December donations are as expected we should be OK for the year. Verizon has made their payment for landscaping around their shed, and those monies went into the Major Maintenance Fund. The Fidelity investment account balance is up.

### **Committee Reports**

**Trustees:** Bonnie Gray reported that weather stripping has been ordered for the narthex doors and the rugs will be replaced. The test patch in the sanctuary ceiling has been painted, and the lift has been returned to Spittle Electric. The Trustees approved payment to Spittle for materials for the steeple lighting. That project will be funded by a gift. The Sandy Bay Historical Society has requested use of the sanctuary for their presentations, which have overflowed the library. Their request was approved. The Trustees have approved hiring a cleaning service when the sexton is away. The Trustees seek to rent the space vacated by Rainbow Day School. Dick Cooper looked at the damaged floor of the parsonage garage and made a proposal.

**Outreach Committee:** Stephen Kalaghan reported that Family Promise has requested that we host two consecutive weeks in February. There was discussion of how to manage the worship service on the middle Sunday, but the consensus was that we could find a way.

**Christian Education:** Jack Reed reported that the job description for the new position of Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation will be reviewed after worship November 24.

**Membership Committee:** Jim Schell reported that there are five adults who would like to become members of the church and the Membership Committee will work on scheduling a joining Sunday.

**Music Committee:** Bob Cannon reported that the Rockport Legion Band will perform its annual Christmas Concert December 15.

**Personnel Committee:** Lou Cannon reported that the Personnel Committee will soon review the job description for the new position. There is a possibility of sharing personnel with other churches or using a seminarian.

### Other

Jim Schell reported that there will soon be a video feed into the bride's room. Liz Rice-Smith reported that a few people have left their positions in the coffee hour schedule. She requested that we consider who else might participate and get names to her or Wendy.

### Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59PM.

### Date of Next Cabinet Meeting:

The Cabinet will next meet in the Morgan Room at 7:00PM on December 15.

Respectfully submitted,

Geof Lyon, Clerk

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## TRUSTEES

### Meeting Minutes: November, 2019

**Trustee Meeting** – The meeting was preceded by the annual Investment Committee review with Fidelity starting at 6pm. The Trustee meeting was called to order at 6:48 PM. Rev. Derek opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Present:** Walter Vining, Bill Elwell, Chip Kistner, Rev. Derek Van Gulden, Bonnie Gray, Bruce Coates

**Absent:** Mark Jurewicz, Kevin Love

- **Minutes:** Minutes from the October 21, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Bruce Coates presented the Treasurer's Report and noted that Income is now better than the budget by \$740.21. Pledges for 2020 are off to a very strong start. He also reported that an anonymous donation of stock valued at \$5,877.14 has been received, deposited in the Operating Fund and is to be used "where most needed." Bruce also presented a first draft of the 2020 Budget for the Trustees to review and discuss at the next meeting in December.
- **Monthly Reviews:**
  - Bank Statements:** No report. Still waiting for Kevin to review May/June.
  - PEX Statements:** Bonnie reviewed the PEX statements for September and October. Youth Director, Katie Welch, had noticed a charge on her PEX card on October 30 for \$75 at Disney.com. She did not make this charge and it is under dispute at this time. Apparently it is fraudulent and will be corrected. Other than that one charge, all purchases have been approved.

#### Old Business:

- **Narthex Face Lift:** Bill Elwell has ordered weather stripping for the doors. Walter and his crew have painted the ceiling in the Narthex along with the wall behind the cross at the altar. He also has taken care of cleaning the pineapple above the altar. It was decided that washing the walls before the concert on December 2<sup>nd</sup> is unnecessary and could actually do some damage if there are any cracks in the walls. Bill & Michelle Elwell have offered to hang Christmas lights in the Narthex to dress it up for the concert. The decision to replace the rugs was made. Rev. Derek and Bill will place an order for those.
- **Verizon – Landscaping, etc.:** The reimbursement check for \$5,000 has been received from Verizon and deposited in the Major Maintenance Account. It is now up to the Church to complete the landscaping which was disturbed by the Verizon workers during installation. The decision was made to wait until Spring to complete this work.
- **Sanctuary Ceiling Paint:** The "Test Patch Areas" have been painted and Bill has returned the lift to Spittle Electric. There was discussion on how the Church will cover the cost of the final painting of the ceiling. Bill made the suggestion of finding a Grant Writer in hopes that a grant could be the answer. Rev. Derek mentioned that he has someone in mind who attends church occasionally and has done some grant writing.
- **Steeple Lighting:** The Trustees voted by e-mail to approve paying Roy Spittle Associates the requested deposit of \$6,000 for the Steeple Lighting. The funds will come from the Major Maintenance Account and be replaced when the expected donation, which will cover the entire cost of \$12,282, is received.

