

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262

August 2022

Pastor: The Rev. Brent Damrow - bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org
Minister of Music: Peter Frost - music@stockbridgeucc.org
Administrator/Sexton: Will Garrison – office@stockbridgeucc.org
Financial Secretary: Marion Pomeroy - finance@stockbridgeucc.org

(413) 298-3137 | www.stockbridgeucc.org

www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

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

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

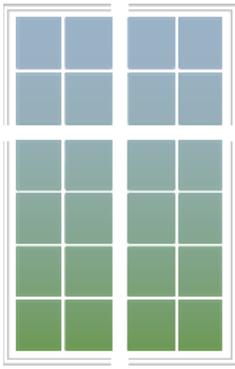
Office hours: 9:00-2:00, Monday - Friday



August 2022

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Livestream worship at stockbridgeucc.org	1	2	3 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Council 7:00pm	4	5 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	6 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
7 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i>	8 Spiritual Direction 2:00pm	9 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	10 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm	11	12 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	13 Service League Summer Fair 10:00-2:00 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
14 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered Outdoors & online</i> <i>Welcome reception for Peter Frost, Minister of Music</i>	15	16 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	17 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	18	19 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am Newsletter deadline	20 Memorial Service for Joyce Hovey 1:00pm <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
21 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> <i>Kolano/Ridenour baptism</i>	22 Brent out this week Will out	23 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> Will out	24 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Will out	25	26 Service League 10:00am	27 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
28 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered Outdoors & online</i>	29	30 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	31 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm			



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

August 2022 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

I hope that you are taking in every moment of this glorious summer. I hope that you are finding your way to the kinds of places that make the Berkshires such a special place to live. I hope that you are hiking in the woods, sitting on the lawn at Tanglewood, taking a dip in any of our lakes and ponds, taking in the dance at Jacob's Pillow, seeing what is on hand at the farmer's markets, watching your ball fly on the links, or doing what brings you joy!

After more than two years of life being scaled back due to the pandemic, my household is trying to make up for lost time. We are reveling in the blessings we missed and being

reminded of other blessings we had forgotten about but treasure, nonetheless. We are re-forging good habits – like reserving Sunday afternoon for the lawn at Tanglewood no matter what is playing. Each time we go back, we find the logistics easier, the relaxation comes more quickly, and the beauty lingers longer. By Thursday we are already looking forward to Sunday. And wow, Summer is flying by!

There is another habit I hope you set time for this fall. Like so much else here in the Berkshires, church life has been limited during these last couple of years. It too will return to full life this fall. Like so many other things, our church is full of memories, connections, blessings, and possibilities. I hope for many of us, coming here on Sunday becomes a habit again. Once it does, we will settle back into the blessings quickly, we

will relax and engage deeply, and we will find love, joy, and grace together too!

Part of what makes Church work, after all, is that we all commit to doing church and being church together. It makes the singing fuller, the prayers richer, the sermon a conversation, the fellowship time more delicious, and all of it more connected. There have been good reasons to join in remotely and some of those reasons will continue. If you have to use the livestream do (and don't forget to check in). If you can be here, try.



Walter Brueggemann maintains that Sunday morning is central to the life of the church. One of the reasons is that collective

worship, study, and fellowship are foundational for us to become the body of Christ. Another reason, though, is that it stakes a claim on the importance of our church family to our lives. It boldly resists the messaging of the world to consume, produce, or make it on our own. It sends us forth with joy and when we make it part of our lives, by mid-week we start looking forward to the next Sunday.

Soak in all the life and beauty of the summer! Get ready to do the same here at church in the Fall. Rally Day, or Re-Covenanting Day, is September 11. Sunday school will open, the choir will return, a picnic will grace the front lawn and family will come back together to share our adventures and share our lives too. I can't wait!

Pastor Brent

HAPPY AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

August 2	Jacob Geldert Damrow
August 6	Susan Moyle Lynch
August 8	Muriel Wermuth
August 9	Ashley Collins
August 13	Ronnie Cunningham Janet Canning
August 14	Kinney Frelinghuysen Kim Ruffing
August 17	Helen McCormick Mary Lou Ryce
August 18	Nora Randolph Linda Hoddy
August 21	Emily Brown Joan Nimmo Linda Russell Miles Wheat
August 23	Jennifer Germain
August 24	Joe Roy
August 25	Kyle Germain Natalie Doerr
August 26	Jon Geldert
August 27	David Cooper
August 29	Joshua Hall
August 31	Steven Bankert

Save the Dates

Joyce Hovey, a woman of deep faith, profound hope, generous love, abiding loyalty, and goodwill departed this world on July 20. A memorial service to celebrate Joyce's life will be held at the church on **August 20**, 1:00pm.

Megan Kolano and Jeremy Ridenour are happy to announce that Micah and Ava will be baptized during the service on Sunday, **August 21**.

