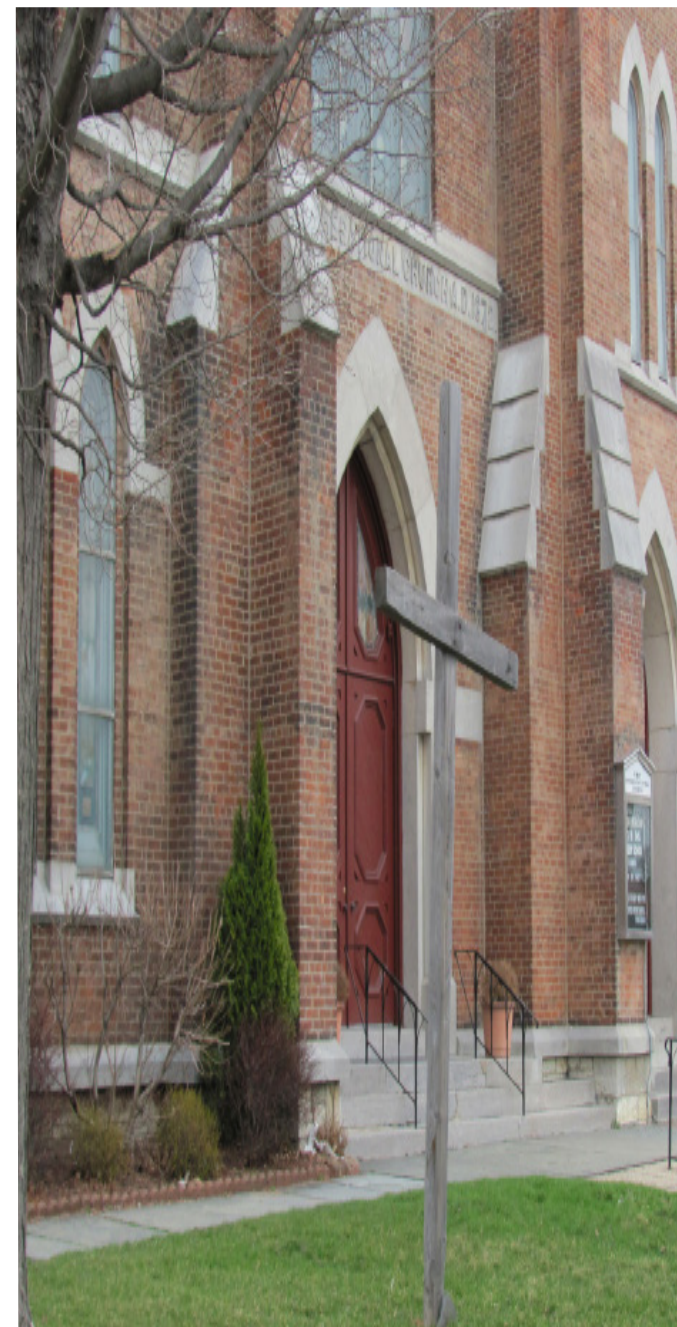




THE SPIRE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
35 EAST MAIN STREET
MIDDLETOWN, NEW YORK 10940
USPS 613-100 (845)343-5764 www.fccmiddletown.net
MARCH 2018



Beloved of God,
 As we prepare to commemorate Good Friday on March 30th and the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus on Sunday, April 1, I wanted to focus our attention on the foundational underpinning that is the basis upon which our great God deemed it necessary to relinquish His only begotten Son on our behalf. It should be obvious from the Scripture verse John 3:16, that His motivation was LOVE. "For God so LOVED the world (you in particular) that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever (you in particular) believes (into, trusts) in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

God loves you and me so much that He made the Way for us to have a loving relationship with Him by condemning His own Son to death, thereby taking our place, and placing upon Him all of our sin, that which condemned us, and raised Him from the dead proving the satisfactory victory over sin and death. He did all of this out of LOVE. The reason? So that you might LOVE Him back with "all of your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." – Mk. 12:30. But an ancillary truth also exists. Jesus explains – Mt. 22:37-38 - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.** 40 On these two commandments depend **all** the Law and the Prophets."

