

hands & feet



A monthly newsletter of the Webster United Church of Christ, Federated

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesdays 6pm Small Group
"Bible 101"

June 3rd through June 6th
Pastor Sabina at the New England
UMC Annual Conference
in Manchester, NH

Monday, June 8th, 6pm
Council Meeting

Monday, June 15th, 6pm
Outreach Meeting

Saturday, June 20th, 11am
Father's Day Brunch

Sunday, June 21st
FATHER'S DAY

Sunday, June 28th, after Worship
Monthly Brunch and
Birthday Celebration

Sunday, July 5th—4th of July Sunday



EDITORIAL

Dear friends in Christ,

You know that I sometimes (often) ask you "who are your lepers". Who is in and who is out in your world? Truthfully? Even if you can regurgitate the verse stating that Jesus wants us to love each other (check the bottom of the page). Do you mean everyone?

Bear with me.

A few years ago, when the term became popular, I was called "woke" during a conversation about social justice. We hear so much today about the "culture wars": who's "woke" and who's not.

Diversity, equality, and inclusion seemed to be "in". Now they seem to be "out." Christian nationalism seems to be in; secularism and liberalism seem to be out. The right-leaning are in charge; the left-leaning are trying to figure it out. Judging by the comments and posts on social media, there seems to be no middle ground. People are labeled either patriotic or un-American depending on their political views.

As for people's religious views, the battle lines are also drawn. Are you a "bad" Christian if you allow your children to go trick-or-treating on Halloween? If you express compassion and understanding for gays, lesbians, and transgender individuals? Are you a "bad" Catholic if you agree with Pope Leo and Pope Francis rather than their critics?

(continued on page 2)

JUNE 2026 EDITION

"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34



EDITORIAL (conclusion)

But perhaps this tendency to divide people into groups – the poor and the rich, the powerful and the powerless, the elite and the average person, the “right” ones and the “wrong” ones – is nothing new.

So it occurred to me: Was this also true in Jesus’ time? And if so, what did he do about it?

In fact, the Gospels are full of stories about those who are “out” and those with the power to cast them out.

The Pharisees and Sadducees determined what constituted proper religious observance. The Romans ruled the Jews. Lepers were untouchable. Tax collectors were shunned. Prostitutes and women caught in adultery were stoned to death. The rich and powerful took places of honor at banquets and synagogues. The poor and powerless were relegated to the rear.

Jesus highlights these contrasts throughout his ministry, and he’s definitely not siding with the “in” crowd. He dines with Zacchaeus, a tax collector, and chooses another, Matthew, as a disciple. He, a Jew, dares to speak to the Samaritan woman at the well. He stops to heal widows, the blind, and lepers along the road. He accedes to the request of a Roman centurion – a Gentile and pagan – to heal his servant.

In his parables: The rich man ignores poor Lazarus, but it’s Lazarus who winds up “in the bosom of Abraham.” It’s the Samaritan – not the priest or the Levite – who cares for the man beaten by robbers. It’s the yeast and the mustard seed – both small, hardly visible, easily overlooked – that leaven bread and provide shelter for birds. It’s the widow’s mite that counts for more in the eyes of God than the rich man’s coins. And it’s the tax collector who is justified while praying in the temple, not the Pharisee.

Speaking of which, the Pharisees and Sadducees continually try to trap Jesus in religious arguments: Is it okay to get a divorce? Why are his disciples not fasting? Why is he performing miracles on the Sabbath? Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Their religiosity, Jesus makes clear in the Gospels, is more about talking and judging than living and doing. He calls them hypocrites and says to them: “You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is esteemed by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.”

And who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God? The most innocent. “Let the children come to me,” Jesus teaches, “for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

So the Jesus of the Gospels condemns only hypocrites – and only the unrepentant, self-justifying ones at that. He does not condemn the woman caught in adultery. He forgives the criminal crucified next to him. In fact, he literally takes the place of a revolutionary – Barabbas – who “had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder,” and whom Pilate released at the behest of the crowd.

