

The Old Sloop's Log

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

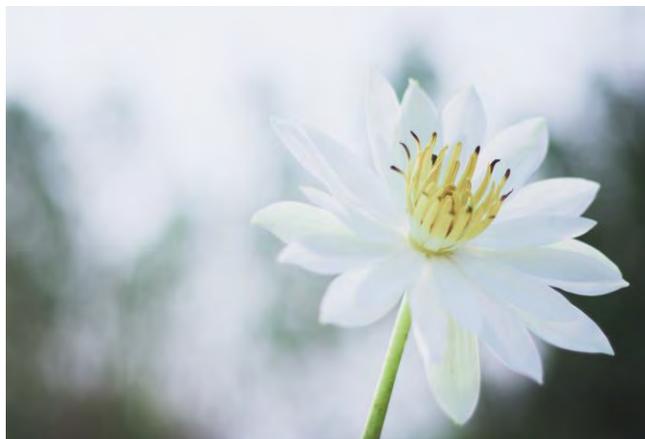


Our Covenant

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,

On Sunday March 21st here at the old Sloop we celebrated and honored the one-year anniversary of providing *live streaming worship services* through Zoom and Facebook live. I'm sure it is not an anniversary we wish to continue to celebrate year after year, but it was a recognition of how things have changed so drastically over the last year. Change might not be the right word maybe how we have grown into new ways of being **The Church**.

Protecting the environment. Caring for the poor. Embracing diversity. Rejecting racism. Forgiving often. Loving God. Fighting for the powerless. And sharing earthly and spiritual resources. An enjoying this life.

What ever way you look at it, it has been a year like no other. A long-drawn-out journey, which often seems to have no end in sight. In some ways it has reminded me of those family vacation trips I took as a child or the ones I took my family on. All of us crammed into the

car with everything we might need for a week of camping or visiting relatives. Car games, car snacks, naps, face time, playlists, pod casts, video games, twenty-four-hour news coverage and miles upon miles of endless road and boredom. *"Are we there yet?"*

Some of the most consistent questions I have been asked this are, "when will this journey end? When will things return to normal?" *"Are we there yet?"* Recently there has been another question arising more frequently, *"where has God been?"*

Have we or should I say have I filled my life with so much noise just to distract me from everything going on in our world this year. A worldwide pandemic, which changed the way we lived our lives every day. In our own country systemic racism, [racial](#) and economic inequities, increased violence against people of color, most education taking place in the home instead of schools, and a national election? Has God been silent, or do we not know where to find God? During these moments I always turn to scripture for guidance and invite you to do the same. In the 1 Kings chapter 19:9 Elijah was sheltering in a cave on a mountain side for the night. God calls out to Elijah.

*"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a **gentle whisper**. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. (1 Kings 19:11-13)*

Some versions of the Bible say that God was heard in **sheer silence**. I like the new living translation version that I listed above, Elijah encounters God in a *gentle whisper*. Where do you encounter God? How do you make it possible to hear God's voice in a gentle whisper or in the sheer silence? I have learned that I need to be proactive about listening to God. I need to quiet the noise, to be still in my heart and mind to breathe in deeply inviting God to enter into a conversation with me. Allowing myself the time to be with God, to listen to the gentle whisper, that sheer silence where I find God, hear God's voice.

As for this year and the journey we have all been on I still cry out to God *"Are we there yet?"*. God's response to me has been, "don't forget to breath, have a little patience, and remember I am always with you." We will get there, wherever that may be. I am sure it will be a new normal or an everchanging normal. What I can say for certain is we do better when we do not walk alone. I invite you to continue our journey of faith together. To find time to shut out the noise and listen to God.

"Are we there yet?". I think the answer is yes and no.

Shalom, Rev. Derek

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR APRIL

Thursday April 1st - Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 pm

Friday April 2nd – Good Friday Service 7:00 pm

Sunday April 4th – Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Good Harbor Beach 6 am

Sunday April 4th – Easter Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am

April 18 – April 24th- School vacation

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



To Commemorate and Mourn 400,000: Ringing our Historic Bell in the Steeple of the Old Sloop, January 19, 2021

In anticipation of a National Memorial Service to honor and mourn the 400,000 Americans whose lives had been lost over the last year as a result of the Covid-19 virus and pandemic, congregations of all kinds were invited to participate. This memorial was planned to be held on Inauguration Eve at the Washington Memorial, in D.C.

And so it was that a “call” went out across the nation to invite a ringing of bells, 400 times, once for each thousand people who had died, starting at 5:30 PM, on the Eve of Inauguration for President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

Here in Rockport, on January 19th, just as the National Memorial Service began in D.C. at 5:30 PM, we began our Old Sloop Bell ringing. Pastor Derek van Gulden, Bob Cannon, Liz Rice Smith, and Jim Schell gathered together in the room above the church narthex to ring the bell 400 times, with a background of sight and sound of the National Memorial Service from Pastor Derek's iPhone to accompany us, along with bell-ringing from the nearby congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Religious Society.

Reflecting on this experience, Jim Schell noted, "We came together because of the burden of shared local and national grief for all those lost to Covid-19. Our grief had become so intense that after almost a year of pandemic, we felt a need to share and also do something to physically and actively, to broadcast our concerns. By ringing the bell in our steeple we felt some release, physically, mentally and spiritually. We took care to spell each other every 10 pulls of the bell rope, sharing the burden."

Afterwards the one Bible verse that came to mind was from Matthew 11:30 'For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' It is always easier when we share!" From The Message translation of this Matthew passage 11:28-30, we listen to Jesus, saying, "Walk with me and work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythm of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Even amidst a pandemic.

And what did this mean to Bob Cannon? "It was a job we felt needed to be done. The full impact of the experience--the enormity of the loss--didn't fully hit me until I got home afterward. When I told my wife, Lou, that we had to ring the bell **400** times I broke into tears. For each ring of the bell, fully one thousand American lives were untimely lost, families torn, friendships closed, gifts to the world cut off. A wash of bitterness came with the realization that much of the tragedy could have been avoided.

