

A GIFT OF GRACE: You so deserve this!

On Epiphany we remember the Magi, their journey of faith, their gifts, and their visit to the Christ child, God's great Gift of Grace. Epiphany is also the time of our annual Stewardship journey to gather our financial pledges for the year to support the life of First Congregational Church.

This year, however, seems to call for something special to launch this season. In a time when we are separated from each other we wanted to find a way to celebrate our common life, to express the joy we share and our care for one another, and to offer in a new way our gratitude for all God's gifts of grace. So this year, we decided to begin Stewardship season a little differently.

Before we ask you to offer your gifts to the church, we are first giving a gift to you. On Epiphany and in the days just before the holiday, First Congregational Church Magi moved out in every direction with delight to visit every household in the congregation and deliver a Gift of Grace.

Inside yours, please find:

- A **Gifts of Grace Book** full of reflections, devotions, and art, beautiful and loving contributions from members of the congregation made for you to appreciate and enjoy.
- A **House Blessing Kit** which includes a prayer, a poem, a candle, some chalk, the supplies you'll need to join a time-honored tradition to bless your house. In this season when we are spending so much time at home, it's an opportunity to give thanks to God for the grace of safety and shelter.
- A **Star with a Word** printed on it, an invitation for your reflection all year long. The word is the beginning of a prayer practice, a lens through which you can look for God's presence and the Spirit's leading in your life and in the world as the days and months unfold.
- A **Star Cookie Cutter and Recipe** for you to make and enjoy and perhaps to share, sweet treats to pass along to others and to spread the joy.

You'll also find Hugs and Kisses in the bag because we love you, and because a gift from Libby Black almost always includes chocolate.



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**We hope this Gift of Grace brings you as much delight
as it brought us in creating it for you.**

In a few days, the Stewardship packet from the church will arrive in your mailbox for you to prayerfully consider your financial pledge to the church for 2021. Sunday morning worship this month will include testimonies from church members about the gifts of grace in their lives and Tuesday morning's email devotions will be offered by members of the Stewardship Team. On January 31st in worship we will consecrate our pledges for the coming year as we give thanks to God for the life we are blessed to share as First Congregational Church and for every Gift of Grace.

*We look forward traveling this journey of discernment and gift giving with you.
With joy and gratitude,*

Your Stewardship Team

*Libby Black, Betsy Barrett, Chris Braudaway-Bauman, Karen Cumbo,
Allison Hamm, Jon Hinebauch, Jeanne Lounsbury, Laura McCutchen,
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