That’s the Good News of Easter for us: There is no “in” group or “out” group in God’s eyes. “Culture wars” are inconsequential. The elite and the average person, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless are all God’s children.

More importantly, all are sinners in one way or another. None of us is saved by our social status, our political views, our wealth, our education, our immigration status, our gender or sexual orientation, or our nationality. Salvation is for everyone who lives by Jesus’ commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

When Jesus opened his arms on the cross, he embraced the whole world. That’s something to think about as we go about our lives as Easter people and as the world keeps trying to pull us back into its silly “culture wars.”

And so, now, let me ask you... who are your lepers?

By his grace,

Pastor Sabina

2026
Annual Conference
Session

THEME ▶

“Faith for our Future, Loving Boldly”

Pastor Sabina will attend the 2026 New England United Methodist Annual Conference in Manchester, NH from Wednesday, June 3rd to Saturday, June 6th. You can reach her on cellphone at 508-450-1614 for emergencies. Please call the office for non-urgent matters.

Worship News

Date	Scripture	Sermon
06/07	John 6:51-61	"From Mild to Shocking"
06/14	Mark 3:1-6	"Do You Feel Righteous?"
06/21 Father's Day	Luke 15:11-32	"The Prodigal's Dad"
06/28	Matthew 10:40-42	"A Cup of Cold Water"

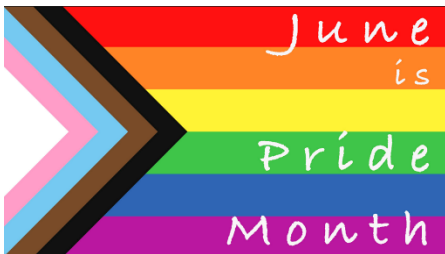


Lord of all, may I be so filled with your love that my life is an outpouring of that love. Help me to hate what you hate and long for your goodness—not whatever I think might be good.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

*I have loved
you with an
ever lasting
love*

Jeremiah 31:3



A note from Pastor Sabina

Yes, June is Pride Month. And every year, I hear the same comments:

why pride? Then there should be straight pride, white pride, etc. This is miseducation at its best. So, what is pride? It is called "pride" because the word was specifically chosen as the exact opposite of shame. Pride was chosen to serve as an antonym for the shame and secrecy that LGBTQ+ individuals were historically forced to endure.

Pride Month is a celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community and to bring awareness of the community's struggle for equal rights.

The month of June was chosen for LGBTQIA+ Pride Month to commemorate the Stonewall riots, which occurred early on the morning of Saturday, 28 June 1969, in response to a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar at 54 Christopher Street in New York City. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender persons and drag queens rioted in anger at police harassment. This riot lasted for days and is the watershed moment for the LGBTQIA+ rights movement and the impetus for organizing pride events.

(see page 6 for the conclusion of this article)

Ministries News



shirts, and bathing suits onto the shelves. We also have tons of dresses for the ladies.

Come on down!

Gloria and Gayle, along with the hard-working Threads Closet volunteers, have started putting lots of shorts, short sleeve and sleeveless



FEED MY SHEEP
Free Meal Ministry

The Feed My Sheep free meal ministry continues to grow as we share food, fellowship, and God's love with our community each week. We are now serving up to 60 meals or more every Thursday evening, with each meal including soup, bread, sandwiches, salad, and an assortment of desserts prepared and served by caring volunteers. Beyond the meal itself, the ministry offers a warm welcome and fellowship to all who attend. If you know of anyone who could benefit from a good meal or the companionship and community that Feed My Sheep provides, please help spread the word. Meals are served every Thursday from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM in the Fellow-



The Golden Bees volunteers continue to stay busy serving our neighbors in need by preparing more than 50 sleeping bags and health kits each month for those experiencing homelessness. Each health kit contains essential toiletries and personal care items.

