

MATTAPOISETT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



27 Church Street, PO BOX 284
Mattapoisett, MA 02739
(508) 758-2671

mattapoisettcongregationalchurch.org
mattcongchurch@gmail.com



PLEASE NOTE: THE CHURCH BUILDING IS CLOSED,
HOWEVER, THE CHURCH OFFICE IS AVAILABLE BY PHONE
OR EMAIL TUESDAY-FRIDAY FROM 8:15-1:15 PM UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE.

THE TIDEINGS

APRIL 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Pastor's Page</i>	2
<i>News & Notes</i>	3-4
<i>Note from Patty</i>	5
<i>Honoring the Stickneys</i>	6-8
<i>Lenten Movie Night</i>	9
<i>Confirmation Youth</i>	10
<i>Photos</i>	11

I had the month of April already planned in my head months ago. Lent, Holy Week and then Easter is a very busy time here at Matt Congo, as you all know. Now as I work from home at my dining room table because we are all asked to limit our contacts to try to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 virus, I realize what is really important and how fast things can change. At this difficult time of uncertainty, I rely on my faith and trust that in everything "God has a plan". I pray for you all, my church family, and hope you enjoy this "Picture Issue" of Monthly Tideings.

During this time of uncertainty when we cannot gather in person in our beautiful worship space, your staff and pastor are still at work and the council continues to conduct the business of the congregation. The offering is one part of worship. You can mail your offerings to the church at P.O. Box 284, add the church to your personal online Bill Pay service and they will mail the check directly to the church or [click here](#) to use PayPal for a secure transaction. Your continued faithfulness and support is appreciated as our expenses are ongoing.

Tina, Administrative Assistant at Matt Congo

Pastor's Page

Greetings from the parsonage!

You'll notice that this edition of the Monthly Tide-ings is a bit different. For one thing, there are fewer articles but more photos. Often there are so many articles, Tina has to pick and choose, sometimes squeezing things in last minute. (She knows how much you love all the pictures!)

This month, we just don't know what to expect. April should have been our busiest month of the year, with a week full of activities and worship services, beginning with Palm Sunday on April 5. Right now, it looks like those services will be on-line, as are most of our communications.

That's another thing that's different about this edition of the Tide-ings. We aren't printing it out with our wonderful office copier, for mailing and setting around the church. Instead, some folks are using home printers to mail this to those who cannot access it via e-mail or the internet.

The Covid-19 Virus is not only forcing people indoors, it's also forcing us to be church in a different way. Business meetings are shorter, more frequent, and being held via Zoom. (Zoom is a way we can see and hear each other on our computers and cell-phones.) This is a new experience for some people, who are having to learn how to do it.

Tina has moved her computer equipment to her home and is working harder than ever from there. I'm working from the parsonage, and working hard as well. Our worship has moved to Facebook and our Webpage, and we are laying plans to broadcast a worship experience over local cable — all of which are new experiences.

In other words, there are many in our church community who are learning things they didn't expect to have to learn — some at a time of life when they thought the learning curves were behind them!

Any experience — even something as devastating as Covid-19 — is an opportunity not just to cope, but to learn. Throughout our entire lives, God gives us ways to look beyond the horizon of what we thought we knew, what we thought we needed, and what we thought were our limitations.

Our top priority is making sure everybody remains connected within the church community. Our Visitation team has shifted to regular phone calls. Our Faith Formation team is marshaling our kids' creativity to create lovely notes to send out. If you know of someone who needs a phone call, or who does not "do e-mail" and would like information sent through the U.S. Postal Service, please call the church office or send me an e-mail: mccpastoramy@gmail.com.

If you are able and willing, please join the world of Facebook and follow Mattapoissett Congregational Church. You'll be among the first to see uplifting messages and a weekly worship experience, recorded from the Parsonage.

In the meantime, stay home, stay safe, and wash your hands!

Blessings!



Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken

Some important Updates...

