



GROVELAND
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

The Bell

4 King Street
Groveland, MA 01834
www.grovelanducc.org 978-372-3463

Summer 2020

I have exciting news! In August I will begin serving Christ Church United, United Church of Christ in Dracut. Dracut is just a hop and a skip down the road. I am looking forward to working with CCU-UCC; they have very similar challenges to Groveland and are seeking many of the same answers that we have quested after.

This does mean that my time with you is finite and our long anticipated task of saying goodbye has at last arrived. My last day in worship will be Wednesday, July 22nd, but we are celebrating our time together on June 21st!

I never imagined that saying Goodbye to you would include the challenges of a pandemic but alas, all we can do now is make the best of it. I am incredibly proud of the work that you have done. I wholeheartedly believe that our church is ready to have a long lasting and good relationship with your next pastor. If I could be so bold as to leave with one last piece of advice, one last sermon....

Before I came Reverend Patricia Long told you all to "Let Him Lead" which was in essence an invitation to extend trust to me. To extend trust after being hurt or having your sense of stability shattered is no small task and yet somehow you were able too. Trust is the foundation of a relationship.

I invite you into a similar track, not only extending the trust you gave me, but more....

- Trust that God walks with you, that you are not alone.
- Trust that God is hard at work in your pastor's life.
- Trust that God is working with in the congregation.
- Trust that you are able and willing to have an amazing long term relationship with your next pastor.
- Trust that much hard work still lies ahead of you.
- Trust that there are answers to your questions and challenges.
- Trust that answers you have found through challenges are good.

Finally saying goodbye is always hard, and no doubt will involve lots of tears. Saying goodbye and doing it well are also very important. It marks an end to our time together and therein makes space for your next trusting relationship. I promise to do my best not to retreat from this work and invite you to do the same. Peace -- Pastor Chris



As our planned Annual Meeting date of June 7th approaches, please consider participating and exercising your vote.

We are planning to move forward with this meeting using the following systems. The meeting will be held on ZOOM which is the way many groups in the congregation have been meeting for the past 2 months. For anyone not comfortable logging onto this platform using a tablet, laptop or smart phone, you can still call into the meeting and participate in the meeting by phone. Finally, we will also have absentee ballots available to use. The warrant articles as presented will be on the ballot and you will be able to select a "yes" or a "no" vote. The only caveat to this is that if the article is amended in the meeting and the article is altered, the votes submitted by mail would be voided. The mailed in ballots cannot be used to establish a quorum. The quorum must be attained via number of parties on the ZOOM session.

Dear Church Family,

After twenty three years of keeping the church records it is time I step down. As I look back in the Minutes of Session book to my first recording of the Annual meeting I see a report that is three and a half pages long. (This year's report will be considerably shorter.) It is the Clerk who keeps the history of the church as it evolves over time. The Clerk has two big books that aid in keeping this history. Minutes of Session are where you will find the minutes of every Annual Meeting and Special Meeting. The Church Register, the second book, maintains the list of members and their standing, baptisms, marriages, and pastors. We started to work on getting the Chairs to tell a story with their annual reports and that has made reading history far more enjoyable. Thank you for putting up with me while I learned how and then with me who thought I knew it all.

My life has become complicated lately and I finally reached the conclusion that something has to give and the only thing that can give is the clerk's position. I thoroughly enjoyed the keeping of the records and hope that history will bare that out.

Bless you,

Jane Holden, Clerk

As a result of COVID 19, many local charities are in need of monetary support. Annual fundraising events, that typically bring in large donations, have had to be cancelled due to the virus and safety concerns. This equates to major losses that have dramatically cut budgets. Yet, shelters still need to be open and people still need to be feed and cared for. If you are able to give support, please consider reach out.

It is time again to consider if the church wants to move forward with plans for the 2020 Snowflake Fair. The main team members are in conversation now. They will also be looking to the congregation for their support at our Annual Meeting on June 7, 2020. The Fair is a huge undertaking and requires the help of all members and friends of GCC. Thanks in advance for whatever you can do for The Fair!

