

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**January 2022**

Pastor: The Rev. Brent Damrow

Interim Minister of Music: Tracy Wilson - [music@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:music@stockbridgeucc.org)

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

Financial Secretary: Ron Hanft – [rphanft@yahoo.com](mailto:rphanft@yahoo.com)

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

[www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc](https://www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday: Bible Study, 1:00 p.m. *Online*

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

Thursday: Walking Prayer

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

# January 2022

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Online worship at stockbridgeucc.org						1 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
2 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> CEC 11:30am	3	4 CEC 11:30am <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	5 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Church Council 7pm	6 Brent's Sabbath Day	7 Service League 10:00am	8 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
9 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> CEC 11:30am	10 Spiritual Direction 2:00pm	11 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	12 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Christian Ed 5:00pm Music 7:00pm	13 Brent's Sabbath Day	14 Service League 10:00am	15 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
16 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> CEC 11:30am	17	18 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	19 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Trustees 5:30pm Deacons 7:30pm	20 Newsletter Deadline (send to Will) Brent's Sabbath Day	21 Service League 10:00am	22 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
23 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> CEC 11:30am	24	25 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	26 Morning Prayer 8 am M & A 5:00pm G&F 6:00pm	27 Brent's Sabbath Day	28 Service League 10:00am	29 Stockbridge Golf Club meeting 8:30am <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
30 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> CEC 11:30am	31					



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## January 2022 Newsletter

Dear Pastor Brent,

In some ways, it seems as though you have been gone for eons; in other ways, it seems like just yesterday that we gathered on a gorgeous fall day to bid you farewell on your sabbatical.

You left us in very good hands, even if we didn't quite realize it at the time. The guest preachers you arranged for us from Andover Newton were all quite wonderful, each in their own way. They gave us new lenses through which to experience our Sunday worship services, and take our lights out into the world.

Little did we realize that you also left us in our own good hands. Not everything was done as well as it would have been if you had been here. Quite frankly, some things did not get done at all. But all that we did accomplish was done with good will, grace, and a willingness to forgive each other and ourselves.

As we celebrated your departure, we now rejoice in your return.

The Bell Choir was a highlight of the December 12th service.



*Go Pilgrim*

*Go, pilgrim, go with all our gratitude, for  
God commands your Sabbath rest.*

*May all your steps be sweetly blessed until  
you can come back to us renewed.*

*We hope you will inhabit woods and seas, to  
contemplate Creation's expanse;*

*To walk in beauty and to dance along the  
edge of God's infinities.*

*We will be here, attempting to discern our  
mission, and our thoughts of you will teach us  
what we need to do, until we celebrate your  
safe return.*

Words and music by David Anderegg  
September 26, 2021 sending worship service

On behalf of a grateful congregation,  
Welcome Home!

Cathy Clark  
Moderator

## HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 4	Lisa Nelson
January 5	John Morse
January 7	Jane McCormick
January 12	Anne Roy Mary Jane Dunlop
January 13	Jeannene Booher
January 14	Jill Wheat Ned Saviski
January 16	Nancy Wilcox
January 21	Alexis Kennedy
January 22	Pat Carlson Daniel Knauss
January 23	Christine Smith
January 26	Willa Pohl Kenneth LaBresh
January 27	Linda Colvin
January 28	Chuck Gillett
January 29	Vivian Wise
January 31	Cathy Clark

## Scholarships

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce five recipients of the Church's annual grants. The five students are Fiona Brown, who is studying for a Master's degree in Social Work at Westfield State University; Gabriel Davis-Hollander, a sophomore at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he is pursuing a double major in Economics and Philosophy; Anna Grace Nimmo, a senior at LIM College, where she will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in International Business, with a double minor in Marketing and English; Sophie Randolph, currently in her second year of Rice University's MBA program; and Ella Smith, who is pursuing her life-long dream of becoming a pharmacist at Western New England University, where she is currently in the six-year pre-pharmacy program. Grants were awarded at the worship service on December 19.