At this point, I would like to quote one of my favorite authors, the renowned Andrew Murray. (If you ever get the opportunity, read his book "Absolute Surrender" -found free on the internet- from which this quote is taken.)

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE."
 I want to look at the fact of a life filled with the Holy Spirit more from the practical side, and to show how this life will show itself in our daily walk and conduct.
 Under the Old Testament you know the Holy Spirit often came upon men as a Divine Spirit of revelation, to reveal the mysteries of God, or for power to do the work of God. But He did not then dwell in them.

Continued on page 2



If you are interested in placing an Easter Plant in the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018,

please complete the following form:

Given in memory of: _____

Given in appreciation of: _____

Given by: _____

Please circle your request for flowers: Lily Tulip Hyacinth

Enclosed is: _____ (\$10.00 per plant)

_____ Give to shut-ins. _____ Plants will be picked up Easter Sunday.

_____ I will help deliver plants.

Make checks payable to First Congregational Church Flower Fund

Mail to: Kay Martin, 1259 Ridgebury Rd., New Hampton, NY 10958

DEADLINE FOR ORDERING: Saturday, March 24, 2018

~ Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus ~

Now, many just want the Old Testament gift of power for work, but know very little of the New Testament gift of the **indwelling Spirit**, animating and **renewing** the whole life. When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great **object** is the **formation of a holy character**. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual **disposition**, and what we need above everything else, is to say **“I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am ready to live for God’s glory.”** You might say that when Christ promised the Spirit to the disciples He did so that they might have power to be witnesses. True, but then they received the Holy Ghost in such heavenly power and reality that He took possession of their whole being at once and so fitted them as holy men for doing the work with power as they had to do it. Christ spoke of power to the disciples, but it was the Spirit filling their whole being that worked the power.

I wish now to dwell upon the passage found in Gal. 5:22 - **“The fruit of the Spirit is love.”**

We read that “Love is the fulfilling of the law,” and my desire is to speak on love as a fruit of the Spirit with a twofold object. One is that this word may be a **searchlight** in our hearts and give us a test by which to try all our thoughts about the Holy Spirit and all our experience of the holy life. Let us **try ourselves** by this word. **Has this been our daily habit, to seek being filled with the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of love?** “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” Has it been our experience that the more we have of the Holy Spirit **the more loving we become?** In claiming the Holy Spirit we should make this the first object of our expectation. The Holy Spirit comes as a Spirit of love.

Oh, if this were true in the Church of Christ how different her state would be! May God help us to get hold of this simple heavenly truth, that **the fruit of the Spirit is a love which appears in the life and that just as the Holy Spirit gets real possession of the life, the heart will be filled with real, divine, universal love.**

One of the great causes **why God cannot bless His Church is the want of love.** When the body is divided, there cannot be strength. In the time of their great religious wars, when Holland stood out so nobly against Spain, one of their mottoes was: “Unity gives strength.” It is only when God’s people stand as one body, **one before God in the fellowship of love, one towards another in deep affection, one before the world in a love that the world can see—it is only then that they will have power to secure the blessing which they ask of God.** Remember that if a vessel that ought to be one whole is cracked into many pieces, it cannot be filled. You can take a pot-herd, one part of a vessel, and dip out a little water into that, but if you want the vessel full, the vessel must be whole. That is literally true of Christ’s Church, and if there is one thing **we must pray for still, it is this: Lord melt us together into one by the power of the Holy Spirit; let the Holy Spirit, who at Pentecost made them all of one heart and one soul, do His blessed work among us. Praise God, we can love each other in a divine love, for “the fruit of the Spirit is love,”** Give yourselves up to love, and the Holy Spirit will come; receive the Spirit, and He will teach you to love more.”

Let us at FCC unite with Gods’ powerful Holy Spirit in loving one another in the same way He loves each one, unconditionally with a forgiving spirit.