Rally Day is **September 11**. Kids will return to Sunday school and the choir will again share their music and joy.

After worship, enjoy a picnic and games on the front lawn. It's an opportunity for the church family to come together for sharing and fun.



By-Laws Revision on Horizon

Our church By-Laws prescribe a revision at least every five years, and 2023 is the next year for revision. Council recently approved a By-Laws Revision Task Force, which has begun to meet.

The Task force consists of: John Canning (retired lawyer with experience with similar church By-Laws); Margaret Hornick (Moderator during last revision); Jeremy Ridenour (Clerk); Patty Strauch (Treasurer and Trustee); Brent Damrow (Pastor); and Cathy Clark (Moderator).

I am excited about the talent and heart that each in the Task Force brings to this effort and look forward to the process, and with working with them.

As part of the process, we are looking forward to

input from boards, committees, and the entire congregation—general or specific; large or small. If you would like a copy of the current By-Laws, let Will know and he will either email you a copy, or have a hard copy for you.

The Task Force would like all input into us by the end of September, with a goal of voting on approval at our next Annual Meeting in May, 2023.

Also, you are invited to pass along your input or ask questions of any of us on the Task Force.

Thank you,

Cathy Clark (Moderator) for Bylaws Revision Task Force—John Canning, Margaret Hornick, Jeremy Ridenour, Patty Strauch, and Brent Damrow

Board of Deacons

The Deacons are fortunate to have three new board members. Ken Ward who has experience as a deacon with two previous churches that he attended. Sarah Conly whose husband Michael Deegan is already a deacon (she has gained deacon knowledge through osmosis) and Miles Wheat who appears to be a natural and humble leader. Also, I would like to acknowledge Ted Randolph, who we all owe so much to for the enthusiasm that he brings to everything he does for our congregation. He has graciously accepted the role of Chair. We are blessed to have Anna Duhon as secretary and as the informal chief creative officer (CCO) as well.

Our board is looking forward to assisting Pastor Brent in many of our familiar and loved traditions. We also are brainstorming and allowing our creative juices to flow. We pray that we will be inspired to develop new ways to share God's love and that we can find ways to include others in our congregation to become involved in services and prayer to further deepen the experience of worship.

As we all know, July and August are jam-packed with activities that involve all the attributes of The Berkshires. Music, outdoor activities, visiting with friends & family. Still, our outside and inside services have been well attended. Pastor Brent and the deacons are in the planning stages of creating some events that utilize our beautiful grounds that may include some food, fire, and song. Please stay tuned for news on these events.

Let's all be grateful for the wonderful weather that we have had so far this summer and pray that we will have enough consistent rain to keep our local farms, forests, and gardens healthy throughout the remainder of the summer months.

Respectfully,

Don Eaton for the Board of Deacons

Food, Fire and Song

August 14 – the Front Lawn

Food, Fire, and Song is “being church” and doing worship in a whole new way – simply through gathering together, eating together, and singing together all under the shade of the trees and in the light of the flickering fire.

Come whenever you like. Firepits will be lit at 5:30 p.m. A welcome followed by singing will start at 6:00 p.m. You can linger as long as you like. Bring friends, any food or drink you want, and any blankets that will make you more comfortable.

This event is designed to be casual, comfortable, kid-friendly, and connected. Song books will be provided and we are lucky to have the Rev. Bert

Marshall play his guitar while he leads us in singing.

Questions: contact the Deacons or the Church Office. Come and See!

By the way – want to know more about Bert? In



addition to being the former Pastor of the Lee Congregational Church, here is what his Linked In profile says about him: “Nebraska native; former professional rock 'n roll musician (Nebraska Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame); worked with troubled teens in NYC; apprenticed on Vermont dairy farms; drove 18-wheelers for a New England health food distributor; lifelong singer/songwriter, performer, recording artist, storyteller; progressive Christian, biblical scholar, perform the Gospel of Mark from memory all over the country. Love being a pastor, love sharing my music and storytelling.”

Summer Fair

Sat., Aug. 13, 2022
10 am – 1 pm

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
4 Main St., Stockbridge, MA



**Mini Grandma's Attic
Baked Goods • Crafts
Cut Flowers • Fresh Produce
Silent Auction**



The Church Tent

Looking for a place to hold your alfresco meeting? The church's big tent is available (at no cost). There are a few chairs always stationed here, with more available. All are welcome to contact Will in the church office to check the schedule.

June 26, 2022

Dear friends,

Thank you for your continued support of The People's Pantry.

It is summer in the Berkshires: warm weather, long days, and the first local harvests arriving from our farmers. We are awash in lettuce and looking forward to peas and zucchinis.

The Pantry continues to be very busy with a persistence of high numbers of shoppers. Meanwhile, the increase in inflation has left many of our neighbors struggling to make ends meet. Accordingly, we are launching a fundraising campaign, our first one in 23 years of operation. With increased numbers of families served and increased prices of food and trucking, we anticipate a need of \$300,000 to stock food this year, far more than the \$100,000 we have received so far this year.