Yet, just as we four friends did what we needed to do in pulling the bell rope, most of the world's people have attempted to pull together--against formidable habits of alienation, political division, and economic disparity--to address this global threat largely of our own making. May we long remember all these victims, and those yet to fall, so that we might be inspired to do **together** what will bring better days to all who inhabit God's fragile Earth."

Why do we ring church bells? How do we feel when we hear them ring? For fifteen hundred years, people in many Christian churches have been ringing their bells for spiritual and practical purposes, calling the faithful to worship, celebrating a marriage, highlighting a particular aspect of a church service, reminding the faithful of God's presence in their lives, and announcing important events, in loss as well as in celebration — local and national. Joining with other Americans across the nation on the evening of January 19, 2021 in the ringing of our bell, on behalf of the whole

congregation and our wider community, we memorialized the 400,000 whose lives have been lost, and conveyed our deep hope for our future, in God's time.

Dr. Liz Rice-Smith

LIVING HISTORY BY DR. LIZ RICE-SMITH

Paving the Way for our 400th Commemorative. 1620 to 2021.

Our Congregationalist, UCC history is a long history, longer even than the 2,000 years since Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. In this "Log" series of ecclesiastical history essays, we are taking a look at some of what occurred that led to our Congregational Way and how we "do" church.

November, 2020 marked 400 years since our Congregationalist, "Separatist" forebears arrived at the tip of what we now call Massachusetts. Arriving at Virginia was their planned destination. And this November, 2021, we will commemorate the 400th years since our forebears first shared a harvest feast with the Wampanoag people of Patuxet/Plimoth, on Thanksgiving Day. Each of our congregations in the United Church of Christ does well to search deeply into the past; to know where we came from; to search how our past lives in us; to reflect on and repent what went wrong while honoring, enlivening, and renewing all that our faith invites us to celebrate.

There is quite a history, which led to this adventure of emerging Congregationalism in North America. Here, we are looking at what occurred during the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries that surely contributed to emerging needs, wishes, hopes, and goals in peoples' lives of faith. Focusing in Britain, which is where the Congregational Way began to emerge, culturally, it is notable that the Bubonic Plague pandemic was sweeping across Asian trade routes, into Europe, reaching Britain in 1348. John Wycliffe, whom we noted in the March issue of The Log, would have been eighteen years old when that happened, and no doubt it had quite an effect on his perspective, studies, and life choices. The first known case of Bubonic Plague in England was a seaman who arrived at Weymouth, Dorset, from Gascony in June, 1348. By autumn that year, the plague had reached London and by the following summer 1349, the plague covered the entire country. Estimates of mortality from that episode of pandemic suggest that 40 - 60% of the population died.

During that period, the Roman church was the only religious institution promoting a "way" for living and dying. And no doubt, numbers of Roman Catholic priests died during that pandemic, leaving many faithful Christians without clergy to carry out sacraments, read/interpret scripture, anoint the dying, and bury the dead. People began to want to learn to read, to teach reading, and especially, to read Scripture and make

sense of it in their lives. Many lay people became key in leading prayer, tending to the sick and dying, bringing Christ's healing and comfort as best they could, as long as they, too, were living. The clergy were regarded as having an elevated status amongst ordinary people, having become more holy in their view of ordination.

The Roman church, too, had given as the cause of the Bubonic Plague/pandemic the evil in human behavior; the higher death rate amongst the clergy led many people to lose faith in their priests and in the institution of the Roman church. English churchgoers began to view some priestly practices as corrupt and were offended by a sense of abandonment by clergy during the worst of the pandemic episodes. The high rate of mortality and consequent shortage of Roman church clergy increased the public participation of lay leadership. This notably helped to pave the way for early pathways to the religious life of our Separatist forebears and the Protestant Reformation.

It is thought that the plague pandemic thus significantly promoted the uses of the vernacular. There were other immediate consequences at that time. There was a halt in the campaigns of the Hundred Years' War. The decreased population led to shortages of labor with rising labor costs, which was resisted by the landowners and led to growing resentment among those who worked the land. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 was a fruit of this resentment, and though effectively suppressed, led to the end of serfdom in England. The omnipresence of death in England inspired more piety in the upper classes, as well, which became evident in the establishment of three colleges at Cambridge University during and shortly after the Bubonic Plague.

Twelve or thirteen years later, the plague returned to England 1361 - 1362, and led to the death of 20% of the British population. After that episode, plague pandemics continued to return intermittently, with less severe impact, throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, in local, regional, and national outbreaks. One of the last outbreaks of the plague in Britain was the Great Plague of London, 1665 -1666.

In the midst of this, John Wycliffe (c.1330 - 1384) was developing theories of a political and ecclesiastical nature that would require the church to give up worldly possessions, a practice called disendowment. It was during 1378 that he began a systematic attack on the practices of the Roman Church, as well as the beliefs. John Wycliffe's views were espoused by a group of believers, the Lollards, who were thought by the king and the Roman church to be a heretical group. The Lollards were a group of lay people who were considerably energized by the translation of the Bible into English. They were given the name "Lollards" in association with medieval Dutch words meaning "to mutter," which was most likely reflecting their style of worship, during which they read Scripture out loud. It seems to have been used as a derisive expression applied to those without an academic background, which is notable, especially since the Lollards were such promoters of literacy and lay reading of Scripture. The Lollards were never

constituted by a large number of participants, but they were recognized as a reform movement, and heretical. They believed that the church should aid people to live a life of poverty, imitating the life of Jesus. Their ideas deeply influenced the thought of John Huss, who in turn influenced the thoughts and practices espoused by Martin Luther, on the continent.