In His service,
Pastor John

March Greeters:

- 4 ~ **Barbara LaForge & Ruth Knospe**
 - 11 ~ **Peter & Betty Jane Reilly**
 - 18 ~ **Betty VanLeuvan & Alison Zavadil**
 - 25 ~ **David & Kay Martin**
 - 29 ~ **Shirley Homan & Michelle Richardson**
- If you are unable to serve call Vera Hoogstra (845)342-3531**

March Ushers:

- 4 ~ **Catherine Woodruff & Betty VanLeuvan**
 - 11 ~ **Joe & Lorraine Guagenti**
 - 18 ~ **Barbara LaForge & Marcella Lord**
 - 25 ~ **Shirley Homan & Michelle Richardson**
 - 29 ~ **Maunday Thursday Evening**
- Shirley Homan & Michelle Richardson**
If you are unable to serve call Shirley Homan (845) 926-8550



~ Praise, Thanksgiving and Prayer ~

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Please remember the following people and situations in your daily prayers:

PRAISES:

First anniversary of Pastor John ministry at FCC
Our Lord God is awesome in the work He does each day
Bea VanPelt & family on the birth of a happy, healthy great granddaughter
Presley Cannady Sr. ~ extraordinary healing power of God for bypass surgery on his leg
Carolyn Kessinger home following triple bypass surgery for her heart

PRAYERS FOR HEALING FOR:

Jerry & Jeanne Bricker ~ prayers for comfort & healing
Eli Guagenti ~ 3 year old with severe allergies to most food
Betty Feldman ~ continued prayers (Laura’s mother)
Brian Hampshire ~ suffered a stroke
Pastor Steve Offringa ~ continued prayer
Don & RuthAnn Luis ~ continued prayers
Linda Lansear ~ working as a nurse while enduring chemo and radiation.
Edward Toomer ~ appendix surgery recovery doing well/still waiting stem cell transplant match (Doris C’s brother)
Doug Jobson ~ bladder cancer
William “Bud” Curtis ~ bladder cancer
Karen McLean ~ decision on treatment for her back
Nicole ~ 22 year old recovering from a stroke
Olive Morris ~ pneumonia (Chick Morris’s mother)
Doris Gray ~ continued prayer (Junotte Odom 100 year aunt)

PRAYERS FOR:

God’s hands of protection in our public, Christian and private schools nationally and world wide. Keep our children, teachers, faculty, staff and bus drivers safe at all times
Growth in the hearts of all believers and followers of Christ
Financial and medical concerns for many worldwide
An end to abortions worldwide
All world leaders, first responders, military personnel and their families serving abroad and at home. Providing for all their medical needs as well
Homeless families & individuals in local communities, across our nation, and around the world.

Events for March and April

- Women’s Mayflower Guild Meeting, Monday, March 5th, 12:00 noon
- Deacon’s & Trustee Meeting, Tuesday, March 6th, 7:00 pm
- Movie Night-Passion of the Christ, Saturday, March 17th, 6:00 pm
- Fellowship Luncheon, Sunday, March 18th, 1:30 pm, see Joe Guagenti
- Men’s Breakfast, Saturday, March 24, 9:00am, see Peter Reilly
- Holy Week Events- ! Maundy Thursday Service, March 29th, 7:30 pm,
- Sunrise Service, Sunday, April 1st, 6:30 am, breakfast 7:00am,
- Resurrection(Easter)Service Sunday, April 1st, 10:30 am.
- FCC Covered Dish Luncheon Sunday, April 15th, 12:30pm



- 8 ~ **Gef Chumard**
- 9 ~ **Min Hampshire**
- 17 ~ **Jamaine McLean**
- 21 ~ **John Velez**
- 21 ~ **Cathy Milton**
- 29 ~ **Brody Reilly**
- 30 ~ **Doris Schmidt**



- 23 ~ **Fred & Valerie Cosh**



***Day Light Savings Time*
Sunday, March 11, 2018
2:00 AM

Altar Flowers are needed
for the following
Sundays 8/5, 8/19/2018
and 2/3/2019**