- **Exit Door Replacement:** The three exterior replacement doors have arrived. Bill will arrange for installation.
- **Parsonage Garage Floor:** No news, although Derek did give it a good sweeping.

#### **New Business:**

- **Historical Society Request:** The Historical Society has been holding 6 programs and lectures a year at the Library. These programs have become very popular and there have been times when people have been turned away due to lack of space. A request has been made to use the Sanctuary on occasion for these programs. The expectation at this time would be for one or two programs a year at the Church. As there is no charge to attend these programs, it was decided that the Church would not charge the Historical Society for using the Sanctuary. Walter made the motion that we approve this request. It passed unanimously.
- **Vacation Back-up for the Sexton:** Rev. Derek suggested hiring a cleaning company to do the necessary cleaning when the Sexton is on vacation. He has received a quote from a company he is familiar with for \$120 a day as needed. As it stands now, The Pastor has been stepping up to take care of any necessary work while the Sexton is away. The Trustees expressed their approval of hiring the cleaning company.
- **Space Rental:** Discussion was held on the rental of the space now vacated by Rainbow Day School. Two artists have expressed interest in renting the space to be used for their studio. Rev. Derek has heard from them and feels that their renting the space is unlikely. He knows of a church in Gloucester that is now housing the business, Coveted Yarn. He will contact that church to discuss possible ramifications of renting to a For-Profit business in a Non-Profit building. It is the hope of the Trustees that a tenant will be found by word of mouth and having this opportunity appear on the Church web-site.

A copy of this report will be forwarded to the editor of the Old Sloop Log. There being no further business, the Board of Trustees adjourned at 8:05pm.

The next scheduled meeting of the Trustees will be on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

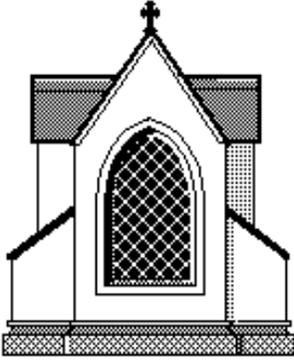
Walter Vining

Chair, Board of Trustees

Bonnie Gray

Acting Recording Secretary

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## Stewardship Committee

### STEWARDSHIP DECEMBER 2019

#### A Note of Gratitude from Stewardship

We hope you all celebrated a day of gratitude and happiness on Thanksgiving. Our stewardship campaign, *Living the Love and Justice of Jesus, through Scripture, Service, Story and Song*, concluded on November 10 with worshippers placing their pledge cards in the offering plate during the service, then gathering for a celebration of thanks in Fellowship Hall afterwards.

In the words of one of our Witnessing Stewards, Sigi Lindo:

*I've long since come to terms with prayer not helping my candidates win elections or my team win a game. I pray for strength and love. In the past several months, I have felt surrounded by your prayers of love and strength for me. I am grateful.*

*This church is a community of caring, spiritual persons. We are enriched by each other's company, passing the peace of Christ in worship, by acts of service and in sharing food, coffee and other libations. Join us for coffee hour, Potluck or one of our dinners out at local restaurants that donate a generous percentage of the evening's take to the church. If you haven't already, join the book group, a discussion group or get on a committee that interests you.*