Church is about people, not about buildings. Yes, we miss gathering in our beautiful sanctuary, and meeting face-to-face around the big conference table. We're sad we've had to abandon classes and fellowship times. But, church "business" does continue! We are just doing it in a different way, on a different timeline. Here's an update on some of the bigger projects:

Holy Week Worship Planning — We are working toward pre-recording an Easter worship service to be released on Easter Sunday morning, both on line and on local cable. We will have a Day of Resurrection! (even if we still have to stay home). We are also working toward Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services as well, to be posted on our Website and on Facebook.

Church Organization and Committees — At the annual meeting, Council Chair Phil Jackson announced that a team would be re-evaluating the number of church committees, and that everybody's input was important. This important project has been nudged to the back burner, but is still there. One first step is for everybody, including you, to be thinking about the most important things our church does. There may not be a better time for everybody to be thinking about the church's needs, activities, and resources and how we can best be church for God's kingdom.

Gather Round Circles — Pastor Amy has started compiling findings from surveys and interviews. Generally, those who took part in a Circle are eager for more, and want to invite the whole community. Some folks have volunteered to help organize another series of Circles. The Gather Round Team had begun planning a pot-luck celebration and "big reveal" of the study's findings. We'll do that when we get back together. In the meantime, Amy continues to work on her dissertation. (She could use some prayers on this.)

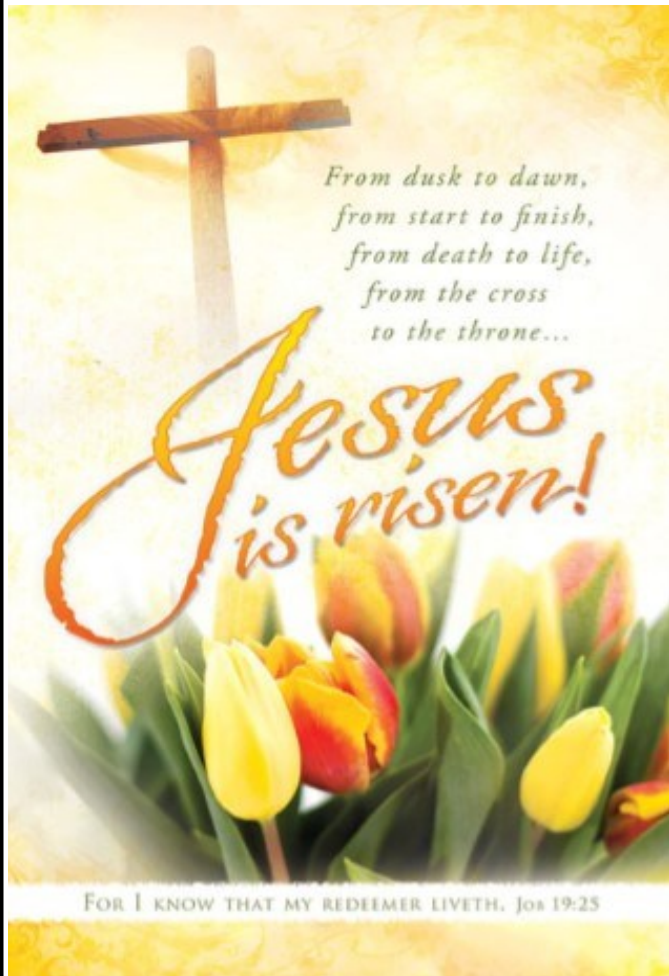
Safe Church Policy — Phil has pulled together a number of resources and has shared them with the Executive Committee for review.

CONGREGATION NEWS & NOTES

Even as we are practicing social distancing, we are still united as the Body of Christ! We can still celebrate together as we embark on the holiest week of the year.

Every Palm Sunday, we receive palms to wave during worship. This year, our services are online (YouTube, FaceBook, E-mail), and we cannot wave our Palms. But, we can still participate!

This Sunday, Palm Sunday, please put a branch on the front door of your house, or in a window, or front stoop -- wherever might be visible to your neighbors. Any green branch or other greenery will do!



