



The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

April 2011

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First ChurchNEWS

Statement of Purpose

We gather as a faith community to love and magnify God. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will love our neighbors as ourselves, advocating for peace and justice. We will go out and share our faith in Christ, inviting others to join us. We will be nurturers of the spirit and teachers of the Word. We will welcome and provide sanctuary to all.

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As gardeners of the spirit, we provide fertile soil to nurture both church and community, harvesting faith, compassion, and understanding of God's love, as taught by Jesus Christ.

Welcome!

At FCCR, you will find joyful hearts, open minds and a caring community. If you are a long-time church member, seeking a new spiritual community, or brand new to the very idea of "church"...if you are young or have young children or are mature beyond your years...if you are single, married, partnered, divorced, widowed, or in transition...no matter who you are, at FCCR, you are welcome to join us in celebrating God's love, sharing warm welcome, and offering sanctuary for all.

Holy Week Services

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on April 17th. This service of celebration and of anticipation will include the distribution of palms and a parade, which is always especially enjoyed by our children.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

On Thursday, April 21st, we will hold our annual Maundy Thursday Potluck Supper at 6 pm, followed by the Maundy Thursday Worship Service at 7:15, all in Fellowship Hall. Families and children are really encouraged to attend – we stay seated at the dinner tables and there are both easy participation & activity bulletins for all children in attendance. This is a special time for the whole church family to eat together and remember Jesus' last supper.

Finally, Easter is April 24th, and we will celebrate the hope and joy of the resurrection in worship 10 am in the Sanctuary. Our marvelous choir will be joined by our equally wonderful Handbell Ensemble and FCCR Orchestra. The service will be followed by a light coffee hour and an Easter egg hunt for children and youth.

We hope everyone will come for these special services of faith and invite a friend or neighbor!

Worship in April at FCCR

April 3, Sunday – Stewardship Sunday Worship with Communion

April 10, Sunday – Worship with Special Music for Lent

April 17, Sunday – Palm Sunday

Special Worship for the Whole Church Family

Worship includes a Palm Parade (continued page 2)

Church Contact Information:
Office Phone: 781-944-0205

www.churchofreading.org
Office Email: office1.fccr@verizon.net

Dear Friends,

I am so happy to greet you in the spirit and season of spring! Like many people, it is my favorite season. Even when spring begins with snow on the ground, I am aware that just beneath the snow, new life is growing and will soon push its way through to the surface. I look forward to those first crocus blooms – they make me smile! Nowadays, I am smiling a lot! (Though still waiting for the LAST snow!)



The sprouts and blooms of early spring flowers also make me think of new life. This is one of the things I love about spring – and about Holy Week and Easter, which are fast approaching. For me, the events and celebrations of Holy Week and Easter are about new life and the renewal of life that we may find with God.

Sometimes it is easy to get lost in the middle of the story of Holy Week and focus more on the betrayals and violence in Jesus' arrest and the agony of his crucifixion. While it is true that Jesus endured a violent and agonizing death, and this part of the story is important, I do not believe it is the most important part of the story.

The important themes for my faith focus instead on the community of people and the relationships they had, before, during and after the arrest and crucifixion. I find meaning in this part of the story, and this provides me with a basis for what I believe about God, Jesus and Christian community.

So, I would invite you to join me in remembering the stories of Holy Week and Easter and allowing them to feed and nurture your faith. Join us at the Maundy Thursday Potluck and Service to hear and see the story of the community meal in the upper room and the fracturing of the community in the garden and beyond. Then be with us on Easter Sunday for worship, as we re-encounter the powerful love of God in the risen Christ and re-experience the joy of new life.

Blessings!

Lisa

New Discussion Group - April 26 at 7 pm—Are you interested in hearing about an approach to Christianity that is inclusive, innovative, and informed? Come join in this group, forming to explore 'progressive Christianity'! Open to all members of FCCR, as well as friends and other folks curious about a Christian perspective that is distinctly forward-looking and seeks to respond to what people are seeking from a faith community today and tomorrow. This gathering will take place in the Schneider/Maitland home here in Reading. Questions? Contact Rev. Lisa or Betsy Schneider.