*I have been pledging to my college, my public radio stations, and my church ever since I became involved with each of them. Why? Because they have given me so much that makes my life more fulfilling. I can say "thank you" with my financial gift. Pledges help those church folks planning budgets understand what to expect for income in the coming year. My annual pledge to the church is a service to them.*

*Please consider what this church means to you, and give thanks, at least in part, by filling out your pledge card. How much? If you pledged last year, the Stewardship Committee is suggesting a 6% increase. Someone I knew in NJ said, "Give until it feels good!" Interesting idea! Give until it feels good.*

Many of you reading this are scattered around the country. We thought it might be interesting to hear a bit about our financial landscape, as stated in the letter that kicked off our campaign:

***Pledges contribute significantly to the many local and wider ministries of our church. In 2019, pledges supported the spiritual and material needs of our congregation in many ways:***

- *Rev. Derek taught a 22-week course on What is God Calling You to Do? where participants explored their connection with God through scripture, prayer, social justice, outreach, and sharing stories.*
- *Rev. Sue Koehler-Arsenault was contracted to undertake a study where she looked at changes in Christian education and formation and alternatives to traditional Christian approaches. Her report, Charting the Future, is helping us restructure our own Christian education and formation.*
- *With our Outreach Committee, the congregation has recently completed our 27th week hosting temporarily homeless families in the church for Family Promise North Shore Boston.*
- *The Outreach Social Justice Subcommittee invited Andrew DeFranza from Harborlight Community Partners to speak to the congregation about affordable housing on Cape Ann.*
- *Our Trustees funded steeple repair, studies for painting the sanctuary ceiling, and unexpected expenses for elevator and fire alarm/sprinkler repairs.*

*As you may know, the church operates with a balanced budget. Pledges support approximately two-thirds of this annual budget. The predictability of a unified pledge allows the Trustees to more responsibly manage our finances throughout the year.*

*Last year, 72 members and friends pledged \$171,000. This year's preliminary budget requires us to reach the goal of approximately \$181,500. Please consider increasing your pledge by 6% if you are able to support this increase. The Stewardship Committee will also reach out to our friends and members who donate but don't pledge and ask that they consider pledging. Last year, we were delighted that eight individuals and families who had previously donated committed to pledging their support. This year, we hope to see other donors make the commitment.*

Keep in mind that pledges can come in different forms. If you haven't pledged before, but wish to make a one-time donation for the 2020 fiscal year, consider making it as a one-time annual pledge. You may wish to make a quarterly pledge, or a monthly pledge. For example, I make my contribution on the first Sunday of each month. If you wish to pledge, just contact the church office and we will be sure to send you a pledge card and packet. You may also simply mail your check to the church office ATTN: Stewardship Campaign.

Finally, as the Christmas season arrives, so does the gift-giving season. If you plan to make purchases on Amazon, **PLEASE USE AMAZON SMILE**. It's so easy — go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and select First Congregational Church of Rockport as your charity. If you have an Amazon account already, you use the same login information.

Nothing changes, except that the church will receive 5% of your purchase amount. Please take a minute to do this!

Happy Advent, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year should cover everything until the January Log comes out!

Gratefully yours,

Louisa Casadei-Johnson for the Stewardship Committee

Joe Chambers, Fred Witte, Kathie McCarthy, and Marcia Myers

### Meeting Minutes—October 8, 2019

In attendance: Louisa Casadei-Johnson, Kathie McCarthy, Joe Chambers, Rev. Derek Van Gulden. The meeting began at 4:25 pm with prayer led by Rev. Derek.

Discussion opened on the topic of the Stewardship Campaign.

- Witnessing stewards were well received. Recordings of each were made and need to be centralized for future reference.
- Thank you notes will be worked on in January.
- Progress seems to be tracking well, updates to the Congregation will be made on December 15 and Mid-January.

A spring dinner fundraiser has been discussed for Fish Shack or other options. General consensus is that a winter (January/February) dinner might be a nice respite from the cold months.

Nominating was discussed as we need a replacement for Fred who has stated his desire to move on. Several candidates were discussed and will be approached about their interest.

Kathie will collate the Time and Talents sheets.