Easter isn't cancelled

We are just temporarily changing how we worship Him.

Be sure to like us on Facebook and then watch for a virtual worship with Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken on Sunday morning or check out our website at mattapoisetconggregationalchurch.org as we praise His holy name .

Watch for exciting news about our "virtual Easter Service"! May peace be with you all!

CONGREGATION NEWS & NOTES



JOIN OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP!

We have some exciting news for you!

In these difficult times when we cannot worship and celebrate the joy of Easter with you in person, we will be offering two opportunities for us to gather virtually! Pastor Amy has been posting worship videos on the Matt Congo Facebook page on Sunday mornings. There is also a link to YouTube on our church website if you are not on Facebook.

In addition, and **here is the exciting part**, we are hoping to broadcast our Easter service on the local ORCTV station! Stay tuned as we work out the details but just know that we are constantly working to stay connected during this trying time!

God's Beacon of Light at Matt Congo

The March Beacon of Light was lit in remembrance of Mary Alice Bjerre.



Would you like the steeple to be lit in remembrance for, in celebration of, or in honor of a loved one or blessed event? If so, make a donation in any amount to the Mattapoissett Congregational Church. On the check's memo line, please mark **"God's Beacon of Light."** Forms are available at the church office. We will publish a list of monthly donors in the Monthly Tideings.

During this time when we are asked to quarantine in our homes and keep social distancing, please remember there are still ways to connect with one another. Go to the church website at mattapoissettcongregationalchurch.org and watch Pastor Amy's online sermons, like us on [Facebook](#), or call or send an email to the church office at mattcongchurch@gmail.com, Pastor Amy at mccpastoramy@gmail.com or fellow congregants. You are not alone. We are all in this together!



Although we cannot be together at this time, please know that Matt Congo has an active prayer group that is inviting prayer requests. If you would like to be involved in the group or would like yourself or someone else added to the prayer list, please contact Rev. Amy at mccpastoramy@gmail.com, Phoebe Girard at phgirard508@gmail.com, or contact the church office at mattcongchurch@gmail.com.

We continue to pray for our doctors, nurses, first responders, researchers, all our essential workers and all of you at the Matt Congo Church.

Click on the link below for some ideas of things to do when you're bored or need distraction from the current events

[100 things to do while your stuck inside](#)

Here's a couple more things to think about. Think about (and write down so you don't forget!), ways you can help with:

1. 2020 Matt Congo Holiday Fair
2. 2020 Matt Congo Yard Sale
3. Recipes for the new cookbook
4. Other ideas for programs and activities

SOME THOUGHTS FROM PATRICIA BERRY, MEMBER IN DISCERNMENT



Staying Rooted By Patricia Berry, March 13, 2020

“And that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love” Ephesians 3:17

When things got tough, my mother would turn the TV off and take us, kids, for a ride. We would reluctantly climb into the LTD station wagon and ask, “Where we going, momma?” She’d reply, hands gripped on the wheel, tissues by her side, “we’re going to go find God!” We never knew how long the ride would take. One afternoon, while riding along on an old country road, tree-lined with maple sugaring buckets, we watched the river below us run wild. Faces glued to the backseat window, we lost ourselves in the Spring current that was pushing through the winter ice, rising up onto the river’s edge and soaking the stubby cornfields razed from the season past. As the chaos simmered down in the car, mom pulled over mesmerized by the purple crocuses peeking through the thawing earth in the abandoned setback. Together, we all got out of the car to count the fresh buds and flowers emerging in the dirt. Feet planted in the muck, we found our breath in the changing wind. And remembered where Christ dwells and works best.

