



# First United Methodist Church of Warren & Bristol

**BEACON**  
**MARCH/APRIL 2021 EDITION**



Easter 2021

1. One Easter when I was a teenager it snowed. My lasting memory of that Easter is daffodils in the snow. The incongruity of bright yellow blossoms, green stems and leaves standing tall amidst the snow is still a vivid mental snapshot that I carry.

For a while, only the incongruity caught my imagination. Then, it slowly dawned on me. The snow did not kill the daffodils! The power of spring, the symbol of resurrection for Christians in the northern hemisphere, could not be killed by the cold. I wasn't surprised that snow could not hurt the bulbs; they were protected by the soil. I wasn't even surprised that snow could not hurt the shoots just breaking forth; they seemed hardy. **But the flower was also victorious over the snow and cold.**

2. As we contemplate once again the amazing Easter story of God's love and resurrection life, let the words of the following hymn ring in our hearts:

Hymn of Promise (words and music by Natalie Sleuth)

*In the bulb, there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.  
There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;  
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future, what it holds, a mystery,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.  
In our end is our beginning, in our time, infinity;  
in our doubt, there is believing; in our life, eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,  
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

3. The week of March 19, 2012 - 84 degrees! An early Spring. No, an early Summer! People smile more, stop to talk to neighbors again, think of plantings and new life. To steal a phrase - Life is good!

Then on the weekend - cooler weather. More seasonable, but less enjoyable.

And then! The howling Northwest wind. A hard freeze. 24 degrees. The wind chill factor close to zero. Where did Spring go?

Palm Sunday- the entrance into Jerusalem - the warmth of spring - new life - the Messiah arrives - the yoke of Rome will be thrown off - the grandeur of King David's Israel will be restored - the lame will walk, the blind see, oppression would end. Life is good.

Next, the quiet celebration of an April evening - the great observance of Passover.

And then the chill of Jesus' words, "One of you will betray me." "Others of you will deny me." All will fade away like sheep without a shepherd.

Then the bitter blast of Good Friday - a brutal execution - a criminal's death on a rough cross.

Did the disciples and Jesus' followers believe that the winter of evil would have the last word? Did they fear that all their hopes and dreams of new life in the Messiah's kingdom would prove false?

A hard freeze in March or even April cannot hold back spring and new life. Even a howling March blizzard cannot stop spring and new life.

On Easter morning, the final answer belonged to God - oppression, evil, violence, and hatred cannot hold back the Kingdom of God.

## ***Christ Is Risen!***

Grace and Peace,  
Neil "Sandy" Sweet, Jr.  
Member, Ministry Team First UMC of Warren/Bristol



The First United Methodist Church of Warren/Bristol (25 Church Street) invites everyone to view our April 4, 2021 Virtual Easter Resurrection Service on our website (<http://umcwarrenbristol.org/>) and Facebook page (The First United Methodist Church of Warren and Bristol). We will be posting a service that has been prerecorded in our sanctuary with our five ministry team members and music team. This is a family friendly service for all ages, and though we are not in-person yet for worship, you will be sure to find this online service to be both inspiring and meaningful. Watch at your leisure at a time that works for you. Bulletins and service links are also sent to our church family via email. If you would like to be added to our mass emailing list, please notify Regina. Don't have email? Let us know and we be happy to send you our weekly bulletins and sermons via standard mail. We long to stay connected, and despite this pandemic, we strive to bring you the Good News. Have a Blessed Easter!

# EASTER SUNDAY



We are planning to be back in-person for worship in our sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday (May 23, 2021). As you can see in the left photo, we have plenty of room to safely socially distance. At that time we will also be live streaming to Facebook and YouTube. Many thanks to Julie Blount and Rick Norman for all their work with technology to ensure that everyone can worship with us, no matter where they are. If you are also willing to learn how to run our new equipment and be on the tech team on Sunday mornings, please contact Julie.



