

Falmouth Congregational Church
267 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

The Congregator

May Edition 2020

Volume 57, Issue 5

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From the Pastor:

May marks our second full month of being physically separated, worshiping on Facebook Live and connecting via Zoom, cards, and calls. While we are unable to gather in our traditional sense, this community has shown the strength of our bond to one another as you have stepped up to provide comfort and care in ways as creative and varied as sewing masks, making soup, picking up groceries, and participating in virtual

Palm Sunday parades. As has been true throughout the ages, the people of the church have adjusted to the state of the world, and found meaningful ways to serve their community and worship God. I am proud to be among you.

It can be easy to lose track of the ways that the daily, often monotonous sacrifices we are making are service. Working to keep our grocery run to once a week, wearing a mask, giving up haircuts and in-person church services—this is not what we have been accustomed to thinking of as caring for “the least of these” or doing “acts of kindness.” These changes can often feel less heroic and more like just a drag.

Nonetheless, it behooves us to take time to reflect on what is happening, on a bigger scale—we are prioritizing the health and safety of our neighbors (and ourselves), and placing them over conveniences and business as usual. As we do this we are practicing Christian virtues: self-sacrifice, love of neighbor, and the prioritization of human life. In my best moments I am trying to approach this shift as a spiritual practice, and find the lessons that God is teaching me about what “need” truly means. In other moments I grump around the house and spend too much time on social media—the process of spiritual growth is not linear!

As we continue this journey together we will strive to think carefully about what our Christian values are calling us to do to worship God while protecting God’s people. We will keep having

Live Stream worship throughout the rest of 2020, and I expect beyond that as well, even once we've fully returned to the sanctuary. In addition, we will look for opportunities to gather in small groups, as and when it is safe to do so. Will this look like gathering spread out in Beinema Hall in late July to watch Live Stream Worship, or having a carefully thought-out August BBQ? I don't know, and we will listen to the advice of experts. It is my prayer that we will be able to gather physically together in some form when I am back from Parental Leave in September—after all, there will be a baby to show off! But I also know that we are learning to worship God well from our computers, and we will do what is necessary.

No matter what the future requires, I am confident that our community will continue to rise to this opportunity for service, creativity, and resiliency, and that our good and loving God will guide us along the way.

~Yours in faith and hope, Pastor Amelia
pastorameliafcc@gmail.com



Council Corner

Happy Spring everyone! I realize that this Spring is a bit different than prior years. This pandemic is hard for everyone. We have all been impacted in one way or another but I continue to try to find happiness in the small things like taking my dog for a walk, spreading mulch

in the yard with my son, and baking homemade blueberry muffins (sadly I think my family still likes the box version better).

The Council has been meeting every few weeks in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that we are constantly reviewing the situation and doing all that we can to provide support to our congregants and protect the church's finances. I am happy to share that the church has been approved for a loan through the Small Business Association's Payroll Protection Plan (PPP). We should have the funds by April 30th. This will allow us to cover payroll for the next eight weeks so we will not have to furlough any members of the church staff during that time.

We also received pledges/offering of approximately \$45k over the last several weeks. Many of these pledges are prepaid so we don't intend to use those funds now unless absolutely necessary. With the receipt of the PPP loan, it is highly unlikely that we will need to but it sets us up to cover expenses during the summer especially if we are not able to resume in-person services.

The Council voted to keep the church closed through May 31st and will continue our virtual services with the Foreside Community Church. We also plan to offer virtual services throughout

the summer even if we are able to worship in-person. We realize that some congregants may not feel comfortable returning to the church even if we are able to do so.

I also wanted to provide an update on the Solar Project. The structural engineer completed his review of the church roof structure. He has informed us that we will need to make some structural changes to reinforce the roof to support the solar array. I have not received the specifics yet as to what that will entail and what it will cost. I will share those details once I have them.

Stay safe and healthy and please contact the church office if you need help during this difficult time.

~ Kim Hendry, Moderator

shendry001@maine.rr.com

Ministry of Missions

Upcoming Service Project: Mother's Day Diaper Drive

In this time of urgent need many of our littlest community members need diapers! In honor of the holiday (and with a nod to baby Edson's approaching arrival!) Falmouth Congregational Church will be collecting diapers for the Falmouth Food Pantry. Drop off diapers at the box outside the church starting Monday, May 4th through Sunday May 17th. We will hold them for two weeks (to ensure safety) and then they will be distributed to families in need.

Falmouth Food Pantry



It is heartwarming to see how our community has come together to help each other during this terribly sad pandemic. Even though the physical location of the Falmouth Food Pantry temporarily "closed" on March 15, distribution of food to many clients has continued. Thanks to the help of more than 50 volunteers, over the past month more than 165 families with over 470 family members have received "no contact" deliveries of food on their doorsteps. In addition, the Food Pantry has been supplying some of the food that is included in the Falmouth Schools' free lunch program.

If the trial event goes well, the Food Pantry is hoping to continue distributing free food several times a month in front of the Falmouth Elementary School for current food pantry clients and those with a food emergency. If you have questions or know someone with an urgent need, please call Nancy Lightbody. Thank you for your help.

Family Promise

As of the middle of March, there were two families in the program. The families were moved to two shelter-in-place locations at two different congregations. Families are no longer going to and from the Day Center. There is a core group of volunteers who are checking in with the families regularly and have been consistent throughout this time to keep the risk of contamination as low as possible. Family Promise is providing food to the families so that they can prepare meals themselves. Measures are being taken to ensure that contact between guests and core volunteers is kept at an absolute minimum.

As you can imagine, families experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable during public health crises, and they need our support more than ever.

