



**First Church Squantum
Congregational**

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**February Special
Congregational
Meeting, Feb 26**

The Congregation has called a Special Congregational Meeting for late February. At this meeting, we will ask the question, “What are the ministries and ideas God is calling us to in the coming year?” All the same? Add some new ones? We will then consider how best to prioritize and staff the congregation’s ministries and programs for the coming year. These could include (among other possibilities) talking about restarting the choir or other music additions, how many hours we need for paid vs. volunteer staffing for cleaning and secretarial work, supporting our Sunday School and Student Minister. Hope to see you there!

The Light

Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before all, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” February 2023

Into the Wild!

by Pastor Doug Gray

“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he nothing in those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.”

—Luke 4:1–2

Do you have a favorite food? When I was six-years old, I loved barbecue potato chips, soooooo much! Every chance I could get, I would eat as many as I could. That strategy worked great until someone gave me one of the giant bags of barbecue chips while we were driving somewhere. My eyes got big, and I started in with gusto! Sooooo good—crunchy, tangy, tasty—for like the first ten mouthfuls. Then it started to be a chore, but I liked them, so I kept eating. I actually finished that giant bag! And I was miserable...I didn’t touch another barbecue chip for years.

The thing about our appetites is that they can run away with us. Like my six-year old self, we sometimes consume more than we really need, long past what is reasonable. For my six-year old self, it was food, but we could easily substitute buying things, playing computer games, reading the news, working, drinking caffeine, even exercising—anything that we do or consume more than we need. Sometimes these things can start “running the show” in our lives, instead of God. When that happens, it may be time for a course correction.

Lent is the perfect time to change course. We take the chance to reflect on our lives, reassess whether God is running our lives or something else is, and with God’s help get back on track. Turns out, that’s how Jesus prepared Himself for loving on people! He went aside, and gave up something for forty days, to help Him put God first in His life.

As you think about your walk with God, what are the places where something unhealthy or unhelpful is running your life or your family’s life? Could you step out of that habit for a time, to realign yourself with God’s love and purpose for your life?

This Lent, we are going “Into the Wild!” to explore how we have to leave where we have been, and enter the wilderness, if we are to get to the relationship we want with Jesus. Let’s go together!

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.” — Philippians 1:9–11

Coffee Hour Thanks and Update



Thanks to all those who volunteered with

yummy goodies and coffee for our coffee hour this summer. Your continued support makes this wonderful part of our fellowship would possible. Please sign up if you would like to help.

Season of Lent Ahead!

February 22 is Ash Wednesday, the first day of the Christian season of Lent. The colors in the sanctuary will turn from green to purple, and our hearts will begin the season of preparation ahead of Easter.

Birthdays in November

Caleb Gray Feb 2
Anthony Greenwood Feb 25

Friday Women's Breakfast

Come one, come all! A great chance to share faith and fellowship over some good



food. Women, meet Fridays in the Parlor at 9:30a.

Worship at Marina Bay and the Atria

In February, Pastor Doug will lead worship at Marina Bay and at the Atria. Come sing!

February Worship & Bible Study

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
Feb 5	Post-Pandemic U: Next Level Prayer Communion	Luke 11:5-11 Acts 4:13-31
Feb 12	Post-Pandemic U: Changing the Center of Worship	Luke 19:37-44 Acts 15:1-11
Feb 19	Post-Pandemic U: Making Lasting Changes That Make a Difference Last Sunday after Epiphany	Jeremiah 31:31-35 Matthew 9:9-17
Feb 26	First Sunday of Lent Into the Wild! Why We Need the Wilderness	Psalms 51 Matthew 6:1-6, 19-21
March 5	Second Sunday of Lent Communion Sunday Into the Wild! Our Indispensable Partner	Luke 4:1-13



Friday Family Fun

Friday Family Fun runs every Friday night in March (March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31), 5:30-7:30p. We have the toe-tapping music and heart-jumping stories of Maker Fun

Factory for kids pre-school aged thru Grade 5, and we will add science, snacks and games to make a wonderful, God-honoring evening. Parents are welcome to participate with kids, so the whole family can enjoy the experience :) Teens and pre-teens are invited to participate as group leaders and assistants. To register a child, please follow the link on the church's homepage. To sign up to assist with this terrific ministry to the kids of our neighborhood, please talk with Tina Rychalsky or Pastor Doug.

A Word from the Deacons

by Leo Bergin, Chair of the Board of Deacons

It's amazing to see how God's spirit works through each of the Deacons on this Committee.