GROVELAND CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO

Worship
ON
Wednesday

WEEKLY BEGINNING JULY 1
WORSHIP STARTS AT 7:00 PM
STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION

Our sponsored Boy Scout Troop has offered to do a cleanup of the green space near the back side of our church building. As soon as this is physically possible and safe to gather as a group, they will begin the work. THANK YOU BOY SCOUTS!! We are excited to see how your efforts will result in a pleasant area for all to enjoy the nature that God has provided.

Congratulations to the Confirmation Class of 2020!
This year was more challenging to finish the requirements for confirmation due to the quarantine. Even though there were some traditions that the students were unable to participate in, they did their best and we are proud of what they were able to accomplish. Please give a special congratulations to the following students who did an great job. Frank Cordaro, Kara Keene, Trina Quinnan, and Abigail Szarek.

TEAM ONA is looking for new members!
If you have compassion in your heart, please consider joining and assist this congregation with outreach to those who are marginalized in our society. All people are children of God. Our church has passed the Open and Affirming Covenant – which is great- yet there is still much to be done. Please contact Lisa Quinnan at lanquin@msn.com to lend a hand.

Missions Team: Unfortunately, due to our current virus restrictions, we are suspending our preparing and delivering of all our Emmaus meals for the rest of this year. Once we can safely work together in the kitchen, and have our Thrift Shop open for business and generating income we will resume our work with Emmaus.

WE SEEK TO CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE FOR ALL TO GATHER



Team Access is

ZOOM TALKING AND PLANNING
INTERVIEWING ARCHITECTS
LOOKING INTO CREATIVE FUNDING

how you can help

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE TEAM
OFFER MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT
HAVE FAITH IN US!

THIS PROJECT WILL HELP GCC TO BETTER SERVE OUR COMMUNITY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Congratulations to our Graduates!!!



John Allen Hart was born March 12 2002 in Spokane Washington. At age 2, his family moved to Webster Groves, Missouri, where later he began his education completing Pre-School and Kindergarten. 1st grade through 7th were completed at Conrad Weiser School District in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. His family moved him again to Massachusetts where he completed the 8th grade through the Massachusetts Virtual Academy before entering Pentucket Regional High School where we now celebrate his accomplishments and graduation. John began his career in Tech in middle school helping to produce shows with Conrad Weiser Middle school which he continued at Pentucket. In total he has helped produce over 15 plays and musicals. John has a passion for helping others and will be graduating with over 300 hours of community service. He plans to focus his vocation around helping marginalized communities find and access technological solutions to the problems they face, he has a special interest in green technologies. John will continue his education at a community college before moving to Germany to complete a degree in Engineering.



Congratulations to **Erin O'Hara** on graduating from SNHU! She was a Dean' List student for all 8 semesters!

Mikayla Lauren Tilden is graduating in the top 10% of her class at Pentucket Regional High School. She has consistently participated in Pentucket's winter theater productions since 7th grade, tried cross country her sophomore year, and threw discus and javelin in spring track for four years. In her junior year, she tutored 7th grade math students, and in senior year, she was a member of the Environmental Club, where she was able to lead two Climate Cafes. Between working as a cashier at the Riverside Market Basket and school, she was participating in many activities at GCC. She started singing in the Sunshine Choir at age 5 and made her way through Youth Choir and on to Senior Choir. She packed boxes for War, West Virginia, helped in Sunday school and then even taught some classes (which she enjoyed very much). She has also modeled for the thrift shop, helped serve at the roast beef dinners, volunteered at the Snow Flake Fair each year, participated in the Live Nativity, and has helped many times during Sunday church services. She is currently a member of the Pastoral Search Committee. Mikayla will be attending the Honor's Program at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. She will major in history and is looking forward to a career as a high school history teacher. We strongly feel that much of Mikayla's success is in part due to the consistent love and support of her church family at GCC. Thank you!