We are appealing to the greater community: individuals, businesses, faith groups, foundations, etc... to help us meet this goal. Please check out our fundraising video for more information, and please spread the word.

Again, thank you for your donations of time, food and money. It takes a community to feed a community. For a video, click here: [People's Pantry Fill-The-Bag Fundraiser Short](#)

The People's Pantry, GB

The [People's Pantry](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and all donations are tax deductible

Bit by Bit, Marion Pomeroy Found her way to First Church, Stockbridge

The pandemic brought many losses, inconveniences, and deprivations - but one that had not occurred to me until recently, when I had the pleasure of speaking with Marion about her new role as our Financial Secretary, was the loss of opportunity for older members of the Church to properly welcome and get to know new members. Marion joined this congregation over two and a half years ago, yet before we sat down together in July, I wasn't sure we would recognize each other. I'm happy to say we've fixed that.



Anyone who's been following the Newsletter knows that Ron Hanft, who's served so ably as Financial Secretary for the last ten years, at last decided it was time to pass the torch; luckily for the Church, Marion was willing to take it up. Speaking to her about her past experience in health care and medical coding and billing, I realized once again what a deep bench of amazingly skilled and experienced members we have, a fact that's easily overlooked, as, like Marion, they are usually modest.

My father used to advise me and my brothers to "let other people do your bragging for you". That's good counsel, undoubtedly, but we often don't know what lights are hiding under bushels. I was given the delightful task (by Moderator Cathy Clark) of doing some bragging for Marion.

Though born and raised near Lowell (a preacher's kid!) with much time spent in New Hampshire, where, from an early age, she was an avid rider (more on that later), as an adult she studied and worked in Westchester County, NY. The path from urban and suburban New York is well-worn by many Berkshire transplants, but Marion's was more gradual, with a number of stops along the way. She trained as a nurse but soon realized she

was better suited to Social Work, so got a second degree. Bit by bit, she worked her way North in search of the right combination of job and community. Marion found that the Pittsfield area offered rich opportunities for social work practice, and given that it was within range, it was the logical next move. As a medical social worker, she enjoyed providing case management for individuals with disabilities living in foster placements, as well as supporting patients and families. After quick refresher courses in anatomy and physiology and medical terminology, Marion kept busy during the pandemic learning medical coding and billing.

In case you're wondering how this connects to her new role as Financial Secretary, the common theme is a facility with numbers. When first approached by Cathy, Marion demurred, but, on second thought, realized that she was in fact prepared for the opportunity. The happy result is that she is now fully on board in the job, with Ron on call, if needed, to help with the transition.

And how did Marion find her way to UCC Stockbridge? When she attended a Palm Sunday service in Stockbridge with her parents several years ago, something clicked for her and she suspected that this might eventually become her church home.

One other very important thing to know about Marion is that she is a skilled and experienced equestrienne. If you can get her to show you some pictures of her competing with Willow (most recently in Vermont) I promise that you don't need to know anything about horses or the sport to be impressed by the grace and beauty of this team. And we are most fortunate that she's decided to join ours, both as a member, and as staff.

~ Margaret Hornick

Marion is usually in the office on Monday afternoons - stop by to say hello!

Peter Frost is thrilled to be joining the staff at the First Congregational Church

Peter Frost, the church's new Minister of Music, comes to us with a wealth of experience. Peter has been a theater/choral teacher in both public and independent school for sixteen years. For five years, he was the Director of Music for the Children's Aid Society Chorus program where he administered to 18 choruses (K-12) and directed five in New York City. Peter's two select choirs from The Children's Aid Society performed in Carnegie Hall with Mandy Patinkin, The Rainbow Room with Donna Murphy, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Waldorf Astoria and Radio City Music Hall.

He received his Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut and Master of Music degree in music education from Lehman College, City University of New York. Peter has performed with the Hartt Touring Opera in Connecticut, the California Opera Center at Notre Dame College in Belmont, California.

As an actor-singer, he has appeared in musicals in summer stock, dinner theaters and regional theaters, as well as many dramatic plays with Bluestone Actors Project, a professional repertory company based in Westchester County, New York. Peter has been an adjunct professor in voice at Sacred Heart University, in Fairfield, Connecticut. He began his career as a church musician in college. Most recently, Peter has been the music director at Saint Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church in Chappaqua, New York.

As a composer, Peter has been commissioned to write choral compositions by the Briarcliff Congregational Church, The Children's Aid Society in New York City, and the Great Neck

North High School Jazz Choir and Colgate University. His choral pieces were recorded by The Varsity Ensemble at the St. Mary's International School, Tokyo, Japan, and Ohio State University Women's Chorus. Peter's choral pieces have been published by GIA Publications, