



# FIRST NEWS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 01262

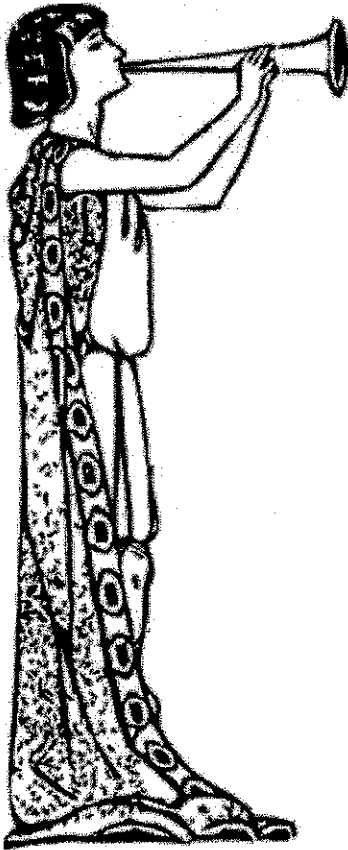
The Reverend Brent Damrow  
September 2013

## Rally Day

September 8

10am

kick-off day  
for  
Sunday School  
and Choir  
Join Us





Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

There are some transitions in life that grab you by the shoulders and shake you up a bit – things that compel you to think about how you want to live life in new ways. Certainly this summer Jon and I have experienced that kind of transition with the amazing addition of Jake.

I have to tell you, even the smallest of things on his end have prompted me to give serious thought to my own life and how I live it. One of my favorite times with him is watching him wake up and stir in the morning. I take him out of his crib and put him on the changing table and there take off his swaddle blanket that has held him safe and secure and cuddled all night long. With his arms and legs freed, he stretches first one arm, then the other, then both and then all in combination with his legs. His little mouth starts warming up and his face makes the cutest (and yes quite odd) expressions as he encounters a new day. With a wee bit of jealousy I notice how he wakes up not encumbered by any thoughts of what he has to do (well, maybe except eat or get changed) but simply encounters the new day and his goofy papa who is making faces of his own and kissing him on the forehead. That little action has gotten me to start thinking about how I start my own days. I remember my time in Divinity School where every day I would set aside time to pray and get myself ready for the day before I did anything else. Jacob is helping me to remember the importance of that and get me to rethink how my life has become and what I want to do about it. And that is just the first thing he does in a day. Every single thing he does is a chance to re-think how I do things in a most beautiful way.



What are the things in your life that might be an excuse to think about your own life in new (or maybe old ways)? I know this summer that some of you have lost loved ones, found new jobs, dealt with health scares and found love. Each of those things is an opportunity to be shaken up in a good way, to think about life from a new perspective.

There is another chance coming up on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Here we call it Rally Day and it is a day where church life is re-invigorated for yet another year. Adult and children's education resumes in a more full way, the choir returns to lead worship, committees bustling with the energy of new members are ready to hit the ground running...it is an exciting time. But just as importantly it is one of those transitions that can shake us up a bit. Whether you have been coming to this church for less than a year or more than seventy years, each time we re-launch (even though we never stop in the summer) there is an opportunity to reflect on our own lives, to pick a new way to engage our faith and to contemplate whether the habits we have fallen into are life giving or life sapping.

I really hope that you will take the chance this year to try something new – whether a new spiritual practice, a new study, a new friendship, a new time of quiet, a new service project or anything else that has the chance to shake you up a little bit. Our faith is not a status quo kind of thing, but rather an ever-unfolding invitation to grow deeper in our connection to God, one another and our own spirit. So take a leap, take a chance and see things in a whole new way this fall – I promise you won't regret it.