Spring has sprung at First UMC! Spend some time on our garden bench and enjoy some quiet moments with God while appreciating the wonders of nature. Many thanks to Sandy Ayers, who has spent countless hours over the years pruning, planting, and weeding. God bless you, Sandy! If you see her working outside, be sure to wave hello!





Thank you!

A phenomenal team, spearheaded by Trustee Chair Julie Blount, has updated one of our restrooms to make it handicapped accessible. A job well done to:

- John Ryan for the demo work
- Carpenter Michael Kurkoski
- Electrician Dave Loren
- Barrington Plumbing for installing the sink and toilet
- Wayne Proulx for installing the tile floor (a gift of labor to First UMC: Thank you, Wayne!)
- Julie Blount for painting (another gift to First UMC: Thank you, Julie!), selecting materials, and orchestrating this remodeling endeavor

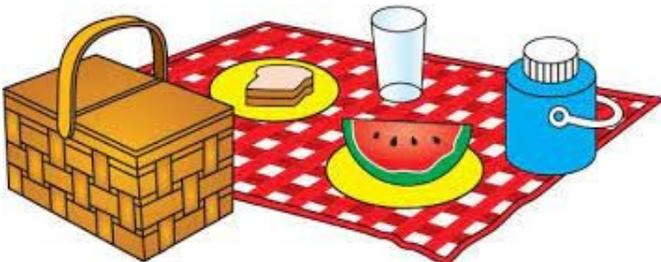
*The bathroom looks wonderful! God bless you!*



## Save the Date:

This year's annual worship service & picnic at Colt State Park will be held on July 25, 2021. This is always a fun event in which the church gathers to worship at "Chapel by the Sea" at 10:00 a.m. followed by a picnic on the adjacent grounds. It is fun for all ages and is an enjoyable way to spend the day. Come and appreciate the beauty of nature in the company of our loving church family. Many, many, many fond memories have been made in numerous years we have been hosting this outdoor service. Be thinking of who you

would like to invite this year and of other ways we can encourage others who happen to be visiting Colt State Park for the day to join us for worship. We are always looking for creative ways to reach out and connect, and this annual event at Colt State is a fantastic opportunity for invitation.





# SPRING 2021 LAY SERVANT 'ZOOM' ACADEMY

Seacoast District  
Lay Ministry contacts: Stephanie Cyr  
Ruth Koha James (860) 376-9760  
508-677-7422 Cyrbrass@gmail.com  
Seacoast.layservantmin@gmail.com

Register at <https://www.neumc.org/lay-servant-SC>

For the Spring Zoom Academy there will be a \$15.00 registration fee and you will order your own book either through Amazon or Cokesbury.

Please go to the following website for course descriptions:  
[https://www.beadisciple.com/wp-content/uploads/LayServant2020\\_Final\\_web.pdf](https://www.beadisciple.com/wp-content/uploads/LayServant2020_Final_web.pdf)

### Basic Lay Servant Course

Lay Servant Ministries Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson Participant's Book • DR626 • 978-0-88177-626-3

Led by Charlene Fiore, Certified Lay Speaker

- Monday Evenings 6-8:30 pm  
o July 5 July 12 July 19 July 26

Basic Lay Servant Course requires Pastor recommendation.

## ADVANCED CLASSES BEING OFFERED

From Pew to Pulpit - A Beginner's Guide to Preaching by Clifton F. Guthrie  
Led by Rev. Neil "Sandy" Sweet.

- Sunday nights - 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
o April 11, 18, 25; May 2, 9

Dancing With Words, Storytelling as Legacy, Culture, and Faith by Ray Buckley

Led by Huxley Conklin, Certified Lay Speaker

- Thursday Nights - 6:30-8:30 pm  
o April 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6

Discover Your Spiritual Gifts - William J. Carter □  
Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts (online)

Led by Cathy McNeil, CLM

- Saturday May 1: 9-1 4hrs
- Monday May 3: 6:30-8:30pm 2hrs
- Tuesday May 4: 6:30-8:30pm 2hrs
- Wednesday May 5: 6:30-8:30pm 2hrs

Life Together in the United Methodist Connection - Beth Galbreath

Led by Heidi Fiore, Certified Lay Servant and Second Year M.Div.

