

First Congregational Church Weekly Newsletter

East Longmeadow, MA

April 23, 2025

FROM YOUR PASTOR

"He is not here. He is risen!"

Those few words form the very heart of our faith. Without the empty tomb, we would be lost in the mire and mess of the world. Without the substantiation of the empty tomb, Jesus would be relegated to the status of just another great teacher, or prophet, not the Messiah and Savior that we know.

Even death could not hold Him, and the resurrection opened the door to eternal life for all who call upon His name. That's what makes Easter the great celebration of new life, second chances and victory over all that might appear at first to be defeat. So... hear it loud and clear... He is no longer in the tomb! He is Risen!

But there are other parts of the Easter story that also have profound implications for us. The angel said, "Do not be afraid". The body was gone. But this was not the end. It was just the beginning. Fear can either cause us to run and hide, or to be bold in facing the unknown and the uncertain. The words to the wonderful Easter hymn ring out in my mind this morning... "Because He Lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He Lives, all fear is gone." Those that heard the angel that first Easter morning certainly faced fear, confusion, and uncertainty. But they acted faithfully. What about us? Are we able to act faithfully, even when we're afraid?

The women that came to the tomb found it to be empty, and were confronted by an angel. In the story, we hear the angel tell them to "Go and tell". Those words were directed first to the women, then to the early disciples, and to each of us today. If we truly believe the Easter story, how can we not shout that message from every rooftop, and share it with everyone we know and love? Hopefully, this Easter season, we will rethink this call to "Go and Tell," and make it a more important part of our lives.

How are you responding to the Easter story??

With great rejoicing...!

Denise

SUNDAY WORSHIP in the sanctuary or live stream at any of the following locations:

- On our church website: www.churchontherotary.org/sermon
- On our church YouTube page: www.youtube.com/@churchontherotary/live
- On our church Facebook page: www.facebook.com/churchontherotary

SPRING PLANT SALE



It's that time again! Time to take out those shovels and start to dig plants, shrubs, trees, whatever you could contribute to the spring plant sale which will be held on Mother's Day weekend, Saturday, May 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We will also be having a great bake sale, with free coffee.

Any garden-related items would be appreciated for our garden-related tag sale (pots, vases, gardening books, shovels, statuary, bird houses and the like). So please see what items that you could donate.

Lunch will be available for sale. Bring your appetite!

You will hear more from those who are heading baked goods, tag sale items, etc. in the coming weeks. The sale is coming fast and we have to pray for exceptional weather. Either way, rain or shine, it will go on!

Thanks so much in advance for your participation,
The Spring Plant Sale committee

IT'S TIME TO SPRING CLEAN

We can't have a tag sale without stuff to sell. Please look around your garage, your shed, your basement, your closets(?) and donate any outside, garden, bird related items you no longer want and please leave on the stage in Fellowship Hall on or after this Sunday April 27. We need STUFF! Thanks so much. Marilyn

Springfield YWCA - 5th largest in the country

Last year Elizabeth Dineen (the **Y** CEO) spoke at our church. She explained that the **Y** exists to fulfill its mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. The **Y** provides safe places for women and children in crisis. It provides shelter, support services, and tools for self-sufficiency for women and girls in our community. It operates an 11-acre campus in Springfield that provides shelter to battered women and their children in a modern facility with state of the art computerized security.

When women and their children arrive having fled a dangerous situation in their homes, they arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The **Y** provides them with a basket of necessary toiletries. We can help; we can offer our support. Please read carefully and donate any of the following items:

Full size and NEW

- soap
- body wash
- body moisturizer
- mouthwash
- toothbrushes and paste
- ***shampoo and conditioner, etc. from brands:
*****Shea Moisture, Pattern Beauty, Mielle, Camille Rose, Curl Mix, CURLS, The Doux, Miss Jessie's*****
- tampons, and feminine napkins
- baby wipes
- coloring books and crayons
- GENTLY USED books

Once again, we can really help out these families in crisis. Please leave your donations in the breezeway until June 2. **Thank you** for your continued support of this truly life-saving agency right in our own back yard.
Mission and Outreach

PRAYER CONCERNS

from Sunday April 20

- for Alice who is back home after a fall
- for the Thomas' mother is in hospice.
- prayers of thanksgiving for Julius' cousin, that her health is moving in a better direction.



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