

# THE NEW COVENANT



## News from The United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville

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### Bell Tower Reconstruction Update

This column is being added to the monthly newsletter until the reconstruction of the bell tower, the main church tower that faces Cottage St., is completed.

As was indicated in the Building Repair Fund letter mailed out a couple weeks ago, the church contracted with Central Massachusetts Roof Restoration to fix the roof leak on the main tower. That work began on January 31 with an urgent phone call from the contractor followed by a video, which was presented to the congregation following the Feb. 12 worship service. It shows that the front facing façade is detached from the building by 5 inches. It also shows: numerous bricks have already fallen onto the roof; extensive mortar missing, including that which holds the large stone cubes on top of the tower; and holes in the roof causing leaks to the internal structure of the tower.

The Building Inspector and Fire Marshall were called that same day to meet with the roofing contractor and inspect the video he took of the external tower. The following day a structural engineer, Frank Lagodimos, not only viewed the video but also climbed into the tower to inspect the internal structure. He found rotted beams, layers of brick that had shifted, and 12 inches of space between two brick walls that should have been pressed up against each other. Some session members and Pastor Susan met with Mr. Lagodimos to discuss his assessment.

Building Restoration Services (BRS), contacted by Mr. Lagodimos to appraise safety needs, arrived on the scene on Friday, Feb. 3. They concluded quickly after viewing the video that the first order of business is to make the area safe enough for workmen to put scaffolding in place. They recommended that the sanctuary building be closed "until further notice." Mr. Lagodimos, the Northbridge Building Inspector, and the Fire Chief had all previously expressed the opinion that the building could remain open, with everything beneath the tower (including the Welcome Center, men's room, and children's Sunday School room), the front steps/sidewalk, and most of the front lawn cordoned off as a danger zone.

Given the additional report from BRS, however, Mr. Lagodimos recommended that the building be closed, at least until further inspection by the contractor who would engineer the safety plan, Isaac Blair, Inc., could make an on-site visit to assess the tower. Session met in an emergency called meeting on Feb. 3 and voted to close the building through Feb. 11.

**(Continued on page 4)**

### The United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville

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Office Hours: Asa noted in the weekly Scoop

\*The church office is CLOSED on Thursdays\*

If you would like to see the newsletter in color, please view it on the website.

**February**  
**2023**

**~ February 12– March 5 ~**

Ministries	February 12	February 19	February 26	March 5
Worship	L. Walsh	J. Finnegan	S. Santoro	M. Alling
Leader				
Greeter	B. Giezma	J. Baker	T. Morin	C. Lee
Sound				
Board	G. Giemza	G. Giezma	M. Thomas	G. Giezma
Powerpoint	K. Mercer	M. Thomas	R. Thomas	S. LaMar
Media	K. Remillard	K. Remillard	K. Mercer	K. Remillard
Camera	J. Baker	J. Baker	J. Baker	J. Baker
Coffee				
Hour	K. Mercer	J&D Baker	G. McCrea	T. Morin
Junior Church	C. Pilibosian	S. Santora	L. Walsh	K. Mercerr
Counters	D. Baker	K. Mercer	M. Alling	G. Giezma
	C. Pilibosian	S. Santora	G. McCrea	T. Morin
Communion	S.Santora			
	B. Giezma			

***February Birthday Corner***

Mark Austin	2/11
Matt Stone	2/12
Ian Connelly	2/22
Michaela Joyce	2/22
Chris Matchett	2/27
Nicholas Joyce	2/28

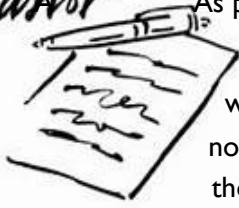


***\*\*\*Sunday Morning Worship Schedule\*\*\****

<b>Adult Education</b>	<b>9:00AM - 10:30AM</b>
<b>Morning Worship Service</b>	<b>10:30AM - 11:30AM</b>
<b>Coffee Fellowship</b>	<b>11:45 AM</b>

*“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them”* Matthew 18:20

*From the  
Pastor*



As people who have been members of other denominations visit our church, a question I am sometimes asked is “What does it mean to be a member of this church?” They primarily want to know in what ways they can participate and how to do so. Initially the concern is not about the understanding our denomination has of baptism and communion, although those questions usually come up during New Member Classes.

