**THE CONNECTION**

**February 2022**

**“So faith, hope, love**

**abide, these three;**

**but the greatest**

**of these is**

|  |
| --- |
| **love.”****Connecting God's People Through Love** |
|  |
| February 2022 |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4Elijah's Closet10-2 | 5Elijah's Closet10-2 |
| 6 5th Sunday after EpiphanyWorship 10 AMCommunion | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11Elijah's Closet10-2 | 12Elijah's Closet10-2 |
| 13 6th Sunday after EpiphanyWorship 10 AM***Deacons Mtg. after church******in the Parlor*** | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17***Trustees Mtg.******4 PM*** | 18Elijah's Closet10-2***Prudential Board Mtg 3:30 via Zoom*** | 19Elijah's Closet10-2 |
| 20 7th Sunday after EpiphanyWorship 10 AM | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25Elijah's Closet10-2 | 26Elijah's Closet10-2 |
| 27 TransfigurationWorship 10 AM**Annual Meeting after service** | *28****Church in Society Mtg******6:30 @ Church*** |  |  |  |  |  |

**Revised Common Lectionary**

The readings used at our weekly worship service and in most Mainline Protestant Churches and in Roman Catholic Churches are from a list of assigned readings known as The New Revised Common Lectionary. In our Congregational tradition, pastors are encouraged to use the assigned readings but it is not mandatory.

I personally prefer to follow the readings and I mainly focus on the Gospel lessons for my meditation. It gives me and you a structure through which we can study and learn from the teachings of the scripture of the Word (Logos) of God in our midst.

The readings for January: (You are encouraged to read them as well)

Date 1st Reading Alternate 1st 2nd Reading Gospel

 and Psalm Reading and Psalm

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Presentation of the Lord](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327)February 2, 2022 | [Malachi 3:1-4](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327) | [Psalm 84](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327)or[Psalm 24:7-10](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327) | [Hebrews 2:14-18](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327) | [Luke 2:22-40](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=327) |
| [Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=111)February 6, 2022 | [Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=111) | [Psalm 138](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=111) | [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=111) | [Luke 5:1-11](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=111) |
| [Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=112)February 13, 2022 | [Jeremiah 17:5-10](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=112) | [Psalm 1](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=112) | [1 Corinthians 15:12-20](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=112) | [Luke 6:17-26](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=112) |
| [Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=113)February 20, 2022 | [Genesis 45:3-11, 15](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=113) | [Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=113) | [1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=113) | [Luke 6:27-38](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=113) |
| [Transfiguration Sunday](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=116)February 27, 2022(Last Sunday before Lent) | [Exodus 34:29-35](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=116) | [Psalm 99](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=116) | [2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=116) | [Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=116) |

**Deacons Dialogue**

 Thank you to all who attended the Carillon Concert and the candle light service on Christmas Eve.  Special thanks to children of the Sunday School who passed out hot chocolate packages.  The children also brought the baby Jesus to the manger during the candle light service.  Music was provided by Jamie Bryden.

Please keep each other in your prayers.  Reach out through phone calls, emails, Facebook and notes/cards.  Offer to do shopping or dropping off food. Let’s keep lifting each other up.

Stay safe.  Let a Deacon know if you need anything.  The Deacons are: Diane Meredith, Donna Thomson, Fran Robinson, Ann LePinnet, and Nadene Kopetz.

**From the Treasurer**

 The offering envelopes for 2022 are in. They are currently in the Narthex of the church. However,

 I realize that it is difficult for most to get their envelop box while the church is closed. Please

 contact me by phone or email if you would like me to deliver or mail your offering envelopes to you.

Contacts to get offering Envelopes:

Marc Evans

mrevans22@yahoo.com

(607)-510-4050

Regardless of whether you have your offering envelopes, you can still submit offerings via mail in a normal envelope. Please send them to the following address.

Address to mail offerings:

The First Congregational Church

Attn: Trustees

4 Mead St

Walton, NY 13856

 I thank you for all of your continued financial support during these strange times.

 *Marc*

**Moderator’s Message**

**Do We Still Have a Dream?**

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

*Martin Luther King*

 On Monday, January 17th, many around the United States celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in honor of the life and legacy of this Civil Rights Movement leader.

 The most quoted and recognized of all of Dr. King’s speeches and sermons is his, “I Have a Dream” speech, given in 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, after a peaceful march by hundreds of thousands of protesters. While it was not the speech that was originally prepared, it would turn out to be the one that sent him into the annals of history. Yet the tragedy of the speech is that decades later, it is still relevant for a world that MLK did not live to see. Whether or not the US has lived up to the dream of Dr. King or whether we learned anything from history, is up for debate.

 Apart from a few sound bites, do we actually remember what Dr. King’s dream was? In particular, what significance is attributed to the speech especially in the current day and age? What would King say if he was alive today and saw the disparities taking place around the world?

Dr. King was clear that this was no pie-in-the-sky dream of a far-off future, but a dream whose time had long-since come, and would be a struggle, and a disciplined collective power of resistance to make real.

 This is the challenge that MLK sets for us. To see where we stand during challenging times. Will we rise above the narrow boundaries to the broader issues facing all people? This is why the dream is still alive and needs to be kept alive to ensure that Martin Luther King’s vision is not confined to the archives of history.

 So, as we remember MLK, please pause and reflect on what he would make of a world that appears, to some, to be retreating backwards to a time that was common when he lived. And ask yourself, do we still have a dream?

**Now…. WHAT is Your Dream for Our Church?**

  Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired us to dream and I have been dreaming quite a bit lately. Most have been grounded in grief, worry and anxiety. These dreams take place either while I’m asleep or during those 3 am, lying awake times.