I've had an opportunity to witness the time, energy & great ideas that Tina, Val, Judi & Liz bring to the table each month as we serve God's calling. The Deacons are working on many great ideas with the help of Pastor Doug, Reverend Clara and Student Minister Sally.

We've also had the opportunity to work closely with the Trustees recently on various issues that need both Boards' input, and we're grateful for the job that they do.

We're reminded to be God's hands & feet, and I believe this Congregation wants everyone to know we're here for them, so please reach out if you need anything, or if you know of someone else's need!

I also get the feeling that we're all excited for the upcoming season of Lent that's just around the corner and how God would like to use this Congregation in the mission field around us now and in the near future.

Keep looking for signs of God's Grace around you each day!
May you be blessed and a blessing each and every day!

The Book Club



All women are invited to participate in the Book Club's meetings held at 7 pm on the first Tuesday of each month on Zoom. For more information please contact Sally Wainwright at 617-328-7078.

Finding Pastor Doug in the Week

Pastor Doug will be in the church office most mornings, except Thursday (his day off). Feel free to drop by and chat with Pastor Doug! In the afternoon, Pastor Doug often heads out of the office to do visiting and errands.

To reach Pastor Doug to talk or to make an appointment, try one of these:

Pastor Doug's Phones

Church 617-328-6649
Cell 608-436-6263

Pastor Doug's Emails

firstchurchsquantum@gmail.com
dgray1620@gmail.com

Lent Devotionals for 2023 Coming!

Want to add a few minutes to focus on God each day? A Lenten Devotional could be just the thing! Each day features a brief scripture message and prayer—perfect for a cup of coffee, a quiet moment. You can find these devotionals on tables in the entryway, or feel free to ask the office to send one to you. They are free for anyone to take or to give away.

From the Chaplain's Desk

by Rev. Clara Sparks, Chaplain

Ecclesiastes 11:1 reads:

Cast your bread upon the waters,
For you will find it after many days. —RSV translation

Be generous. Invest in acts of charity.
Charity yields high returns. —Message translation

During our remarkably well-prepared budget meeting last Sunday, capably led by Recilla Westerbeke, this verse from Ecclesiastes kept playing in my head. It has not stopped. I learned the important scripture as a little girl in Sunday School. Why is God reminding me of this lesson all week? What is God saying?

You can imagine my excitement when I looked up Ecclesiastes 11:1 in The Message translation! "Be generous. Charity yields high returns." Wow! That sounds sweet. What would happen if we spent a chunk of money to invest in making a difference in meeting our community's needs? What would happen if we "cast our bread upon the waters," did something good out in the world, without expecting very much in return? Blessings would surely come to us. Let it be so.

Faithfully, Clara

The Trustees' Report — This Month

by Recilla Westerbeke, Chair of the Board of Trustees

The proposed 2023 budget was approved by the membership at the Congregational meeting on Sunday, January 22, 2023. Thank you to everyone for your hard work on getting this prepared and to the Congregation. If you did not get a chance to see the budget, please contact the Church office.

We are continuing to search for vendors to plow the Church and driveway of the parsonage in the event of a snowstorm. We've been lucky so far this season, but there are still several weeks ahead with the potential of significant snow. If anyone has names or a referral, please contact the Church office or Recilla Westerbeke. (And yes, we have talked with Ralph Ames and Chuck Ayers.)

**“The Lord
is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He restores my soul.”—Psalm 23:1, 3**

ISS Food and Supply Donation List

Our church participates in Interfaith Social Services' food drives to help local residents who are struggling to put food on their tables. Interfaith operates one of the largest emergency food programs in Greater Boston, as well as a mental health counseling center and homelessness prevention program. Donations will be delivered to Interfaith's offices for distribution.