Next meeting date TBD

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm



## Membership Committee

### Meeting Minutes: October 17, 2019

Attending: Pastor Derek VanGulden, Sigi Lindo, Geof Lyon, Jim Schell

- I. Derek opened meeting with a reading that reminded Sigi of 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.
- II. Review and approval of minutes of September 26 meeting: Reviewed and accepted.
- III. Review of October 2nd and 9th get-acquainted meetings.
  - a. October 2: Faith journeys, History of UCC video, UCC covenant, and Open and Affirming statement
  - b. October 9
    - i. The presentation History of the Church was presented by Rev. Liz Rice Smith.
    - ii. some questions were discussed about Creeds and Statement of Faith.
    - iii. Discussed differences between Episcopal and Congregational approaches.
  - c. Third meeting canceled as Susan couldn't attend.
  - d. Next Steps:
    - i. We discussed about how we could welcome new people into the Church.
      1. Ask the possible new members what they are into, or the needs that the Church community might offer.
      2. A membership person should be designated contact person to the new member.
      3. We need to be super flexible in making time and or location.
      4. It is important we get their contact information so we can follow up and maintain communication. Geoff Lyon will supply a form that will outline the most important information to capture.
      5. We could supply a packet of materials to consider:
        - a. Our Ministries,
        - b. Our Statement of Faith,
        - c. Bylaws,
        - d. Pledge packet and pledge card.

- e. Organization Chart of the Committees and what they do, (Our Ministries) (similar to information panels).
- f. Our Mission Statement, when that is finalized.
- e. Reception of New Members proposed date, second Sunday in December, the 8<sup>th</sup>.
- IV. Rolling Panels: Next Steps:
  - a. Find proper rolling displays
  - b. Finalize paper size and type
  - c. Go to various committees to follow up on displays
  - d. Proposed: 3 panels. One each in narthex, fellowship hall, 12 School St. entrance
- V. Practices of Faith: Concerned about egregious typos in publication.
- VI. Organization chart: Still in progress
- VII. Mission Statement: Still in progress
- VIII. Next meeting at Sigi Lindo's November 21 @5pm. Meeting adjourned 6:15pm.

## **Mission – Practices of Faith in the United Church of Christ**

### **What does Mission mean for the First Congregational Church of Rockport, UCC?**

When we talk about mission at FCCR, "the Old Sloop," we talk about what we do in the service of others -- as we reach out to others -- our giving to them and their giving in return. We do this reflecting Jesus' teachings to love one another.

FCCR gives generously of its time, person power and dollars. We are known throughout the North Shore area for our leadership role in outreach efforts, sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry, and working toward justice. We are known throughout the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC as a generous congregation, who gives from a spirit of abundance, not of scarcity. In the past several years, FCCR has been recognized as one of the top-giving churches per member in the Conference.

### **Foundation**

*The Spirit of God is upon me, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of God's favor.*

*Luke 4: 18-19 (NRSV)*

### **What does mission mean for the United Church of Christ?**

We understand mission to be an expression of God and not simply the activity of the church. The church is God's creation to enable mission to take place, and is the church only when it is engaged in mission. Commitment to God's mission challenges Christians to refuse to accept reality as it is, and to aim at working towards God's kingdom on earth. When mission is seen as movement from God to the world, it is transforming. The understanding of mission as God's mission replaces a church-centered focus, and thrusts us into a search to discern God's will, with the church as its instrument for mission.

### **Why does the United Church of Christ engage in God's mission?**

As the church seeks guidance in facing contemporary issues and constituencies, it looks at God's activity through scripture. Some examples of images of God from scripture follow:

#### **God is a creating God.**

*Genesis 1:2 "The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters."*

A church that engages in God's mission must be prepared to be creative, discerning with a restless Spirit where transformation is needed when life has grown sinful, chaotic, and stale.

#### **God calls people.**

*Genesis 12:2 "And I will bless you so that you will be a blessing."*

A church that engages in God's mission must be prepared to be formed by God as a community of the faithful, where they are mutually nurtured, cared for, and prepared for mission, and through which God reveals God's vision for the justice, peace, and wholeness of life.