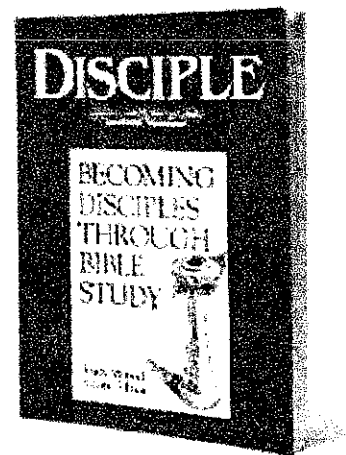
Peace, *Brent*

## Year Long— Disciples Bible Study

This study will take a group of people through the entire Bible in 35 weeks. Daily readings and weekly gatherings will help you to learn more about our sacred texts and see the Bible as a whole coherent work. The classes will be led by Brent and once we know who might be interested we will schedule a time that works for all.

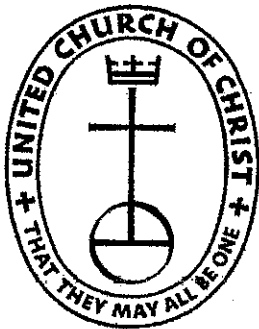
Regardless of your Biblical literacy this is a class that will help anyone grow in their faith.

If you are interested, please email Brent ([bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org)) or sign-up on his door. We plan to start the week of Sept 22-29.



### New Member Class

We will once again welcome new members into our congregation during worship on Sunday, October 27th.



All who wish to join should plan to attend a two hour class where we share faith journeys, learn about our church, our tradition as well as what

membership means (and what it doesn't).

We will hold that class on :

*Saturday, October 5  
10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.  
(light lunch provided)*

To sign-up or if you have questions, contact Brent ([bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org)) or 298-3137 (ext 11).

## Faith on Tap

Wednesday  
September 25th

6:00 p.m. (for food/drink)

6:30 p.m. (for conversation)

Michael's Restaurant  
(Downtown Stockbridge)

This month we take a look at the creeds

...what they mean

...why they matter

...how we might think about them.

## All are welcome!



# PRAYERS

## HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

(Please let someone on the Growth Committee know if we have not included your birthday or listed it incorrectly.)

September 2 Margot Wise  
Allison Tracy  
September 5 Cindy Brown  
Sara Zanin  
September 6 Jackie Hawkins  
September 10 John Frelinghuysen  
Lee Dixon  
September 11 Christopher Niebuhr  
Mark Bachman  
September 23 Patty Fadding  
September 26 Brenda Hawkins  
September 27 Lois Hall  
Linda Frelinghuysen  
John McKinstry

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING  
IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Kinney Frelinghuysen, Elaine Gunn, Grace Johnson,  
Nora Randolph, Emily Brown, and Bruce Wise on  
their birthdays

Aleva Henderson (Lenox)  
Jane Huggins (Stockbridge)  
Bill Holmes (Kimball Farms, Lenox)  
Ed Maurer and Allison Tracy (Bradenton, FL)  
Pat Martin, (Stockbridge)  
Norm Charbonneau (Stockbridge)

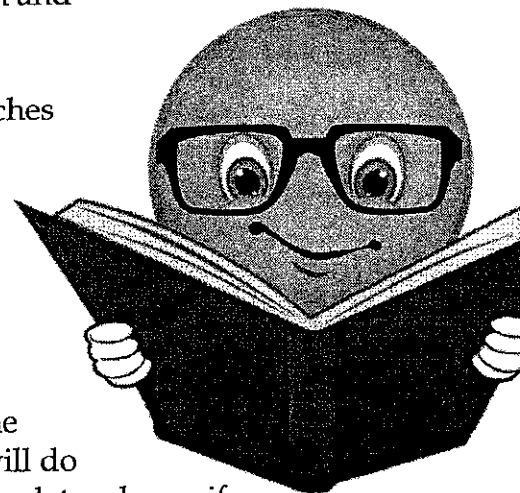
## Four Church Book Read - Wednesdays (Sept 25, Oct 9 & 23, and Nov 6)

We are planning to get together with the churches in Housatonic, Monterey and Tyringham to read a book and gather for worship, conversation and fellowship.

We will hold one meeting of the group at each of the four churches getting a chance to see each others' spaces, enjoy each others' hospitality and talk about our lives and our faith.