In seeking reform of Western Christianity, the Lollards felt that Roman Church practices of baptism and confession were not necessary for salvation. They also regarded praying and honoring images of saints to be a form of idolatry. They also had a poor opinion of many elements of the Roman church at that time, including certain taking of oaths and fasting as well as such an emphasis on church buildings. The Lollards' influence spread to the north, to both the midlands and Wales to the west, with the greatest concentration in the south and East Anglia. Norfolk was an influential hub. These were the heralds of large agricultural estates within which were the bulk of the restless population, which became involved in the Peasants Revolt, led by Wat Tyler (1381). Lollardism became associated with tradesmen, farmers, "public disorder," and public actions, identified as heresy and efforts to suppress the movement. Then, King Henry IV was persuaded by the Roman church to pass the 1401 Statute "De Heretics Comburendo" (The Necessity of Burning Heretics), which did not specifically ban the Lollards but did prohibit the translating or owning heretical versions of the Bible and authorized death by burning of all heretics. By 1395, the Lollards had their own ministers and were winning popular support but were subjected to extreme measures of persecution. They were increasingly hunted down, imprisoned, tortured, and frequently burnt at the stake as heretics. A primary early opponent of the Lollards was Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was aided by Henry le Despenser of Norwich of whom the Chronicler, Thomas Walsingham praised for his zeal. In 1410, John Badby, a layman and craftsman who refused to renounce his Lollardy was burnt at the stake; he was the first layman to suffer capital punishment in England for the crime of heresy.

The Lollards suffered for their faith. After Wycliffe had been dead for 40 years, during the 1420s, when Roman church leaders were afraid that his grave would become a religious shrine, Bishop Richard Fleming of Lincolnshire, acting on the instructions of Pope Martin V, was the one who ordered officials to exhume Wycliffe's bones, burn them, and scatter his ashes on the River Swift. As punishment for their efforts in calling for the reformation of the church, many Lollards were burnt to death in an old, dis-used chalk pit in Norwich, England, a location built near the foundation of the Cathedral there. Thereafter began a concerted persecution of Lollardy over a large area of England. While we are not Lollards, today, their legacy to us is worthy of our attention and respect. We can hardly imagine being part of a congregation in which our reading and reflecting on Scripture would be considered heresy.

We can hardly imagine being killed for participating in study groups or prayer meetings. We can hardly imagine a world in which these practices would be condemned.

And that was how it was.



John Wycliffe's remains being dug up and thrown into the river Swift – its source at Upper Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire.

First Congregational Church Scholarship

The Outreach Committee, on behalf of the church, awards three \$500 scholarships to graduating high school seniors planning to seek higher education in 2021. One of those scholarships may be granted to someone from the church graduating from a school other than Rockport High. The application for that scholarship may be found on the church website. The deadline for submitting applications will be April 1. Questions about the scholarship should be directed to Pastor Derek or any committee member.

The Outreach Committee uses three criteria for awarding scholarships:(1) interest and involvement in community service (2) association with the church (3) financial need.

THRIVING CONGREGATIONS

Currently we are working as a team on a statement of what it means to thrive for us as a congregation. As soon as we have it completed we'll share it with everyone. Our next conversation as a committee is talking about relational formation, which is thriving relationships in our church. For those who would like here is the completion of our survey, [Thriving Survey Results](#). We had 29 folks complete the survey, from all ages of the congregation! Thank you to all who took the time to complete the survey.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

FAMILY PROMISE NORTH SHORE BOSTON Announces Plans for 2021

Our family homelessness program, Family Promise, will vacate its day center at 330 Rantoul St in Beverly and rent a new building at 8 Rantoul. For 2021, homeless families will live in that building, starting in February. Two of the three families have been in YMCA apartments temporarily, and the third family has been living at the day center. The third family has found an apartment and expects to living there soon.

First Congregational Church through the Outreach treasury has donated rent and expenses for a month in 2021. Outreach will help raise another month's rent and expenses, most likely for the month of September, with the help of our support churches.



WEEKLY ZOOM EVENTS

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
STORY TELLING

3:00 p.m.



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
BIBLE STUDY

5:00 p.m.



THURSDAY MORNING
BOOK GROUP

9:00 a.m.



FRIDAY AFTERNOON
PRAYER SERVICE

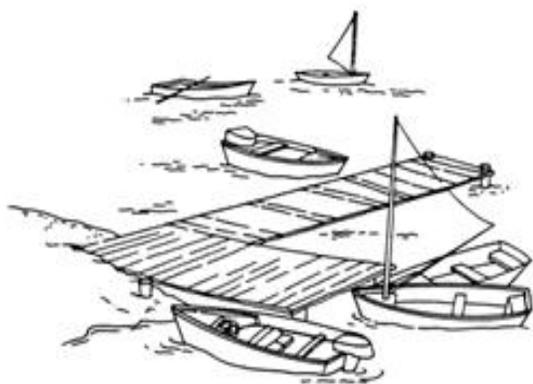
5:00 p.m.



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
LIVE VIA ZOOM AND FACEBOOK

10:00 A.M.





The Old Sloop Landing

12 School Street
Rockport, Massachusetts
office@rockportucc.org
978.546.6638

Taking Care of our Church Family

During our lives in the time of the Coronavirus we have had to face mutual fears that we never thought would be an issue -- being isolated, along with weekly and daily events that we took for granted. And, one of those is putting food on our tables. That is...*grocery shopping*.

Your church, in its quest to always be mindful of keeping its members safe and spiritually nourished, has come up with an innovative way to keep you healthy and physically nourished too. The idea is to greatly limit your need to visit the grocery store. The Old Sloop has set up a way for you all to acquire needed produce, meats, dairy products, bread and pastries, and other grocery items. And, you will be able to pick up your groceries at the new "Old Sloop Landing" located at the former day school at 12 School Street.

Who will be providing your groceries? Henry's Market

We are so fortunate to have **Henry's Market** providing all your groceries – meats, seafood, dairy and juice products, their wonderful baked goods, and famous prepared meals and more. If you don't see it on the list that they have provided us, just ask. They also have snacks, paper goods, wine, and beer...just like any other grocery store!