Teagan Pratt attends PRHS and has been actively involved in cross country, indoor and outdoor track. She's been running Varsity since freshman year and loves the sport. Teagan played the violin in the orchestra and was part of the chorus in her earlier high school career and recently became active in the environmental club. She's worked with coach Derro and her teammates volunteering at the Special Olympics each year and has really enjoyed that.

She was working at Ingaldsby Farms and then for Vinewood catering, working all over the North Shore on weddings and social events.

At church she was in the choir from pre-school through the beginning of high school and worked with the youth group on outreach and volunteer programs including the fair. Her love of travel began years ago and culminated with a volunteer trip to Peru a few years ago.

She is hoping to study abroad as part of her tenure at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She will be studying biology with a minor in business.

Emma Formosi, daughter of Caroline Cranos and Bill Formosi, graduated with honors from Simmons University with a B.S. in Public Health. She has been a part of the GCC community since birth and loved teaching Sunday School and helping with VBS. She plans to work for the next year while applying to graduate programs in clinical psychology.

Casey Pratt attends PRHS and has been actively involved in chorus and theater and helped to launch the Pentucket Students Against Gun Violence. She is an editor and contributing writer for the school newspaper (pentucketprofile.com) and was a contributing writer for the local paper the *Valley Patriot*.

Pre-covid she was working part time at Panera Bread in Newburyport - making sandwiches and salads.

At church she was a choir member from pre-school though her junior year and loved working with the youth group on outreach and volunteer programs including the fair. Her volunteerism brought her to Thailand a few years ago where she worked at and elephant rehab center. This trip solidified her adventurous spirit and plans to travel.

The University of Denver will be her new home next year where she will study political science and computer science with plans to attend law school afterwards



Greetings from Susan Dangelo, Minister of Worship

As Minister of Worship, I would like to share the current state of The Groveland Congregational Church as we know today.

We have all heard Governor Baker doing his best to manage our state. We are many and not all communities are experiencing this pandemic in the same intensity. In Groveland we have been fortunate, although our numbers are increasing weekly. All losses are monumental, and we send our condolences to anyone who has lost a loved one or suffered from this virus.

Pastor Chris is doing a fine job making sure the drive-in services are well publicized, informative and inclusive to all who can attend. We must be resourceful, never knowing when the Lord will test our abilities. In that way Pastor Chris and his helpers are to be congratulated. I am sure the Lord is pleased.

The state suggests churches hold outdoor services for Phase 1 and all the phases after. We were way ahead on this, and if the weather holds, we can add chairs, bug spray and sunscreen while sitting outside our cars continuing social distancing, praising God.

Unfortunately, the summer will roll by and the idea that we can still have outdoor services becomes an impossibility. What will we do then? Will we be able to sing? Where do we sit? What about Sunday School? What is going to happen to us? These are all frightening questions.

Our church is a place we gather to worship God and gathering is no longer safe. Even singing may spread germs. Pastor Chris has informed the music team that they may have to wait a year before things return to normal. It seems like such a long time.

You want to know the answer when no answer comes. God has yet to reveal the answer.

If you watch the news you are already aware that policies and rules, as well as medical advances and information change daily. It would be nice to say we will open the church this fall in time for Homecoming, Thanksgiving or the Snowflake Fair. This is not possible to predict. The reality is that Phase 1 will decide for Phase 2 and so on. Its too soon to tell.

We must patiently move through each phase praying that the outcome will allow us to advance, following the rules set before us.

The Ministry Team will be meeting shortly to discuss ways we can all contribute our talents and abilities... Put on your thinking caps. Ask each other "How can we do things differently"? Is there something new you have been meaning to try? Call the church for help. Above all keep in touch. Arrangements will be made to provide weekly updates to keep you informed of changes in our status.

Is your glass half empty with despair or half full of hope and the love of God?

Be comforted knowing the heart of the Groveland Congregational Church is with you always.

Love from Susan.

