



The Spire

A publication of the Original Congregational Church

March 2022

Inside this issue:

Activities/Calendar	2
Outreach	3
Music / Yard Sale	4
Open & Affirming	5
Pastors Page	6

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Lent is here. Please join us for a special worship service on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary at the OCC. We will offer music, prayers, and ashes to observe the beginning of the season of Lent.

While not a long service, this invites us to be intentional about focusing on our faithfulness as we journey towards Easter. Lent is a time to be thoughtful about our relationship with God as we pray, read, give up food items, change behaviors and attitudes, and participate in humble acts of service. Let us return to the Lord!

CHURCH LIFE CONVERSATION “A Culture of Welcome”

As we move forward into 2022, and anticipate more activity after these last two years of caution due to the global pandemic we are asking questions like “What would make folks feel comfortable to return to in-person church activities?” And looking outward, “What needs and ministries could we add to reach out, serve, and attract new people to the OCC?” The next gathering for this conversation is on Wednesday March 9, 2022 at 7:00pm. As we seek to support our vision of building an inclusive church with a vibrant welcoming ministry, we look forward to seeing both long time and new friends enjoying OCC life together. Come and be part of our “extravagant welcome” as we like to say in the United Church of Christ! If you have any contributions please be sure to contact Pastor Ken, Gordon Wetmore, Bob Boissy, Charlotte Capone and Trevor Knott. Thank You

TEN THINGS TO GIVE UP FOR LENT

While it is common to give up sweets for Lent here are a few other suggestions.

- | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|------------------------|
| 6 | Clutter | Screen Time | Social Media |
| | Worrying | Complaining | Stepping on the Scale |
| | Believing the Bible Is Too Hard to Read | | Being Too Busy to Pray |
| | Driving (using less fossil fuel as you can) | | |
| | Give Up Giving Up Stuff for Lent thereby Living Life to the Fullest! | | |

RANDOM DEEP THOUGHTS for Observing Lent

Don't give things up to the point of realizing great self-satisfaction. If the devil is in the details shall we turn from being so detail-oriented? Reimagine the greatest obstacles in life as giant stepping-stones. Negate the negative in your thinking. There is no such thing as “Self-Help” there is only “Help” from others and above.





The Ladies Breakfast Club, is planning to resume, and meets the 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month, and 5th when there is, 9:30am at the Village Griddle in Plainville. Contact Emmie Foster or Sue Schwarm if you plan to attend. **We will resume March 10th!**

The Kitchen Elves, meet the first Wednesday of each month to prepare and deliver meals to members in need. Preparers and drivers are always welcome. **Elves have resumed for March.**

Chancel Choir is rehearsing .
Bells are rehearsing.
Rehearsal for Chancel Choir is Thursday at 7:30pm.
Rehearsal for Bells is Monday at 7:15 pm.

Join Pastor Ken and friends for Bible Study by Zoom, Tuesday mornings at 10am See our web site and Facebook page as well until further notice .

Lunch Bunch meets at noon in Fellowship hall the 3rd Wednesday of each month for a light lunch of soup, sandwich, desserts and beverages. There's always an element of fun with friends. **Lunch Bunch is on hold for March... Watch for updates soon!**

All are welcome!

The SPIRE is available on our website!!

Go to the OCC page at www.occhurch.net.

Highlight Dates

- March 02 7pm Ash Wednesday Service
- March 13 10am Music Sunday
- March 27 Bells Perform

“Todays flower’s are dedicated”

Any given Sunday you can dedicate the altar flowers to anyone in your life. Notify the office of your chosen day and you can make a donation to the Flower Fund, or bring in an arrangement yourself. For further infor-

*** Look for announcements about Coffee Hour and Sunday School in each weekly bulletin.**

If mation contact Donna in the office.

NEWCOMERS WELCOME

If you would like to become a member of our church, which affirms your regular participation in our worship life and support of our work and service to the wider community, please be sure to contact Pastor Ken or Donna in the office at anytime. We have a few families and individuals who are interested in being a part of our next service of Reception of New Members. See details at the worship hour and in the worship bulletin. We look forward to growing along with you in your spirit journey!



you need to contact the office to submit anything for the bulletin or Spire, please e-mail us at of-

office@occhurch.net or call the office at 508-384-3110. Every effort is made to accommodate your needs.

Facebook is used for information purposes. Messages are checked randomly and it is not a recommended way to connect for anything important.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Local Afghan Relief Effort in Worcester

Keeping up with our state’s humanitarian response to the Afghan Refugee crisis, we have learned the organization WARM (Welcoming Alliance for Refugee Ministry) of Worcester (info@warmwelcoming.org) is hard at work making a huge difference for locally relocated Afghan families. Partnering with Hope for Worcester and Living Word Church they have seized the opportunity to provide love and care through their work efforts.

On Saturday, February 5th, they prepared apartments for two Afghan families. Meeting together they cleaned, moved furniture and decorated the living spaces. On Wednesday the 9th, donations of food and clothing were collected at the Living Word Church, in hopes of meeting as many needs as possible of resettling refugees. We were able to quickly gather warm wear on short notice for Drop Off on the 9th. A big thank you for such a quick response!

FOOD ITEMS NEEDED

- Salt
- Yeast
- Sugar
- All-purpose flour
- Tuna in the can
- Kidney beans
- Chick peas
- Vegetable oil
- Green/black tea
- Basmati rice



- Black pepper
- Garam masala
- Turmeric
- Cardamom
- Cumin
- Dried fruits and nuts
- Candies (candied almonds or small hard candies)



CLOTHING ITEMS NEEDED



- High quality used or new:
- Winter coats
 - Boots
 - Shoes
 - Clothes



We need items for both youth and adults, men and women!



