

First Church
CONGREGATIONAL
Boxford



News
from the Pews

May 2015



Not only are we seeing encouraging signs of spring (the snow is allllmost gone!), our fellowship has been noticed and blessed. The **Tri Town Transcript** was kind to us with a front page spread of our **Stop Hunger Now** food packaging event on March 28. The photos captured the fun of the day, including Dan Moniz hitting the gong. We may have to watch Dan so he does not bring out the gong during praise songs. Click here for the ["wicked local"](#) version or check it out on the FCCB bulletin board. And special thanks to Susan Humerian for garnering terrific publicity via her food pantry contacts.



In the very same edition, **Pastor Andrew** was featured in [a profile](#). The article captured his enthusiasm and drive as he shared his testimony. We are all encouraged by what the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst as Pastor Andrew is quick to share his love for Christ with those he meets. We as elders have reflected on what good, positive, energetic, and enthusiastic things are happening lately here at FCCB. Lead Elder, Taylor Robinson reminds us that only the work of the Holy Spirit can cause so much to move in the right direction at once.



My favorite service of the year, our **Maundy Thursday** Candlelight Worship and Communion, drew over seventy this year. Leading this service was another of many "firsts" for Pastor Andrew. We had some First Church members attending Good Friday services at Trinity Episcopal in Topsfield, the following day. Pastor Andrew and Pastor Rolan closed out the three hour time of meditation and worship with messages of hope and salvation.



Easter sunrise service also brought out worshipers in chilly weather to the cemetery across the street from the church, followed by breakfast in the FLC - a real treat, thanks to the ladies of Body Life. Later in the morning, Pastor Andrew's first Easter message at Boxford drew more than 200 through our doors to hear the resurrection story. Ron and Sue Giovannacci handled our "Children's Sermon" on Easter while Mike Haddad was providing newly acquired fatherly duties at home. Abby Cassell and Becky James brought tears to our eyes with a touching duet of "Amazing Grace". How blessed we are with the musical direction of James Cassell, and the attention to detail by our Elder of Worship, Gerri White.

"Turning Point" made their second straight visit to FCCB on April 12 and proved once again to be fantastic performers. This will no doubt be Eastern University senior, Kelsey Giovannacci's last visit as a group member back to her home church. Pray for Kelsey and her future endeavors.

This month the Elders welcomed Pastor Andrew's father, **Peter James**, to share some of his wisdom and insight into some of our FCCB needs. Peter James pastors in Vienna, VA and occasionally teaches at GCTS, and his reflections on his experience with his elders and leadership was very helpful.

Even more encouragement at end of April.....



Mark Whitacre's story of intrigue, greed, corruption, incarceration and redemption was incredible. We hung on every word as we viewed the Holy Spirit at work. On Sunday morning, Mark shared more about his journey. The Lord has gifted Pastor Andrew with the ability to make marvelous connections with people from many walks of life and we are the privileged beneficiaries.

By the way, our **nursery** is spic and span thanks to Leslie Van Volkinburg's teaming up with Clorox and sponge to give it a deep cleaning! And speaking of teams, thank you all for your encouragement to Team News From the Pews (aka me and Nancy Gill). Know that your comments, and suggestions are always appreciated.

Mission Moment in April focused on our **Prayer Shawl Ministry**, as Elder Paul Sidmore highlighted this new ministry that provides knitted shawls (Michelle Robinson is taking lessons from Shawl Ministry leader Ann Johnson) to those who are physically or emotionally hurting, with the encouragement of being wrapped in Christ's love and comfort. At coffee hour the ministry ladies hosted a display table, providing more information and demonstration of their handiwork. If you are able to help either with knitting or financially (to purchase more yarn) contact [Ann Johnson](#).



VBS is in the thick of planning for this summer's session. Thank you for your contributions to their barrel in the hallway. Christina Clark says to "keep it up"! Keep Vacation Bible School in prayer, as well. VBS is July 27 to 31!



Spring Clean Up took place on April 25, with a highly efficient team. A bushel full of thank yous to those who helped, and particular thanks to Rick Haywood for his leadership and hard work (that's him on the ladder doing gutter work!).

An update on **Ron and Paula Sylvester**. Paula is using her nursing skills at a local rehab facility, and Ron begins a new interim pastor relationship with Crossroads Church in Framingham this month. The church is a young, independent Congregational Church, formerly associated with the Brethren denomination. Please pray for Ellen Shaw, Paula's mom who recently fell and sustained a broken wrist. Hold the entire family up as they face new challenges, while we remember them warmly.

Health Updates : Doffy Falk is feeling better and was able to get away to see family and friends on the West Coast. Bill Meyer, our "Ironman", spent a couple of days being tested at Beverly Hospital after a mild heart attack, but is back in the saddle again! Reid Smith has completed successful surgery and we pray for his strength to be renewed. Continue to pray for Deb McGill and her strength.

What a nice surprise to have **Dr. Clement and Sathya** worship with us on April 26. They were here for a few days before continuing visits to other supporters throughout the US. During the middle of May they plan to return to spend a month with us in fellowship and worship. Keep them in prayer while they travel between now and their return.

May is here!!!! We can rejoice more than ever to warm weather after the winter that is finally over. As usual, May is a busy month...

May 2 - **CCCC Spring Conference** at Hamilton Congregational Church. Join us and brothers and sisters in Christ from all over New England.

May 3 - **Don Behrens Memorial Service** is Sunday at 2:00 pm followed by a reception in the FLC.

May Community Life Survey - Over the month of May we'll be helping FCCB leadership by answering a couple of questionnaires about our needs and gifts. Elder of Body Life, John Noyes has been hard at work to make this survey helpful and informative to FCCB leadership, so grab a pen and be ready to "express yourself"!

May 7 - **National Day of Prayer** - David Allen is heading up a special prayer service at 6:00 PM in the FLC.



May 15-16 - **Elder Retreat** at Oceanwood on the Maine Coast. We'll look to God for guidance (and appreciate all your prayers for a blessed and productive weekend!) and assess where we've been and where God is leading.

May 17 - Outreach elder Paul Sidmore honors **Lu Gould** in the form of a memorial after services in the Coggin Room.

May 17 - Our youth are out to help do major yard clean up at the home of Lars and Elisabeth (aka **Elisabeth Elliot** of "End of the Spear" fame and her ministry to the Auca Indians) Grens. Way to go guys!!!

May 24 - Joint **Memorial Day** church service at Second Church, with Pastor

Andrew providing the message. We will remember our veterans during and after the worship time.

May 30 - at 8:00 am we have a **Men's Breakfast** in the FLC, and a **Women's Breakfast** in the Coggin Room!

And join with me...

as we rejoice in the many ways God is working here at FCCB. Think about where God has given you talents and gifts, and pray about how He would have you use them here at First Church.

Pray for our ministry as we look to our community to share the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.



Rick

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. II Cor. 13:14

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