Mike Halle, a manager at Henry's Market has updated the store's website for easier ordering. You can now visit Henry's new website at <http://henrysfinefoods.com>.

Instructions for Ordering and Pick-up of groceries

Important: Pick-up days are the first and third WEDNESDAY of each month

Orders must be in by 5 p.m. on the Monday before pick-up day

Please contact the church office to get copies of the Henry's inventory.

You can only order during store hours: Sunday-Saturday, 7am until 6pm
Please call Henry's at 978-922-3885 with further questions and to place your order.

OR

You can also send an email with your organized shopping list

(include options of flavors or brands, in case your first choice is unavailable)

and send it to: info@henrysfinefoods.com.

Please include your name, address and telephone number and

be sure to use the following address for delivery:

First Congregational Church of Rockport

12 School Street, Rockport, MA 01966

Orders are paid by credit/debit card only.

Please **do not** email any payment information-- they will obtain it over the phone.

There is no minimum with Henry's Market.

Pick up Instructions at the Old Sloop Landing

We will call you late morning/early afternoon to arrange your pickups.

Pick-up at The Old Sloop Landing is at the window of the former day school at 12 School Street. You will park on School Street. There will be a table right outside the window for you to receive your order. If necessary, a volunteer will be available to assist you to your car with your order. A cart will also be available for heavy loads.

There will be no contact and wearing your masks is mandatory.

If you need to pick up your groceries after work or have a conflict, just let the church office know ahead of time by calling 978-546-6638 or email at office@rockportucc.org to make arrangements for pick up after 5pm.



CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES AND NOTES

CABINET

MEETING MINUTES MARCH 21, 2021

Subject to Approval

Special note: this meeting was held during the COVID 19 pandemic while social distancing kept the members of the cabinet from being physically together. Cabinet members attended from their homes using the Zoom video conferencing facility.

Present: Jack Reed, Moderator and chair; Bruce Coates, Treasurer; Bill Elwell, Trustees; Jay Reed, Treasurer of Mission Funds; Lou Cannon, Personnel Committee; Bob Cannon, Music Committee; Elizabeth Rice-Smith, Historian and Old Sloop Fleet; Camilla Ayers, Diaconate; Karen Hurst, Christian Education Committee; Dan Bing, Stewardship Committee; Joe Chambers, Board of Ushers; Leap Kasten, Thriving Congregations Committee; Kristina Martin; and Geof Lyon, Clerk and recording secretary.

Handouts: (sent by email before the meeting): Agenda, Draft Minutes of Cabinet Meeting February 21, Operating Summary and Cash and Investment Summaries for February 2021

Action, Discussion, and Follow-up Items

Declaration of a quorum, approval of minutes.

Moderator Jack Reed observed that a quorum was present. He called the meeting to order at 7:03PM.

Rev. Liz Rice-Smith led us in prayer.

The minutes of the February 17 meeting were reviewed. A correction was made to the account of the activities of the Team for the Welcoming Ministry of Hospitality. The minutes were approved as amended by voice vote.

Updates on the new website

Geof Lyon reported that the website was nearly complete and that it would be announced Easter Sunday. He indicated that the rollout had already begun but provided no details.

Tech support needs of the church

Geof reported that he has drafted a job description and had sent it to the Personnel Committee for help with details such as benefits and salary range. He hopes to bring a proposal to the next Trustees meeting. They would have to find a funding source for this year because the position is not in the budget. Liz reminded us that she had suggested at our previous meeting that we speak to several congregations, so we have points of comparison. Geof indicated that he could not undertake such a project. Liz replied that she would do it.

Church future activities

Jack asked whether it was time that we begin discussions about reopening the church. Dan Bing opined that it is too early.

Camilla Ayers asked whether there is a group working on proposals for the Old Sloop Fair.

Geof described the problems that are particular to Old Sloop Coffeehouse. Most of the performers are touring musicians who plan their tours a year or more ahead of time. The coffeehouse had informally agreed with some of the artists whose concerts were canceled in the fall of 2020 that we would try to reschedule in the fall of 2021, and agents for those artists are now seeking to confirm those dates. Performer contracts include substantial guarantees that must be paid if a concert is canceled, so the coffeehouse must make a judgement about the risk of executing contracts. The state's COVID guidelines for the fall are uncertain, but the coffeehouse has plans for measures to comply with likely restrictions. For example, concerts might be moved to the sanctuary to allow more space for distancing. Some guidance about the church's intentions is essential if the coffeehouse is to have a fall season.

Liz said the church is looking for guidance from the UCC. She said Rev. Derek communicated with the UCC at the beginning of the pandemic and they have provided a lot of information.

Officer Reports

Treasurer

Bruce Coates referred to the summary report he had distributed by email. He said there is little to report since we are only two months into the year. Operating income is up \$722 over last year, and operating expenses are down \$3,020, so net income is up \$3,742. There are timing considerations, but Bruce thinks we are on track. The market value of the church's investments increased by \$9,232 in February and are now up \$756 for the year.

Treasurer of Mission Funds

Jay Reed reported that Outreach treasury balance at the end of February was \$8,500. Outreach disbursed funds to Big Brother/Big Sister of Mass. Bay, Church World Service, City Mission, Hadwen Park Church in Worcester, and HAWC. They spent funds on food for DenMar staff.

Jay reminded us that the Easter Offering is usually given to Outreach for one of their programs. This year they would like the funds to go to Family Promise. Jay made a motion that the Easter offering be given to the Outreach Committee. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

Historian

Liz reported that she started a series of living history essays to commemorate 400 years since the Pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts. She wrote an article for last month's Old Sloop Log, and the next one will be in the April Log. She will write stories throughout the year. Topics will include use of the land by indigenous peoples. She continues to work on the pandemic project. She would appreciate it if contributors would leave any materials that might be useful on the table in the outer office. She continues to interview people in the congregation to learn about their activities during the pandemic and how it has affected them. She is working with the Diaconate and the Trustees regarding archival preservation equipment. Rick Kasten's architectural firm is closing their office and will donate three flat files. With the help of Bob Cannon, Jim Schell, and Rev. Derek she wrote a blog article for the new website about ringing the bell on the eve of the presidential inauguration.

