

The Meetinghouse News

The First Congregational Church of Madison

July & August 2020

Church in a Time of COVID

If then our common life in Christ yields any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete. Be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility esteeming each other as far better than your own selves Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the concerns of others.
Philippians 2.1-3

If nothing else, COVID 19 has increased my appreciation for the writings of the Apostle Paul. He wrote Philippians while doing a spell behind bars, having offended the wrong person in the wrong place. The experience seems to have had the effect of confirming what he had already experienced of God and the Gospel—that much of the best of both is worked out in times of trial and challenge.

Paul was of that disposition that understood the no matter how demanding the times we live in might seem, there is always something at the back of it, veiled perhaps by turmoil and confusion, waiting to break out. Being faithful to promise and opportunity obscured by trial and circumstance is at the heart of the gospel.

So, if we seem to be running out of words to describes life amid COVID 19, perhaps it's time to consider a different vocabulary. 'Unprecedented' and 'challenging' still work, of course; no matter how overused they've become, they seem appropriate to a season marked by constant flux.

But from a Christian perspective, words like 'prophetic' serve equally well, suggesting as they do the possibility of something new and hopeful just waiting for an opportunity to rise.

Personally, I've been reflecting a good deal on 'gratitude' over the past few weeks. One benefit of the *Covida Loca* has been a deeper appreciation of those things I've often taken for granted, like the beauty of Green after a storm; or the solitude of early Sunday mornings. Or the skunk that seems to wander the church grounds with utter indifference to the rest of us.

Going further (and more seriously), I'm grateful for how COVID restrictions have called forth new forms and expressions of faithfulness in us at First Church. I am grateful, deeply grateful, for all the ways the members and friends of FCC Madison have offered their support to one another and to the church as well—from Lay Caring Ministries providing meals and writing cards, the Healing Prayer Team for holding so many of us in prayer, to all of the private, personal, efforts you have made on behalf of one another.

I am grateful as well for the resilience of our community; of our willingness to stick with Facebook Live worship, to those whose technical knowledge make it possible (Jeremy Clark and Charles Reese), to all of you who have filmed videos of songs, readings, reflections for service, and for everyone of you who simply show up to worship in this new way.

And I are grateful as well for your continued pledging and financial support, especially in times so deeply marked by uncertainty.

I know we long to be together again, to enjoy the simple blessing of seeing old friends and familiar faces; and so I am especially for the faithfulness you have all shown in simply hanging in there, with the trust that like all things, COVID will one day pass.

Until that time, we continue to try to be as faithful and creative as possible in our ways of worshipping together and staying connected. Given the circumstances, it doesn't seem like reconvening public worship inside the Meeting House is possible as of now. The Board has discussed this every month, always deeply conscious of questions of safety and health of all of our members and friends. We simply cannot know at this point when it will be possible for us to be together in person on Sunday mornings. So we continue to try new things, like Worship on the Lawn in July and August. We continue to explore new ways of gathering as many voices in worship as technology allows; and we are always open to suggestions and new opportunities.

We cannot know fully what will come or when; but we remain confident that in our faithfulness to one another as the Church, when the day comes, our joy will be very close to complete. In the meantime, I remain grateful for all you do, each of you, for everything you do to sustain our life together. Blessings. Todd

Worship Calendar - July & August

We invite you join us Sunday mornings at 10 am for our live worship service, streaming on Facebook. You do NOT have to be a Facebook member to join us. Simply click on this link and you will be directed to our page (www.facebook.com/fccmadison) You may also watch the service on Madison Public Access as usual, and a recording of the service will be available on our website Sunday afternoon.

July 5 **5th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching

July 12 **6th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Sarah Vetter, preaching

July 19 **7th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am **Worship on the Lawn**
Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching

July 26 **8th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Justin Zeigler, preaching

August 2 **9th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Justin Zeigler, preaching

August 9 **10th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Christine Sima, preaching

August 16 **11th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00 am **Worship on the Lawn**
Christine Sima, preaching

August 23 **12th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching

August 30 **13th Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00am Facebook Live
Rev. Sarah Vetter, preaching

We have a new website design!

Many thanks to Pamela Hutchinson Brown for all her amazing work on our website. Check it out at fccmadison.org
(It is a work in progress so some pages are not yet completed.)

Weekly Ways to Connect

Sundays — **10 am Worship** on Facebook Live

www.facebook.com/fccmadison

10:45 am (or right after worship) Zoom Coffee Hour

Pour a cup of coffee and join us to check in and say hello! The link is posted in Tuesday Newsday and on the Facebook page.

Tuesdays— **8:30-9:30 am Men's Group** on Zoom

All men are welcome. Discussion this month is centered on the book of Acts. Email colin@reevefamilyct.com for the link.

Wednesdays— **10 am Connection: A Ministry for Motherhood** on

Zoom. *Join in for candid conversations, advice, laughter and prayers as we strive to navigate our daily lives in a more meaningful way. Contact sarah.stoever@gmail.com for the link.*

5 pm Youth "Houseparty" on the Houseparty app

Email justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com to get connected.



Worship on the Lawn Sundays, July 19 & August 16 10 am

It has been a long time since we have been together and the warm weather upon us, we thought it would be a good opportunity to gather in person, outside on the Church Lawn for our Sunday worship on July 19th and August 16th.

Social distancing is still required and you need to wear a mask. We can provide them, if you forget yours.

You are welcome to bring breakfast or brunch, set out a blanket on the grass or bring your own chairs. You are also welcome to worship from your cars (Park on Meetinghouse Lane facing towards the doors of the Chapel entrance).

To assure the safety of everyone, we do ask that you spread out as much as possible, and limit greetings to waves and hellos.

We look forward to the joy of being together with you. Until then, blessings to you all and continued good health.

We would love to include your voice in worship!

Would you like to read scripture? Offer special music? Create a Grace and Gratitude video to share? It is fairly easy to capture a video of yourself and send it in for us to weave into our online worship services. Reach out to justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com (while Todd and Sarah are away) or nbayreuther@fccmadison.org (with music).

Summer Vacation

Revs. Todd and Sarah will be taking time off during the last week of July and the first two weeks of August. During that time, Rev. Justin Zeigler will be providing pastoral care coverage. Justin and Christine Sima will be leading worship and preaching on July 26, August 2, 9, and 16.

Blessings on our High School Graduates!



Lucy
Brown



Laurel
Bennett



Ella
Dreier



Harrison
Sweet



Jamie
Watkins



Luke
Watkins

Update on David, Rosita and Gracia

We are delighted to report that David, Rosita and Gracia are doing very well. Gracia is beginning to walk and has a lot to say. They continue to live here in Madison during the time of quarantine, and we are deeply indebted to all those who are supporting them: *Alison & Adam Hubley, Susanne & Richard Kos, Judy Hawke, Kristen Skonieczny, Cynthia Nethercut, Burt Rose, Karin Peterson, Colin & Marie Reeve, Marcia Nye, Lisa Brown, Christine Sima & Jeremy Clark, Julie & Justin Belcher, Carol Robbins, Barbara McCormack, Vicki Littell, Helen Glaser-Stroebel, Marla Gitterman & Dan Sherman, Ross & Linda Tutschulte, Catriona Hoffman, Susan Cassidy, Vanessa Ballantine, Joe & Joan Marrone, Nancy Cross, Bruce Cross, Tina Bascom, Ann Archer and Doreen Elia.*



It takes a village.

In addition, we received some very good news a short time ago about their legal status. As probationary residents of the US, David and his family will have to appear in Federal immigration court to present their case for formal asylum-seeking status. Their chances of success are increased considerably if they have legal counsel. And we were overjoyed to hear that the University of Connecticut Law School's Asylum & Human Rights Law Clinic has accepted them as clients on the pro bono basis. The AHRLC assigns 1-2 law students to research their case and prepare an extensive dossier to present to the immigration court. They will dedicate between 30 and 40 hours per week at no cost, in an effort to ensure that David and his family have the best opportunity for receiving asylum. We hope that this will give David, Rosita and Gracia the best possible chance to take another step to becoming permanent residents of the United States.

The Music Corner

Contact Nathan for more info: 203-245-2739, ext. 14; or nbayreuther@fccmadison.org.

Thanks to those who participated in the video for the hymn "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty!" If you missed it, go to the church's Facebook page and watch the July 12th video of the service—it comes in about four minutes from the very end. If you missed taking part, there will be more chances coming up to sing to a familiar hymn. Stay tuned for more information as we get into August.

Do you play an instrument or sing? We would love to include you in our Sunday worship service. There are several ways you can do it:

1. Record yourself singing or playing by yourself and send the video to me.
2. Need a pianist? Let me know what song you'd like to sing, and I'll record an accompaniment that you can sing along to and record yourself.
3. Don't have anything that can record yourself, or you're nervous about doing it? Call me to set up a time to come to the Church House Chapel so I can record you with my own equipment.

I hope to hear from you—it is very easy to share your music with the rest of the congregation, even in this difficult time. I'll help you every step of the way!



The First Congregational Church of Madison

26 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443
Overlooking the Green

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Change
Service
Requested

The Meetinghouse News July & August 2020

This newsletter is available on our website and via email. If you would prefer an electronic version to a paper copy, please let the office know.

Mainoffice
@fccmadison.org

Sunday Worship

10:00 a.m.

Join our livestream worship on Facebook.com/fccmadison

Or watch it later in the day from our website fccmadison.org

Our Worship Service is broadcast on Madison Access TV Channel 18, Sunday at 12:00pm and 10:00pm, check their listings.



The Rev. Todd C. Vetter
Senior Minister

The Rev. Sarah E. Vetter
Minister of Community Life

Phone: 203-245-2739
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Website: www.fccmadison.org
Facebook: fccmadison
Church Office Hours:
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday - Friday



GO.BE.LOVE.