The first book will be "Traveling Mercies" by Anne Lamont. This book will be available to purchase from the church or you may purchase it on your own.

If you are interested in participating please contact Nancy in the church office ([nwilcox@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:nwilcox@stockbridgeucc.org)) or 298-3137. We will do our best to provide rides for people who need them. Also please let us know if childcare would be helpful.



# 2014 FABULOUS FUN & FELLOWSHIP RETREAT

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey, to give us an idea on how to plan for our All-Church Retreat, which will take place in the Fall of 2014 (next year). **IDEALLY WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY ON-LINE (which will allow for much easier data collection for us). IF POSSIBLE PLEASE GO TO : <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HZ5VWRJ>. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO GO ON-LINE COMPLETE THIS PAPER SURVEY AND RETURN TO NANCY WILCOX.**

We need completed surveys by Sunday, September 15, 2013. Thank you!

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

How likely is it that you would attend the church retreat?

COUNT ME IN, DUDE     Possibly     Not likely

We plan to start on a Friday evening and go through Saturday.

Do you plan to:     Attend both days.     Sorry, only able to come Saturday

Which of these dates would be good for you? **Check all that apply.**

September 19-20, 2014     September 26-27, 2014     October 10-11, 2014

Realistically, how much would you be able to spend to go on the retreat? Less expense means fewer amenities and more work planning meals. *(We are planning to offer scholarships and assistance to those who otherwise would not be able to attend. Also, there will be a discount for small children.)*

\$50 per person     \$75 per person     \$100 per person     \$125 per person

Are you willing to help in some way with meal preparation? (set up, cooking, clean up, etc.)

Are you kidding me?     You betcha!! (Please elaborate.)

What kind of activities would you like to have on the retreat?

What kind of topics would you be interested in discussing if we have group discussion times?

Do you have any special needs (dietary, accessibility, etc.)?

Over

If you'll be bringing children, what are their names/ages?

Would you like to help us plan the retreat? \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ YES!!

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. Blessings on your head from Your Fabulous Fun & Fellowship Fall 2014 Retreat Planning Committee

## **Growth & Fellowship**

The Growth & Fellowship Board is responsible for promoting fellowship among members, and between the church and the community. The board finds Sunday morning greeters and coffee hour hosts, makes nametags, takes photos of new members and of church events, publicizes church events to the community, and updates the church website. And the board helps to organize some special events and receptions, often with the help of other church boards.

### **Church Pictorial Directory**

This Fall, we will be creating a Church Pictorial Directory. The Lifetouch Company will be here on the following dates to take our portraits:

- Thursday, September 26, 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Friday, October 4, 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Saturday, October 5, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Having your portrait in the directory is a free service. If you have your directory portrait taken, you will receive a free directory and a free 8x10 copy of the portrait. Also, there will be a "no obligation" opportunity to purchase portraits for personal use as well. We need everyone to sign up as soon as possible.

**To make an appointment**, please go to this web address and fill out the information:

<https://www.securedata-trans14.com/ap/thefirstcongregationalchurch1/index.php?page=10>

There will also be a sign-up link on our church website, [www.stockbridgeucc.org](http://www.stockbridgeucc.org). Or, if you are not computer-savvy, we will have someone at coffee hours available to sign you up for your portrait sitting.

Be on the lookout for hand-outs in the JE Room, bulletin inserts, emails and reminder phone calls. If you need information mailed to you, please [contact Cindy Brown, 413-298-5365, cindycbrown@verizon.net](mailto:cindycbrown@verizon.net).

## **2014 All-Church Retreat**

That's right 2014!! Mission and Action is working with Growth and Fellowship to begin planning our church retreat for the fall of 2014 and we need your help!! We have designed a very short survey for you to take on-line to provide us with your ideas and interests. Simply go to this web address:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HZ5VWRJ>

While we would prefer for you to take the survey on-line, if you can't, you may pick up a copy of the survey in the JE Room or from Nancy in the church office. We are hoping that people will complete these surveys soon and no later than September 15<sup>th</sup>. Thanks in advance! Questions? Contact Terry Wise or Cindy Brown.

