

*The First Congregational Church, UCC*  
*PO Box 825*  
*Stockbridge MA 01262*



## **October 2020**

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

Minister of Music: Dr. Sándor Szabó - [music@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:music@stockbridgeucc.org)

Administrator: Will Garrison – [office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org)

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(413) 298-3137 | [www.stockbridgeucc.org](http://www.stockbridgeucc.org)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m. *Online*

Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 p.m. *Gathered, church front lawn*

Wednesday Morning Prayer: 8:00 a.m. *Online*

Thursday Morning Prayer: 8:00 a.m. *Gathered, under the tent*

Office hours: 9:00-1:00, Monday - Friday

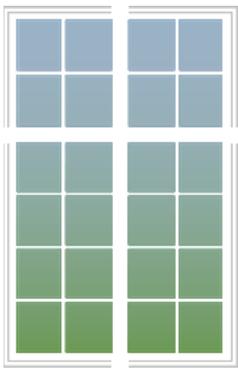
### **Giving Tree Holiday Gift Program**

It's not too early to begin thinking about the Giving Tree! This program provides wrapped gifts and gift cards for individuals and families identified by local human services agencies. Mission and Action is working with to bring elements of the Giving Tree on line this year – and while the program will be virtual, the need is even greater this year due to lost income from the pandemic. As you shop, think about picking up some gift cards (CVS, Walmart, Target, Big Y to name a few). **Please stayed tuned for special updates and instructions.** Questions? Contact Charlotte Rodgers. Thank you!

# October 2020

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
Online worship is at stockbridgeucc.org	Calendar is subject to change. Please check the church website for updates.	Brent's office hours by appointment, call church office.		1 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the tent</i>	2	3
4 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>gathered, church lawn</i> All-Church Birthday Evening Worship 5:00 p.m. <i>on church lawn</i>	5 Covenant / Disciple Bible Studies begin this week.	6	7 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Church Council 7:00 p.m.	8 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the tent</i>	9	10
11 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>online</i> Evening Worship 5:00 p.m. <i>on church lawn</i>	12 Stewardship mailing sent out.	13	14 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Mission & Action 5:30 pm Christian Ed 5:30 pm	15 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the tent</i>	16	17
18 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>gathered &amp; online</i> Evening Worship 5:00 p.m. <i>on church lawn</i>	19	20	21 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Trustees 5:30 pm Deacons 6:30 pm G & F 7:30 pm.	22 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the tent</i>	23	24
25 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>gathered &amp; online</i> Lake Mahkeenac Radio Theater 5:00 p.m.	26	27	28 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm	29 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the tent</i>	30	31



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## October 2020 Newsletter

Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning I went for a saving walk. I have long known that a walk early in the morning after expressing love to family is transformational, yet over the past few weeks or maybe months it has become a rare and fleeting thing. This morning my plan was to get to work early to go through the significant and important things that were waiting for me. Yet when I stepped out the door into the damp breezes just before the sun fully emerged, something took over, whether wisdom or need, and I set out for a walk listening to one of my favorite podcasts.

It was only moments into the walk that the truth of the moment came visually into focus. Fall is here, change is unfolding, and while often that leads people to worry about what is coming there is also stunning beauty to behold. This fall, there will be additional challenges for each of us and for our community. For many, summer was not as joyfully resilient making as we might normally enjoy. Even with the gorgeous weather the chance to expand our horizons through the myriad of cultural opportunities that exist, through travel, or even just carefree connections was greatly diminished. There are new challenges of days that are becoming shorter while responsibilities for family members that might be growing, There is the divisiveness of politics, the reality of the pandemic and a possible resurgence, and the growing possibility of isolation.

All of this is leading me to try and imagine the ways that we as a family and church might support turning – both inwardly and outwardly. Poet, priest, and

philosopher John O’Donohue often wrote about both the vastness of our interiority as well as the importance of intimate connection, saying in his work *Anam Cara* “It is very important to find a balance in your belonging.”



