Dear Friends -

I miss seeing you. I miss being together. I can envision everyone in “their” pews when I look out at the empty sanctuary each Sunday morning. Absence is felt deeply.

And, I am grateful that experiencing God’s love is not limited to being in a building but with us no matter where we are. The Church has left the building. It is out in the reality of the world with a story of love, grace and hope. Thank you for putting flesh, words and actions on the truth. Thank you for being Main Street Church. I remain grateful that I get to journey with you.

In peace,

The View from the Pulpit

COVID TEAM NEWS

We are grateful for the time and attention, adapting and reworking that our COVID Team has been doing. We are all learning things, watching numbers and seeking to make decisions and adapt protocols that keep the community safe while trying to connect in person when it is ok to do so. Stacy and Joan are back to working in their offices but the Parish House is closed to others. The Step Up Thrift Shop is open and has their own set of COVID protocols in place. Our Neighbors’ Table is serving a take out meal on Wednesdays. Narcotics Anonymous meets in the vestry on Friday nights.

In person worship is the part that remains a hurdle. We have had a few 25 person services in the sanctuary - a wedding, a funeral and a baptism - but have not opened the sanctuary for in person worship on Sunday morning. At this point we have been focused on a Sunday worship service that looks like our pre-pandemic worship - with hymns, unison prayers and musical offerings. Those components are not recommended for in person worship. What is the right to do? Change the service to remove music? Explore ways to make it safe to have people in the sanctuary and music as well? We need your help going ahead. If you would like to join in with the COVID team and develop and implement protocols for in-person worship please let someone on
The COVID team know (Heidi Fram, Dave Olson, Lee Ford, Cathy Young, Wendy Brennan, Steve Horhota)

Meanwhile, we are grateful to our tech team for streaming worship each weeks and arranging for audio broadcast on the lawn.

**SPEAKING OF TEAM TECH:**

Have you ever wanted to stand behind an iPhone and stream Facebook live? Have you wanted to be part of spreading the love of God and Main Street Church’s sense of community to those holy distanced during COVID? Have we got an opportunity for you! Our Sunday morning A/V team would welcome new members. We will train and Instructions are provided. Requirements: a willingness to take a turn in the rotation every 4-6 weeks and to be COVID safe (we want to keep our tech team and worship team healthy).

**SUPPORT FOR COVID ECONOMIC AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES**

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of this congregation we have spiritual and financial resources available for those in need. Please contact Rev. Joan if there is support that you need (and let those you know with needs that we are there for them).

**MISSIONS NEWS**

Missions has a MVHH build day planned for Nov 14th—folks already signed up—we are set. The missions committee will bring a check for $250 for MVHH using some of our budget money. We hope to plan more builds as we get the go-ahead from them. Nancy is working with Emmaus House to coordinate a church collection of wish list items some for some of the families there.—more info will be coming. We are also working with school leaders to find a way to financially help with the education of special needs children and families at this difficult time of learning in our schools.

**RECORD-BREAKING PUMPKIN PATCH!**

Despite, or maybe partly because of, the Covid 19 restrictions, our annual Pumpkin Patch event in October broke previous records. Sales began as soon as the pumpkins were unloaded from the truck on September 17th and continued until we ran out on October 25th. For the most part the weather cooperated and volunteers and shoppers alike abided by the Social Distancing the Mask-Wearing orders. MANY photographs were taken, and children had fun running around the patch before helping Mom and Dad choose just the right pumpkin. It was a special time during a difficult time.

The net profit was $5581.41! Thanks to all who set up the pallets and the shed, decorated the porch area, unloaded, sold, recorded the finances, and then took it all down and stored supplies for next year!

At the same time, several ladies who had been crafting in anticipation of the Holiday Fair decided to have a “No Fair Fair” and sell as many of our hand-made items, especially Covid masks for adults and children, as possible. Despite lack of advertising and one very cold and rainy Saturday, we ended up with a profit of $346.30.

P.S. I am still making masks, and I’m about to start holiday themed ones. I will make them to order, and sell them for $3.00 each, all proceeds to go to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. Please email me at carolranshaw9@gmail.com and let me know what size you’d like, pleated or fitted style, nose wire or not.

Sue
2020 STEWARDSHIP FESTIVAL: MAIN STREET CHURCH, WHERE OUTREACH GOES BEYOND 6 FEET

A BIG thank you to all the folks who recorded (and rerecorded and rerecorded and ...) a message about stewardship and connection to Main street church and our ministries. It was wonderful to see so many people!

A BIG thank you to Tessa and Nicole for their lovely prose and encouragement of us to think about how we can support Main Street Church financially in 2021.

A BIG thank you to Stacy for keeping it all organized and moving; for her creativity in language and in art and for her patience.

And of course, a big thank you to all who have pledged to financially support Main Street Church in 2021. At this point (thank you Kay!), we have 35 pledges totaling for $113,830. THANK YOU! We are a little less than half of where we were last year in terms of the number of pledges and a little more than half of the amount pledged in 2019. If you are able to pledge, please email Kay at: kaynweiner@gmail.com and let her know how you can help in 2021 so the church can plan accordingly.

Thank you,
Steve and Deirdre

NEW KIND OF GIVING TREE TO TAKE ROOT

I (Joan) love when one of our deacons asks how they can give what they would normally give to the church on the giving tree. Technology is not yet figured out but our Trustees say, if people want to give to the church like a giving tree way - we will make that happen. Stay tuned.

PETTENGILL MEALS RESUME - WITH CHANGES

The next Pettengill meal is scheduled for November 14th

We’re going to continue with our new way of doing things. It’s worked very well for the past two months.

So feel free to sign up for the following tasks:

Group 1:

- Two families to bag up rolls and butter
- Two families/individuals to bag up cookies
- Two families/individuals to cut up cucumbers
- These six families are asked to pick up their supplies from the Methodist Church on Friday, the 13th, between 3:30-4:00 p.m. and then drop off the completed bags of food between 12:00-12:30 on Saturday…Methodist church again. Then you’re free to head off!

Group 2: 35 Lasagnas

- We will need 35 lasagnas (delivered hot) to feed the 175 people that have signed up. If you can do this, wonderful. Can be store bought too. Please drop off between 1:00 – 1:30 on Saturday (please no later...we’ll be waiting for you!)

(Continued on page 4)
Group 3: 12-15 Drivers

- We’ll need 12 – 15 drivers to deliver the meals. We’re trying to keep the routes very small. The already assembled meals will be staged for you, with your already assigned route outside the church on the tables/sidewalk for you to pick between 3:30 – 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. We’ll provide you with gloves too if you need them.

And yes, we need milk this month, so feel free to sign up for this too!

Please let us know which of these fun tasks/donations you would like to do. All is appreciated! This is going very well and many people have let us know how much they appreciate our efforts during these tough times with Covid.

Any questions, please call! Diane and Kevin, clarkkj@comcast.net 978 729-2263 or 978 729-2264

NEWS OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Congratulations to Sarah Alyce Prince Moughan and Andrew Smith, married at MSCC on October 31st. Sarah and Drew have been mainstays during Covid, Sarah lending her beautiful voice to the music ministry and Drew part of the Tech Team.

With great joy we celebrated the baptism of Meadow Marie Belmonte, daughter of Zack Belmonte and Dakota Collins. Meadow was born on June 3, 2020 and baptized on October 11th. Her Godparents are Jennifer Brown and Christopher Belmonte.

On Monday, November 2, we let the vibrant, spunky Mary Young go after a long walk with Alzheimer's. Our deepest sympathy and our prayers go to Mary's daughters Cathy Young and her wife, Wendy Brennan, Cindy Young; and Lisa Mihnos; “son” Daryl Arsenault, four sisters, two brothers and two grandsons, along with many nieces and nephews and many friends.

A Covid-compliant service was held on Saturday November 7th. A memorial service for Mary is planned for May.

Her joy of life, Irish wit and her “spunk” made everyone who knew her love her. Her memory will being smiles to anyone who spent time with her.
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| Nov. 29 | Advent begins  
   Vespers 5:00 PM                                                              |
| 1     | 9:00 AM Volunteers sort bags at the Step Up Thrift Shop  
   Andrea Rainey  
   Evelyn Olsson                                                              |
| 2     | 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM ONT  
   3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| 3     | 7:00 PM NA  
   Nicole Savigny                                                             |
| 4     | 7:00 PM NA  
   Ted Morse                                                               |
| 5     | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open  
   Donald Hall                                                                  |
| 6     | 10:00 AM Worship Communion  
   5:00 PM Vespers  
   Bob Burton                                                                   |
| 7     | 9:00 AM Volunteers sort bags at the Step Up Thrift Shop  
   Jill Hruby                                                                |
| 8     | 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM ONT  
   3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| 9     | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 10    | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 11    | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 12    | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open  
   Nativity/Pageant                                                            |
| 13    | 10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook  
   5:00 PM Vespers  
   Al Mackie                                                                  |
| 14    | 9:00 AM Volunteers sort bags at the Step Up Thrift Shop  
   Jill Hruby                                                                |
| 15    | 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM ONT  
   3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| 16    | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 17    | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 18    | 7:00 PM NA                                           |
| 19    | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open  
   Nativity/Pageant                                                            |
| 20    | 10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook  
   5:00 PM Vespers  
   Al Mackie                                                                  |
| 21    | 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Service of the Longest Night                                             |
| 22    | 9:00 AM Volunteers sort bags at the Step Up Thrift Shop  
   Liz Morris                                                                |
| 23    | 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM ONT  
   3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| 24    | Christmas Eve Worship services at 5, 6 and 7 pm                                        |
| 25    | 1:30 PM Christmas Worship on Facebook                                                     |
| 26    | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                                |
| 27    | 10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook                                                      |
| 28    | 9:00 AM Volunteers sort bags at the Step Up Thrift Shop  
   Liz Morris                                                                |
| 29    | 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM ONT  
   3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Step Up Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| 30    | 7:00 PM NA  
   New Year’s Eve  
   Ryan Tabot                                                                 |
| 31    | Happy New Year  
   2021!                                                                 |