The greater interest seems to be in what it means to be a member. Since that has also been a question asked by members sometimes, the answer to that question is the subject of this month’s Newsletter column.

Of course the overarching answer to the question is that being a member means that one is part of a family of faith, a family that belongs to God as God’s children. But that understanding is true of any church and every denomination. More specifically, people want to know about what to expect from others and what others expect of them when they become members of this *particular* faith family at this *particular* church location.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination has four categories of membership in its *Book of Order*. First, a baptized member is a person who has been baptized in this congregation or elsewhere and has been enrolled by the Session as a baptized member. The person has not yet made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Baptized members receive pastoral care, the instruction of the church, and may participate in the Lord’s Supper.

The second category is active member. The Presbyterian Church (USA) describes an active member this way: “A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the governance of this church [i.e denominational rules of governance], and participates in the church’s work and worship. In addition, active members participate in the governance of the church [for example by voting in meetings] and may be elected to ordered ministry [Deacon, Elder]. Active members shall regularly, after prayerful consideration, recommit themselves to the disciplines and responsibilities of membership such as the following:

- proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- responding to God’s activity in the world through service to others,
- living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- caring for God’s creation,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and
- reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one’s membership, and considering ways in which one’s participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.”

The third category is *affiliate member*, one who is a member of another congregation of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the congregation of membership is situated, has presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate council or governing body of that congregation and has been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member can participate in the congregation the same way as an active member except that an affiliate member may not vote in congregational meetings or be elected to ordered ministry or other office in the congregation.

The fourth category is *other participants* who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination. They are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized. Those who are not members or have ceased active participation do not participate in the governance of the church.

Sometimes a church can be seen by culture in general as just another non-profit, social justice, charitable, or social organization. But those images express only part of what a church is. Each of those ideas reflects only one aspect of Christ's ministry. Even taken together, they do not add up to what the church is. The church is the body of Christ and as such it is responsible for carrying out, under Christ's direction, Christ's mission of reconciling love for God and other people through its educational, worship, mission outreach, and fellowship activities.

Active church membership is an honor, privilege, responsibility, commitment, and joy, because as such you become a tag-a-long with God in the mission of redeeming all of creation so that it becomes what God created it – and you in particular – to be.

Rev. Dr. Susan L. DeHoff

### Bell Tower Update Continued from Page 1

Blair, along with BRS, made an on-site visit to assess the tower, climbing up into it, on Feb. 10. Following their assessment, some Session members and Pastor Susan met with Mr. Lagodimos and Neil Rouleau, COO of BRS. It became clear that the sanctuary building needs to be closed until the tower is made safe. In an emergency called meeting following that meeting, Session voted to close the building until the tower can be secured and is no longer in danger of collapsing.

Contractors are in close contact with Jason Mercer and Pastor Susan throughout the week. Session and Trustees are working very closely together to insure that the best contractors available become part of the team addressing the problem. In addition to the structural engineer, BRS, and Blair, an architect will be included on the project. Session is exploring loan options as well as grant funding. The preliminary cost estimate is that it could go as high as \$500,000.00.

Session is hoping for generous donations to the Building Repair Fund. This is the time to express your love and concern for the church by generously giving to the Building Repair Fund. Now is the time for sacrificial giving!