The Adult Lenten opportunity, "Just a Closer Walk: A Psalm-Inspired Lenten Path", is open to anyone who wishes to participate. There will be a group meeting on Sunday afternoon, April 10 from noon to 1 pm, and the same program will be shared after Soup Supper on April 12.

Worship in April at FCCR (continued)

April 21, Thursday – Maundy Thursday

6:00 pm – Potluck Supper in Fellowship Hall

7:15 pm – Service of Worship in Fellowship Hall
Communion & Tenebrae

Families and Children encouraged to attend – there will be easy participation & activity bulletins for all children in attendance

April 22, Friday – Good Friday

12:15 – Ecumenical Service at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church (Lisa will be a participant)

April 24, Sunday – 10:00 Easter Worship for the Whole Church Family

Activity packs will be available for children for worship (No Church School)

Easter Egg Hunt after worship

May 1 – Centennial Celebration Sunday

April Youth Event and Summer Mission Trip Information

Please mark your calendars for the following Youth events in April. There will be a Sr. Youth meeting on Sunday, April 3 immediately following worship and a Jr. Youth outing on April 10 (TBD).

The date for the summer mission trip has been set. We will be working with Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP) based out of Washington D.C. The trip will be June 25-July 2. We have a limited number of spots available and they are filling very quickly. Please contact Blake Huggins (bhuggins@bu.edu) if you are interested in attending and if you have any questions concerning the details.



2011 Summer Camp Opportunities

Yes, it is already time to start thinking about summer activities!

The NH UCC Outdoor Ministry has posted camp schedules and registration information at www.hortoncenter.org. New this year are mini-camps for elementary school children in July and an extended week for high school students in August. Family camp, a great vacation and chance to experience Horton Center, will be held on August 9-12th.

Children and families from FCCR have been attending Horton Center for years, and would love to share their experiences with you. Contact Betsy Schneider for more information.

Intergenerational Yoga continues – Sundays at 1:15 in the Youth Room (behind the stage). \$10 adults, \$5 kids/seniors per 75 minute class. Contact Joann Sanford, jo.take@verizon.net or 781-944-7805, for more info or to get email reminders and updates.

READERS SOUGHT FOR Maundy Thursday Service!! – If you are interested in reading for the Maundy Thursday Service, please speak to Lisa, as soon as possible. Thank you!

Need a Mother's Day gift?

Join Congo Club at the Stoneham Theater on May 7th!

42nd Street" at Stoneham Theater on May 7th at 8 pm. Peggy Sawyer is a star-stuck chorus girl from a small town who gets her big break when the star of the show breaks her ankle. Can Peggy rise to the occasion and become a star herself? Don't "Shuffle off to Buffalo" - come and see this "Lullaby of Broadway"! Tickets (\$44 value) are \$32 each if paid by April 10th, \$37 each if paid by April 22nd. Checks should be made out to Stoneham Theater. Dessert after the show at the Sanford's, 52 Hopkins St. Feel free to invite friends! RSVP today to Joann Sanford, jo.take@verizon.net or 781-944-7805. Seats are limited.

A Note From Ruth Richards

Dear Friends,

I just wanted to let you know that folks from FCCR would be most welcome to come to my Ecclesiastical Council, which will take place on Wednesday, May 18 at the Acton Congregational Church, at 7 PM. Please don't feel burdened to come - I know how busy you all are, but I wanted to invite you, of course - as I would never have reached this point without all your help, advice and encouragement! Only members of the Central Association of the Mass Conference may vote, but people from elsewhere can participate in the examination and discussion of the candidate.

My profile is out and I am excited to have a temporary job for three months at the Congregational Church of Harvard, (town - not university) providing coverage while their regular minister, Rev Greg Schmidt is on sabbatical - so I'm excited about that.

Love to all and blessings, Ruth

PS. The church's address: Acton Congregational Church, 12 Concord Road, Acton MA.

