

FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives



February 4, 2021

This Sunday

To this day when we or a loved one goes to the doctor, we are seeking a healer more than a technician. Do not get me wrong, we want the skills of a technician, in fact, the absolute best, but with the touch of a healer.

Dr. Richard Selzer taught surgery at the Yale School of Medicine and used literature and writing as additional tools to explore the art of healing with patients and physicians. A colleague described him as a man *who lives with a knife ... but preserves wonder and awe*. He authored numerous books, told multiple stories, and explored ethical boundaries but one of my favorite observations is from his book, *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*.



I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face post-operative, her mouth twisted - palsy, clownish. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed . . . to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had cut the little nerve. The young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. . . "Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks. "Yes," I say, "it will. It is because the nerve was cut." She nods and

is silent. But the young man smiles, "I like it," he says. "It is kind of cute." He bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I am so close that I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate her, to show her that their kiss still works. . . . I hold my breath and let the wonder in.

Medical knowledge and skills are greatly advanced since Jesus' day – and thank God – but when our lives have been disordered by disease or accident, we long for a healer. Jesus' call to disciples includes the charge to heal and cast out unclean spirits but that does not mean we are all to go to medical school. Perhaps it means living with and by a grace that knows lips can twist and kisses still work. The wonder of it all.

This Sunday we will read the story of Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law and the response of the townspeople to bring *all who were sick or possessed of demon* to Jesus.

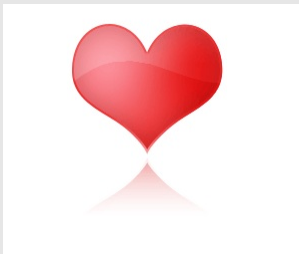
On Sunday morning, you will find our **worship service** on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716>. **Jesse Aguilar**, assisted by **Fina**, will ring the hour, **Amie Colcord** will read the Gospel lesson, **Sarah Tocco** will offer music and the **First Parish Choir** will sing. While on Facebook, please "share" the church's post on your Facebook page.

Following the pre-recorded Sunday Worship on Facebook, please plan to gather on Zoom at **10:30am** for **Communion** using this link: (<https://zoom.us/j/97776095457>). You will want to have a cup (with juice or wine) and bread within reach when you join on Zoom.

After Communion, plan to stay on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/97776095457>) as we will have our **Annual Meeting**.

In faith,
Jill & Richard Edens

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



This week we learned that former parishioner, Gary Shaw, passed away. He leaves behind his children, Elizabeth and Mason, and his former wife Susan. He is the former son-in-law of member Mason Taber. Gary had been instrumental in streamlining our investment portfolio as the church's investment advisor. Our prayers go out to Elizabeth and Mason.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH

Our 2020 Fiscal Annual Meeting will be held virtually after Zoom Communion on Sunday, February 7th. Please join us for this important discussion about our 2021 budget.

SEVENTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING THE FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UNITED CHURCH



Under the authority of the constitution of First Parish, United Church, notice is hereby given that the Seventy-Second Annual Meeting of the First Parish of Westwood, United Church will be held on Sunday, February 7th 2021 on Zoom following the service of Communion. The meeting will take action upon the following agenda:

1. To approve and accept the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting.
2. To hear and approve the Treasurer's Report for 2020.
3. To hear the proposed budget for 2021.
4. To hear and act on any other matters which may properly come before this meeting.

Light Up Your Winter Bible Study Continues...



**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9
5PM**

Zoom Bible Study, (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>)

Join your pastors and other church friends for Bible study on Tuesday, February 9 at 5pm via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>).

We will look at the lectionary readings for Sundays, February 14 (Transfiguration) and February 21 (First Sunday in Lent).

The Sundays following Epiphany and prior to entering Lent concludes on February 14 when we read the story of Jesus' Transfiguration. As in the gospels themselves, Jesus' transfiguration occurs just before the passion narrative (the stories of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, death and crucifixion). We too are preparing to enter Lent and the story of Jesus' passion.

- **February 14** – When threatened, selflessness is not the default setting for most humans. Self-protection is. To the disciples' dismay and protest, Jesus predicts he must suffer, die, and be resurrected. In the experience of Jesus' transfiguration, the disciples hear a voice from heaven affirming the way of sacrificial love.
- **February 21** – Jesus arose from the waters of baptism into temptation in the wilderness. The moment we seek to discipline our lives to achieve a goal whether it is to run in next year's marathon, diet or usher in the reign of God, we are tempted away.