#### **God requires justice.**

*Micah 6:8 "And what does God require of you but to do justice."*

A church that engages in God's mission is called to be on the cutting edge for justice in the world, and to exemplify justice and share the vision of a just and peace world joining with God's concern for the poor and oppressed.

#### **God is a healing God.**

*Luke 9:2 Jesus sent the disciples out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.*

A church that engages in God's mission is called to witness to God's spirit with ministries that heal bodies, souls, cultures, nations, and the church itself.

### **How will God's mission lead us?**

The God who nurtures us leads us to nurture others, equip and educate the church for mission, invite people into faith, and feed the hungry in spirit.

The God who sent Christ as Servant leads us to a global sharing of resources so we can serve and be served. We respond to the needs of others – the hungry, the sick, and the victims of wars, disasters, oppression, and exploitation. The God who transforms leads us to transform society, challenge the cultural status quo, confront powers of evil, change unjust structures, resist governmental policies designed to serve only the wealthy and the powerful, and combat classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism and other forms of discrimination that diminish any person as human being. God calls us to join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation, and to work for justice, healing, and wholeness of life.

### **Mission and the United Church of Christ**

God's mission in the UCC is acted out in various settings, including the local church, associations, conferences, and the national setting. Each ministry is responsible for participating in God's mission. Each expression of the church implements God's mission in ways that are appropriate to it and which complement and support the mission expressions of the other settings. God's mission is more than all this. We undertake our part but it is bigger than we are. Nevertheless, by participating in our part of God's mission, we reap tremendous blessings as we glimpse God's kin-dom on earth.

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## **Christian Education**

### **Youth Ministry News**

**DECEMBER CALENDAR**

Sunday, December 1 Service	10:00	Worship with Children in  No Youth Group (Thanksgiving Break)
Wednesday, December 4 follow)	5:00	Creating your story (potluck to follow)
Saturday, December 7 retreat)	7:30	Christmas Bazaar (\$ for winter retreat)
Sunday, December 8 Service	10:00	Worship with Children in  5:00 No Youth Group
Wednesday, December 11 follow)	5:00	Creating your story (potluck to follow)
Sunday, December 15	10:00	Worship with Children in Service
	5:00	Youth Group: Ugly Sweater Party
Wednesday, December 18 follow)	5:00	Creating your story (potluck to follow)
Sunday, December 22	10:00	Worship with Children in Service
	5:00	No Youth Group
Tuesday, December 24	4:00	Early Christmas Eve Service
Friday, December 27	5:00	Alumni Potluck
Sunday, December 29	10:00	Worship with Children in Service No Youth Group

**4 O'clock Christmas Eve Service**

Join us for an early Christmas Eve service on Tuesday, December 24th @4pm. This service is open for all ages to attend! If you are at all interested in taking part of this service please let myself, Kristina or Rev. Derek know!

**Alumni Pot Luck @KT's house**

Join us on Friday, December 27th for our annual alumni pot luck at KT's house! It's a great time to catch up and check in to see what everyone is up to! Please bring a dish to share.

### Quick Update re Babysitting Night

We had 15 kids at our Babysitting night last month! This was a great start and we will for sure be planning at least a few more for the rest of the year.

### Continuing Education

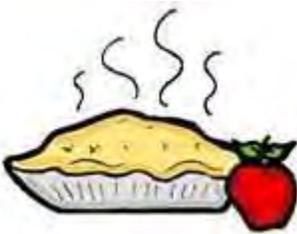
I am continuing my classes towards certification towards the Faith Formation Leadership program with the UCC. I have been learning a lot of the ever-changing ways of church, Sunday School, Christian education and formation. I am excited to be bringing in new ideas to implement!

### "Creating your story with God's story" Bible Study

Wednesdays @5:00PM.

Please join Katie Welch and Rev. Derek for this new Bible study gathering on Wednesdays at 5 pm.

We will listen to the stories of the Bible--God's stories and see where they connect with our own stories. Through this process we will delve deeper into the biblical story. And we will learn different methods of storytelling to tell others our story and its connection with God's story. We will be meeting in the CE room on the 2nd floor of the Law Building.