Fools for Fun! Spring Auction, Sat., April 9th

Neither you nor your family will want to miss this night of food, fun, and the opportunity to bid on some really great goods or services for reasonable prices! There are folks hard at work behind the scenes planning the event, collecting goods from businesses, managing the lists of donations from both businesses and church family members, planning the meal, lining up entertainers and more. BUT, it's not too late for you to help! We will need help setting up during the day on the 9th. Our master chefs Judy Austin and Deidre Ryan will surely want some support either cooking or serving or both. We will need help at the auction—selling chance tickets, helping with check out at the end, cleaning up from dinner and from the event at the end of the evening. Where will you fit in? Contact either Linda Ananian or Gay Williams.



By now you should be aware of the plan for the evening but here's a quick recap: arrive at 5 to start checking out the items available for bid; 5:30 magic show; 6-6:45 dinner; 6:45-7 more time to make your bids; starting at 7, singing with Peter Stewart with an intermission for last bid opportunities.

Admission is \$10 per person or \$25 per family. There is no need to pay in advance but **we do request advance reservations** so we set up enough tables and chairs. Please contact Gay Williams, 781-944-5140 or email at ggwill@aol.com with the number of seats you will need. If you have a donation to make, you can tell her about that as well!

Final Centennial Event: Open House and Concert May 1, 2011, 1-4:30 pm

The Centennial Celebration Team is energetically planning another event as the second celebration of the Centennial of the original part of our current church building. There will be multiple activities that we hope you will enjoy! Some of the events are the following: a pre-Open House historical tour or stained glass window scavenger hunt, an Open House with activities for adults and children, a Rededication Ceremony, and a concert with our own Jubilate Ringers. It promises to be a great event!

As we have gone through this year of celebration, it is impossible not to look backwards at the strength and faith of our predecessors who built this church after the devastating fire of 1909. However, now it is time to look forward, by taking their example, and making our own fervent efforts to do God's work in the world.

This will be the final event of our Centennial year, and the Celebration Team looks forward to sharing this very special day with all of you. We look forward to seeing regular attendees, sometimes attendees, and all those of us who hold this church in a special place in their hearts. Come and let us be thankful for the past, to celebrate the work of the people in our church now, and to dedicate ourselves to God's work in the future.



1 pm—Early bird historic tours and sanctuary scavenger hunt: SPECIAL from 1-1:30 pm

1:30 pm—Open House: Snacks, punch, children's and adult activities, photos from Oct.31 Luncheon

3 pm—Rededication in the sanctuary and organ selections

3:30-4:30 pm—Bell choir concert by Jubilate Ringers

Donate Blood at FCCR

With the arrival of spring comes the feeling of renewal, hope and possibilities. This spring you can share this sense of hope with others by donating blood? It will bring a smile to your face and warm the hearts of those you help. Please spring into action and make an appointment to donate blood today!



First Congregational Church of Reading—Monday April 25th from 1-7 Guild and Dining Hall. If you want to help with Registration or the canteen table for an hour or two, please call the office.

Register at: 1-800-RedCross or online at: www.RedCrossBlood.org

“There is Enough”

This is the theme of this year’s One Great Hour of Sharing, which our congregation will celebrate Sunday, April 10. On this vast planet of God-given resources, we honor our Creator because there is already enough for all. We live in a world brought into being and intended by God to sustain all of creation. Yet far too many across our globe do not have all they need. Brothers and sisters near and far lack even the basic necessities of life: water, food, shelter, jobs, or peace. So if there is, indeed, enough to go around, why are so many without?

There is enough—but for all to have access, we must share. And that’s what One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has been doing for more than 60 years—sharing your resources with those who need them most. OGHS is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God’s message of love and hope to people in more than 80 countries. This offering is also taken by eight other Protestant denominations, thus multiplying the effectiveness and extent of our witness many times over. In cooperation with hundreds of local partners around the world, One Great Hour of Sharing is part of a remarkable network of service and caring that is efficient, effective, and faithful. Administrative costs are typically less than 8 percent annually.

Through OGHS, the UCC works with national and international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. The UCC annually channels more than \$3 million dollars through One Great Hour of Sharing to these and other humanitarian needs in the world.

The funds collected help to:

[Build sustainable communities](#) through self-help programs that enable people and communities to stand against and rise above hunger, disease, illiteracy, and other forces of injustice that deny and destroy dignity.

