



First Congregational Church of Fall River

DECEMBER

2023

Parish Guide



First Congregational Church Parish Guide



Volume 143

No 12

December 2023

From Reverend Andy

There are lots of pieces and parts to the Advent and Christmas Season. As you read through the Parish Guide this month you'll find an event every Sunday. Whether its than Hanging of the Greens, Pictures with Santa, or the Christmas Cantata on the 24th, there are all sorts of celebrations and events to be a part of at church. And that's not to mention all the parts of Christmas and its story, wise men and shepherds and angels; its hard to tell the players without a score card.

The thing I encourage you to remember and invite you into this season is the simple truth of the season:

Jesus is not part of the story of Advent and Christmas, Advent and Christmas are part of the story of Jesus.

To that end I want to invite you on a devotional journey this Christmas. We have two opportunities. One is the personal devotional from the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Their 25 Day devotional for the 25 days of Advent will invite you to a deeper walk with daily reflections by Congregational pastors and lay people around the nation.

Second for those more technologically minded is the Hallow app on your phone or computer. The Hallow app (you can join for 90 days for free and can cancel after advent if you like) has readings from the works of C.S. Lewis read by Liam Neeson to highlight the story of Jesus in Christmas and Advent. It can be found at hallow.com and just search 'Lewis' or 'Advent'.

If you'd like to be a part of one (or both!) of these challenges, please email the office (churchoffice@fccfallriver.com) so we can check in regularly on our progress. We'll be gathering to checking in after worship each week immediately following worship to see how its going and keep each other on track.

No matter how you choose to mark this season remember:

Jesus is not part of the story of Advent and Christmas, Advent and Christmas are part of the story of Jesus.

Look for him amid the parties and the worship and the eggnog and he will be there.

Peace and Grace
Rev. Andy



Scholarship News

Gratitude from your Scholarship Committee!

On November 12th, we held our first ever Pop-Up Bake Sale as part of our 2023-2024 fundraising project. We are SO GRATEFUL to all who either provided baked goods or purchased these delicious delights of yumminess. In many cases, there were folks that did both!

We sold \$392.50 worth of goodies, with of course no expenses thanks to all of the generous donations. The items that remained were given to our friends at First Steps Inn, much appreciated by the residents there. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Also, please notice our many Thank You notes posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex from our Scholarship recipients of 2023. They are filled with gratitude as well. With heartfelt appreciation from the Scholarship Committee.

Susan Lanyon, Chairperson



Notes from the Treasurer:

Stewardship Sunday was held on November, 19, 2023. The initial Pledge Drive included 20 families/individuals that Pledged a total of \$19,204.00 for the calendar year 2024. Thanks to all that participated!

If anyone would like to submit a Pledge Card for 2024, they are available in the narthex. You can also contact the church office: leave your name with Ivette and I will mail one to you.

Ken Ward-Treasurer

“Diaconate Corner”

Holiday Greetings!

Advent Season is upon us, the most joyous time of the year. We at FCC have so much to look forward to, such joy to be found.

Our “Hanging of the Greens” will take place on the first Sunday of the month, December 3rd, one of my favorite Sundays for sure. And this year this special event will again be accompanied by our partaking of “Bread and Wine”, along with our traditional Christmas music, always so exceptional. Really looking forward to this, it’s a “must” come Sunday!

In addition, on December 3rd, we will engage in an important business meeting following our service, held in the sanctuary. We will have our typical December business of approving our 2024 budget and the nominees from our Nomination Committee, filled with some new names this year for your approval. We will also be hearing from the Bylaws Committee for your approval of six changes to the Bylaws. We haven’t had any amendment changes since 2019; we will describe for you these proposals, and the reasons behind them. One proposal does affect the Diaconate Committee, so please fulfill both your responsibility and your right as a member of FCC. It is important to us that you have a clear understanding in all of these matters, as well as a “thumbs up” from you as a member of our family. This is the beauty of being Congregational, your voice matters!