### Pie Bake.

We had another successful pie bake for open door, 40 pies were prepped and baked with in 2.5 hours! It is amazing what you can do with people from all ages. Every one worked so hard to peel, core, mix and Mookie used her amazing crimping skills and crimped every single pie by hand. I want to thank the congregation for their donations and for everyone who came out in the nasty weather to help keep this tradition alive.

### Kids In Worship

Starting in January we will be trying to implement some more ways to involve children and youth in worship and look into different programming that is not necessarily Sunday school but a learning time for children of all ages.

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## Christian Outreach Committee



### MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 10

Attending: Darlene Spittle, Ann Kistner, Marge Schell, Diane Westman, Pastor Derek, Jay Reed

The meeting began about 11:30 a.m. with a prayer from the hymnal.

We discussed the treasury: receipts were low in October and the balance is currently low. We disbursed \$400 to the UCC for Bahamas relief after the August hurricane. The Neighbors in Need offering realized about \$1,100. There is an adequate balance in the Pastor's Fund account.

We asked Pastor Derek about our budgeted disbursement to The Northeast Association Scholarship Fund in view of the fact that Andover-Newton Seminary, to which we had contributed in the past, still exists within Yale Divinity School. It was Pastor Derek's feeling that our contribution to the Northeast Association is the more appropriate one, because it supports education of clergy from our area.

Our Family Promise host week begins next Sunday. We don't know the guest numbers yet. Julie Dillard, assistant director of Family Promise North Shore Boston, has resigned. Volunteers are filling our schedule, and we expect to be ready for guest arrival next Sunday evening.

We discussed affordable housing after Harborlight Community Partners executive director Andrew DeFranza's address to the congregation on October 20. Darlene mentioned how affordable housing development helped Rockport residents in the past. Both Ann and Marge remarked that expensive housing makes Rockport unaffordable for young families with children, and how Rockport schools benefit from school choice. Social Action subcommittee will discuss next steps at our November 25 meeting.

We discussed our Open Door dinner on November 2. There was enough food and plenty of volunteers. Open Door manager Kenn Taber told us about potential changes after the hiring of a new Gloucester Board of Health Inspector.

We have begun to campaign for Wellspring's Holiday Store on December 7 and 8. Participating church members are asked to place new, unwrapped toys in the collection boxes in Fellowship Hall and the School St lobby by December 6.

We will begin campaigning for Open Door's Holiday Basket program next Sunday at worship, and on November 24 we will begin the drive for the Christmas Fund offering. Members are encouraged to speak to the congregation at worship.

We discussed the nominations process and attempts to recruit committee members.

We agreed to hold our next meeting after worship on December 8. Meeting ended at about 12:45.

Respectfully submitted, James Reed

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### **Christmas Fund 2019 for the Veterans of the Cross**

Every year our church takes an offering for the Christmas Fund of the United Church of Christ, which supports retired clergy and others employed by UCC churches, either retired or working and experiencing emergencies. Last year First Congregational Church of Rockport was the eleventh top-giving Christmas Fund church in the Massachusetts Conference.

Christmas Fund began in 1902 as an outreach of Congregational Churches of America to struggling retired pastors.

Most of Christmas Fund goes to retirees living on the margins, with pension supplementation for basic needs like food, utilities, living or medical expenses, health insurance premium supplementation, emergencies such as paying for funerals, or helping a spouse who couldn't afford lodging close to her husband, a retired pastor, having surgery far from home.

All retired UCC clergy and lay employees receive a gift check at Christmas from the UCC Pension Boards thanks to your offering. This year 460 people will get Christmas Fund checks.

Christmas Fund is a way for us to show gratitude for those who have shepherded us in good times and bad, and now have extraordinary financial stresses in or near retirement. Please give generously. You will find the offering envelope in your bulletin at Sunday worship.