**If you have questions, you may contact any of the Trustees, Session members, or Pastor Susan.**

# FUEL FUND COLLECTION

The proposed budget for this fiscal year projects \$10,000 needed for fuel. You can donate to the fuel fund on February 12th. (Envelopes marked with "Fuel Fund" will be in the bulletin that Sunday and extra envelopes will be in the worship area. If you have not yet contributed to the Fuel Fund and would like to, you may designate a check by writing "fuel fund" on the memo line or you may write the same designation on an envelope containing a cash offering. Thank you for your support.



## ***Words of Inspiration*** -- For February, 2023

The month of February seems to bring all kinds of surprises. As we look at our inconsistent weather, it can bring a lot of snow and freezing temperatures (like we are experiencing now, with record breaking temperatures that can bring all sorts of nasty setbacks.) But if we take the time to think about our elders, they definitely also saw all sorts of weather in their lifetime also. It is always a treasure to hear stories from them and how the weather affected their homes and lives. But they always treasured the ability to express and share their experiences and stories of fun in (or with) the snow, and how they survived with the bitter cold and weather changes.

Now we can also share many positive sides when we look at the month that celebrates a holiday (President's Day) as well as fun (or special days) such as Valentine's Day, Groundhog Day, and then we have Ash Wednesday. With the bitter weather we are currently having, it would not be surprising if the groundhog stayed in his underground home. Valentine's Day is always a warming sign, though, when we share our love with our spouses, friends, family, and special people.

The greatest gift that we have received from God though is His son, Jesus Christ, who was willing to live on earth and teach us the true meaning of love, which he exemplified with his sacrifice on a "rugged" wooden cross. This special love that Jesus gave us, is a genuine love where all of mankind can share a special bond with others, (even including our pets). This exemplifies God's true message from Isaiah for us... *"In that day, the wolf and the lamb will lie down together, and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among lions, and a child will lead them all."* [Isaiah 11:6]  
**AMEN**

**NEW MEMBERS**



Bonnie Candalino



Patty Reynolds

We thank you God for the addition of two new members to our local flock and to the church universal. We thank you for their talents and gifts that they bring to us. We thank you for the love that Bonnie shows in the raising of her four grandchildren. We thank you, God, for the enthusiasm of the kids as they participate in the worship services, especially in the children's sermons. We thank you O God, for Patty's skills in keeping the church clean. As we celebrate their gifts, we celebrate everyone's gifts that they bring to the ministry of the United Presbyterian Church of Whitinsville. May all that we do, glorify your name. In His name. we pray. Amen.

## Church Family News



Tanya and Ken had a lovely time celebrating over the holidays.





Mallorie and her sorority sisters attending a recent ski-themed party



## THANK YOU CORNER

*Thank you to the congregation for helping out with the NAC Christmas baskets-The Deacons*

THANK YOU

*Session would like to thank Kathy Miedema for being our volunteer Corporate Assistant Treasurer. She has been the behind the scenes person who makes sure that all of our contribution information is recorded so that members have an accurate record of those contributions at the end of the year. Her dedication and commitment has allowed this part of the church finances to run smoothly for many years. On behalf of the whole congregation Session gives Kathy a huge thank you for a job well done.*

*Thank you for your patience in waiting for the February newsletter to be produced. (Before working in the office, I never knew how much was involved in getting out the newsletter.) Mark*

### Psalm 25

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
In you I trust, O my God  
Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths;  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
For you are God my Savior,  
And my hope is in you all day long.  
Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from old.  
Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;  
According to your love remember me,  
For you are good, O Lord.

Psalm 25:1-2a, 4-7 (NIV)

**THANKS BE TO GOD!!**

## **PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONCERN**

- Mary Spalton has a prayer of thanks and praise that her sister Connie responded to treatment this week and that her blood pressure and calcium levels are normal once again.
- Gay McCrea asks prayers for her daughter Heidi who tested positive for Covid.
- Jimmy Tobin has a prayer of thanks and praise that he passed the final TSA test to become a badged, fully certified TSA officer.
- Suzanne Santoro has a prayer of praise that Tony is back at work following a bout with Covid. She asks continued prayers for Jennifer, who is battling Covid.
- Mallorie Mercer has a prayer of praise and joy that she earned a 4.0 grade point average her first semester of college.
- Tanya Morin has a prayer of joy that she has a new job as a full-time co-teacher in a kindergarten prep classroom at Blackstone Valley Children's Place.
- Kimberly Mercer asks prayers for her family, as her 96 year old Grandmother, Evelynne Frasier went to be with her Lord on Friday evening, Jan. 14.
- Ruth Hoekstra asks prayers for her daughter, Dee, as she has surgery to remove all the "hardware" that was placed in her arm following surgery to repair damage caused by a fall. The surgery to remove the plates and screws must be done by the end of January. Pray for a good recovery and use of that arm.
- Ronda Thomas asks prayers for healing for her foot. She has a bad infection..
- Continue to be with the family and friends of Nancy P. Frieswyk who recently died
- We also pray for Tanya Morin, who became ill on Saturday. She does not have Covid, but is feeling pretty miserable with fever and all that goes with it.
- And we keep Mallorie Mercer and Ava Whitney in our prayers as they begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of their freshman year of college.
- Diana and Ken Pedersen have a prayer of joy that Ken finished his chemotherapy on Friday. Although it will take a few weeks for him to fully feel like himself again, they rejoice that they have made it through these past, difficult 6 months. Diana and Ken also have a prayer request that the final CT scan that he will have toward the end of February will show no signs of cancer.
- Eileen asks prayers for Michael that God will give his drs. wisdom to find a cure for the leg wounds.
- Jim and Debbie Baker ask for continued prayers for their daughter-in-law's cousin who suffered a stroke on Christmas Day. She is currently in rehab for 3 weeks and will then go home, but in need of 24-hour care. The drs. are telling her that there is some permanent deficits. Pray for hope, patience, and for the maximum amount of healing.
- Carol Pilibosian asks prayers for her Mom, as she is experiencing some weakness and fatigue.
- Please keep the Giemza family in your prayers, as his nephew died a little over a week ago.
- Marilyn Alling asks prayers for her best friend whose husband is rapidly progressing to end stage dementia.
- Chris Lee asks prayers for his work colleagues that they will stay free of Covid.
- Jean Finnegan has a prayer of thanks to God for all the help she has received from the congregation as she has been recovering from hand surgery.
- Patty Reynolds has a prayer of joy that her daughter, Jessica, is engaged to her boyfriend, Joshua, and they plan on a September wedding.

## **FEBRUARY 2023 CHURCH CALENDAR**

- Wed. 1**      **Peace of Bread**  
**Worship Committee Meeting**
- Sun. 5**      **9 AM Adult Sunday School (ZOOM)**  
**10:30 AM Worship Service**  
**11:45 Coffee Fellowship**
- Mon. 6**      **7 PM Session Prayer Meeting**
- Wed. 7**      **Peace of Bread**  
**CG & N Committee Meeting**
- Sun. 12**     **9 AM Adult Sunday School (ZOOM)**  
**10:30 AM Worship Service**  
**11:45 Coffee Fellowship Noon Gospel of John Bible Study**
- Wed. 15**    **Peace of Bread**
- Sun. 19**     **9 AM Adult Sunday School (ZOOM)**  
**10:30 AM Worship Service**  
**11:45 Coffee Fellowship Noon-Gospel of John Bible Study**
- Mon. 20**    **7 PM Session Meeting**
- Wed. 22**    **Peace of Bread**
- Fri. 17**     **Newsletter Submission Deadline for March 2023 Issue**
- Sun. 26**     **9 AM Adult Sunday School (ZOOM)**  
**10:30 AM Worship Service**  
**11:45 Coffee Fellowship Noon-Gospel of John Bible Study**
- Mon. 27**    **7 PM Deacons Meeting**
- Wed. 28**    **Peace of Bread**