## **Heaton Court Dinner & Entertainment Night, September 22**

On Sunday, September 22, at 5:30 pm, we are hosting a Dinner & Entertainment Night for our neighbors at Heaton Court. If you would like to help plan, cook, set up, and/or entertain, please contact Cindy Brown.

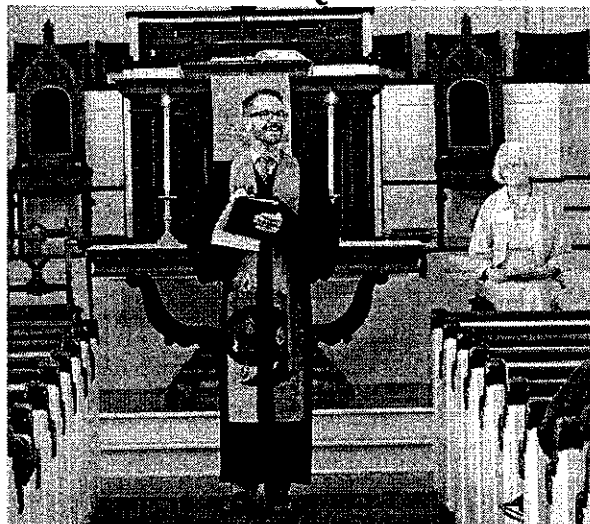
## **Coming to a Coffee Pot Near You**

Norm Charbonneau's son Gregg Charbonneau has graciously agreed to sell Barrington Coffee Roasting Company's coffee to our church at wholesale prices. Barrington Coffee is organic and free trade. In fact, their standards go beyond the legal stipulations, and they pay the grower a higher price than fair trade mandates. So, at church coffee hours, know that you are enjoying morally meritorious coffee!

## **Nametags, Greeters and Coffee Hour Hosts, Oh My!**

If you would like a nametag made for you, or if you are interested in being a Sunday morning greeter or coffee hour host, please sign up on the JE Room bulletin board, or contact Cindy Brown.

### **Guest Preacher Quinn Caldwell**





## **BOARD OF DEACONS**

The Deacons are charged with assisting the minister in meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation. I think of us as extensions of the minister's arms. On one arm, we are involved in worship on Sundays and for special services. Our work involves anything from the nitty-gritty of readying the sanctuary and slicing bread to the more theological work of creating meaningful worship services and reading scripture. The other arm reaches out and hugs; we are to assist the minister in comforting, celebrating with and listening to those among us at times of need.

We are working on two projects for the fall, one for each arm. We are looking for people willing to deliver Children's Messages on occasional Sundays. We hope to find a handful of people to undergo some training and then speak with the children during service, so that they might understand that there are many adults who are part of their church family who love and mentor them. The other arm is launching Hearts and Hands, our caring ministry.

Please let us know if you would like to get involved with any of this.

Diane Piraino

### **Mission and Action**

The Board of Mission and Action meets once a month (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 7:00) to review requests for funding, to discuss possible activities of a charitable nature and to look forward in regard to how our congregation can make a difference for others in our community and the world. We are entrusted with carefully distributing the funding voted by our congregation to be used for mission. We also want to be engaged with others doing good in the community and the world. We tend to respond more enthusiastically to projects that are important to members of our congregation.

We recently completed a collection of new backpacks and school supplies for children in Pittsfield who are served by Western Mass Labor Action. From our budget, we purchased supplies and requested clothing items for 15 children from 4 different families, and in addition, supplies were donated by various members of the congregation. THANK YOU!

An annual activity that is on the horizon this fall is the Construct Walk to Prevent Homelessness, which will take place on **Sunday, October 20, 2013**. We will encourage walkers and funders; we will provide food for the end point at the Construct, Inc., headquarters. Please consider getting involved – it's a fun day!