Prepare for worship by joining us as we converse about these texts for February 14 and 21 via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>). As we have learned no time is right for everyone. If you are able, please join us. If you are interested, and this is not a good time, please let us know (jrichardedens@gmail.com) or (jillredens@gmail.com)

Pastoral Search Committee Update



the new First Parish – Westwood web site which went live last weekend! (Here is a **[direct link](#)** to the web site.)

The Local Church Profile, which was assembled over the past several weeks by the Transition Committee, has been posted on the national Ministerial Opportunities web site **[click here](#)**. Additionally, if you look at the posting you will see the link to

The Search Committee met Monday night to start organizing to receive and review profiles from interested candidates. We look forward to this work and welcome prayers of support from the First Parish community.

Ash Wednesday Service

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE



<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>

Our journey towards Easter 2021 begins on February 17, Ash Wednesday. Held in tension with Easter's promise of new life, the observance of Ash Wednesday is a deep confession of all that may thwart the new life that awaits and a reminder of our vulnerability as humans: our mortality.

Keeping with tradition, First Parish of Westwood will celebrate Ash Wednesday with our neighbors: St. John's Episcopal Church and First Baptist Church. The service will be hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church, we will be using the liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer.

The service will be virtual. It will be live at 9am in the morning and then available any time after that on the Facebook site of St. John's Episcopal Church (<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>). We will be invited to place ashes on ourselves at home.

Rev. Jennifer Phillips has offered these suggestions for having ashes available at your home:

At home before the service, you are invited to write sins or regrets on pieces of paper and safely burn these in a fireproof container. If this is not possible, the black from a burned candle wick may be used, or even some soil from the ground. Place a small dish with the ash on a table near you for use during the service. As the prayer of blessing is said by an officiant, hold the dish in your palm. Only a small quantity is needed, and you may sign yourself with a thumb dipped in the ash at the appropriate moment in the service, or members of a household may sign one another with the words of administration.

Again, please join us on February 17 in an Observance of Ash Wednesday (<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>) at 9am or any time thereafter.

Covid-19 Vaccine Information



Please see the information below from our Faith Community Nurse, Margery Eramo:

"Covid-19 vaccine recipients can expect to have some symptoms, such as mild to moderate local systemic reactions (pain, swelling, redness at the injection site) as well as localized lymph node swelling on the same side as the vaccinated arm. Expect fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle aches and joint aches.

These are not allergic reactions. Vaccine recipients should think of these symptoms as signs that the vaccine is working. Most symptoms occur in the first three days after vaccinations. Reactions are more intense after the second dose. Symptoms are also worse in younger as compared with older persons. The good news is that symptoms seem to resolve within 1-3 days."

CVS will begin giving vaccines according to state mandates on Tuesday, February 9th. Please visit www.CVS.com for further information.

Also, for those who have signed up for the Westwood Board of Health vaccination and have not yet heard, BE PATIENT, town is getting 100 doses/week and will contact you when your place on the list comes up. In the meantime, do not hesitate to sign up for other

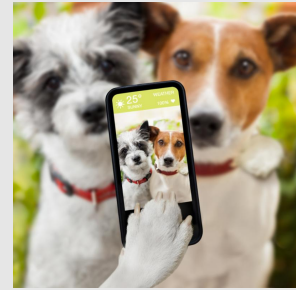
venues if available. If you are in the first cohort for Phase 2 and need help signing up, contact the Senior Center.

Send a Selfie!

During the year, Meg will be working on compiling a "homemade" pictorial directory as a gift for our new settled Pastor.

Pastors Rick and Jill Edens invite you to email Meg a "selfie" of you/your family. Please send all pictures to:
office@firstparishwestwood.org.

Feel free to get creative!



Welcome Videos Requested



We are currently seeking volunteers to do a "Welcome to service at First Parish" video. We encourage you to get creative and have fun.

If you have questions, contact Amie Colcord at amiecolcord@gmail.com. Please submit completed videos to Doug Hyde at dkhydema@gmail.com.

To read our Winter 2021 Spire Newsletter, please [click here](#).

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STAY CONNECTED