Amen

Greetings GCC friends and family,

I don't typically write an actual "article" for the Bell but I've been thinking a lot about our church and our community during this uncertain time. We are embarking on a new future together. Pastor Chris will be leaving us this summer and following his departure we'll have a new pastor. Our financial situation feels tenuous. We don't know when we'll all be together again in the church sanctuary that feels like home to so many of us. All of that unpredictability can bring up feelings of fear and anxiety.

I'd like to share something with all of you that has helped me immensely during times of fear. When my son was in high school, his future was uncertain. Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder in elementary school, his developmental delays made it clear to us that he was not going to be following the same path as many of his peers. When I would approach the administration about "what comes next" for our son, I got a lot of blank stares and statements that seemed to come from a "how to avoid hard parental questions" guidebook. I would make phone calls which would never be returned. Needless to say, my anxiety level was at a consistent 10.

Around the same time as all of this, I was reading some material by the author Glennon Doyle. On her blog she shared some thoughts about how to move forward when we are not sure of the path. Her advice didn't involve elaborate planning, list making, or analysis. She said, very simply, that we just need to do the **next right thing**. Often when we don't know what's coming next, we feel that we can't possibly plan for all the foreseeable possible outcomes. It can feel paralyzing. But, if in the face of this time of unknowing, we just take the next small step; it shrinks some of that fear to a more manageable chunk. It might be as simple as saying "today I'm going to put on my mask and go for a walk around the neighborhood". So we put on our mask and we go for that walk. For others that might be too big a chunk. Maybe just a walk around the yard is good enough for today. Maybe tomorrow they can walk around the neighborhood. Or next week. "Just do the next right thing one thing at a time. That'll take you all the way home."

As I read these words I realized that I didn't have to have my son's entire future mapped out yet. Maybe I just had to pause, see how things unfolded and then just do the next thing. As luck would have it, some staffing changes at his school happened and one day there was a phone call to set up a meeting to talk about some options after graduation. So, my "next right thing" was to just go to the meeting. I didn't have to make any decisions, just show up and listen. And after that there were more phone calls. And more meetings. And all I had to do was show up. At one meeting we learned of a post-graduate program where he could stay until he turned 22. The next right thing turned out to be saying yes to that plan. And, rather than allow my anxiety to bubble again wondering what would happen when he turned 22, I sat with it. I waited. And then, as we approached that day, more meetings and ideas. You get the point.

So, as we were preparing next year's budget for GCC, we had so many questions. Will we be able to have the Snowflake Fair? Should we keep that income line the same? What's going to happen with Perry Park Preschool in September? Is it going to look like school years in recent past? Should we plan our income the same or decrease it? All of it felt big and scary. We were already facing almost a \$60,000 deficit. If we can't get back to normal, that number will only get worse. Big stuff. But, then I stopped myself. We don't know what September is going to look like yet. Or November. And we can't control it. What we can control is what we do today. Today we can do the next right thing. We can create our budget and have faith that our church can resume operations over the next several months. We don't know what the next couple months will bring, but worrying now isn't going to change anything. So, together, let's just do the next right thing. Let's embark on this uncertain future together, have faith that the next right thing will keep presenting itself to us and that we will get through this.

Blessings, Jen Petersen
Your Office Administrator

From the Organist's Corner...

It Is Well With My Soul
1873

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
Psalm 121:5

When the great Chicago fire consumed the Windy City in 1871, Horatio G. Spafford, an attorney heavily invested in real estate, lost a fortune. About that time, his only son, age 4, succumbed to scarlet fever. Horatio drowned his grief in work, pouring himself into rebuilding the city and assisting the 100,000 who had been left homeless.

In November of 1873, he decided to take his wife and daughters to Europe. Horatio was close to D.L. Moody and Ira Sankey, and he wanted to visit their evangelistic meetings in England, then enjoy a vacation.

When an urgent matter detained him in New York, he decided to send his wife, Anna, and their four daughters, Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie, on ahead. As he saw them settled into a cabin aboard the luxurious French liner *Ville du Havre*, unease filled his mind, and he moved them to a room closer to the bow of the ship. Then he said good-bye, promising to join them soon.