Fellowship Sunday will be exciting as well. SANTA is coming! We will be accompanied by Santa for “Cookies, Goodies, and Cocoa” He will be available for photos for any child in attendance, or for anyone “young at heart” looking for a special memory. Ho Ho Ho! This will all occur on December 17th, one week before Christmas Eve. Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, Andy is willing to provide three choices for you, to attend one, two, or all three services!

- * 1st Service- 10:00 AM- Christmas Cantata Service filled with joyous sing-alongs for all to enjoy. Great way to start your day!
- * 2nd Service- 4:00 PM- Family oriented Christmas Eve candlelight service. Lovely and fun!
- * 3rd Service- 7:00 PM- Traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. Includes big finale held outdoors, the singing by candlelight of Silent Night All arranged in a symbolic circle, praising the coming of Baby Jesus. So heartwarming!

We thank all that have already donated to our annual Diaconate Christmas project that supplies gifts for 100 children in need in our local Fall River area. For your donation of \$25.00, one child is very happy. Please remember to choose one of the cardinal ornaments from our Christmas tree in the Narthex as a **Thank You from the Deacons.** We appreciate Denise’s efforts for her shopping of these 100 gifts. Thank you, Denise!

Let us rejoice in all our blessings of the Christmas season- for a capable and loving Pastor who loves us, and loves to have fun, for a hard-working Church leadership team, and for a congregation of members who say, **Yes, I want to be a part of this.”** We are truly blessed here.

Happy Holidays to all!
Love, Peace, and Grace,
Senior Deacon, Susan Lanyon

Missions News!!



The season of Advent is at our door marked by its time of waiting... and preparation... and prayer... Missions is offering many opportunities to serve so that you may sense the Holy Spirit alive in you as you join us in our Christmas giving ministries.

We had the pleasure of hosting in our pulpit Maureen Philbin from the Fall River Deaconess Home and Katie Dawkins from Saint Vincent's Childrens Services to share thoughts about the vital work they do with the youth they serve. Imagine a child who has never experienced Christmas or their ethnic holiday, has never spoken of Jesus, or has never awoken to the thrill of a gift given especially for them. We had an inside look at the children, adolescents, and young families who typically find the holidays challenging and overwhelming only to wonder about the gift of love and hope for the season. Your Missions Committee will once again be funding the filling of Christmas stockings which will hang on the bedroom doors at Saint Vincent's on Christmas morning. In addition, we have a wish list available for you to review in the event you want to donate a little extra gift to bring wonder and excitement to a child. **That list is available in the vestibule alongside our mission’s collection baskets.**

We will also be holding our annual "PJs and Slippers" gifting event for the FR Deaconess "Hope for the Holiday" celebration. You may select a gift card funded by Missions with the initials and size of a child who can't wait to open toasty jammies on Christmas morning. You will find the cards trimming our sanctuary Christmas tree on Sunday December 3rd with the gift to be returned by December 10th. **"Many hands make light work", and we thank you for your help in making this season joyful and bright for these young people.**

Our outreach abroad rests in the hands and heart of Vicky Neville who is going on mission to the Dominican Republic in January 2024. Please see needed items below as she serves and ministers to both Dominican and Haitian peoples who are living at the margins.

- » Clothing and shoes: specifically, children sizes infant to teen
- » Small toys: McDonald's toys, small stuff toys, costume jewelry
- » Financial support: bag fees, transportation to churches to worship and to work sites to assist with projects.

Missions hopes to offer you varied opportunities to be zealous and enthusiastic in your gift giving this season, further strengthening the fulfillment of God's call. I'd like to reference our offertory hymn from Sunday's worship on November 30th - it touched my heart!

Let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Let the blind say I can see
It's what the Lord has done in me

Let the Lord work in you and let us rejoice in all our blessings as family and as church family this Christmas season and share them abundantly!