## **Reducing Junk Mail to Aid our Environment**

Want to reduce junk mail, catalogs, and credit offers? Did you know that you can stop unwanted mail and help the environment in the process? It's easy! Just follow these few simple steps:

- (1) Go to <https://www.catalogchoice.org>
- (2) Click on "Sign Up Now" to create an account to opt out for free
- (3) Fill in your name, email, and password where prompted
- (4) You will receive an email to the account you provided with a link to click to activate your account
- (5) Add your address and click "Save Address"
- (6) A page will appear with a place to request a certain catalog. After you fill in a few more items (customer number, etc) you hit "send request" and it goes to the catalog company. Once you have sent one request it gets much quicker and easier to do more. It really helps to save the back page/address portion of all the catalogs or junk mail you get for about a month, and just log them in one after another.

## **2014 Tremendous Hearts Tour to Cape Town, South Africa**

As you know, this newsletter carried the monthly reports of our daughter, Sara, and son-in-law, Johan (and their two children, Zachary and Violet) as they experienced life in a clinic/nursery/ day care center for handicapped children in a poverty and AIDS stricken area near Cape Town in South Africa as volunteers for a year. They were supported by "Tremendous Hearts", a relatively new and growing mission staffed and funded largely by UCC individuals and Congregational Churches in MASS., including our Mission and Action Board. At the end of their term in South Africa, they returned to Stockbridge and presented a video about their work, the progress they made, the people they met and their interaction with many features of the culture, church life, society and wild life (Safaris are accessible). At that time several members of our congregation expressed interest in going to see the ministry being done there, to explore that part of the world and the possibility of participating in some part of the service work for a short term or longer term or to become a supporter of the marvelous work being done. Sara and Johan pledged to get more information as soon as dates, tour plans and registration forms were available.

Sara and Johan asked me to share this information with you about the 2014 Tremendous Hearts Tour to Cape Town, South Africa. The trip will take place July 5-14, 2014. You can also find the information and registration forms on our website at <http://www.tremendoushearts.org/content/2014-hearts-hands-minds-tour>.

Max Stackhouse

# Hearts and Hands

This fall the Deacons are launching a new initiative to further enhance the way we care for one another. This program will bring together our church family in three ways:

- Sending out cards of celebration, hope and healing.
- Preparing meals and food for those in need.
- Helping people to get to worship when they otherwise might not.

Please sign up in the JE Room or contact Amy Broberg or Anne Roy for more info.

## Card Ministry

We are looking for **YOU** to keep our congregation's well being in exceptional condition. I know first hand that life has a way of handing us some complex situations to try and live through, grow through or accept. I also know that it was those cards or e-mails I received with heartfelt compassion and genuine concern that kept my head a float during those difficult times. The kindness of others is such a treasure to behold and even better to administer. Please consider being one of our **Hands** to reach out to each other during those tenuous times. You will be reached by me with a name in need, cards and stamps will be available. **You** will make an extraordinary difference . Thank you!

Anne ([annemroy@the-floorstore.com](mailto:annemroy@the-floorstore.com))

## Food Ministry

Please come together to serve our brothers and sisters in the spirit of sustenance. Whether in joy or in need we would like to support our community through a food ministry.

We know how much you have done for your neighbors. We would like to continue in this tradition of giving by creating a group of members interested in cooking fresh meals and/or seasonal freezer cooking gatherings using your favorite recipes!

For more information and to add your name to our food ministry please email me at [abroberg2@yahoo.com](mailto:abroberg2@yahoo.com) or find the sign-up list in the JE Room after worship.

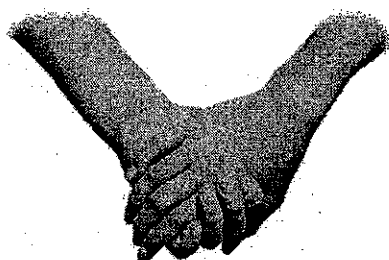
Thank you so much!  
-Amy Freeman

\*We are also accepting the donation of a freezer if anyone has an extra one just hanging around the cellar!

## Ride Ministry

We are looking for people to sign-up with a willingness to bring people with them to church on Sunday mornings. This could be a one-time or an ongoing commitment and we would work to find someone in your area who is in need.