[Respond to disaster](#) with emergency and long-term assistance to people in the aftermath of natural or human-caused events such as hurricanes, tornados, storms, floods, tidal waves, fires, explosions, technological disasters, civil strife, and war.

[Minister to refugees](#) by responding with advocacy and help, hope, and hospitality.

As you can see, sharing your resources through your One Great Hour of Sharing offering can literally change the lives of those who otherwise would not have enough. Sharing our God-granted resources helps others not only survive, but perhaps even thrive as they find new ways to generate income, gain access to clean water, grow food, and live in communities where peace and justice prevail over poverty, violence, and inequity.

Drivers Needed

The Care Committee is trying to expand our list of volunteers who are available to drive members of our church family when a family member or friend is unavailable. Most of these trips are to medical appointments in the area, some for shopping and errands, or even transportation to church. Since you would usually have to be available during the day, retirees are the most likely source of volunteers. We have an energetic, loyal core of helpers now, but the need has grown lately and it would be helpful to have an expanded list from which to draw. To add your name to our list does not mean a definite commitment for any particular job or length of time, just an okay to call you if a need arises. I’m sure you would find this service rewarding, and often a good opportunity to meet a new friend! If this sounds like something you’re interested in please call me.

Nancy Ballantyne, 781-944-7564 For the Care Committee.



3rd Annual Reading Bicycle Recycling Event



Do you have a bike that is outgrown or neglected? Someone in your community can use that bike! Do you need a new bike for yourself or for a growing child? We might have one to suit your needs! Join us at the annual Bicycle Recycling Event in Reading. Last year we found new homes for 60 bikes!

Donate a bike in *good working condition* on Friday or Saturday and you will receive a voucher that allows early admittance to the bike give-away on Saturday. Don't have a bike to donate? You can still choose a bike from the donations Saturday after 12:30pm.

Donation Hours:	Friday	April 8 th	11:00am - 1:00pm
	Saturday	April 9 th	9:00am - 11:00am
Selection Hours:	Saturday	April 9 th	12:00 - 12:30 ~ Voucher Holders Only
	Saturday	April 9 th	12:30 - 2:00pm ~ General Public

Join us at RMLD, 230 Ash Street, rain or shine. The first 50 bike donors will also receive a 20% discount coupon from **REI**. The bike event is sponsored by ReadingCares and the Cities for Climate Protection Program Committee. For questions, or to help at the bike event, please contact info@ReadingCares.org.

English Tutors Wanted! - Rev. Lisa's friend and colleague, Pastor Kyung of the Korean Church on Main Street, has written asking if there are folks in our congregation who might wish to help several people in his church who are looking for English tutors. Here are the details:

- One to one meeting setting for everyday-conversation English
- \$25 per an hour-long session, once or twice per week
- Meeting on any arranged day for weekday evenings or Sunday late afternoon (or can be arranged)
- Meeting place in Reading or nearby
- Adult tutor preferred

If you have any questions, please be in touch with me (Lisa) or email or call Rev. Kyung Yu directly at Kyunglyu@hotmail.com or (781)439-1840.

Dear Friends,

Can you envision a coalition of LGBT welcoming churches within our community? Might this coalition sponsor outreach at community events? Provide resources? Send a message of tolerance to the wider community? What would your vision be? We look forward to hearing your ideas.

Collectively, our voices are stronger. Together we can build a faith based movement for equality and inclusively. Anne Wiehem member of South Church's Committee for Open Dialogue will be contacting you within the next few weeks.

Coalition of Churches first meeting will be: April 4th 7 pm, South Church, 41 Central St., Andover, MA 01810

For more information, please feel free to contact Anne at: 978-475-1491

Life Line Screening will be at our church in Pilgrim Hall Thursday, April 14th. Life Line Screening is the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings and offers tests for stroke prevention, vascular disease, and osteoporosis. Screenings include: Stroke/Carotid Artery – Heart Rhythm (Atrial Fibrillation-Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm – Peripheral Arterial Disease and Osteoporosis Risk Assessment. \$60 per screening or \$145 for all five.

Please call Colleen @ 518-288-3293 directly to make your appointment as Lifeline is giving the church a \$10 discount. If you wish to know more about Lifeline Screening go grab a pink brochure outside the office or from the bulletin board.