## Board of Deacons

The Deacons have been busy planning Advent services with JaQuan and Tracy, consulting with the Regathering Committee, decorating the church inside and out, and ushering on Sundays. We are grateful for all the help we've received from volunteer readers and decorators, and those who have recorded the Sunday morning text messages for attendance and prayers.

As I write, the week of Joy is half over (or half yet to come) and we have one more planning session and lots to consider to get us through this liturgical season. What amazes me is seeing more closely how much thought and effort so many people have put into making this season, an Advent during pandemic and sabbatical, special. I hope you have found it meaningful.

And here's a plug for the Advent Spiral Walk: if you haven't yet had a chance to walk the spiral, it is on the front lawn of the church and lit up every evening. There are Advent "candles" surrounding the spiral, with a new candle lit each Sunday. In the center is the Christ candle, to be lit Christmas Eve and through Epiphany. The walk is meant to give you a special way to relax, pray, unwind, and enjoy beauty. Blessings! ~ Ted Randolph



## Board of Christian Education

**ADULT EDUCATION:** The Board of Christian Education is thankful for Jeremy Ridenour, Kim Ruffing and Linda Russell, who led the sermon discussion groups this fall. The small groups had much to discuss with the lively sermons presented by members of Andover Newton Seminary, and the leaders did a terrific job facilitating the weekly conversations and the development of connections within small groups. Thank you to all involved and to Will Garrison for his help with Zoom!

The Advent devotional discussion group got a late start, but we are enjoying the brief and lively essays in *Jesus Crisis*, this year's collection of pithy lessons for the season. We meet in person, Thursdays 2:00-3:00, through Epiphany, January 6. All are welcome.

With Pastor Brent's return in January, CE is pleased to initiate a Kerygma Bible Study course titled *Good News for All* on the Gospel of Luke. Luke's gospel is complex, even contradictory, and the course focuses on the themes of this gospel and, of course, the large issues Luke focuses on in Jesus's life and teaching. The course will begin in early January and run for 14 weeks. Pastor Brent will lead one small group and Elizabeth Young the other. See more details in upcoming E-news. If you are new to and uncertain about Bible Study, please talk with Elizabeth about this specific course, intended for newbies and experts alike!

**YOUTH GROUP:** The Youth Group started off their Advent with a craft party after church on November 28. Before the crafting got underway, the kids had lunch while hearing about the Kiva loan program. Over pizza à la Diane, Patty Strauch explained how the program works, with a view to having a youth event in the near future to allocate the next round of loans.

After lunch, Khalil, Ruth, Julian, and Mia played a quick game of charades while adults finished setting up the room for making Advent wreaths and stained glass votive holders. A printing station was also set up. Then we got busy!

Everyone seemed to enjoy making their own Advent wreath with forms and candles supplied by CE, freshly cut fir and pine, and various decorations from Terry Wise's trove of supplies. Tissue paper was glued over Jill's extra small jelly jars to make wonderful candle holders. Over at the printing table, the kids used potatoes and sponges to decorate wrapping paper, gift bags, and note cards.

We were sorry that a last minute commitment prevented Andrew and Conor from joining us at this second youth meeting of 2021. We are planning for more youth events in 2022. Adult participants were Terry Wise (votives), Josh Hall (wreaths), Ted Randolph (printing), Diane Piraino (printing and pizza), and Jill Wheat (general factotum). Thanks to Cindy Brown for taking pictures and Patty for talking about Kiva.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** CE is grateful to the Regathering Committee for their careful consideration of COVID safety protocols for Sunday School. At this point we plan to continue to have Sunday School indoors with masks and appropriate physical distancing, and to provide study materials online for families with children who cannot safely come to Sunday School. Jill Wheat has done an extraordinary job preparing and posting materials each week!





## Pledges - Past and Future

**Year-End Giving - It's Not Too Late!** Have you completed your 2021 Pledge? Do you want to give to the Christmas Fund, Food Pantry or other special projects? And would you like this credited to your 2021 giving? Online giving must be done no later than Dec. 31. However, checks dated in December which we receive by January 20 can be counted as a 2021 gift.