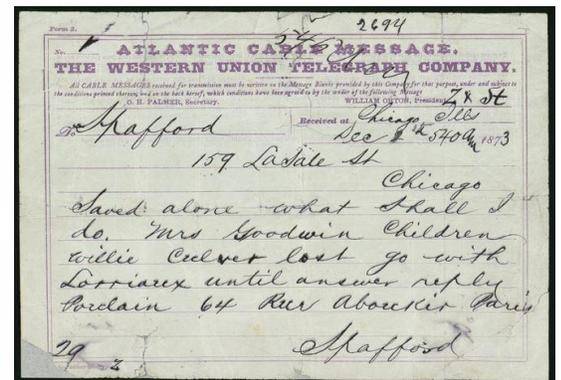
During the small hours of November 22, 1873, as the *Ville du Havre* glided over smooth seas, the passengers were jolted from their bunks. The ship had collided with an iron sailing vessel, and water poured in like Niagara. The *Ville du Havre* tilted dangerously. Screams, prayers, and oaths merged into a nightmare of unmeasured terror. Passengers clung to posts, tumbled through the darkness, and were swept away by powerful currents of the icy ocean. Loved ones fell from each other's grasp and disappeared into the foaming blackness. Within two hours, the mighty ship vanished beneath the waters. The 226 fatalities included, Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie. Mrs. Stafford was found nearly unconscious, clinging to a piece of the wreckage. When the 47 survivors landed in Cardiff, Wales, she cabled her husband: "Saved Alone."

Horatio immediately booked passage to join his wife. En route, on a cold December night, the captain called him aside and said, "I believe we are now passing over the place where the *Ville du Havre* went down." Stafford went to his cabin but found it hard to sleep. He said to himself, "It is well; the will of God be done."

He later wrote his famous hymn based on those words.

The melody for "It is Well", titles VILLE DU HAVRE, was written by Philip Bliss who was himself soon to perish, along with his wife in a terrible train wreck in Ohio.