CWF News Antique Appraisal

Have you always wondered the value of the painting Aunt Sue gave you? Wondering if you should hold on to those old books? This is your chance to get the answers. CWF is having an Antique Appraisal on Saturday, April 16th from 10-1 in the dining room. Bring up to three items to be appraised by Gerald Herrot, a certified appraiser. The cost is \$5 per item or 3 items for \$10. Coffee and crumpets will be served, as we listen to the stories about unique items. No antiques??? Come anyway for the fun.

Cookbook News

The cookbook will be ready for our May 1st Centennial Celebration. Many have preordered or reserved one. Look for our sign at the Antique Appraisal to preorder.

Also, please note because of scheduling conflicts, we will not be having a Spring Ham 'n Bean Supper or Spaghetti Dinner.

Plant Swap—Saturday, May 21

Is your garden getting boring? Do some plants need some taming? Are you just starting to plan a garden? Do your indoor plants look like they are taking over? We have just the thing for you! On May 21st, from 8:30-12:00, CWF is holding their annual Plant Swap on the Church lawn outside the office. Here is how it works- You dig up any plants in your garden that are overgrown, you are tired of, or you'd like to share. Bring them to the plant swap and trade them for plants that others have brought from their garden. Indoor and outdoor plants are welcome. No money is exchanged, but you may buy plants if you have none. Floral cards will also be for sale. Any profit will go to the CWF Kitchen Fund. Neighbors are welcome to participate. Questions? Need help digging things up? Call Joan Kingston or Mary Ann Higgins 617-347-8346

Memorial Easter Plants Order Form Deadline Sunday, April 17th

I would like to order an Easter Plant to decorate our Sanctuary for the Easter Services.
Please order the following for me:

- Tete-a-tete daffodils @ \$3.00 each
 - Tulip Plant(s) @ \$6.00 each
 - Easter Lily Plant(s) @ \$8.00 each
- Total Enclosed \$ _____**

In loving memory of: _____

or

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

Check one of the following:

- I will take my plant(s) home
- Please give my plant(s) to a Shut-in

Name _____

Address _____

Questions: Call Mary Ann Higgins(944-4428) or Ginny Davenport(944-5276)

Please pay when ordering Make checks payable to FCCR and mark the memo "Easter Plants"



Thank You Notes

To all my friends at FCCR,

I would like to thank everyone for all the calls, emails, cards prayers and remembrances that I have received during my ordeal with my eye surgery. One eye is home free and the other is a waiting game to see if it heals properly. It is a very warm feeling to know that you are cared about and in the prayers of so many. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Marilyn



I was walking one day and I saw this wonderful old church. I stood there for nearly an hour and then walked around to the front and there was a huge sign that said "No matter what, you are welcome", MM oh ya. I heard that before, but that sign's words stayed in my head. The next day I went to the Senior Center and was talking to Laurie Tucker about that sign. She told me that was the church she attended and would I like to go. I walked in then and never in my life had I felt such Peace. See I just get up each morning and ask for God to use me for whatever he/she wants to. Then one day God put me in the most wonderful place and with the most God-filled folks I have ever met. So once again God you have put me where you want me. I know I have been given love, music and something I can always count on. Thank you, dear Father in heaven, for all of the most amazing, wonderful people that have given me so very much.

Rainbows and Blessings, Betty Horne

Dear Church Family,

Thanks to so many who remembered me with calls, cards, and meals following my total hip replacement! I am especially grateful to the Care Ministry. Thanks to their dedication and co-ordination we were blessed with delicious meals and fellowship while I was restricted to my chair and crutches.

Love, *Shirley Osborne*

Dear Prayer Shawl Ministry,

You gave my mother-in-law a prayer shawl when she broke her hip. Now that Nana has passed, I want to let you know that she had continued to use it for warmth, both physically and emotionally. Its light continues to shine even when the recipient has passed. I now have the shawl, and it has warmed and comforted me.

Love, Mary Ann Higgins



Thanks to those who donated flowers to beautify our worship space in March

- In loving memory of Cliff Allen with love from Lee, Scott, Dawn and all five grandchildren.
- In loving memory of Muriel, Bill and Donald Myers by John Myers.
- In loving memory of Robert Fosberg by his wife, Nancy, and family
- In loving memory of John and Aileen Meyers by their daughter, Carol Patterson.