Committee Reports

Trustees

Bill reported that the Rockport Community Preservation Committee has approved our application and will present it at fall town meeting. If the grant is approved, it will fund deleading and painting the Main Street façade of the sanctuary building and reconditioning the windows on the first floor of the Law House.

The Old Sloop Fleet

Liz reported that the fleet has been busy. She recognized two young people for recent accomplishments. Gia Brackett won first place in every event and all-around in a competition with her Beverly gymnastics team. The fleet sent Gia cards and roses. And Celeste Schocker wrote a song that the 12 School Street singers sang for a worship service.

Liz asked whether Bruce or the Personnel Committee have arranged for Regina to get unemployment. Bruce reported that he has spent hours on a state unemployment website. There were problems with the church's account that have finally been straightened out. He has been answering questions and filling out forms with gross wages and other information for every employee for the last four years by quarter. There are a few more things for the Personnel Committee to answer.

Stewardship

Dan Bing reported that the Stewardship Committee discussed their goals for year. Among the ideas are a virtual coffee hour and pot-luck fundraisers once we are back in Fellowship Hall. They discussed the Christmas Bazaar and the Old Sloop Fair, wondering who is responsible and talking about ideas for an online fair. Camilla Ayers mentioned that the Annisquam Village Church held an online fair that went very well. Dan said the Stewardship Committee would be willing to work on the fairs. Dan made a motion: that the Stewardship Committee be authorized to proceed with the planning of an online version of the Old Sloop Fair. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. The Stewardship Committee is thinking about doing another video for this year's campaign. Jack noted that there are national awards for videos like this, and that Derek said he would send the video to the appropriate minister at the UCC.

Christian Education

Karen Hurst reported that the Christian Education Committee will be sending a digital policy for approval soon. They are also updating the Safe Church Policy.

Music

Bob Cannon reported that there is a lot of excitement among the members of the Music Committee. Music continues to be a big part of worship services. The creativity is inspiring. The Music Committee renewed two copyright licenses. Copyright remains a tricky area. Evelyn Reed now reports our use of music to OneLicense. Rhiannon Hurst is spearheading exciting new possibilities. She is cooperating with other musicians and is looking into being on Instagram.

Kristina Martin opined that the 12 School street singers are awesome. The 7 and 8 years old kids are singing two-part harmony. She is nervous about having to change back to in-person rehearsals because things are working so well.

Personnel

Lou Cannon reported that the Personnel Committee is busy dealing with a confidential issue.

Thriving Congregations

Leap Kasten reported that the Thriving Congregations team put the results of their survey in last month's Old Sloop Log. They are working on a relationship model.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

Date of Next Cabinet Meeting:

The Cabinet will next meet at 7:00PM on April 18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Geof Lyon, Clerk

DIACONATE**MEETING MINUTES MARCH 7, 2021**

Present on Zoom: David Emerson, Andrena Huntsman, Laurie McKenna, Jim Schell, Liz Rice-Smith, Pastor Derek VanGulden

Opening Prayer: Reverend Derek opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the January and February meetings: Minutes were reviewed and with a wording change in the January notes both months were approved and also the February notes.

Communion:

Rev. Derek was assisted by Andrena Huntsman in today's service of communion.

Pastor Report:

Rev. Derek restarted home visits, using proper COVID protocols and distancing.

Derek has been working with the Associated Clergy of Cape Ann and putting together the ecumenical Easter sunrise service. Five Churches will take part.

Katie and Derek are planning Holy Week:

Tuesday: Vespers 7 pm

Thursday: Maundy Thursday service 7 pm

Friday: Good Friday service around 7 pm

Sunday: sunrise service at Good Harbor Beach around 6:00 am. Regular Worship service at 10:00 am.

Infant Baptism March 28. Baptism during Worship needs approval of Trustees and Diaconate. A deacon will read the congregation's part.

Songs were discussed that are commonly used. Derek will talk to The Worship team to see if they can help with this.

Committee reports:

Membership Committee delegate: Laurie McKenna. Meeting was held everybody was there. They will meet the last Thursday of every month.

Nominating Committee delegate: Liz Rice-Smith They will meet in Aug or September.

Church Cabinet delegate: Camilla Ayers: Not Present.

Old Sloop Fleet delegate: Liz Rice Smith. No unusual activities.

The Old Sloop Landing has been running well. Wendy, Mark Jurewicz, Derek and Jay are taking care of the deliveries. They usually have 8 -10 people who order.

Living Memorial Fund- No report at this time.

Ongoing Business:

A discussion of inactive status for members who are living away from Rockport ensued. Liz Rice-Smith and Andrena Huntsman suggested the positive effects of retaining those people on active status. Deacons agreed to continue discussing this topic in the future.

New Business:

Homebound congregants and phone buddies. Jim Schell reported that he has a list that was compiled by the office manager early in the pandemic. Jim Schell will get a listing from Geof from Power Church and will put it in a form that the Diaconate can work with.

Liz Rice Smith spoke to matters of coordinating the work of the Old Sloop Fleet with the work of the Diaconate.

There was a discussion about flat file cabinets to store historic documents.

Liz, Laurie and Jim will work on the logistics.

Derek will be off the week after Easter. Derek will arrange for coverage for the Sunday after Easter.

Next Meeting Date:

4/11/2021 @ 11:30

Motion to adjourn

Meet adjourned 12:40pm.

MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 7, 2021

Present on Zoom: Camilla Ayers, David Emerson, Andrena Huntsman, Laurie McKenna, Jim Schell, Liz Rice-Smith, Pastor Derek VanGulden

Opening Prayer: Reverend Derek opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes last meeting: Minutes of the January and February meetings will be reviewed and approved at the next meeting.