 We have been through so much over the past couple of years, but in the words of Dr. King, “It would be fatal for us to overlook the urgency of the moment.” You have heard me say in the past that we cannot return to business as usual and I still feel this way. Status quo, to me, is not an option.

There is work to do in the future. Yes, the church will continue to face problems, but, I have hope. I believe in our church. And I have a dream for our church.

I dream that our community sees our church for the open and affirming church we are. A welcoming church, not just a slogan or a sign.

 The average American family is facing greater challenges than ever before. I dream that we focus on creative ways to bring families into our fold. We do this by investing in our children/youth ministries, and by offering support for every member of the family.

 I believe now, more than ever, people are looking for a way to give back. They want to use their time, talents, and treasures to make a real difference. This is especially true for those born roughly between:

* 1960 – 1980 (Gen X)
* 1980 – 1985 (Gen Y)
* 1986 – 1995 (Millennials)
* 1996 + (Gen Z)

 I believe that people aren’t just looking for a friendly church; they are looking for friends. I feel Christian life isn’t just about believing; it’s also about belonging.

 I dream that no one within our community should ever have to consider suicide or hiding the truth of their sexual orientation.

 I dream of a church where the question of same gender marriage isn’t a problem. To me Christian marriage is a symbol of two people prayerfully determined to do God’s will.

 So, ask yourself: If you could be a member of a church of your dreams what would it look like? and dream with me.

Nancy

***A NOTE FROM***

***Janet***

This has been a very difficult year for me and perhaps many of you as well. During the past year my time has been limited due to both the failing health of Maureen and the COVID-19 restrictions. In September Maureen passed away. I am still devastated and grieving over her loss. She has been my companion, spiritual guide, and personal support. My ministry has been greatly affected by her loss. Yet, some activity has been accomplished:

* March 2021 we held a five week Bible Study on Zoom.
* April 2021 I was accepted by the Ecclesiastical Council for ordination. In addition we opened the sanctuary for in person/hybrid worship. I also attended the NY Conference Annual meeting on Zoom.
* May 2021 I attended the Homiletics Conference and lectures on Zoom for five days.
* June 2021 I was ordained in the United Church of Christ. I also officiated at Molly Darvil’s funeral.
* August 2021 Maureen was hospitalized and died September 2, 2021
* September 2021 We held Maureen’s Funeral Mass at our church. Later that month I attended a retreat in Massachusetts with the New England Women in Ministry.
* October 2021 I returned to church to do partial services with help from the congregation, thank you Nadene, Diane and Ann
* November-December I attended the Walton Ministerial Association, continued Zoom with Prudential Board and Committees. Held Christmas Eve Service in the sanctuary.

 I am very thankful for all your concerns and support for me while I am grieving the death of Maureen. It has been a very difficult journey and I am blessed by those who reached out to me.

 I have been wrestling with my future ministry without Maureen. I have said that on Ash Wednesday (March 2, 2022) Maureen will have been gone for six months; it is then, I will wait to make any decisions. (Many people have advised me to wait for a year to make decisions). I have been with you for eleven years and I have often said that if you could have an investment of half a million dollars, then I consider my ministry successful with you. Over the years you have worked hard to acquire this possibility. With all your work in Elijah’s Closet and the varied other means of fund raising, especially in the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, you have achieved much. I thank you for all your work and efforts! Especially Mary Carroll who stepped up to manage.

 At this point in my ministry, I have two concerns with which to challenge you:

1. What do you consider as “church”? I fear that when the pandemic is controlled, we will be and look different. Is church to you the structure or is it the ministry within the structure and what does that mean to you?
2. We have 11 children in our congregation. Where do you see the possibility of developing a spiritual future for these children and for you as their spiritual family?

Janet

 **SUNDAY SERVICES**

The Prudential Board met on Friday, January 21st and the following decisions were made:

With the Covid number continuing to be high in Delaware County, the board decided to continue virtual services through Sunday February 13. Which means we will tentatively resume face-to-face services on Sunday February 20. This closure includes Elijah’s Closet.

To view the Sunday service live;

∙ Go to uccwalton.com

∙ Click on Virtual Worship

∙ Click to watch Sunday Service @ 10 am

Sunday services are typically uploaded to the website on Monday or Tuesday after the service. Past services are also available on the Virtual Worship page of the website

Our **Annual Meeting** has been rescheduled to **Sunday February 27th**immediately following Sunday

services that day.

**ORDER YOUR FREE COVID TEST KITS**

The US Government is offering 4 free Covid test kits per residence delivered through the US Postal Service. One mailing per address.

The order site, covidtests.gov, is now open. Go to https://www.covidtests.gov/ .

Help others in our congregation or your neighborhood. Order the free kits for those who do not

have internet or computer access. Kits will be mailed directly to them.

**A New Favorite Recipe**

My Dad’s favorite cookie from his childhood was a chewy, crinkle top, molasses cookie. I have finally found a recipe that I believe would have met with his approval. I thought I would share it with you. Giving credit where credit is due, this recipe come from the allrecipies website, [www.allrecipies.com](http://www.allrecipies.com), where it is listed as “Crackle Top Molasses Cookies” by Julie. **Dana**

**Directions**

**Step 1 - P**reheat oven to 350 degrees F

**Step 2 -** In a large bowl mix oil and 1 cup of sugar. Add egg, beat well. Stir in molasses, 2 cups flour, baking soda and spices. If necessary, add more flour to make a firm dough.

**Step 3 -** Shape dough into 1 1/4 inch balls. Roll in 1/3 cup sugar. Place 3 inches apart on an ungreased baking sheet, parchment paper works as well. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until tops crack. Remove from baking sheet and cool on rack.

**Ingredients**

2/3  cup vegetable oil

1 cup white sugar

1 egg

¼ cup molasses

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground ginger

½ teaspoon ground cloves

⅓ cup white sugar