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## OLD SLOOP COFFEEHOUSE UPCOMING PERFORMANCES



### **Saturday, December 14 at 7:30PM – Brad Byrd, John Jerome, and Marina & Berna**

Brad Byrd writes songs that occupy the rarely-explored middle ground between indie rock and alt-country. He's a genre-spanning musician, carving out a diverse sound fueled by melody, detailed storytelling, and the instincts of a journeyman songwriter who began making Americana music long before the genre had a name. Byrd grew up in Massachusetts and lived in Rockport for a time, but now makes his home in Los Angeles.

Gloucester's John Jerome blends rock, pop, country and a little hip-hop in a soulful and tasteful manner that is unique to him. Growing up, John was always sure that he wanted to be a performer, singing and mimicking artists such as the Beatles, Paul Simon and the Eagles. John continues to hone his craft and is always finding new approaches to songwriting and storytelling.

Marina Evans and Bernardo Baglioni are an international folk/Americana duo who divide their time between Marina's native Rockport and Bernardo's native Italy. Combining Marina's strong, sultry vocals, effortless melodies, and unusual lyrics with the raw, gritty edge of Berna's slide guitar, sweet mandolin stylings, and vocal harmonies, the duo's sound has been refined over years spent together on the road, the stage, and in the studio.

Tickets for this concert can be purchased in advance for \$10 from the coffeehouse web site at [oldsloopcoffeehouse.org](http://oldsloopcoffeehouse.org), at John Tarr Store in Rockport, at The Bookstore of Gloucester, and at coffee hour following worship on Sunday, December 14. The suggested contribution at the door is \$12 for adults, \$5 for those age 18 and under, and \$24 for families.

## Weekly Church Events

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
POTLUCK DINNER  
6 PM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL**



POTLUCK DINNER



**THURSDAY MORNING  
BOOK GROUP**

**MORGAN CONFERENCE ROOM  
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**



### The Fellowship Hour Schedule

December 1 Jack Reed/Steve Lindo  
December 8 Wendy and Mark Woodbury  
December 15 Rich Kasten/Kathleen Morgan  
December 22 Ann Kistner/Sue Morris  
December 29 Liz Rice-Smith

If there are any questions or concerns or if you would like to be a part of our fellowship hour by baking or hosting, please contact Liz-Rice Smith or Wendy Woodbury.

## With Gratitude for our Church Servants for November

### Ushers

November 3 Dick Douglas & Kathie McCarthy  
November 10 Susan Heron & Kathie McCarthy  
November 17  
November 24 Marge Schell & Kathie McCarthy

### Readers

November 3 Peter Goodwin  
November 10 Barbara Reed  
November 17  
November 24 Louisa Casadei-Johnson



**CHURCH DIRECTORY**

<p><b>First Congregational Church of Rockport, UCC</b></p> <p>12 School Street Rockport, Massachusetts 01966</p> <p>Phone: (978) 546-6638 Email: <a href="mailto:office@rockportucc.org">office@rockportucc.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rockportucc.org">www.rockportucc.org</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>During non-business hours:</b></p> <p><b>Rev. Derek van Gulden can be reached at (508) 818-0616 or <a href="mailto:revdvan@yahoo.com">revdvan@yahoo.com</a></b></p> <hr/> <p><i>The Old Sloop's Log</i> Susan Lillis, Editor Please submit articles to: <a href="mailto:oldslooplog@rockportucc.org">oldslooplog@rockportucc.org</a></p> <p><b>** All articles are due on the 18<sup>th</sup> of each month. **</b></p>	<p><b>Church Office Hours</b></p> <p>Tuesday – Friday 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sunday Worship Service</b></p> <p>Nursery Care is available</p> <p><b>Sunday School</b></p> <p>No Sunday School in August</p>	<p><b>Church Staff</b></p> <p><b>Pastor</b> Rev. Derek van Gulden</p> <p><b>Office Manager</b> Regina Reis</p> <p><b>Music Director</b> Dr. Phil Swanson</p> <p><b>Youth Choir Director</b> Kristina Martin</p> <p><b>Youth director and Interim Christian Ed. Director</b> Kaitlyn Welch</p> <p><b>Sexton</b> Phil Bynarowicz</p>
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