Communion: Rev. Derek was assisted by Katie Welch in today's service of communion.

Pastor Report: Rev. Derek reported on recent visits with hospitalized and home-bound parishioners.

Committee reorganization: The following people were unanimously approved to serve in the following positions for the year:

Cochairs: Jim Schell, Camilla Ayers

Recording Secretary: Jim Schell

Membership Committee delegate: Laurie McKenna

Nominating Committee delegate: Liz Rice-Smith

Church Cabinet delegate Camilla Ayers

Corresponding secretary for Living Memorial gifts Camilla Ayers

Living Memorial Fund: Thank you cards. Janice did transfer cards and instructions to Camilla. Bruce Coats was notified that Camilla will be sending out cards. Janis Ramsden has completed her term and we thank her for her commitment to the Church!

Ongoing Business: In response to a request from Geof and Celene Lyons to move their children to inactive status, Rev. Derek explained that conference dues are no longer based on the number of active members in a congregation. The dues are now calculated as a percentage of giving to outreach. Jim will discuss the matter further with the Lyons family.

A discussion of inactive status for members who are living away from Rockport ensued. Liz Rice-Smith and Andrena Huntsman suggested positive effects of retaining those people on active status. Deacons agreed to continue discussing this topic in future Homebound congregants and phone buddies. Jim Schell reported that he has a list that was compiled by the office manager early in the pandemic.

New Business:

Liz Rice Smith spoke to matters of coordination of the work of the Old Sloop Fleet with the work of the Diaconate.

NEXT MEETING. March 7, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Jim Schell

MEETING NOTES January 3, 2021

Present on Zoom: Camilla Ayers, Janis Ramsden, Andrena Hunt, Laurie McKinna

Opening in Prayer: Paster Derek opened in Prayer

Review and approve Minutes of December: Not available, deferred to next meeting.

Jan 3 Communion: Derek did all of communion.

Pastors Report/Update/Visitations: David Emerson's grandchildren checked positive for COVID but his son will get back at doing it. Phone calls help keep the congregation in the loop. Regina has phone book that has broken up the list so deacons can call a few every month. Share when and how congregants can see the weekly service on Channel 67 4 PM every day, how to watch on You tube, Jim Schell will ask Geof Lyon.

(Not sure what these names are for: Nancy Andrews, Janice Ramsden, Sue Morris, Jim Schell,) Rosemary Bigello

Jessica Hunt has asked to join the Church. Jim Schell will notify the Membership Committee.

Deacons have learned how to do communion on line. This should be added to the cabinet report.

Cabinet News (Camilla): Although she missed the Cabinet meeting she reviewed the notes. Old Sloop Log will be digital, dateline for annual reports is January 6, PPP loan from federal government will be forgiven although waiting for formal letter, personnel committee earned time off, working on it.

Membership Committee News (Jim Schell): Membership has not met in a while.

Worship Team: Is this something we should be following? The Worship Team created by Derek to help organize the music and liturgy. It usually consists of Derek, Katie, Phil Swanson, Kristina Martin and Geof Lyon.

Nominating Committee News (Jim Schell): Jim has been working with the committee to fill vacancies. Liz Rice Smith was asked if she would join the Diaconate for 2021 and she agreed.

Living Memorial Fund- Thank you cards (Camilla): Janice will transfer cards and instructions to Camilla.

On Going Business: Storage Cabinet: Jim Schell worked with Dr. Liz Rice-Smith to make some measurements. It is possible that flat files cabinets from Rick Kasten's old company may have some available. Baptismal Font: Derek indicated the because of sickness in the Emerson family this has been put on hold for now.

Homebound Visitations and or phone calls: Jim Schell will get list started by Regina.

New Business: No new business.

Next Diaconate Meeting : February 7 2021

Motion to adjourn: Adjourned 12:40pm

Jim Schell

TRUSTEES

MEETING MINUTES MARCH 8, 2021

Trustee meeting called to order at 7:04pm.

Present: Walter Vining, Bill Elwell, Geof Lyon, Kevin Love, Bruce Coates, Chip Kistner, Bonnie Gray, Jack Reed.

- Walter offered an Opening Prayer.
- **Minutes:** The minutes of the February 8, 2021 meeting were approved.
- **Treasurer's Report:** Bruce provided the Treasurer's Report noting that there hasn't been much activity. Compared to last year, Operating Pledges are up \$2,100.10. Total Church contributions are up \$151.59. Total Income is up by \$7,22.27. Building Operation expenses are down \$1,997.44. Total Expenses are down by \$3,020.36 thus the actual Net Income through the month of February is up by \$3,742.63.
- **Review of Bank/PEX statements:** Chip Kistner reported that he has checked the Bank Statements through the month of December 2020 and will continue getting caught up to date. Bonnie reported checking the PEX statement ,which only had two charges for the month. Both charges have been verified.
- **Jack Reed, representing the Personnel Committee,** presented information on additional Liability Insurance coverage. Employment Practices Liability coverage protects against employee accusations of discrimination, wrongful termination or sexual harassment by your employees. Coverage for \$1,000,000 would raise our annual premium by \$173. A motion was made and seconded to add this coverage to the Church's Liability policy. A unanimous vote was taken.

Old Business:

- **Steeple Leaks:** No update on the water leaks in the Steeple. Geof reported that now that the warmer weather is approaching, he will get in touch with Bob from American

Steeple & Tower in hopes of scheduling a date to have the necessary repairs taken care of.

- **Parsonage Issues:** No update
- **Fellowship Hall Windows:** The company, Window Woman, is working to refurbish these windows.
- **Request for Baptism:** Rev. Derek received a request to hold a Baptism on Palm Sunday, March 28th, during the service in the sanctuary. The original request was for 6-8 people, but later changed to 25 people. Bill Elwell brought up the thought that allowing this ceremony to happen would open the door to other groups or committees requesting the use of the building, which has been closed during this pandemic. After much discussion it was decided that if the Baptism could be performed with only 6-8 people, it would be allowed. Otherwise, a later date, when the Church is opened again, would have to be chosen.

