

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of North Brookfield - **November 2026**

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By Kaitlyn Foucher

November Verse of the Month

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- Ephesians 4:15-16

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6

When the apostle Paul wrote these words to the members of the church of Phillipi, he knew about anxiety. He knew what it was like to face challenges. He knew what it was like to be alone. But he knew gratitude. He knew God. And, despite his circumstances, he knew peace because of his relationship with Jesus.

I may not be imprisoned or facing a potential death sentence, but now more than ever, I can relate to Paul as he wrote these words. I have battled anxiety my entire life, but as I now face my most challenging season yet, I've truly felt a peace that surpasses all understanding. I know gratitude. I know God. And I know that the peace and strength I carry each and every day can only come from one place – my relationship with Jesus.

Did you know that neuroscientists are starting to confirm what we, as believers, already know – that there is immense power in gratitude? In fact, they're starting to study the effects of gratitude on the brain and are realizing that anxiety can't coexist in the mind when gratitude is present.

I won't bore you with the science because you might not all be as nerdy as I am, but the hormones that gratitude release in the brain have a direct correlation to lowering the hormones released by anxiety. That's right – gratitude drives out anxiety.

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As Pastor Joe always says, "I don't believe in coincidences, but I do believe in God-incidences" and I have no doubt that the One who so intricately created each and every one of us knew what He was doing when he made our brains to function in this way.

The apostle Paul figured it out and was sharing it with other believers as he sat in a prison cell. Thousands of years later, I'm figuring it out and am now sharing it with you as I sit facing the challenges of being a newly widowed stay-at-home mom of three adopted children.

To put it simply, when we express gratitude to our Heavenly Father and let it be our focus, anxiety cannot win. Fear cannot win. Christ wins and the direct result is a peace and rest in our minds and souls that the world cannot comprehend. For that, I am so incredibly grateful.

What a blessing to love and serve a God who wants me to come to Him and surrender my burdens as His feet. What a blessing to love and serve a God who shines in the darkness and who transforms sorrow into joy.

Is there any better month to focus on gratitude than the one where we have a holiday expressly designed for us to focus on it? When Paul (Foucher…not the apostle) and I took in our three kids in 2022, we tried to be very intentional with the traditions we began with them. With them not having grown up in the church, we wanted ways to show them the love of Jesus, but were also actively working to devise ways to help battle their anxieties and to rewire their brains into safety. As a result, the thankful tree was born and it's been here ever since.



We all choose a different color for our leaves, and for each day in the month of November, we write down something we're thankful for and stick those leaves on the tree that adorns our main hallway. At the end of the month, we're left with a tree full of leaves, overflowing with reminders of all the good things we have in our lives. It has become such a family favorite activity that the kids have asked to leave the tree up for weeks, even months after Thanksgiving has passed in years prior.

There's a lot of power in seeing a visual representation of all the ways in which God has blessed you. Every year we name family members and friends. We name the things that provide for our basic physical needs. We name the things that make our lives more comfortable. We name songs. We name Jesus. Two years ago, we got to include the kids' upcoming adoption date. This year, we'll include Paul's Heavenly homecoming because we know that death is not the end and for that, we cannot help but be grateful.

We know he's in a place without suffering, without pain, without hurt. And although we miss him so terribly that it physically hurts at times, we know he's home and we find our rest in the arms of Jesus.

As we enter into the month of November, I'm reminded once again of all the blessings God has provided in my life and when I count them, I can't help but be grateful for you, my village.

I'm so thankful for the ones who have provided gift cards to help with groceries, gas, and clothing; the ones who call or send me text messages telling me you're thinking of me; the ones who silently pray over my family every single day; the ones who send cards in the mail with words of encouragement; and most recently, the ones who have given so generously to the fund set up to support my family financially.

Your extreme generosity has made it so that my anxiety of unknown financial challenges has been one God has completely captured. As someone who usually has no shortage of words, I feel as though I could say "thank you" a million times and it would still be insufficient.

I am just so blown away by the level of love and support that's been showered on my family in these last few months that I'm at a loss for how to adequately express it, so hopefully this will suffice. Please know, that when I'm making my thankful leaves this year, you'll all be on them. ♥



CHURCH LAWN CLEAN-UP

Saturday November 7th

10:00 am to 2:00pm

Please bring rakes, tarps, and a leaf blower if you have one. It will be FUN!!!

See Andy Caron for details.



HELP THE HOME LESS



HOMELESS MISSION OF OPEN HANDS MINISTRY REQUESTS YOUR HELP

Jane Ingersoll-Mahoney

As the cold winds begin to blow, our homeless brothers and sisters are in greater need for warm items such as coats, blankets, boots, etc. So, if you or family members or neighbors have any of these items that are no longer needed, we are asking that you donate them to the homeless.

You can bring them to the church at your convenience. Just place them on the pew as you enter the church. We will see that these much needed items are distributed promptly.

Also as many of you know, we prepare 100 Christmas gift bags for the homeless each year. We need donations to help fill these bags…. personal hygiene items (dental care products, soap, deodorant, razors, shaving crème, hand sanitizer, combs, brushes, travel size shampoo, etc.), candy bars or loose candy, single packaged snacks, and any item that you would consider a special treat. Scarfs for both men and women are needed as well. We will have a bin on the pew at the entrance to the church marked "OPEN HANDS CHRISTMAS DONATIONS". You may put your contributions there.

If you prefer not to shop or have no used items to donate but still want to help, you can do so by donating funds via your check to FCCNB or online (QR code below). In either case, please designate "Open Hands Ministry".