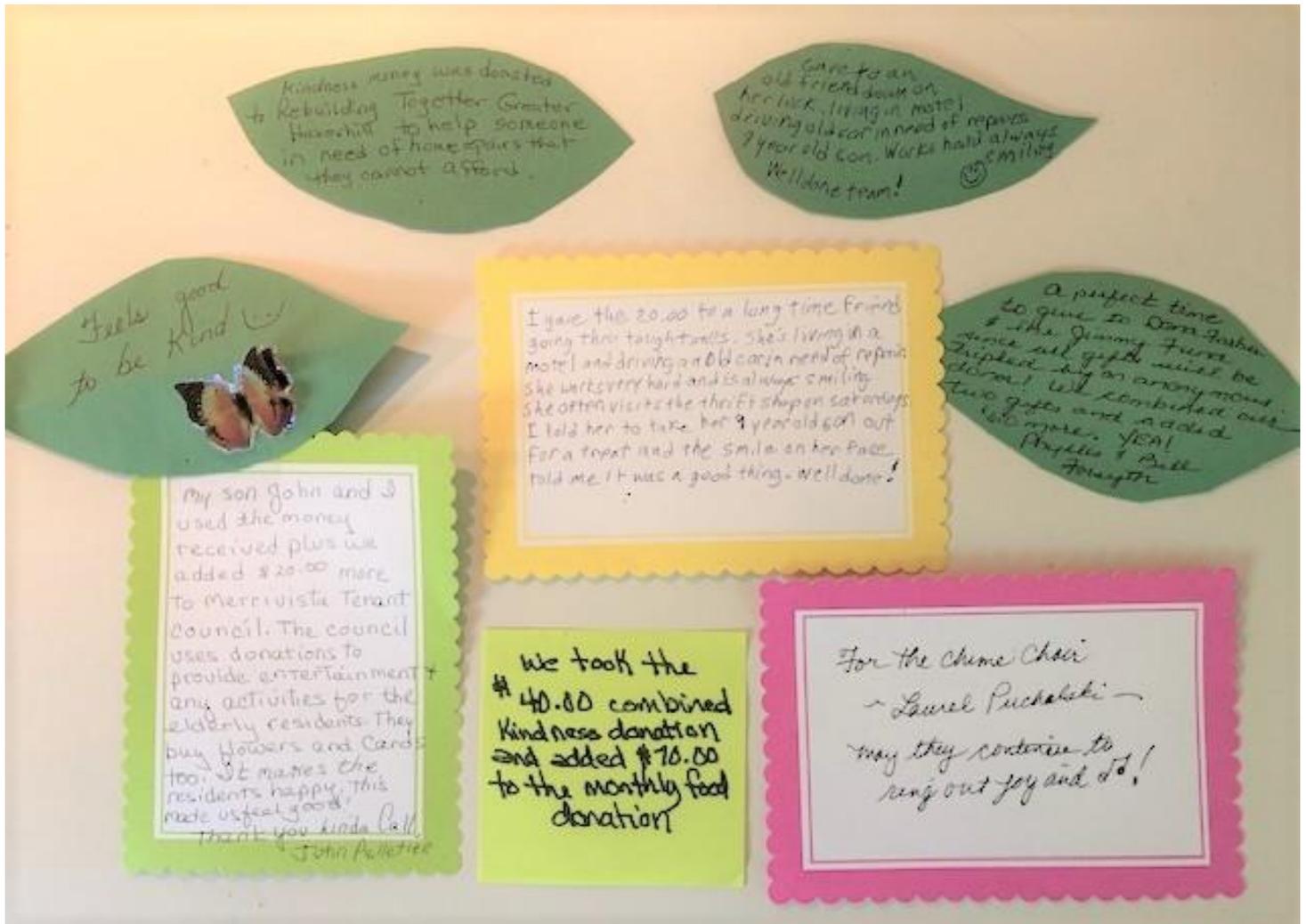
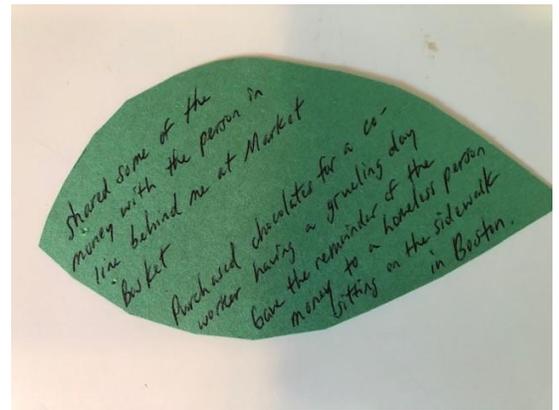
Taken from "Then Sings My Soul" written by Robert J. Morgan @2003



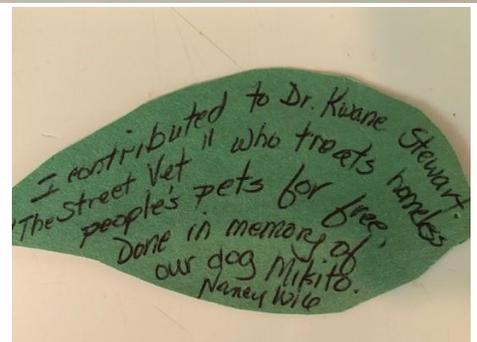
Kindness Campaign

When last we met, it was March and we were in the midst of our annual Kindness Campaign. If you recall, the Kindness Campaign is the event where the Missions/Outreach Team disburses an "offering" to the congregation on Sunday morning. Each congregant is then asked to share their gift in whatever way they see fit.

This year, \$1,600 went out to the GCC community. The remainder of the Bell will be dedicated to your stories of sharing.



Money went to the Merrivista Tenant Council, the GCC Chime Choir, Rebuilding Together of Greater Haverhill, Dana Farber and the Jimmy Fund. People added to the Monthly Food Collection and helped an old friend down on her luck. Another person spread their funds between someone at Market Basket, a coworker and someone living on the streets in Boston. Nancy Wile donated to Dr. Kwane Stewart, the Street Vet, in memory of her dog Mikito.