Questions? Contact Brent...  
([bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org))



## Christian Education News

We have numerous plans for the 2013-14 year:

September:

Adult Education: Rotating book study with 3 other South County Congregational Churches. Wed evening at 6 pm: September 25, Housatonic; October 9, Stockbridge; October 23, Monterey; November 6, Tyringham. Each evening will consist of worship service, church tour, discussion and refreshments. CE will provide the refreshments and tours for our turn. Brent will plan our worship service and lead the discussion.

Children's Education: kick off on Sept. 8, Rally Day with lesson on the Potter and the Clay. Children will work with clay after the children's message in church. We plan to have three age groups: Nursery with Jody for children through age 4, Godly Play for children in pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Middles group for children in grades 4 to 7. We are seeking teachers and assistants. We also hope to plan some middle/high school activities. We will try to have Sunday School lessons follow the lectionary when possible.

We hope to have a parent discussion group to meet about four times a year to discuss Christian education in the home.

October 6: World Communion (drumming)

November 3: All Saints Day (remembrance) November 3

December 15: Advent celebration with pageant in late afternoon

January 19: Justice Sunday

February 2: All-Church Birthday Party

March 2: Mardi Gras Party

June 8: CE Sunday

### OPEN TABLE

**Open Table at the Stockbridge Grange will resume  
on September 5 at 5:30 p.m.**

We would love to have volunteers who can commit to one Thursday a month to make desserts (at home), come to the Grange to make salad at 4 p.m., or come to wash dishes at 5 or 5:30 p.m. Volunteering for 10 weeks each year helps us provide 60-70 meals each week and have an enjoyable time doing it!

If you would like to help plan for this year or to volunteer: [ahutchinson@verizon.net](mailto:ahutchinson@verizon.net)

*We are entering our 5th year and have served over 2000 meals!*

Thank you to everyone who has come to help or to share a meal.

Anne Hutchinson

# September 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10:00 AM Service League</p>	<p>3</p> <p>8:00 PM AA/Alanon</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10:30 AM Open office hours 6:30 PM Growth &amp; Fellowship Com. Meeting</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5:30 PM Stockbridge Open Table 6:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1:00 PM Christian Education Board Mtg.</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10:00 AM Service League 10:15 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:30 AM Clergy Lectionary Study 7:00 PM Trustees Meeting 8:00 PM AA/Alanon</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10:30 AM Open office hours 7:00 PM Diaconate Meeting</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:30 PM Stockbridge Open Table 6:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10:00 AM Service League</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:30 AM Clergy Lectionary Study 8:00 PM AA/Alanon</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10:30 AM Open office hours 7:30 PM Mission &amp; Action Board Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>5:30 PM Stockbridge Open Table 6:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service 1:00 PM Festival Chorus Rehearsal 5:30 PM Dinner at Heaton Court</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10:00 AM Service League</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:30 AM Clergy Lectionary Study 7:00 PM Council Meeting 8:00 PM AA/Alanon</p>	<p>25</p> <p>10:30 AM Open office hours</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:30 PM Stockbridge Open Table 6:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10:15 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service 1:00 PM Festival Chorus Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</p> <p>10:00 AM Service League</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>

SEPTMBER  
NEWSLETTER

First Congregational Church  
P.O. Box 825  
Stockbridge, MA 01262

\*\*\*\*\*

Phone: 413-298-3137

Fax: 413-298-0118 ~ Email – [churchoffice@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@stockbridgeucc.org)

Website – [www.stockbridgeucc.org](http://www.stockbridgeucc.org)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: 9:00-3:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday

#### STAFF

Pastor - The Rev. Brent Damrow - [bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org)

Minister of Music - Evan Mack - [emack@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:emack@stockbridgeucc.org)

Administrative Assistant - Nancy Wilcox - [nwilcox@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:nwilcox@stockbridgeucc.org)

Financial Secretary - I mft - [rphanft@yahoo.com](mailto:rphanft@yahoo.com)