In order to prepare for another Drive Off date in the future, we would like to begin collections now. A box or two will be placed in the Fellowship Hall designating specific items needed for the cultural preferences of Afghan families. Please consider adding to this collection over the next weeks.

ZIMBABWE SUPPORT

Often, we can be frustrated that we don’t always see the effect of donations made to worthy causes. We are so fortunate that our support of the Daisy Dube Children’s Home in Zimbabwe is visible. This is possible because of our connection with Connie Littlefield and her amazing work in Zimbabwe. If you are interested in reading a summary of work accomplished, pick up a copy of her report on the table in the church library

Music in March

March 2

Ash Wednesday Service at 7pm in the Sanctuary

March 6

Music Sunday featuring strings.

March 27

Bells Perform



SPRING YARD SALE

2022 Spring Yard Sale...The 2022 spring yard sale is scheduled to be held on May 21st, 2022, from 8 am to noon. Donations may be dropped off in the Vestry. Call Mike Foster if you need assistance. As usual, **do not bring any clothes, books** that aren't in pristine condition, **TVs, computers, large stereos, or large furniture.**

To reach us by e-mail: office@occhurch.net Pastor Ken Landin: revkenlandin@gmail.com
508-384-3110

ONA UPDATE RE: OPEN FORUM III, TBA

At December's Open Forum II, concern was expressed about how the OCC declaring itself an *Open and Affirming* church would affect its future. In response to that concern, the ONA Team is planning Open Forum III to be held when the current Covid spike has subsided and as many people as possible will be able to attend. With the understanding that no two churches are identical, we have invited Charlie Oliver of Second Congregational Church in Attleboro to share with us what his church experienced after it joined the ONA Coalition some years ago. Charlie was one of the leaders of their ONA Team and also has served as Moderator of his church. If time permits, after Charlie has spoken and answered questions, there will be an open discussion of ONA matters. Stay tuned (and safe) for a Save the Date!

Below is the "Covenant and Welcoming Statement" as presented by the Open and Affirming Task Team. We hope that this statement makes clear that the mission of ONA is to proclaim publicly an unqualified welcome to *all* people at the OCC. This statement expresses what is at the very heart and core of the ONA movement. Try reading it aloud to yourself – it is a very powerful statement! Any questions or comments? Please see Leesa Burke, Charlotte Capone, Jenn Chace, Jane Claffey, Ned Ligon, Joan Mello, or Walter Spencer.

Welcome to The Original Congregational Church in Wrentham! Because we believe all people are created in God's image and thus blessed and loved equally by God, and because love is the unifying and strengthening force of our Christian faith, we the members of The Original Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, hereby declare ourselves an Open and Affirming Christian community, expressing Jesus' inclusive embrace of all people.

We welcome all who have no church home, seek strength, and want to follow the teachings of Jesus.

We welcome believers and non-believers, doubters and questioners, and questioning believers.

We welcome new visitors and old friends.

We welcome grandparents, mothers, fathers and children.

We welcome single and partnered people.

We welcome people of all ages, colors, cultures, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

Here at The Original Congregational Church, Wrentham, we believe that **whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.**

Portions adapted from Bethany Church, Foxboro, MA, and United Church, Walpole, MA

Return to the Lord

Dear Friends in Faith,
Grace and Peace to you!

Soon to enter “Meteorological Spring” in March, we also enter into the season of Lent in the church. Lent refers to the “lengthening” of the days as we experience at this time of the year in the northern hemisphere. Today we might reach near 70⁰ temperatures and then plunge right back into snowstorm weather. This is the time of the year that winter and spring dance with ferocity and delight with each new day.



Lent is determined as the 40 days before Easter, not including Sundays as they always remain a Feast Day of the Resurrection. In the Gospels we see Jesus making his way through the desert wilderness alone for forty days baring his soul to the temptations of faithlessness just as his body comes under great deprivation and stress. Over the centuries, Christians have observed Lent by giving up certain foods, often red meat or sweets, as a reminder that we cannot always get what we want.

Lent is about remembering our basic mortality as a universal condition of life. The shortness of our lifespan on earth energizes the meaning of Christ’s Resurrection on Easter Sunday. For the Lord shows us death does not have the last word, but that life is continually being transformed into something entirely new. As far back as the sixth century in Gaul, the church began observing Ash Wednesday as the beginning of Lent.

The clergy would take the dried branches from last year’s Palm Sunday Procession, burn them, and mix the ashes with oil to apply the sign of the cross on believer’s foreheads. This was an outward sign of our acknowledgment of our mortality and of the need to conduct ourselves with great repentance in our earthly journey, opening the heart and soul to receive the heavenly gifts that lead towards a faithful and Godly life.

While we used to identify such a sensate ritual as Orthodox or Roman Catholic, these distinctions have largely faded away, and all who follow Christ may observe a Holy Lent, entering into this special time, beginning with the Ash Wednesday Service. This year we will offer an Ash Wednesday Service for all those who would like to join us in this solemn and sacred worship service marking our focus on our faithfulness.

In the Book of Joel 2:12 we hear the Lord’s invitation, “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” We return to the Lord in prayer and humble acts of service to the poor, not through giant displays of sacrifice. Joel encourages us by saying we return to the Lord for God is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. “God relents over disaster.” What better way to emerge from a global pandemic than to return to the Lord with an intentional mindfulness to live not just a better healthier life, but a transformed one?

May the Spirit be with you and show you the way forward from here!

Pastor Ken

1 East Street
P.O. Box 657
Wrentham, MA
02093

We're on the web
www.
occhurch.net