- Sundays 6-8pm  
June 13 June 20 June 27 July 11 July 18

### Transforming Evangelism

Led by Pastor Ginny Doran

Tuesday nights from 6:30 to 8:30 from April 6 through May 4.

The Conference Board of Laity is pleased to invite all laypersons in the New England Annual Conference to enter the Laity Address Challenge to have an opportunity to give the Laity Address at the 2021 Annual Conference.

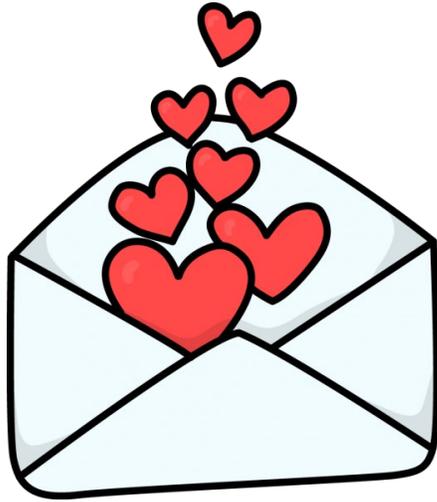
The 2021 Annual Conference will be held online June 10-12. The Laity Address will be pre-recorded. The specific date/time of the Laity Address broadcast has not been set.

Our Annual Conference theme is "Building Beloved Community." Our guiding scripture Psalm 137:4 NIV: "How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?" The address must use those as its theme.

The address should be 15-20 minutes long. Entrants must submit a written copy of their entire proposed address along with a video of themselves delivering the first five minutes of the address. **The deadline to submit your proposed address and video is May 7, 2021.**

For more information on how to submit your entry or to ask any questions about entering the challenge, please email Co-Associate Conference Lay Leader Joan Farrar at [cw.dll.acll@gmail.com](mailto:cw.dll.acll@gmail.com) or call 978.582.4670.





## *A Letter from Rev. Parker:*

Since I'm in uncharted waters, I am really surprised and overjoyed by anything done to show me love and compassion. I was totally surprised and overwhelmed by the more than 75 cards, notes, and letters received over Christmastide from both my two churches. Each was carefully done and contained a note of loving remembrance and blessed wishes. Out of all the fifteen churches I have served (and the 20 additional churches that I substituted or served in four staves as preach/organist at the beginning of my retirement while we were living in Newburyport, Mass from 2002-2004), our two churches, BUMC and FUMC are the most thoughtful and considerate, the most loving and giving and the friendliest and most generous of the bunch. I'll always remember the help Danielle (my CNN) and I received in in early 2020 in physically getting in and out of the Warren church to attend service, and by the hospitality Juli and I received on our visit by BUMC folks on Christmas Eve day in 2019. Such memories. And to end with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic! I haven't been able to visit with anyone since March 3, 2020!

As for my health, it is not best. My neurological disease, my "brain leakage," is not Parkinson's after all. It is the Parkinsonian version of a rare and little-known disease that sometimes can morph into MS or MD. It can by itself shut the body down slowly over time by muscle infections caused by brain leakage. There are several chemicals including dopamine, but others too. It has no known cause, no known cure. My symptoms include slowness of movement, not able to walk except with baby steps with a walker, problems with swallowing, inability to clear my throat of spittle, inability to use my arms, hands, and fingers freely and cleanly. My

disease is called M50A-P Multiple Systems Atrophy- Parkinsonism. I have no or little info on it. I wish you would send me whatever you can find on it. Send to:

Rev. Richard G. Parker  
Lynn Health Center  
30 Alexandre Avenue Room 220B  
East Providence, RI 02914

My chief concerns are breathing and not being able to walk. I'm sitting in a wheelchair all day. All because of COVID-19, I haven't had any visitors to my room since last March 3, 2020. I'll let you know if the ban on visitors is lifted this year. Another concern is that my voice is now unintelligible. If you need proof, just call me on the phone: (401) 654-4458.

