

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IS GATHERED

All students are invited to gather for Sunday School activities.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Notices for the program, ministries and people of the church are shared.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION *sing bold verses, Hymn No. 374*

We take time to pray in word, song and silence

Friends in faith, we seek to live in harmony with the Lord. God has the power to transform us from our earthly ways into our heavenly ways of being. Let us draw near to the Lord in our confessional prayers this morning.

**Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.**

Creator God, you made the world to be holy. We confess that we often fail to see the beauty of your presence in our lives. You call us to serve you and each other with love. We confess we have often served our own needs and followed our own desires. Make us stronger travel companions, that we may help others with their heavy burdens.

**We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road;
We are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load.**

Redeemer God, you hold us in the light of love. We confess we have given in to our fears and hide in the shadows of hesitation. We have withheld our hand of friendship. We speak words that do not bring peace. Our compassion has often been limited by the many demands upon our lives. Let us enter the joys and sorrows of others to assist them in their journeys to you.

**I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.**

Sustainer God, you carry both love and agony in your body and in your heart. We too have known times of suffering. We confess that we do not always live our lives in imitation of your ways. We have turned from your example of service and your instruction to be with others as we would have them be towards us. Make your words our words, our acts of love to be filled with your grace.

**I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: Dearly beloved of God, the Lord is our light. God's saving grace is greater than any of our fears. When we seek the Lord, we take shelter in the strength of faith. When we wait for the Lord, we may behold the beauty of God's Creation. Through prayer, our sacrifices are heard. By Grace, are sins are forgiven. In faith, our souls are set high above in God's heavenly praise.

People: Amen.

*HYMN No. 515

This is My Song (All verses)

RESPONSIVE READING *from Psalm 27*

Leader: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

People: Whom shall I fear?

Leader: The Lord is the stronghold of my life.

People: Of whom shall I be afraid?

Leader: Thou evil doers assail me and devour me,

People: They shall stumble and fall.

Leader: Though an army encamp against me,

People: My heart shall not fear.

Leader: Though war rise up against me,

People: Yet I will be confident.

Leader: God will shelter me in the day of trouble.

People: I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy.

Leader: Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries.

People: They breath out violence and false witness.

Leader: I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord,

People: In the land of the living.

Leader: Wait for the Lord and be strong!

People: Let your heart take courage and wait for the Lord!

*ACT OF PRAISE No. 36

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 15:1-6 "God's Promise to Abraham"

ANTHEM

"I Choose Love"

Mark A. Miller

Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 13:31-35 "As a Hen Gathers her Brood"

SERMON "Counting Stars"

*HYMN No. 185

In the Cross of Christ I Glory (Vs. 2,3,4)

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: Christ is with us.

People: Christ is in our midst.

Leader: Let us pray.

SILENT PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

IN OUR PRAYERS...

Lynnete Beaudro, for prayers of safety during her deployment.

Muriel Beresford, for prayers of strength and health.

Aida Catlow, for prayers of recuperation, healing and well-being.

Cheryl Rowe, for continued strength and a happy spirit.

Peg Mercier, for prayers peace and healing.

Jean Dusty, for a speedy recovery.

The family of Rob Crossley, for the birth of Two new Grandchildren: Brody, born 3/3/2022 7lbs 15oz to daughter Helen and husband Greg Dicomitis, and Raymond, born 2/17/2022 to son Rich Crossley and Erica.

Today's Flowers are Dedicated to the Glory of God

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S LITURGISTS: **Leesa Burke**

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S USHERS: **Steve Becker, Heather Castello, Joan Mello, and Judy O'Neill.**

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S COUNTERS: **Bob Boissy and Mike Foster**

LUNCH BUNCH WILL BE HELD this Wednesday, March 16th at noon n Fellowship Hall. Please Join us for soup, sandwiches, desserts, coffee and tea... and don't miss Pastor Ken's trivia!

OUTREACH...HELPING THE PEOPLE of THE UKRAINIAN

The crisis in Ukraine, as we watch citizens painfully deciding to remain or flee, is distressing to witness. We had just established a hands-on connection to provide support to the Afghan people forced to abandon their homeland. Since our Outreach meeting this past Sunday, we are searching and researching for the most effective route for sending contributions for Ukrainian relief.

Once again, organizations in Worcester have put support networks in place for Afghan refugees as they arrive in central Massachusetts. W.A.R.M. (Welcoming Alliance for Refugee Ministry)

<https://www.warmwelcoming.org> and The Living Word Church of Worcester are actively providing assistance in so many diverse ways. They provide temporary housing, food and clothing donations, education opportunities equipping them as they adjust to a new culture and community. Our church has already delivered a warm clothing donation, built a working connection and continue to maintain donation boxes in Fellowship Hall, for ongoing contributions. We will adjust our requests as new needs are identified.

As we identify the appropriate recipient for a Ukrainian donation, anyone wanting to contribute can write a check to Original Congregational Church, designating it "The Ukraine Fund". We are considering International Rescue Committee, <https://www.rescue.org>, a well-established disaster relief organization.

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**

OUTREACH

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.

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

THE ORIGINAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Sextons: Bob & Sandy Cummings Office Administrator: Donna Charbatji

Bells Director: Martha Goodman