My three Granddaughters and I decided to take the 80.00 from the Kindness campaign and add an extra 20.00 to the amount. I took the girls to several stores and they picked out lot of different things for the animals at Nevins Farm in Methuen.

They choose can and dry food for the dogs and cats. Rabbit food, package of straw for the rabbits cage. Toys for the dogs and cats, treats for the dogs and cats. Water bottles for the small animals.

We got to visit the animals while we donated the supplies. It was an awesome day.

Thank you kindness campaign for everything you do to help the less fortunate.

Ruth Hesse, Aneesiya McCloud, Aubriella McCloud & Adelyne McCloud

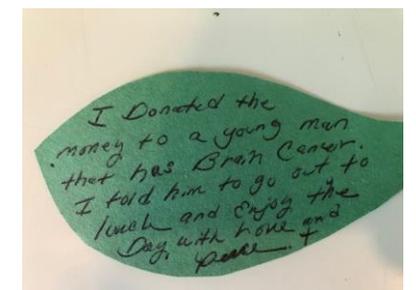
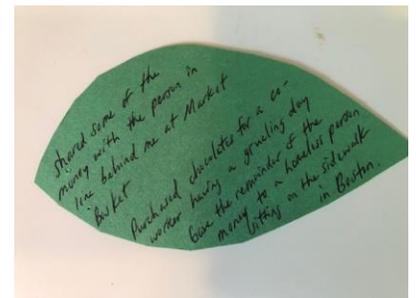
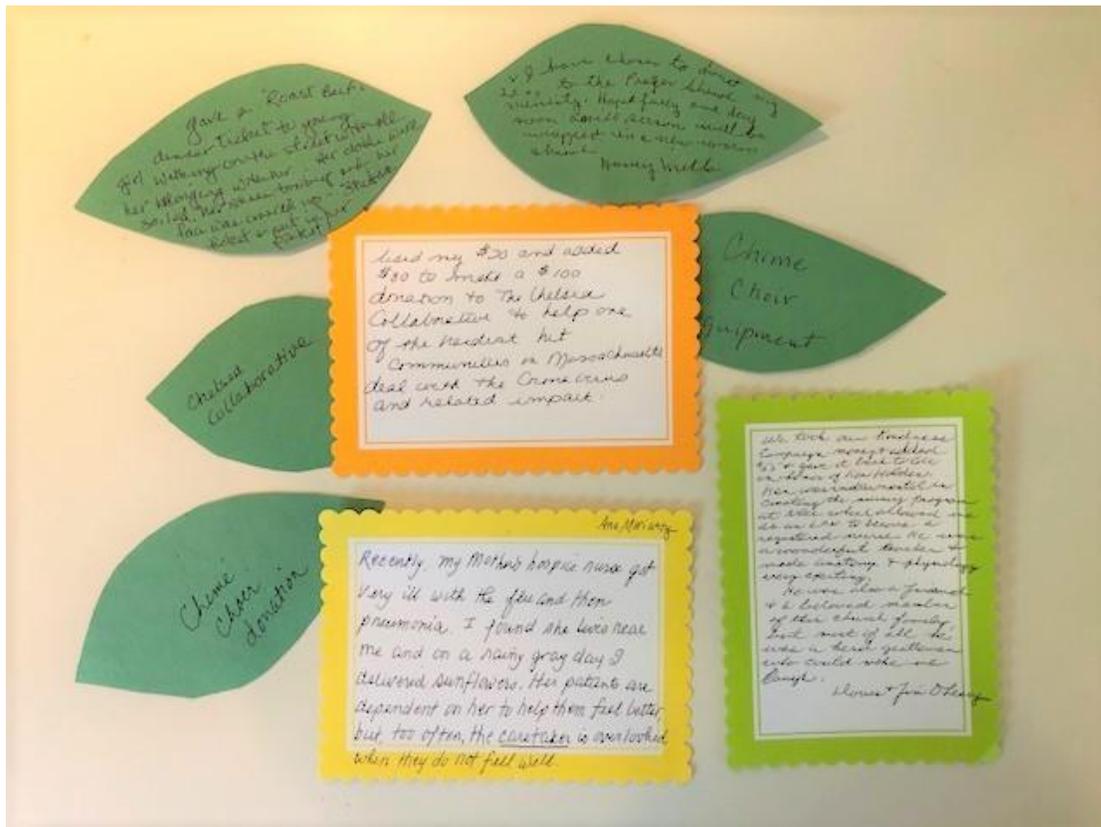
Kathleen and Gus donated their Kindness funds to Our Neighbor's Table in Amesbury.