Update regarding Sara Ewing-Merrill's Resignation

Dear Friends,

I joined Sara on this journey over 3 years ago, and I have so admired her compassion, hard work, and dedication to our mission. As our Founding Director, she is forever part of Greater Portland Family Promise, and I'm grateful that she will continue to be part of our community. While it's difficult to say goodbye to her as our fearless leader, I know that she must take care of herself as she cares for so many others.

The Board of Directors (you can see who we are here) has quickly begun a hiring process to keep us fully staffed. Even in this unusual time with our temporary shelter plan, there is much to do as our guests and graduates navigate the rapid changes with staff support and the warmth and generosity of our GPFP community. We will post the position of part-time Executive Director this week. You will be able to find the posting on our website, and I encourage you to think about who might be a good candidate, and pass it along in your networks. Information on how to apply will be in the posting. If you have any questions or comments, you may reach me at amyholland7@gmail.com.

We can't wait to see you all again.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Amy Holland
President of the Board of Directors
Greater Portland Family Promise

Ministry of Education



During this COVID-19 outbreak, kid's church is still alive and well. The CE ministry has been keeping in contact in many ways. I post multiple videos every week including:

Lessons

Fun craft activities

Baking tutorials

Sing along songs

We have also sent craft kits to families who have requested it through the mail and we have reached out to our families with phone calls and keep in regular contact through email. For Easter we dropped off fun Easter bags at children's houses.

Going forward we will continue our ministry in creative and virtual ways with more videos, lessons, care packages etc. All of our videos and links can be found on our youtube channel and facebook. If you know anyone who might enjoy our virtual kid's church feel free to share our videos and keep the holy spirit alive during this isolating time.

Kristen Coleman
Executive Director
DaVinci Experience

Church Family News

Please remember the following people in your thoughts and prayers

Maureen Grubb

Ginny Hamilton

Bee O'Brien

Myron Krueger

Zack Couture

Peggy Halleck

Bill Graves

Maytha Southard

Trudy; Virginia Eddy & Jennifer Bissell's Poodle



Friends and Family of Pauline Kauffman,
who passed into eternal rest April 16th

Friends and Family of Ellen Simmonds,
who passed into eternal rest April 6th

Friends and Family of Rev. Ronald Beinema,
who passed into eternal rest March 8th

Coffee House

Friday May 8th

Virtual Coffee House with Connor Garvey

Connor Garvey is an award-winning singer-songwriter from Portland, Maine, with the amiable presence of an entertainer, the lyrical depth of a poet, and the enchantment of a storyteller.

The themes of community and living with intention run deep for Garvey, from the musical memories of his youth to his ease in developing relationships with audiences and fellow artists. He builds upon on the energy of live performance to deliver a memorable experience in a way that has led folk stalwarts Vance Gilbert and David Wilcox to proclaim the tradition of acoustic music is in good hands with Connor Garvey. He will also be our special musician this coming Sunday!



Upcoming Schedule:

- **Sunday, May 3rd:** 9:30 AM: Virtual Worship with Pastor Geoff Parker preaching ([Facebook Live](#))
- **Monday, May 4th:** 12:00 PM: Story Time with Pastor Amelia ([Facebook Live](#))
7:00 PM: Ministry of Worship & Covenant ([Zoom Meeting](#))
- **Tuesday, May 5th:** 12:00 PM-2:00 PM: Coffee with the Pastor (Facetime or phone)
- **Wednesday, May 6th:** 12:00 PM: Women's Spiritual Book Group; Inspired by Rachel Held Evens ([Zoom Meeting](#))
- **Friday, May 8th:** 6:00 PM: Virtual Coffee house with **Connor Garvey** ([Facebook Live](#))
- **Saturday, May 10th: Mother's Day,** 9:30 AM Virtual Worship ([Facebook Live](#))
- **Tuesday, May 12th:** 12:30 PM-2:00 PM: Coffee with the Pastor (Facetime or phone)

Look for an all church email at the end of the week for next Sunday's worship and church updates

Upcoming:

Sunday, May 17th: Congregator Deadline for Submissions

Monday, May 25th: Memorial Day

Covid-19 Community Support

FCC Phone Team

The FCC phone team is calling our community in order to check in with each other. Please make sure the church office has your updated information so that we can check in with you.

Grocery Ministry

People in the congregation have offered to pick up groceries and drop them off "curbside" (eg on your doorstep) for any in our community who cannot go out. If this would be helpful to you please call the Church Office (207) 781 3413 and leave a message or let Steve Hendry, Chair of our Missions Ministry, know.

Soup Ministry

If you or a loved one need a pre-made meal volunteers will make chicken noodle soup and drop it off curbside. Especially in times of stress, or when feeling under the weather, brothy and protein-full hot soup can be just the thing. Note that, for now, this soup does have chicken and gluten in it and that it should be boiled before consumption to maintain our good health directives. If a quart of chicken noodle soup would brighten your day please contact the Church Office (207) 781 3413.

Card Ministry

There are people in our congregation who practice a beautiful and tender ministry of card writing. If someone in our community would benefit from receiving a card, please let our Office Manager, Kat Roderick, know (FCCOffc@gmail.com).

Mask Ministry

Outside the church there are cloth masks in a basket, sewn by members of our community to keep you safe for essential errands and appointments. This basket is restocked ~once/ week- please take only what you and your family needs, and stay safe. If you need a mask dropped off to you please let the office know.

Prayer

Please hold one another, and yourself, in prayer during this time. We all need the peace and love of Christ, and nurturing our connection to that source is something that we can do from anywhere. If you or someone you know would like to be added to the prayer list, please let the church office know.

For more information and resources: <https://www.falmouthcongregationalchurch.org/covid19>

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