My needs: in spite of everything, I have everything I need to read except books of jokes, especially puns, and snacks: any kind of white chocolate and anything made by Reese's especially bite-size pieces of old standbys like Snickers, Milky Ways, and Three Musketeers. I have only Jules and Jeff as family, so "thinking of you" type notes would be wonderful. If you write on cards and do letters, please write large due my macular degeneration and because my vision is also double lately.

In closing I wish to repeat my feeling of heartfelt gratitude and genuine appreciation to all of you for just being "you." You are so friendly, so caring, so conscientious, so "outreaching," so compassionate, and possessed by the graceful and merciful Spirit of Christ, even though many of you aren't aware of it. But thanks, Saint Regina, who is a real cherished angel to me over these 8 years, for she is. "I'll get it done for you." "I'll make it happen for you." She is definitely on the path to sainthood, though we don't recognize them in our theology. And so many of you are on the same pathway! All my best wishes to each of you in Christian love. Meanwhile, bring a friend personally to church, just as Moo brought me to you.

Let me end with "Breaking News": Regarding the Mars landing - I want a reservation in the first operable restaurant on Mars, electronically and digitally by a bunch of aliens. Mars has signals that the food is divine but there is absolutely no atmosphere. HA! HA! HA!

In His Love,  
Rev. Dick P.



## Many thanks to our March Ecumenical Meals on Wheels Team:

### Cooks:

Rick Norman  
Charles Rulon  
Brian Powers  
Cindy Saksena  
Carol Race

### Deliveries:

Bill & Dawn Brodrick  
Eric & Debbie Salamon

### First UMC Organizer:

Nancy Watson

The next month that our church will be hosting Ecumenical Meals on Wheels is July. If you are interested in preparing or delivering food on a Saturday in July, please contact Nancy Watson.

deliver a difference



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## Easy Peasy Fundraiser for First UMC:

Do you shop on-line? Sign up for UMCmarket!

- ⇒ Go to [www.umcmarket.org](http://www.umcmarket.org)
- ⇒ Once you register, on-line shopping at such places as Land's End, Old Navy, Nordstrom Rack, Bass Pro Shop, and many, many more earns money for our congregation.
- ⇒ Choose First UMC of Warren/Bristol as the recipient when you register. When you want to shop on-line to order something, log on to [umcmarket.org](http://umcmarket.org) for your shopping, and earn funds for your congregation.

It's that easy!

*Amazon has a "Smile" program that is a very similar. Check it out!*

*Did you know giving to UMCOR allows response for local and global relief?*



When a natural or human-caused disaster strikes inside the United States, UMCOR works with local Annual Conference disaster response ministries to provide financial and physical support. Outside the United States UMCOR serves as the primary channel for United Methodist assistance. In the short term, UMCOR provides financial assistance and in the long term, UMCOR works with local partners toward recovery and reconstruction. Together, we are rebuilding hope in the lives of those in need all over the world. Learn more about UMCOR and how you can help by visiting

<https://umcmmission.org/umcor/>



## Join the New England Conference Episcopal Office on a Spiritual Pilgrimage to the **Holy Land**

February 14 - 24, 2022



### **Join the 2022 Holy Land Pilgrimage:**

The NEAC Episcopal Office is planning a spiritual pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Feb. 14-24, 2022. Clergy and laity are welcome and encouraged to register!

There is special pricing for recent ordinands and commissionees and their spouses as well as for clergy and spouses who are first-time pilgrims to the Holy Land. Contact Brenda Borchers to learn more about these discounts.

Learn more and register at:

<http://www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/hl22021422n#.YGM1Ia9KiM9>

Questions about the pilgrimage?