Daily prayers are invited for all of our friends and members-especially those who are dealing with these special joys and concerns. They and their families are most grateful for your spiritual support and cards of greeting.



Prayers for the Month of March

Following are many of the prayers shared during the past month

O God, We lift up our petitions and concerns in prayer..

- ✚ A friend Marie who had heart surgery this month.
- ✚ Ben Philbrick who is in Rehab.
- ✚ Diane Cain's great-grandson, Tyler William Rossi, born by emergency C-Section a month early who had an infection. He is still in the hospital but doing better.
- ✚ Sister-in-law Marie who is very ill.
- ✚ Adeline McDonald whose infection keeps coming back.
- ✚ Gary Hylan's father Horace, who spent some time in the hospital and is at home recovering.
- ✚ Marilyn Hossman for healing after eye surgeries.
- ✚ For Jane McCord's mother now recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- ✚ Shirley Osborne recovering from hip surgery.
- ✚ Ginny Davenport, Kathy Ulrich and Betty Horne who are dealing with cancer.
- ✚ For Meg's friend Kelly, who just had a lumpectomy for a cancerous tumor.
- ✚ For Dom Bellany who is not doing well - his cancer has spread.
- ✚ Ed Drombrowski fighting cancer.
- ✚ Pat Lucas's mother who now has Hospice Care.
- ✚ Friends and family of Donna, who is moving with grace, through her final days.
- ✚ For strength and faith during a tough time.
- ✚ Children with special needs of all kinds, and their care givers, teachers & parents.
- ✚ Family reconciliation.
- ✚ Families in conflict.
- ✚ Pray for Erica, to give her courage and for her dad to give him an open heart.
- ✚ My parents, struggling with old age and health issues.
- ✚ The people in New Zealand recovering after the earthquake.
- ✚ For the people of Libya, Egypt, Bahrain and other countries in crisis in North Africa and the Mid-East.
- ✚ The people of Japan affected by the quake, tsunami, and potential nuclear disaster.
- ✚ For my family as I begin a new job and we close a difficult chapter in our lives. We are truly blessed by the strength of our family and friendships.

O God, we lift up these celebrations and joys in prayer...

- ✚ Parker Middle School youth in their performances of Fiddler on the Roof.
- ✚ Congratulations to our FCCR players: Sara Bond, Travis Giragosian, Emily LeLacheur, Tim Sanford and Megan Samarian.
- ✚ My friend and his wife who had triplets this month.
- ✚ A friend having their baby girl this month.
- ✚ Findlay Dipple, Joan and Joe Kingston's great grand-niece born by emergency C-Section Monday - all is well.
- ✚ The generosity and compassion of this congregation from Sandi from Heifer.
- ✚ Marriage of Rachel Potter and Tom Ireland.

O God, we pray for those who are grieving...

- ✚ Pray for Ray Higgins and his family as his mother Mildred, who we know as Nana, passed away.
- ✚ For Joan Kingston and family in the death of her mother. Mary Fritsch, whose life they celebrate.
- ✚ For Dan Walker, Lucinda Ellert and family on the death of Dan's mother, Marguerite.
- ✚ Anne Iwen and family on the death of her husband Milton.
- ✚ Peter Rozett, Christine Georgilas and their family on the death of Peter's mother.
- ✚ Noel Robinson, a friend.
- ✚ Remembrance of Nancy Rule who passed away four years ago.
- ✚ For Jennifer Souza's sister-in-law, Jennie Nystom, and her family whose father passed away.
- ✚ The family of Margo Popken who died of a heart attack at the age of 48, leaving three young children.
- ✚ Ralph and Adele Blunt on the loss of their sister-in-law Marie Blunt who passed away.
- ✚ For a family with three children who just lost their 45 year old mother to cancer.

And those who are cared for at home:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Jane Rice | Peter Thorstensen |
| Grace Faulkner | Bill Rule |
| John Weston | |

Please call the church office for these addresses if you would like to send a card or visit these friends.

calendar