My husband and I tripled our money and donated it to the Greater Boston Food Bank to help with the overwhelming need to feed all those who are food insecure!

Linda and Bob Paulet

Lew & I have sent our Kindness \$\$ - to Terry's collections for school lunches and supporting her in her giving ways for community mask makers. As of today - May 14 - she says she has had about \$1500 donated for school lunches. Barb Harrold

The Keene family loves animals! We have sent our \$20 to the MSPCA Nevins Farm. Did you know that when crisis hits a community (particularly when there is an economic impact on working families) that the population in the local shelters goes up? Many pets end up on the street, mistreated due to stress/anxiety, or have little to no food. We know that the \$20 is a small amount, but we hope that it will at least help some animals to be just a little happier and safer during the corona crisis. Nevins Farm does so many great things to help our community. We love NEVINS FARM!



Folks gave away Roast Beef dinner tickets, donated to GCC in memory of Ken Holden and for all that he did to help create a nursing program at NECC, flowers to hospice workers, the Chelsea Collaborative, the GCC Prayer Shawl Ministry and our very own Chime Choir. Another person gave the money to a young man with cancer so he could have a nice lunch and enjoy his day.

Hello!

Since we are all stuck in some kind of isolation with nothing but bad news surrounding our daily lives, I have decided to take this downtime to finally share my story of kindness. I actually have two stories though since I didn't share last year.

This year, back in February, my mom and I combined our \$20 and went to Dollar Tree to get stuff for the Sunday School classroom. We were able to get 40 items that will hopefully improve the youth's experiences while in the church. We got some craft supplies, cleaning products, organization tools, and colorful decorations to simply make the room look more fun! We even started our own version of the kindness campaign with the youth. Whenever we meet, they tell us all the little kindnesses they did throughout the week, which then equals pom-poms in a bucket. The goal is to fill the bucket with kindness (and get candy, haha). I thought this was a fun activity when I was in second grade, so I decided to pass it down with help from the Kindness Campaign.

Last year I decided to give my \$20 out to people in need in small increments. Working at Market Basket, I see a lot. I see mothers and fathers. I see the homeless, and I see people dressed to impress. I see loyal caregivers, tradesmen and women, and public officials. I see fellow church members, and I even see the individuals who buy enough toilet paper to supply a hotel when facing a pandemic. I do my best to never judge any of my customers based on how they look or act because you never know their story or what has been going on in their lives. Yes, I even forgive the scared greedy toilet paper hoppers. This is why, when someone comes up a little short on paying their order I use my Kindness Campaign money to fill the missing dollar or two. Every time I've given a dollar to a customer in need, their face just lights up with appreciation and gratitude. Once there was a very nice woman who I was chatting with while I rang up her groceries. First, she paid with WIC, then with EBT (food stamps), and tried to cover the rest with cash. She was \$10 dollars short. The lady behind her in line offered up her last \$3 in cash but it wasn't enough, so my customer took some food out of her cart to put back. She wasn't getting that much food to begin with, so I told her I'd cover the \$7 remaining. She was so surprised and grateful for my small act of kindness that she started crying and insisted on giving me a hug. She told me that I had made her day, but I disagree. I think she made my day.

Mikayla Tilden



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Return Service Requested