**Jan 2021**

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FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Partners, Thank you to you and your group for making the commitment to host a Pumpkin Patch this year. We appreciate all that you do. Normal revenue was down around 30% this year. Good news, partners like yourselves were up significantly and that helped save our business. Thanks, Richard & The Pumpkin Family

Because of the uncertainty of our schedules and activities, the deadline for the next Prophet will be announced when there is a need. In the meantime, if you would like to send pictures or articles for inclusion in the next edition, please email them to me at caroltranshaw9@gmail.com. Thanks!

PLEASE USE THE ABOVE EMAIL ADDRESS: THE COMPUTER GREMLINS HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK AND I CAN’T ACCESS MY COMCAST ACCOUNT.

EDITOR’S PRIVILEGE

As I sat on the lawn in front of the sanctuary for worship on Sunday, a spectacular warm and clear November morning, leaves drifting from the trees at the side of the vestry caught my eye, and reminded me so much of this poem, one of my favorites: (My apologies to those I already shared it with.)

Leaving

“Consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin--and yet I say unto you, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Matthew 6:28-29

On a hill above Saluda beside Pacolet Falls I lay gazing through a screen of birch at the remnants of the day.

Not a breath, not a whisper stirred the air when, like a camera changing focus, my stare shifted caught the falling leaves that drifted onto clothing slowly sifted, then gifted me, a weary warrior with feathers for my hair.

Suddenly I must know how each leaf fell and how they felt about their circling descent from heaven down to hell.

Surely after all that time so close to sky the ground must seem a strange and far-off place to die.

No breeze shook them from their tenacious holds; the same thin strength that held them throughout a summer’s storms seemed gone. But wait…there goes one on fiery wings of gold!

Why, they’re leaping from their limbs, They’re not just letting go!

They’re taking turns and laughing, they seem tickled by the sun as if today was a leaf parade and they’re falling just for fun.

Bright red, burnt orange, soft yellow--all dressed up in Sunday finery as they loose their perches fearlessly for the first time and last time flying whirling, twirling, spinning ’round singing Hallelujahs as they gently kiss the ground.

I want to learn to leave my life as gracefully as they.

May my certain passing from this place come to me this way—

Let me leap into forever like a well thought out adventure, leave rejoicing in the splendor of a brilliant autumn day.—Mendy Knott
A Holy (distanced) Advent and Christmas at Main Street Church

We can’t do what we always do but we can do new things. That is what happens at Christmas really isn’t it? Yes, we have developed important traditions for Christmas but it is a bit ironic since the birth of Jesus was all about new. It was about light breaking into what was dark and scary. It was about a displaced peasant couple finding welcome in an unexpected place. Christmas is about new and our services/celebrations at Main Street are new this year. Some details are not quite ready for publication but we are sharing basics early because we though you would want to know what was coming.

Outside is where it will be. We have some alternative plans should there be inclement weather (but really who can imagine inclement weather in New England in December?). Rain would be horrible. Snow? Cold? We are gathering.

Light in The Darkness

Since we won’t be gathered in the sanctuary, the Board of Worship and Music is adapting a new way of remembering/honoring people this Advent. Poinsettias and inside window wreaths are being replaced with lit wreaths and trees on the front steps of the church beginning November 29th - the first Sunday of Advent. If you would like to remember/honor someone this year, we are requesting a donation of $25 for each tribute. As we have done in years past, there will be a listing shared so we all know in whose memory and honor we see the light. Please email the office or snail mail us by December 1 with the names of the people you want to honor/remember. Let us know how you wish the name of the donor to appear in the listing when you submit your payment; please indicate Light in the Darkness on the memo line.