Merry Christmas and Peace Dear Friends,
Deb Vautrin
Missions Chair



Newport Navy Choristers Christmas Concert

Newport Navy Chorister presents
46th Annual

Christmas in Song

Sunday, December 3, 2023, 4:00 pm
at First Baptist Church
228 North Main Street, Fall River, MA
Donation \$10.00 at the door

First Congregational Church of Fall River has
20 free tickets
available please contact the church office at
508-672-5862 or churchoffice@fccfallriver.com,
if you would like to attend.

This year's beneficiary: The Branch Community Sup-
per at First Baptist Church

There will be collection of donations of new
sleeping bags and tents.

First Congregational
Church
of Fall River
Invites you to

M O P S

Next meeting
Wed Dec 06, 2023
@ 6:00 PM

FMI please call, text or email our group leaders:

Linda Fernandes
(508) 272-6152/lfernandes@comcast.net
Lisa Blanchette
508) 493-4616/lisa.blanchette@steward.org

Free to all

Lanchnime Organ Recital

Christmas Caroling

Friday, December 22, 2023 at Noon

Robbie LePage - Guest Musician
Judith Conrad - Music Minister

First Congregational Church

282 Rock St. Fall River

performed on our 1911 Ernest Skinner organ with 3 manuals and 1555 pipes

Free, contributions to Partners in Health accepted
for further information email: judithconrad@mindspring.com



Join us for
First Congregational Church of Fall River

Photos with *Santa*

Sunday
December 17th, 2023
11:30 am
Cookies & Hot Cocoa will be served






First Congregational Church of Fall River



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

December 24th, 2023 at 10:00 AM



FMI- 508-672-5862

282 Rock St.
Fall River MA

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule
December 24th, 2023
 First Congregational Church

10:00 AM
 Christmas Cantata Service
 Come and enjoy the sound of our magnificent Choir.

4:00 PM
 Relaxed and comfortable service
 for children and families of all ages.

7:00 PM
 Traditional Candlelight Service
 All are welcome to join in our
 celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

First Congregational Church
 282 Rock St. Fall River, MA
 (508) 672-5862



This has been a very worthwhile endeavor that our church has embraced and we need volunteers to help with the preparation as well as serving.

SOUP KITCHEN

Upcoming Dates: Dec 05, 2023 Jan 02, 2024
 Please plan to be at church by 2:00 PM

First Congregational Church

Free Yoga Classes

@ 6:00 PM

282 Rock St.
 (Please use Cherry Street door)

Every Tuesday & Thursday

Free and open to the public
 (13yrs and up)

All levels welcome!!
 Please refer to our
 Facebook page for all class
 cancellations or changes.



Please join us every
 Tue-Wed-Thu for:
11 Minutes at 11:11 am

with Rev Andy-on Facebook Live
<https://www.facebook.com/FccFallRiver>
 Also available in Spotify & Sound Cloud



Go to: <https://soundcloud.com>
 Search: for FCC Fall River

Diaconate Christmas Project

Adopt a child for this project
 for just \$25.00 until
 January 2024.

IT IS SO EASY!!!!
THE SHOPPING HAS BEEN
DONE NOW WE NEED FAMILIES
TO SIGN UP TO ADOPT
A CHILD FROM DSS
 (Department of Social Services)

Thank you!!!



First Congregational Church
 of Fall River

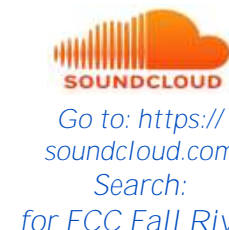
Sing-it-Yourself
Messiah

Sunday January 07, 2024
 3:00 PM

282 Rock St, Fall River MA 02864
 FMI: 508-672-5862

Have you ordered your brick to help complete our
 Memorial Walkway
 in the James Ward Memorial Garden?

Order forms are available in the Narthex or by calling/
 emailing the church office at (508) 672-5862 or
churchoffice@fccfallriver.com



https://fccfallriver.com/



Step 1: Go to <https://get.tithe.ly>
 or scan the QR-Code
 Step 2: Create an account
 Step 3: GIVE!!!