We are working here at the church to imagine ways that both help you to explore interiority while staying connected. I am imaging learning circles, outward adventures, one-on-one partnerships, group networks and more about ways that we can bring our passions together, share the

gifts that God has blessed us with, and not just survive what is coming, but thrive in it.

There is a great deal in flux right now and no matter when there is a vaccine, who wins the fall elections, or who/when the Supreme Court seat is filled - we are in for a long and slow healing. These times right now are the times to strengthen our connections to God, to one another, to our community, and to our world. We will discover new rhythms and truths to life and yet it will not be overnight or even soon. I say that not to lead to despair, but rather to cling to hope and to share honesty that can buttress resiliency.

If you have needs that I or the church could help meet, please share them with me. If you have ideas for how we as a family can weather these times, please share them with me. I remind you of the words that we shared so often in March, “Do not fear. We will make it through this...together!” Amen (which means may it be so!).

Peace, *Brent*

# OUR SHARED LIFE TOGETHER

We will be including prayers in the weekly emails, including those gathered in Sunday worship. If you have a name you would like to add, please contact the church office.

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS	October 13	John Tracy
October 2 Michael Lynch	October 18	John Slocombe
October 3 Madonna Meagher	October 19	Tristan Osgood
October 6 Nellie Rustick	October 23	Starbuck Smith
October 11 Betsy Wise	October 27	Sarah Boyd
	October 31	Anna Smith

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH

### From the Organ Bench: Chime Choirs

#### A Short History of Handchimes

In 1977, an English handchime was developed by Toby Harris Smith and was described in David Sawyer's article "Vibrations" published by Cambridge University Press. This instrument used an external "spring metal ringer." However, there was an inherent flaw in the design and Mr. Smith was unable to find a workable solution to the problem and was eventually forced into bankruptcy. The handchime was made in England and distributed by Schulmerich Carillons in the United States. Mr. David Ward, a therapist in England, used the handchimes in his music classes and in rehabilitative therapy sessions. He felt that the handchime would be a very useful addition in therapy sessions and contacted Dr. Paul Rosene, his friend in the United States. Dr. Rosene toyed with the idea of the "handchime" and consulted with Jacob Malta at Malmark, Inc. In 1981, they started experimenting with different designs, using rounded and squared tubes, using different combinations of aluminum and tin and developing a way to attach a clapper mechanism, similar to ones used in the Malmark handbells. In 1982, Jacob Malta introduced the Choirchime: they had found the right combination of metals to produce a "pure" tone, based on the principals of the tuning fork with an external clapper mechanism. "The sound of the Choirchime is mellow, peaceful and gentle;" "a heavenly sound." There have been some slight modifications in the original design and the Choirchime is marketed in nearly its original form today by Malmark, Inc.



To see chime choirs in action, take a look at YouTube videos, search using "hand chimes" and "let it go." [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com)

#### Chime Choir for Children and Youth

We are very excited to invite anyone from grade 1-12 to our newly formed hand chime choir. Our church purchased a 3-octave set of Malmark chimes and we can accommodate up to 12 ringers. You need not have musical or chime experience just the desire to play and the willingness to learn.

Rehearsals will be held on Sundays, 11:30-12:30, under the tent and following safety protocols. This will begin this Sunday, September 27. To sign up or get more information, please contact Dr. Sandor Szabo at [music@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:music@stockbridgeucc.org)

~ Sándor Szabó, Minister of Music

#### Would you like to meet with Pastor Brent?

Brent would be delighted to talk with you under the church tent! (Or phone or Zoom.) Just call or email the church office to make an appointment.

## Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons continues to explore ways to make worship during the pandemic more meaningful, beautiful, and personal. Sunday Evening Worship is continuing to evolve, and we now have the wonderful addition of guitar to the music offerings and continue to enjoy hygienic weekly communion together and to develop the prayer garden on the front lawn. Please register and join us if you can!