**Supporting the Church in 2022.** Our worship,

education, church facilities, staff, and outreach programs depend on your support. A pledge is a way to give that is especially helpful for planning our 2022 budget. If you have not yet made a pledge for 2022 that can be done at any time. If you've misplaced your pledge card you may pick one up in the J.E. room, at the church office, or we can mail one to you. Also, you can make a pledge without a pledge card, in confidence, by email to our Financial Secretary, Ron Hanft: [rphanft@yahoo.com](mailto:rphanft@yahoo.com).

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## The Service League

We are all pleased, and relieved, to be able to say that we had a successful **Holly Fair** on December 4. It was quite different from previous years in a number of ways - no luncheon, no crowds - but all ran smoothly and eager shoppers were patient with wait times and mask rules as Anne Hutchinson made sure safety protocols were observed.

So many people helped in so many ways. It started on the wreath assembly line at the Grange, where Claire Williams' daughter Hope Ponsart ran a very efficient shop, organizing everything to prepare the way for floral artistry by Anna Smith, Shirley Miller, Jackie Hawkins, Terry Wise, Margaret Hornick, and Liz Murray. On the day of the sale, we had tremendous help at the Baked Goods table, in Grandma's attic, and various other departments, from Patty Strauch, Elizabeth Young, Cindy Brown, Olga Schwede, Terry Wise, Susan Moor, Kinney and Linda Frelinghuysen, and Diane Fogarty. Nancy Wilcox and Patty Fadding send out a **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated baked goods - there were some amazing offerings, and not a crumb was left at the end of the day.



Thanks also to the many generous members who donated their no-longer-needed treasures to Grandma's Attic, and to Gene Kalish, who reprised his role as a piano-playing Santa Claus. When Treasurer Anne Fix finished counting the proceeds, she determined that we had cleared about \$3300; this, plus the proceeds from our Summer Fair and our pop-up fairs, shows that in spite of pandemic

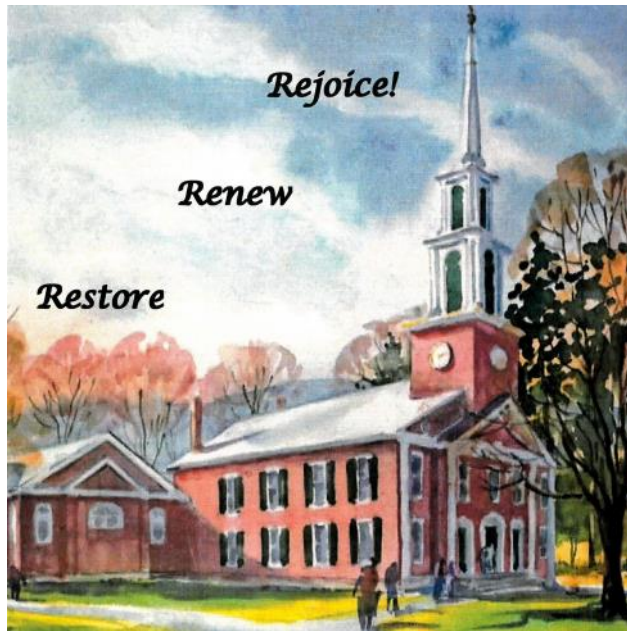
limitations, we have been able to take in about as much as we always have and will be able to continue our support of many good causes at home and abroad. And we could never have done it without **YOU!** Thanks to all who donated, worked, and shopped - we are so grateful for your support. A

special thank you goes to Cindy Brown, our roving photographer, and to Will Garrison, for amazing backstage support. And, if I have omitted any names, please accept my apologies and let me know so I can make amends.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League

## Capital Campaign - Theme & Logo

Much of the Capital Executive Committee's work does not produce a visible result—until it does. Now, thanks to the untiring efforts of the brochure task group, we can introduce to you the theme and logo for the capital campaign. Recently, Charlotte Rodgers and Michael Lynch have been going along in overdrive, working with Terry Wise and others to get to this point in a timely fashion. Because the “and others” includes the entire CEC, this was the proverbial design by committee—not for the faint of heart. Thanks again to Charlotte and Michael!



The theme words “Restore, Renew, Rejoice!” were superimposed on a slightly cropped version of a well-known (to us) 2001 painting by Elice Davis Pieropan to create a logo that is colorful and celebratory. The CEC hopes you will see in it some of the campaign's greater aims: **restore** our historic building, including the steeple, the steps, the classrooms, and the organ; **renew** our commitment to be welcoming to all with the construction of a proper universal access ramp; and **rejoice** that we and those who follow will have safe and accessible place to worship, work, and gather.

This campaign connects us with all those who have been stewards of this place of worship. They did their part to pass it on to us better than they inherited it, as we intend to do for the next generations. The next time this logo appears in your mailbox, it will be on the campaign letterhead. Be on the lookout!

~ Ted Randolph

## Looking for Videographers

The publicity task group of the CEC is looking for help in creating a nonprofessional (but still nice as possible) video for the Capital Campaign. The level of end result will be determined by the skill set of the crew, ranging from a slideshow or PowerPoint type presentation to a more polished production including things like actual video clips, music, sound bite interviews, aerial photos of the church, etc. The crew would need to start working early January toward a late February or early March deadline. Please contact Ted Randolph at (413) 822-0539 (mobile) or tedfr4@gmail.com.





## The Wednesday Virtual Bible Study

Every Wednesday afternoon several of us meet by Zoom at 1:00 PM to study the Scripture text that the preacher for the following Sunday has chosen. We would love to have you join us.

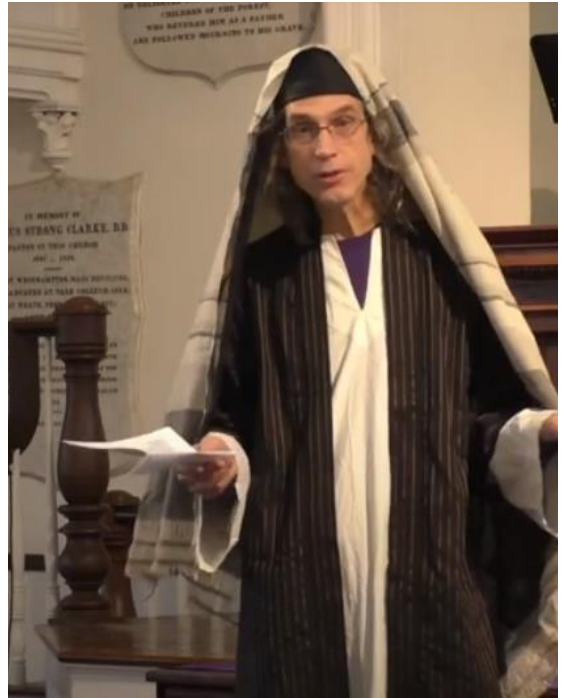
What happens during this hour? First, we greet each other and check in on how our week is going. This may take fifteen or twenty minutes. Then, somebody volunteers to read the Scripture passage. We take a quiet minute to think about it. What struck you? What did you find interesting or curious? What questions do you have about the text? Then, someone else reads it, often from a different English translation.

Then we talk about it. That's pretty much it. We enjoy each other and our conversations are lively and fun. We often learn new insights into the Bible. It is great preparation for Sunday worship. Often toward the end we guess where the preacher will go with the text or texts. We're often wrong.

You may be an expert on the Bible or maybe you never opened it before, but you will be welcomed and valued in this group.

There is no cost, and no sign up. Just go here to the calendar section on the front page of the church website, and hit the Zoom link. We'd love to have you join us.

Blessings, Pastor Rick Floyd



From top left: The Wheat family helped celebrate Advent; Ted Randolph - or is it Joseph? - assisting Rev. Beachem in a Children's Time; Nellie Rustick brought down the house with her rendition of *Gesu Bambino* by Pietro Yon; and Elizabeth Young talking up the Advent devotional.