New Business:

- Geof Lyon initiated discussion on hiring a Tech. Support person once the Church is open again. Neither Geof nor Jim Schell, who are now managing the technical aspects of videoing the Sunday services, will be willing to continue this work once the Church is open again. A decision has been made to continue videoing the services after the Church has re-opened. The appropriate equipment to accomplish this has been installed. Geof and Jim prefer to be in the sanctuary enjoying the services rather than being behind the scenes handling the technical aspects of videoing. He estimates the annual cost of hiring a technical expert to be approximately \$5,000 a year. Geof offered to begin writing a Job Description and will ask the Personnel Committee for their suggestions. The Trustees will discuss this proposal again in April.

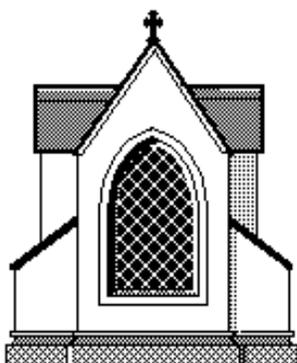
There being no further business, the Board of Trustees adjourned at 8:20pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Trustees will be on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Walter Vining

Chair, Board of Trustees

Bonnie Gray

Recording Secretary



Stewardship Committee

APRIL 2021

A Note From Stewardship

Use Amazon Smile to Raise Money for the Church

We haven't talked about this in a while, but Stewardship wants to remind you about AmazonSmile, a program that will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. All you need to do is go to [AmazonSmile.com](https://www.amazon.com/amazonsmile) and choose the FCCR as your charitable recipient. That's it. If you already have an Amazon account, you use the same username and password. If not, open an AmazonSmile account. It's free and with all the online shopping we are likely doing these days, it could really add up. Thanks!



Christian Stewardship: the responsibilities that Christians have in maintaining and using wisely the gifts that God has bestowed

MEETING MINUTES MARCH 4, 2021

- New business
 - Elect new positions
 - Kathie – Secretary, Jack – Nominating rep., Dan & Louisa -- Co-Chairs, Dan--Cabinet Rep, Louisa or Jack as back-up

- Jack verified that PowerChurch is an issue with MAC users, Dan will talk with Geof for direction.
- Administrative
 - No Jan minutes to approve; meeting was cancelled
 - Select date for next meeting
 - Wednesday, April 7 at 4:00
 - Cabinet report-Dan
 - Website launch by end of March, Looking for Blog authors from Committees
 - Geof brought up the need for help with the technical aspects of virtual worship and other related requirements the church now has. The Annisquam Village church is considering a part time (10 hrs./wk) role and has budgeted \$10-13K. Jay mentioned member support as a possible answer, but it wasn't discussed beyond here. Jack said he might help with a Technical Support volunteer team if it gets formed.
 - Select Log writer; and Select members to do offering first and third Sunday
 - Louisa has been writing for the log, she would love to share so Jack offered to do some. He will do April's submission for the log. Louisa will do May. We'll choose a June author at next month's meeting.
 - Dan, Louisa and Jack will rotate through blessing the offering twice a month. Derek would like one of these to include an update on the pledges, where we are at with pledges in versus pledges committed. March 7-Louisa , March 21 – Jack and Dan on April .
- New business cont.
 - Discuss goals for next year
 - Refer to definition above - Fundraisers and donations are not technically the sole responsibility of Stewardship. Just a note Louisa wants for us to consider going forward.
 - Restaurant fundraisers will not be happening this year either, We discussed having a "Congo. Special" virtual coffee hour after church on Sunday. Idea being, between 11:00-12:00 to have people place order at Brothers Brew and stop by to pick up. Possibility of people setting up Zoom session to sip together. Jack mentioned doing meal/Potluck fundraisers at the Church.
 - Derek mentioned that updates could be put in weekly Church Bulletin as to where the church is with Pledges In versus where we

- stand towards the budget. Coming from Stewardship on a monthly basis during the offering blessing while we are virtual would be ideal. (See above-we decided to implement this)
- Website blog – Louisa will reach out to Katie to find out what type of material she would like. She will report back to us next meeting.
 - Facebook Group for Old Sloop Fair and Christmas Bazaar – bring this topic up at next cabinet meeting for starters. Get input and go from there.
 - Adding events to the church calendar-When someone gets assigned from the church office to manage this we will touch base to find out about the process of adding events, etc will be.
- Pledge campaign 2021
 - Use light months of March-May to plan documents (Our Ministries) or media to be used with Pledge Drive; consider themes. Everyone liked the video and Derek mentioned that he would share it with the Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Finance at UCC.
 - Whoever has access to PowerChurch can pull data on who pledged, etc. Dan cannot access being a MAC user.
 - Get lists of 2020 pledgers, donors, and new targets and draft letter to pledgers by August 30; have letter completed by Sept 30
 - Old/ongoing business
 - Amazon smile-review – We decided to get the word out again during the offering that this is an easy way to bring in additional donations.
 - Pledge campaign
 - Wrapped up with ~\$182,000 out of \$187,000—great results/tough year
 - Lessons learned
 - Start earlier
 - Send confirmations with thank you via mail by Jan 15
 - Could do rolling thank you/confirmations
 - Follow up email to LYBUNTS very successful
 - Congregation seemed to like video – Derek mentioned that having a member of the church speak on why they give to the church is impactful and goes over well with everyone. Having a Spring and Summer video to touch on this type of thing would be a good idea to replace a sermon. Having the message about why people give should be a year long message. We will put this on the agenda for next meeting. Louisa will

- contact Geof about sound quality to determine if having a recording versus someone live at worship.
 - Derek mentioned that having a goal/number to start the campaign with is a good idea. It worked well for us this past campaign.
 - We need to figure out a system to use for mail merging letters to relieve Geof from having to do this. This will go on the agenda for the next meeting.
 - Meeting closed at approx. 5:20
-



Christian Education and Faith Formation

APRIL 2021

Happy Spring!