Sleeping bags and kits are distributed locally here in Webster as well as to organizations in Providence, RI; Norwich, CT; Worcester, MA; Putnam, CT; the North Shore area, and wherever the need arises.

The support of our church family and community continues to make this mission possible through donations, prayers, and volunteer efforts. If you know of a church or organization that may be interested in receiving sleeping bags, or if you would like to donate items or volunteer with the Golden Bees, please contact Carol Beauchesne at 860-481-0233.



Our Prayer Shawl Ministry provides a way to literally wrap people in prayer. Prayer shawls are made by members of the parish and then given anyone in need of our prayers. We meet every other Monday from 10am to 12pm in the Ladies' Parlor. New members are always welcome! If you knit, crochet or would like to learn, please contact Linda Kruzewski (rlkruz70@verizon.net) or 508-943-8984 .

Donations of yarn are also always welcome!

In need of a shawl? Contact Pastor Sabina.



Warm thank you to the Webster Lions Club for their generous donation of \$1,000 towards our ministries!

The Webster Lions Club is a service organization focused on serving the needs of the community. Get involved!



Thank you to the Christina LaPorte and the Dudley Middle School Honor Roll volunteers who have been amazing this school year! Helping in our Feed My Sheep and Threads of Hope ministries, as well as our Yuletide and Daffodil Teas fundraisers. You guys are what serving hearts are all about!!

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." Romans 12:10

EVENTS

ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET!

SAVE THE DATE

FATHER'S DAY

BRUNCH

\$10
Donation

Children 5
and under eat
for free!

All donations
benefit our
ministries

**Saturday
June 20, 2026
11am - 1pm**

Pancakes, sausages, eggs,
bagels, biscuits and sausage
gravy, homemade baked beans,
assorted pastries, fruit salad

**Featuring
the Dulaski
Brass Band!!**

MISCELLANEOUS

Instead of writing more, I thought that a few testimonies would bring a human side to this article.

Accepting people for who they are.

Pride means that every LGBTQIA+ person can show the world who they really are without fear or shame and claim themselves an asset to society. Pride is showing people it is time to accept all people for who they truly are. Personally, Pride means having two sons, one straight and one gay, and expecting society to treat them equally.

Nancy Mullen

Being a whole, complete person.

All my life, I have had to hide in the shadows. Alone. All my life I could not be open as to who I really was. All my life I had to live in fear, trepidation, anxiety and loneliness. All my life I could not be whole. I could not share my true self. And if I dared, I would suffer the consequences: ostracism, isolation, prejudice, blackmail, emotional and physical beatings. And I am one of the lucky ones. Today I can be whole and no longer have to hide in the shadows for fear of discovery and being outed to my detriment. Pride means the world to me, my world, my new world of being complete, whole, in openness and honesty. To be accepted for better or worse as a person - someone's daughter, sister, aunt, and not someone different or inconsequential. Pride has removed my fears, my trepidations and has allowed me the freedom every person should have to be who they are, a whole, happy person. As long as I live, I will continue to help those who are not yet as fortunate to be out and free. I will be there to say "you are ok, you are whole, you are loved". Pride will always matter until the day there are no repercussions for being different. I will help to continue to bridge that gap for all lost souls who yearn to be loved and accepted for who they are, the way God made all of us.

Rose Rubino

The true face of the LGBTQIA+ community

Growing up in the sixties and early seventies as a child I had no reference points of who I was and what or how I fit into the greater society. From the time I was about eight years old I knew I was different, but just exactly what that meant would not reveal itself to me until later. As I entered my early teens, the realization of who I was and what that meant became apparent. The walls and mechanisms to cope with that went