Contact Brenda Borchers in the Episcopal Office at [bishopsoffice@neumc.org](mailto:bishopsoffice@neumc.org) or (978) 682-7555 x250

# A message from Bishop Devadhar

**March 30, 2021**

Beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By now you may have seen the [announcement from](#) the Northeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops with episcopal area assignments through December 2022. I am delighted to continue my journey with the New England Conference. I had originally planned to retire on Aug. 31, 2020 as per the retirement guidelines for bishops in our *Book of Discipline*.

Many things have happened since then. The pandemic forced the delay of our 2020 General and Jurisdictional conferences, postponing episcopal elections and our denomination's plans to find a way through our theological differences. For the sake of consistency and continuity at such a time as this, I am grateful to be able to serve as your spiritual and temporal leader.



Let me be clear: I am honored to be your episcopal leader. I thank God for granting me the health and energy to serve God and the Church for the next year and a half. I am grateful for the wonderful leadership, gifts and graces of our clergy and laity on the church, district and conference levels as well as beyond our conference boundaries. We are truly blessed here in the New England Conference!

Knowing that I cannot do this ministry without the grace of God and love and encouragement of my family, I am most appreciative of my wife, Prema; my daughter, Trina, and her family for their constant understanding and support while walking this journey with me.

Together we have had to learn new ways to “do” and “be” the Church, and I am so proud of the ministry and mission that we have shared.

There are many great things to do together still ahead of us. Even as we face the challenges before us, we are called to work collaboratively in service to Jesus Christ to bring love and transformation throughout New England and as far as we can reach. I am ready to take these next steps in the journey with you.

Let us commit to praying for the leadership in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of our global church, so that bathed in prayer and fully dependent on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and filled with the amazing love of Christ, we become the true people of the Pentecost no matter where our decisions lead us. These will be challenging times but not without great opportunity for new initiatives and creative approaches to our shared mission.

Let us remember the words of the prophet Isaiah 55:8: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord,” so together we can explore what God has planned for us.

May we always remember the final words of our founder, John Wesley, “Best of all is, God is with us.” Prema and I join you in prayer for our Church and our world, and seek your prayers for us in this extended time of service with you.

In Christ's Love,  
Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

## Faith Resources:

New England Conference Daily Prayer During the Coronavirus Crisis

<http://neumc-email.brtaapp.com/archivearea/382>

The Upper Room: Daily Devotional

[Upperroom.org](http://Upperroom.org)

Our Daily Bread Devotional

<https://odb.org/tag/devotions/>

Religious Books

<https://www.abingdonpress.com/>

Global Ministries

<https://www.umcmission.org/>



## COVID-19 Updates:

New England Conference Responding to Corona Virus

<https://www.neumc.org/newsdetail/13395869>

State of Rhode Island Department of Health

<https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>

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IN SHAPE

## New Conference Webpage: Leadership Training Opportunities

Check out our new Leadership Training Opportunities page

[www.neumc.org/training](http://www.neumc.org/training)

This page curates training webinars and workshops for clergy and laity – including District Resource Days – that are being offered in the New England Conference.

These events are opportunities for you to hear from gifted speakers and experts from across New England and around the nation who will offer big ideas and practical tools that can be implemented in your local church context.



And we want folks across the entire Conference to take advantage of these amazing resources. In other words, you don't have to belong to the host district to participate.



# BEACON

March/April 2021 Edition

First United Methodist Church of Warren/Bristol  
25 Church Street  
Warren, RI 02885

**Church Information:**

Church: (401) 245-8474  
Pastoral Emergency: Rev. Neil "Sandy" Sweet  
Cell: (774) 281-3109  
E-Mail: sandypadre@aol.com  
Church Office E-mail: firstumcwarren1845@gmail.com  
Website: umcwarrenbristol.org  
Facebook: The First United Methodist Church of Warren and Bristol

*Lovingly mailed with prayers and blessings to:*



**MAY THE GOD OF HOPE**

**FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE AS  
YOU TRUST IN HIM.**

ROMANS 15:13