Just a reminder that all are invited to join us for our weekly faith formation activities, if you would like any more information or would like to see any new programming please let myself or Rev. Derek know!

Monday

Youth Choir @4:30

Wednesday

Story time with Rev. Derek @3pm

Lectio Divina Bible Study @5pm

Youth Group midweek check in @7:30pm

Friday

Prayer Group @4pm

I can not believe we are a year into all of our online faith formation activities. I am so thankful for all who have jumped on this crazy ride with us, and so thankful for the relationships that have been deepened, the fun jeopardy games played over zoom, and

the insightful conversations and sermons from our amazing 12 school street singers! We have learned how to adapt, and how to thrive in times of uncertainty.

I would like to invite everyone to join me in a project I am working on, what is something positive that has come out of this past year. If you have anything you'd like to share, a photo, video, piece of art, poem, etc. please share it with me via txt 978-290-3427 or email me.

We are also in the process of finalizing our digital safe church policy, and updating our safe church policy. Be on the look out over the next month or so for a photo release form!

Katie Welch

Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation

Youth Group Wednesday midweek check in at 7:30

As we continue into the New Year, we will continue our various ministries via Zoom. Our Sunday night youth group has moved to a midweek check in on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm. We take this time to check in on each other, a small lesson, peak, pits and prayers for the week, and we close with our typical candle light closing.

April 7: 7:30 pm

April 14: 7:30 pm

April 21: School Vacation

April 28: 7:30 pm

As we are continuing into this year of uncertainty and doing online ministry, please reach out if there is anything that you would like to see going through this winter and into the spring. This is a perfect time to be trying new things and seeing what sticks!

Christian Outreach Committee



MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 14 , 2021

PRESENT: Jay Reed, Wendy Woodbury, Steve Kalaghan, Jessica Hunt, Marge Schell, Rev. Derek van Gulden, Ann Kistner.

Jay opened the meeting with a prayer at 11:31 a.m.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance in the budget is \$8,566.33 as of ^{SEP} February 28, 2021. Donations have been given to HAWC (Healing Abuse, Working for Change), One Great Hour of Sharing, Hadwen Park Church Worcester LGBTQ Asylum, among other donations.

PASTOR'S FUND: The Pastor's Fund is sufficient at this time. A portion of the fund was used to give a donation toward an asylum seeker in Gloucester. The next statement will reflect this donation.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: \$511.70 has been sent to OGHS. The celebration for OGHS is on March 21. We will make one more request for donations during that service.

EASTER OFFERING: The committee decided to use the donations that Outreach receives from the Easter offering toward supporting Family Promise. Jay will mention the Easter offering during his Mission Moment on Easter Sunday.

ACTION LUNCHESES: Wendy will host making lunches for the Action Shelter on March 31. Jay will put out a request for the needed food items.

SCHOLARSHIPS: The committee discussed how scholarships are given out to graduating seniors. In the past, three scholarships of \$500 each have been given, two from the MacLean-Hooper Fund, and one from the Outreach treasury. Last year, the High School guidance department assisted us in this. Jay will be in touch with them again for their input as we look at the applicants and the criteria for choosing the recipients. Jay stated that we will make applications available to students not attending Rockport High School, or RHS attendees who may be from another community. The deadline would be April 1.

FAMILY PROMISE: As stated, Outreach will use the Easter offering toward our commitment to Family Promise for rent for the families living in the new home location. Jay has talked to the coordinators of the other support churches to let them know about fund raising needs and how our church is contributing. We will ask Geof to adjust the website to accommodate donating to FP online.

Derek reported that he assisted the Board of Directors for FP in helping the current clients move into their new location. This kicked off a new program that is in place to help families avoid losing their homes with assistance from a bank of resources.

RIM WALK: The Refugee Immigration Ministry will hold a fund raising walk around

Lake Quannapowitt on June 20. Wakefield Town Common has also been reserved for this. Because of Covid precautions, individuals or small groups who represent different church clusters will walk, as opposed to larger groups. Anyone can donate to the North Shore cluster via the RIM website. The donations benefit individual clients or families who are asylum seekers who are waiting for work permits. Because of the lengthy time that applicants must wait, the need for support has increased. The donated funds may pay for an apartment, food, transportation, etc. until the authorization for a permit is granted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

DENMAR LUNCHESES: Wendy will use Jeff's Variety to purchase sandwich platters for the staff at DenMar within the next week or so. \$300 should cover the cost of the meals. This is to recognize the continued hard work of the staff.

SOCK DRIVE: Marge suggested that we consider organizing a sock drive for the Grace Center. Jay will email Frank Freedman to see if this is something we could do, or if there is something else to organize a drive for.

The meeting adjourned at 12:27pm.

NEXT MEETING: April 11, 2021 via Zoom

Respectfully submitted, Ann Kistner

First Congregational Church of Rockport, UCC

12 School Street
Rockport, Massachusetts 01966

Phone: (978) 546-6638

Email: office@rockportucc.org

Website: www.rockportucc.org

During non-business hours:

Rev. Derek van Gulden can be
reached at (508) 818-0616 or
revdvan@yahoo.com

The Old Sloop's Log

Susan Lillis, Editor

Please submit articles to:

sglillis56@gmail.com

**** All articles are due on the
18th of each month. ****

Church Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday
9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Sunday Worship Service

Currently via zoom

Sunday School

Currently via zoom

Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. Derek van Gulden

Office Manager

Music Director

Dr. Phil Swanson

Youth Choir Director

Kristina Martin

Christian Education and Faith Formation Director

Kaitlyn Welch

Sexton

Phil Bynarowicz