As I sat, reeling from the flurry of updates of the Coronavirus, glued to my device for the latest reports; border control, State of Emergencies, cancellation after cancellation, pictures of empty toilet paper and hand sanitizer shelves, charts of global spread, fatality rates, recovery rates, demographics most at risk and the latest people tested positive for Covid-19 and announcements there will no in-person worship services for some weeks, I struggled to find my breath; disconnect; root and ground myself before my kids get off the bus. Walking outside in the wooded cemetery across the street, I wondered how the kids are feeling- the nervous belly aches have already begun. I wondered how parents will manage- I hear the worries and the stress. I wondered how we will make meaning out of this new place that we are in. I wondered how we are to stay rooted and grounded when everything in our world is being uprooted; Our routines. Our disciplines. Our spiritual practices. Our patterns of existence.

When images and anxiety-producing messages saturate our lives, research tells us to unplug; disconnect but as the Coronavirus pandemic spirals globally and the anxiety builds we hear Stay Home! Stay tuned! Stay connected! Don’t touch! Turn to E-learning. Social media. Zoom. FaceTime. Conference calling. Texting. Virtual Worshipping. Are we being asked to root and ground ourselves into something else? Our meaning-making processes are changing. Our orientation is shifting. Our community connections are transforming. How are we to find our breath?

Scrolling through social media, I am seeing more pictures of spring flowers, prayers, uplifting-quotes, offers to help those in need: food, childcare, activities for the kids. My teenage daughter sent me a TikTok cooking video of mint chocolate chip cookies and can we make these next week, please? One mom told me she was going to listen to a spiritual podcast to stay grounded on her way to work. Another mom was going to tune into to her church’s online service. My friend who is a nurse plans to depend on her smartphone more to meditate between her shifts. Group chatroom and text messaging are becoming e-prayer gatherings, a lifeline and a “let me know if you need toilet paper”. Youth are checking in with each other through online gaming, Instagram, and snapchat. Spotify created more mood booster playlists. Virtual fitness and wellness classes are being offered. Daily devotions, inspirational music YouTube videos, reminders to check on our neighbors, make phone calls to loved ones and send hand-decorated notes to nursing homes are posted. Spiritual care apps are popping up; Call-a-chaplain for a listening ear. Faith leaders are gathering online for support and technology planning. This is all happening minute by minute. We are creating new ways to be together, to be a community, to serve, to minister, to exist; still grounded and rooted in love while plugged in.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians to remind them to let the spirit keep their hearts united and to stand firmly grounded and rooted in love. This is true today, whether it’s online, in person, taking a drive with mom or a walk outside with our kids, we find love when we turn to each other, connect, and search for meaning in the chaos. Feet planted firmly in the muck, counting one fresh Spring bud and flower at a time, we will find our breath, together, in the ever-changing wind. And remember where Christ dwells and works best. Amen.

HONORING THE STICKNEYS

Sunday, March 8th was a big day as we honored Ken & Ollie Stickney for 60 years of distinguished service and devotion to the Mattapoisett Congregational Church. The celebration included messages from former pastor, Raymond Patch and interim, Kathy Henry, as well as Jean West, director of the Intergenerational Chorus at Center School and Cathy Dupont, coordinator of FISH. Jack Eklund read a love letter from the Board of Deacons and Chuck Talley, with help from Elliott, presented a citation naming Ken as “Tenor Emeritus”. Along with the text, Chuck painted a watercolor featuring Ken in the center, flanked by a couple of lesser-known tenors. Ken’s favorite hymns were sung. We had fun with the long list of boards and committees on which Ken and Ollie served over the years culminating in the ‘hats off’ ceremony. The event concluded with a delicious lunch and cake.





To all who may read these citations, greetings:
 Hereby it is certified that upon recommendation of the Music Director and Choir, the Pastor and the Mattapoisett Congregational Church do confer upon

Kenneth W. Stiekney

in recognition of 60 years of loyal and dedicated service to music ministry the title of

Tenor Emeritus

with all the rights, privileges and honors pertaining thereto.
 Dated at Mattapoisett, Massachusetts this Eighth day of March
 Two thousand and twenty

Micuel Gordon
 Music Director

Rev. Amy Spaulding
 Pastor





Lois Murray and friends



A note from Lois' daughter, Judy....