(Continued on page 8)
**Advent Vespers— Sundays at 5 PM**

November 29, December 6, 13 and 20

Join us for a brief outdoor evening prayer time on our front lawn. We will light our Advent candles, pray and reflect on the season.

**Service of the Longest Night**

December 21 - 7 PM

This year we sense there may be many people who are struggling to have hope when family gatherings are no happening, jobs are lost, grief is raw. Carmen Weisensee and Dee Morse will lead us in a gentle service sharing the light and hope of Christmas with space to feel what ever is real for you this year. Danny has music in store. And we will light candles of remembrance and hope. We plan to be outside for this service.

**All Ages Live Nativity**

Saturday Afternoon December 19 2-4

Our “Come as You Are and Join in Christmas Pageant” takes a twist this year. We move outdoors, add in live animals. We still don’t have rehearsals but will be doing a wee bit more advance planning. Over the course of a few hours (exact time is awaiting confirmation from the animal people) we will have a combination of telling the story and a tableau. At the live nativity we will be receiving donations of diapers and accepting financial gifts that will go to Merrimack Valley Interfaith Sanctuary Network.

How can you participate?

* You can choose to be any character other than Mary/Joseph/Jesus. You can make your own costume or make arrangements to select from the ones at the church.
* For kids and family groups - we ask you to plan on bringing a blanket and we will set that up in the holy distanced place where y'all will take your places.
* Do you have an urge to direct, narrate, do set up, clean up, help welcome visitors and maintain legal crowd size? talk to Joan sooner rather than later please.
* If this is not your thing? Come and walk through.
* Tell your neighbors and friends.

**Christmas Eve Services of Light and Hope**

5, 6 and 7 pm on the Front Lawn

Join us in a circle of love spread across our lawn for brief services where we hear the stories and music of Christmas and spread light.

**Christmas Day Worship**

1:30 PM Worship on Facebook
EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY AT THE STEP UP THRIFT SHOP

Tuesday morning, giggles emanate from the back room where sorters are checking out a donated toy that asks geography questions. “What city has the largest rose garden?” it queries, and once it has started, no one can get it to stop talking. Wednesday afternoon brings a shopper who takes almost every spoon on the shelf… no forks, no knives, just spoons. Saturday morning a gentleman arrives in his bathrobe. By way of explanation he says that he was sitting on his porch steps, and noting that the shop was open, he dashed right over because he had missed the previous Saturday and wasn’t going to let that happen again. His enthusiasm is rewarded by the discovery of a jacket that he pronounces to be “Vintage! You don’t find these any more!” Such are the moments of fun, unpredictability, and discovery at the Step Up Thrift Shop.

Every week, a faithful crew of volunteers from our church and community gathers to sort through the bags of donations left in the shed beside the shop. Toys, books, household items, clothes, and accessories evoke a variety of responses ranging from, “What is it?” to “I want that!,” giving credence to the notion that one person’s discard pile is another one’s treasure trove.

Wednesdays and Saturdays bring an array of shoppers; some have been coming almost weekly for years, others have only just found us. Some arrive seeking a particular item (like spoons); others are happy to peruse the shop hoping to happen upon something irresistible. It is fun to chat with the regulars and to hear the newcomers announce, “I didn’t know this place was here,” “I’ll be back,” and/or “I’ll tell my friends about this!”

And then there are the Sundays when the congregation gathers and Joan announces that a financial gift has come from the Step Up Thrift Shop to support the ministry and mission of Main Street Congregational Church, an announcement that provides yet another reason why those days of sorting and selling are so important. The shop not only serves those who need and enjoy quality items at affordable prices, its proceeds support a variety of causes and projects locally and globally. That knowledge adds to the volunteers’ joy and provides even more incentive to participate in the work of the thrift shop.

And the good news is that you can help! If you’re looking for volunteer opportunities in these challenging days, consider signing up for a shift or two. (All shoppers and workers are expected to wear masks, to maintain social distance, and to use hand sanitizer in order to maintain a safe environment.)

As you sort through closets or clean out cupboards, consider what might be sellable at the shop. Donations may be placed in the shed on Tuesday mornings from 9-11, on Wed. afternoons from 3-6 and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We are especially in need of women’s tops!

And, of course, you can always support us by giving us your business. Our inventory is constantly changing, so stop by often. And if you are concerned about shopping during regular hours, we can arrange to open for individual shoppers. Please contact Susan Gleason or Rachel Monroe to learn more about these opportunities.