Canned meat or tuna
Cereal or oatmeal
Peanut butter & jelly
Healthy snacks for kids
Juice boxes
Shelf-stable milk
Rice
Canned soup
Mac & Cheese
Pasta & sauce
Salad dressing
Canned fruit or vegetables
Dry or canned beans
Condiments (incl. salt & pepper)
Gluten-free foods
Low-sodium canned items
Cooking oil / Olive oil
Personal care items:
Diapers (size 4, 5 & 6)
Baby wipes
Pads or tampons
Toothbrushes & toothpaste
Bar soap (unscented)
Shampoo
Body wash



Lent — What Is It and Why?

by Rev. Doug Gray

When the Church was just a baby—in the early to mid-first century AD—people were baptized whenever they made a decision to accept Jesus as the Lord of their lives. Before long, however, many churches in the baby Church had developed the practice of baptizing people primarily on Easter Sunday. This general practice would continue for centuries, and the time before baptism was seen as a time of soul-searching, repentance, fasting, and discipline. From early times, the figure of 40 days of preparation for ministry was used, reflecting the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness after His baptism, preparing for His ministry. (As it turns out, Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days, receiving the Book of the Law, God's Covenant with His people. Elijah, too, had a period of travel through the wilderness, preparing to meet with God on Mount Sinai.) That's how we have a 40-day season of preparation leading up to Easter.

The longing for a time to draw closer to turn away from what hinders us and turn toward God is still a deep yearning for many of us in the Church today. For those who want to live and love like Jesus does, what changes everything for us is Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. For us, too, Lent is a time of soul-searching, repentance, fasting, and discipline. Some people "fast" or give up something (a food, a habit, or anything that is trying to take the place of God or is destructive in our lives. I find that if I am going to take something out of my life—even for a season—I have to put something positive in its place that draws me closer to God. So lots of people add some devotional time, or a prayerful walk, or a habit that will help them go deeper in their life with Jesus. If you want something more to read, the Deacons make Lenten devotionals available. (See article, p. 3.)

However you choose to approach the season of Lent, my prayer is that you would find yourself reflecting on the meaning of Jesus' death *for you*, and how His death and rising again might change everything in how you approach your life, your relationships and your calling to be a blessing to other people. May the Lord Who loves You speak words of love and change in Your life!

This Is My Church

It is composed of people just like you and me.

It will be friendly if I am friendly.

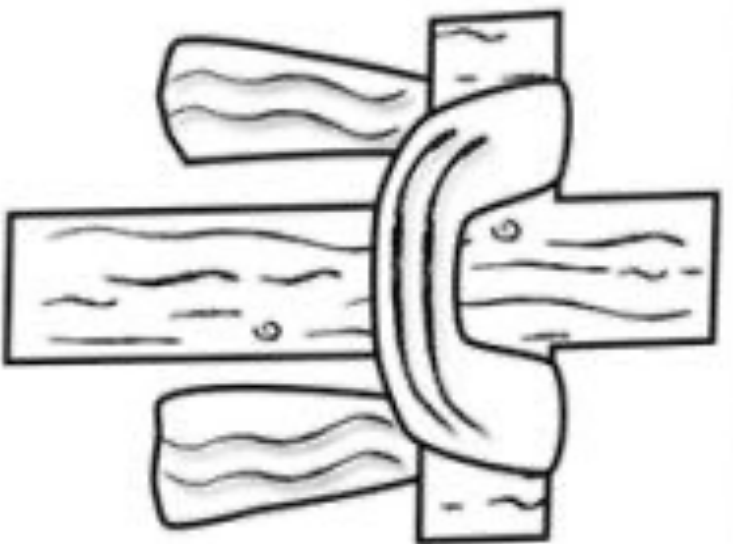
It will make generous gifts to many if I am generous.

It will bring others into fellowship if I bring them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these.

Therefore, with God's love, I dedicate myself to the task of being.

All these I want for my church.



Find all ten words:

- Jesus
- Lent
- Ash
- Wednesday
- Dust
- Prayer
- Alms
- Fasting
- Sacrifice
- Purple

W J E P S A C T A P
 E Q L L U F A W L R
 D J G E O R V R M A
 N E A F N V P C Q Y
 E P R R I T E L W E
 S A C R I F I C E R
 D U S T F W Y R Z N
 A R Y H V A L M S D
 Y Z B J E S U S H U
 Z J F A S T I N G F

Unscramble these Lenten Words

TRYFO YASD _____

HSESA _____

NLTE _____

TISFGNA _____

One thing I can do during Lent to
 bring me closer to God...

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Published by

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Where We Love Kindness

Pastor: Rev. Doug Gray 608-436-6263

Chaplain: Rev. Clara Sparks 617-773-3724

Student Minister: Sally Redondo Padilla

Accompanist: Dr. Miles Fellenberg

Moderator: John Smith

Treasurer: Recilla Westerbeke

Chair, Deacons: Leo Bergin

Chair, Trustees: Recilla Westerbeke

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Church Office Hours: Mo–We, Fr, Su 9a–12p