" I am so very grateful that my mother was able to visit her dear friends at Mattapoisett Congregational Church on the 8th. It meant so much to her to see everyone at the church she loves. Given this current virus crisis, it makes it especially nice that she had that opportunity and good health to see her friends. It was a very nice celebration for Ken Stickney. He certainly has worn a lot of hats!!

My mother has always had a strong faith, love for her church, and the town of Mattapoisett. "

We were so happy you could join us, Lois!
Thank you Judy for the great photos!



*Friends
Are one of God's
greatest blessings!*

LENTEN MOVIE SERIES

On March 2 we gathered for dinner and a movie in the Media Room to watch the movie, "The Way". We hope to be able to reschedule the "Breakthrough" movie soon. Stay tuned!



CONFIRMATION YOUTH

From the perspective of our confirmation youth on the current COVID 19 crisis...

I believe that the virus is just another challenge we are facing and that God wants us all to get through this together. I believe that God is just testing us to see how we support each other in a time of hardship. I will rely on and help my church community by reaching out to people and talking to them. I will also participate in some of the online worship services. I am also going to write some cards with my mentor to older people who are lonely. I believe that God does everything for a reason, and so something good is bound to come out of the whole ordeal. Although I never thought I would say this, but here I am, saying I actually would want to be in school. Yet, life and faith will go on. Even though confirmation classes are postponed, God is still watching over us. Just because something bad happens doesn't mean that you should blame God. He might just be testing you, to see how much you really "love thy neighbor." So, in this hard time, don't forget to reach out to people who may have it worse than you because the only way that we can keep our faith through the crisis is together. Keep your faith no matter what happens because your church family loves you!!

By Rylie Coughlin

Faith VS. COVID-19 THOMAS BERRY

It's hard to believe in God sometimes. With all the terrible things happening in the world it seems like God isn't really there. With more atheism means less faith in God and it is hard to tell if it's all part of a bigger plan or just making it up as God goes along. Humans need comfort. When a bad thing happens you blame your religion, or faith. Does that mean God isn't trying as hard to keep up with humans, due to their lack of faith? We ponder on questions like if God is really there during these tough times or when will this all end? COVID-19 is only a recent problem but it seems as if it's been happening forever. Trapped in your house unable to go to your place of worship. Fear not, because the Lord is everywhere. Pray and have faith and we will get through this with the help of God.



Loretta Sherman and the Confirmation Class (Rylie, Tommy and Elliott) practicing a guided meditation during the Holy Spirit/Prayer/Spirituality class.

PHOTOS



Have you seen our virtual worship services yet? If not, you're missing something great! [Click here](#) or go to our website at mattapoisetcongregationalchurch.org and then the Worship tab.



Easter 2019

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'”

@HUFFPOST

-MISTER ROGERS



You don't have to be a doctor, nurse or first responder to be a Helper!

Reach out by phone or email to friends and neighbors.

Send notes of thank you, encouragement or thinking of you.

Would you like to add yourself or someone to the prayer list? Reach out to Phoebe Girard or Rev. Amy (see page 4).

You may or may not know that Rev. Amy and Bruce's son, Erik Harken, has been helping with the Sunday virtual worship services. Thank you, Erik, for doing an amazing job. You are honestly a God-send!







Thank you

Thank you, Erik and Rev Amy for keeping us all connected!

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Shop local. We're in this together.

Local businesses need your support now more than ever.

-  **Get it to go.** Order from your local restaurants and bars via delivery service, to-go, or curbside pickup.
-  **Buy in advance.** Purchase gift cards or book services from local businesses to use at a future date.
-  **Follow along.** Your favorite local businesses are online and sharing specific ways you can support them.
-  **Shop small online.** Websites haven't closed and it's important to leave positive reviews for local vendors and businesses.
-  **Stay looped in.** Keep up with your memberships, and with services that are still offered online.
-  **Say thank you.** Many business owners and workers are risking their health to provide critical products and services. Be thankful.