SCAN ME



Scan to listen to 11:11 &
 Sunday Worship



Congratulations and Best Wishes

We know these lists may be incomplete, so we ask that anyone whose name is not included be sure to call the Church Office with the necessary information.



Happy Anniversary!!

**2-Dec
Angela & Randy Jersky**

*I choose you everyday
& always*

First Congregational Church
Office: 21 June Street
Fall River, MA 02720



Prepared especially for

You!



If you no longer wish to receive the *Parish Guide*, please let the Church Office, know by phone (508) 672-5862 or email at churchoffice@fccfallriver.com

Moving??? Please let us know; don't forget to notify the church office...



All printed copies of this parish guide are printed on paper that is at least 30 % post-consumer content. Please recycle it when you are finished.

First Congregational Church Worship Service 10:00 AM

Telephone: (508) 672 5862
Fax: (508) 672 2341
Email Address: churchoffice@fccfallriver.com
Website Address: <http://fccfallriver.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FccFallRiver/>
SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-281358520>

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday
9:00AM - 2:00 PM

The Staff
Rev. Andrew Stinson
Senior Minister

Denise Ward-Moderator
Judith Conrad-Music Minister
Cheryl Foley-Bookkeeper
Ivette Alarcon-Church Admin.
Henry Parker-Sexton



Happy Birthday December Babies



11-Dec Holly Menard	16-Dec Ulysses Sallum
7-Dec Sandra McKenna	20-Dec Melissa Kearney
12-Dec Judy Alston	22-Dec Danielle Cabral
12-Dec Connor Jeffrey Cabral	25-Dec Jo Anne Marshall
12-Dec Tara Correira	30-Dec Susan Lanyon



*First Congregational
Church
of Fall River*

December 2023

UP COMING EVENTS!!

Office hours
Monday-Thursday
9:00 AM -2:00 PM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Choir Rehearsal 8:30 Worship Sunday @ 10:00 AM Special Meeting @ 11:15	Last Day to Order Poinsettias Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle @ 5:00 PM	Staff Meeting 10:00 AM Soup Kitchen @ 2:30PM YOGA @ 6:00 PM	UW Coat Drive 9:00-11:00 AM MOPS Meeting @ 6:00 PM REV. ANDY OOTO	YOGA @ 6:00 PM REV. ANDY OOTO	REV. ANDY OOTO	REV. ANDY OOTO
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Choir Rehearsal 8:30 Pulpit Supply Mrs. Quiana Zaets Worship Sunday @ 10:00 AM REV. ANDY OOTO	Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle @ 5:00 PM REV. ANDY OOTO	Antioch School Concert 8:00-11:00 AM Huddle Meeting 10:15 AM YOGA @ 6:00 PM	UW Coat Drive 9:00-11:00 AM Deacons Meeting 7:00 PM	YOGA @ 6:00 PM		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Choir Rehearsal 8:30 Worship Sunday @ 10:00 AM Photos with Santa @ 11:30	Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle @ 5:00 PM	Huddle Meeting 10:15 AM YOGA @ 6:00 PM	UW Coat Drive 9:00-11:00 AM	UWGFR Board Meeting @ 8:00 AM-ZOOM YOGA @ 6:00 PM	Lunch Time Organ Recital Christmas Caroling 12:00 PM Guest Musician Robbie LaPage	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve Schedule 10:00 AM Christmas Cantata Service 4:00 PM Family Oriented Service 7:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Service	Christmas Day Office Closed Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle @ 5:00 PM Ivette OOTO	Huddle Meeting 10:15 AM YOGA @ 6:00 PM Ivette OOTO	Laundry Love Volunteers needed 415 Second St. Fall River @ 9:00 AM-12:00 PM UW Coat Drive 9:00-11:00 AM Church Council @ 7:00 PM Ivette OOTO	YOGA @ 6:00 PM Ivette OOTO	Ivette OOTO	Ivette OOTO
31	01	02	03	04	05	06
Choir Rehearsal 8:30 Worship Sunday @ 10:00 AM Ivette OOTO	New Year's Day Office Closed Ivette OOTO	Ivette OOTO				