up. It was a lonely and isolating time for me. I withdrew from the unaccepting world around me and dark thoughts began to creep into my mind. All that I saw around me and even in the media of the day, which reported on the beginnings of the gay rights movement in NYC, did nothing for me. What I saw in the media was not like me. It was "the flamboyant, the obvious", and I didn't see myself among that crowd. As a result I didn't fit into either group, which isolated me even more - until one day I almost did the unthinkable. Since those darker times, I've grown and worked through all those psychological demons. Along with all those brave souls that stepped out of the shadows so early and changed the face of what it meant to be gay, my world began to change and my strength grew. As I began to come out to family and friends, I asked an acquaintance of mine that worked with Zebra House in Orlando "What can I do to make sure the next generation does not have to go through what I did?" His answer confused me at first and then he explained. He asked "Are you out to your family, at your work, and with your friends?" When I replied that I was starting to do so, he told me "you already are making a difference". When I asked what he meant by this, his answer was as profound as it was simple. By you coming out to your family, friends and co-workers you are forever and profoundly changing the face of the gay community in their minds. It will never be the same again. They will never hear the word "gay" and think of any one stereotype again. So, Pride to me is that ever-changing face of the gay community. We are forever and profoundly changing the world's perception of who we are, all while integrating into and becoming a part of the greater family of humanity!

Richard Chiarelli

Radical, Inclusive Love

Love one another as I have loved you.
Jesus of Nazareth



MISCELLANEOUS



What is the Revised Common Lectionary?

From time to time, Pastor Sabina finds her inspiration in the Revised Common Lectionary. Some pastors follow the Lectionary every Sunday. What is it?

A lectionary is a listing of readings from the Bible to be used on particular Sundays or days of the Christian Year. The early church created the Christian Year so the whole message of God's saving work in Jesus Christ would be heard throughout the year.

Published in 1992 by the Consultation on Common Texts, it provides four weekly readings—an Old Testament passage, a Psalm, an Epistle, and a Gospel—that align with the liturgical year.

The RCL spans three years—labeled Year A, Year B, and Year C. Each year focuses heavily on a different Synoptic Gospel:

- Year A: Focuses on the Gospel of Matthew.
- Year B: Focuses on the Gospel of Mark.
- Year C: Focuses on the Gospel of Luke.
- Note: The Gospel of John is woven throughout all three years, particularly during major seasons like Advent, Lent, and Easter

During most of the year, a standard Sunday service utilizing the RCL will feature the following:

- Old Testament / Hebrew Bible: Highlights the history and covenants of Israel.
- Psalm: A congregational response or reflection sung or spoken after the first reading.
- Epistle: A reading from the New Testament letters.
- Gospel: The climax of the readings, focusing directly on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why Churches Use It

- Ecumenical Unity: It allows millions of Christians across various denominations to hear and reflect on the same core scriptures on any given Sunday.
- Comprehensive Coverage: Following the RCL prevents pastors from only preaching on their favorite verses. Over a three-year cycle, congregations are exposed to a massive portion of the Bible.
- Liturgical Integration: The readings tie directly into the seasons of the Church Year (such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost), tracking the overarching story of redemption from start to finish.

Does Pastor Sabina use the Lectionary? The quick answer is yes, sometimes! Our Pastor always checks out the Lectionary for the week but also prays over it and follows the Holy Spirit. Other exceptions include sermon series.

If you are interested in checking the Lectionary every week, check out lectionarypage.net.



Welcome to the family, Adam! And thank you to Knit Pray Love ministry for the lovely baptism blanket!

United Church of Christ, Federated

"Come as you are, we mean it!"

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hands & feet



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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday through Friday, 9:30-1, or by appointment

WORSHIP: Sundays at 10, in person and live on Facebook

BIBLE STUDY / SMALL GROUPS: Tuesdays at 6pm

THREADS OF HOPE (free clothing, hygiene products,...): Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-11, Thursdays 4-7

FEED MY SHEEP FREE MEAL MINISTRY: Thursdays, 5

GOLDEN BEES SLEEPING BAG MINISTRY: Mondays, 9-12

KNIT PRAY LOVE MINISTRY: Mondays, 10-12, Ladies' Parlor

OUTDOOR FOOD PANTRY: Ongoing