Open Hands Ministry and our youth groups, Ignite and Spark, thank you in advance for all the many ways you provide for the least of our brothers and sisters.

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."
Hebrews 13:16

NORTH BROOKFIELD

Parade & Tree Lighting
Saturday, Nov. 28th
6:30–7:30 pm

Refreshments in Fellowship Hall



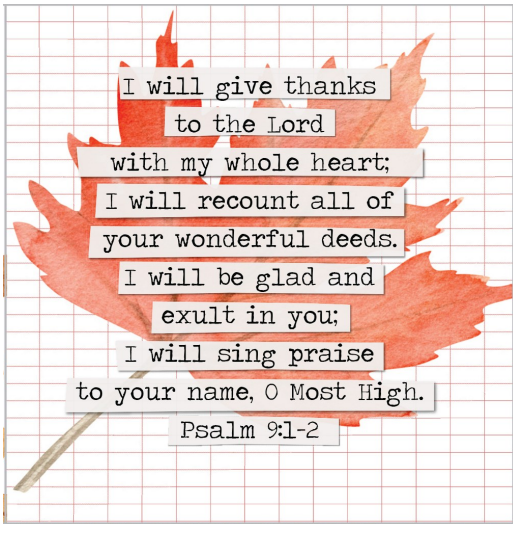


Do you know a new mom or mom-to-be that could use a **FREE wooden highchair, crib, or glider chair**?

Please contact Karen McGrail:

508-873-2543

kmcgrail27@gmail.com





This event is **FREE** to anyone in our community who would like to spend Thanksgiving in the company of good people, sharing the blessings of a traditional home-cooked Thanksgiving meal.

If you would like to help cook, serve, deliver meals, set-up, or just reserve your place at the table, you can call **Jade Ford at 774-200-5927** or the church office at 508-867-8428.

There will be a sign up sheet on the bread table at church.

IT'S ALL HANDS ON DECK! IF YOU CAN COOK A TURKEY—BAKE PIES—DELIVER MEALS—PREPARE FOOD—SERVE MEALS—WASH DISHES (OR ANYTHING IN BETWEEN) … WE NEED YOU! SIGN UP & SEE JADE FORD.

NEW MEMBER SUNDAY - Sunday, November 1st, 10:45 am

GRIEFSHARE Surviving the Holidays - Nov 2, 6:00-8:00 pm

BIBLE STUDY with Pastor Joe - Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

CABINET MEETING - Thursday, November 12th at 6:30 pm

MEN'S BREAKFAST - Saturday, November 14th at 8:30 am

SECRET SISTERS REVEAL - Saturday, Nov. 21st at 2:00 pm

THANKSGIVING DINNER - Thursday, Nov. 26th at Noon

TOWN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING - Saturday, Nov. 28th



Join us for this 2-hour seminar

Monday, November 2nd | 6:00-8:00 pm

November Birthdays

For those 65+

Patti Barney	**November 7**
Elaine Palumbo	**November 9**
Arlene Firmes	**November 12**
Brad Cummings	**November 13**
Bruce Daigneau	**November 13**
Pastor Joe Shea	**November 26**
Mary McGrail	**November 29**

Let us know your birth date!

Happy Anniversary

David & Bonni Holmes	**November 10**

Please notify Deb at the church office for any calendar changes.
Articles, photos, and news items may be sent to **deb@firstchurchnb.org**
OFFICE HOURS: Tues, Wed, Thurs, 9 am—1 pm

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NORTH BROOKFIELD
144 North Main Street | North Brookfield, MA 01535 | 508-867-8428 | website: Firstchurchnb.org

Pastor Joe Shea 508-873-2838

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 NEW MEMBERS 9:30 Adult SS 10:45 Worship & Bible Explorers 3:30 pm Ignite & Spark	2 9:45 Women's Bible Study 6:00 GriefShare 6:30 Diaconate	3 6:15 Men's Bible Study	4 6:30 Bible Study with Pastor Joe Fellowship Hall	5 10-12 Food Pantry 4:30 Prayer Meeting - Parlor	6 10:30–12:00 Prayer Group	7 9:30 am Journaling 10-2 Fall Cleanup 2-4 pm Women's Bible Study
8 9:30 Adult SS 10:45 Worship & Bible Explorers 3:30 pm Ignite & Spark	9 9:45 Women's Bible Study	10 6:15 Men's Bible Study	11 VETERANS DAY NO Bible Study	12 10-12 Food Pantry 6:30 Cabinet Meeting	13 10:30–12:00 Prayer Group	14 8:30 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Bible Journaling 2-4 pm Women's Bible Study
15 9:30 Adult SS 10:45 Worship & Bible Explorers 3:30 pm Ignite & Spark	16 9:45 Women's Bible Study	17 6:15 Men's Bible Study	18 6:30 Bible Study with Pastor Joe Fellowship Hall	19 10-12 Food Pantry 4:30 Prayer Meeting - Parlor	20 10:30–12:00 Prayer Group	21 9:30 am Bible Journaling 2-4 pm Secret Sisters Reveal
22 9:30 Adult SS 10:45 Worship & Bible Explorers 3:30 pm Ignite & Spark	23 9:45 Women's Bible Study	24 6:15 Men's Bible Study	25 NO Bible Study	26  12 pm Community Thanksgiving Meal	27 10:30–12:00 Prayer Group	28 9:30 am Journaling 2-4 pm Women's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 pm TOWN TREE LIGHTING
29 ADVENT 9:30 Adult SS 10:45 Worship & Bible Explorers 3:30 pm Ignite & Spark	30 9:45 Women's Bible Study					

Daylight Savings Ends Sunday, November 1st

FALL CLEAN UP
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:18