We continue to focus on featuring more people in the Sunday morning livestream—thank you Ted Randolph and Diane Piraino for delivering the liturgy and a comedic announcement of Rally Saturday (which, by the way, we hear was a wonderful success! The beautiful stars the kids made warmed our hearts at Evening Worship the next night!) If you would like to share an announcement or offer a welcome via video, please let Brent or Will know, and we will see what we can wrangle into the livestream!

In addition, we ask everyone to take a photo of the place you livestream the worship Sunday morning, and send it to Will at [office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org). I suspect some people may have made a beautiful sacred spot in their homes. I have not managed to do that. As a therapist, I am doing a lot of telehealth, videoconferencing with my clients. I sit at a computer a lot right now. My office has a window that looks out on my yard and the lawn at St. Peter's Community Center across the street; a windowsill with a plant and candles; a very cluttered desk with books, papers, calendars, and a white board that lists frequently-used numbers, reminders about writing projects, and a treasured stone engraved with the word "Faith" on it. Perhaps you will recognize my desk when we feature a photo montage of our various domestic temples at an upcoming service—do send your photo in!

I have realized that this office, surrounded by natural beauty, with fullness of life on the desk, and reminder to have faith, is a very good temple for me. It helps keep my faith in God as I conference with sad, angry, anxious, or grief-stricken clients, and it helps me remember the world outside, as Brent reminds us to do when we are in the beautiful

sanctuary at the church, the world outside the haven where we gather together in love, peace and understanding on Sunday mornings. Although I long to share that haven together again in the physical church in Stockbridge, I also recognize that doubling-up my place of work as my place of worship has brought God closer to me and my whole life in all its challenge, conflict, and chaos.

Isn't that the place where God belongs, right smack in the middle of our lives?

~ Elizabeth Young for the Board of Deacons

## Rally Day

On September 19, a special day of celebration was held for the children in our congregation. Our plan was to connect with families in a joyful, fun-filled, and safe way. The festivities began at 11 a.m.



Large circles were spray painted on the front lawn with a 6-foot distance between the circles. Each circle contained a table and chairs for each of the families who participated. Pizzas had been pre-ordered, according to individual choices. Anne Hutchinson worked her magic by creating beautiful stars attached

to long poles. They adorned the walkway and will remain on the church lawn as a sign of hope. She also set out 11 bags with each child's name on it. The bags were filled with crayons markers and everything one would need to make a paper kite. The results were splendid and the kites filled the sky. Paul Rix was the master of games—seven of them. The children had great fun in the competitions. Other members of the Board of CE and Sunday School teachers were there to lend a helping hand.

Also in the walk way was one long table with *Bibles* for the children to look over and order. Three signs on the table clearly indicated the appropriate age range. The children were very respectful to use the hand sanitizer and rubber gloves when handling the books. After pizzas were consumed, there was one more surprise. Dr. Sándor Szabó set up a table of chimes under the tent and taught the children how to play chimes. Pastor Brent, of course, officiated over the celebration with his usual grace and humor.

~ The Board of Christian Education

## Mission & Action

Your Mission & Action team held our September meeting in person, distanced, under the tent on the church lawn. How good to gather in person! In our first few meetings we've taken a look at defining our mission ... thinking about how we distribute funds, how we engage each other to serve, and, how do we carry out our mission while being mindful of the impacts of the pandemic? A key goal for us this year will be to make sure we identify and address unmet needs in our congregation and our community.

To date, Mission & Action has voted to provide financial assistance to support those impacted by the Western US wildfires and the Gulf Coast Hurricanes through direct donation to the UCC Disaster Ministries. We've also provided funds for the important ministry of the Open Table and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Looking ahead, we are planning to once again support the outreach of the "Giving Tree" holiday program – look for an important update on this ministry in this newsletter.

Please plan to engage with us in the Giving Tree program, and reach out and let us know how you would like to get involved!

~ Charlotte Rodgers on behalf of Sarah Conly, Patty Fadding, Nick Pohl, Patty Strauch, Bruce Wilkins and Sara Zanin

## Service League

A few years ago, the Church was kind enough to build a closet under the stairs in the Narthex for the Service League to use as a storage space for items we were stockpiling for the Holly Fair. Alas, this year there will be no Holly Fair - but the closet now has a new purpose in life. It's housing equipment that the Deacons now need for services that are being held outdoors, as well as additional sound equipment for streaming services. A group of us met last Friday to move our boxes into the basement - (and had an impromptu tour of the old foundation walls, courtesy of **Will**). We'll look forward to the day when we can haul the boxes out again and welcome everyone back to the Holly Fair, in the not-too-distant future, we hope!

Speaking of the Holly Fair, we've been discussing the possibility of offering some of our items for sale

by pre-order. Those would include home-made jams and jellies, made to order baked goods such as pies, cakes, and cookies, and some of our craft items such as catnip mice and the ever-popular "scrubbies". We would love some feedback to gauge interest, so if you think you might like to order some of those items, please let us know by emailing me at [mhhornick@gmail.com](mailto:mhhornick@gmail.com). No obligation! We're just trying to decide whether to go forward with planning.

Meanwhile, thanks to **Anne Hutchinson's** coordination, we were able to contribute some hand-made tote bags to CE for Rally Day, to help start our school-age members on their back-to-class journey. CE packed the bags with some basic supplies - crayons, markers, pencils, scissors - for the eleven kids who came.

As for our members, we just had to share this picture **Nancy Wilcox** took of **Helen McCormick** and a new friend. Who could resist? And **Hal and Ann Brink** are continuing to walk every trail in the Berkshires. We're still meeting under the tent - but if this week is anything to go by, our days in the sun are numbered. We started in the spring in down jackets and gloves, and it's time to get them out again. Next week, we'll change our meeting time to Friday, when the Berkshire Waldorf High School is not in session, so we can move indoors. Funny how those days that seemed to drag so in March have rushed by, and we're suddenly looking at October. Can somebody please tell me how that happened?

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League





### Church Family News

This photograph is of our small dinner-discussion group, Not Bread Alone, reuniting On September 11, 2020 for an outdoor and distanced pandemic supper. Our group comprises Ron Hanft, Ken LaBresh, Steve Bankert and Jill Fleming (along with Will their lifeshare guest), Sarah Conly and Michael Deegan, with Ted Randolph and Diane Piraino hosting. Also of our group but unable

to attend this time is Betsey McKearnan.

We first met four times from 10/18-1/19, each time with a topic to anchor discussion, and each time with wonderful food, wine, and companionship. We had a reunion dinner last October as well. The topic for this meeting, prompted by Jill, was “What have you learned about yourself because of the pandemic?”

THOUGHT WE FORGOT YOUR BIRTHDAY?  
THINK AGAIN!

The **All-Church Birthday Party**  
(Pandemic Version)  
is coming up...Sunday, **October 4<sup>th</sup>**!

We will not have a parade of cakes, but we will have several nice cakes to choose from! We will not be able to eat together but we will deliver your piece of cake right to your door!\*

Please place your order no later than Thursday October 1 at noon. The order form will be available on the church website.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU from GROWTH AND FELLOWSHIP BOARD!**



\*or you can pick it up after church if we do have an outdoor gathering that Sunday morning; details to be announced....

PUT ON YOUR  
PARTY PANTS  
(AT HOME)



**THE LAKE MAHKEENAC  
RADIO THEATER**

**SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 25th  
5 PM**

*An evening of storytelling, singing, and all-around merriment!*

**Star of stage and screen Alison Larkin**  
**Folk singer extraordinaire Bruce Mandel**  
**Opera chanteuse Nellie Rustick**  
**Improv comedian Chris Brophy**  
**Piano stylings by Sandor Szabo**  
**Head writer and host David Anderegg**



**OUR GUARANTEE:  
NO ELECTION JOKES!**

**Donations** to be Solicited  
During the Show

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF  
THE 1824 STOCKBRIDGE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH** UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Stockbridge, Massachusetts



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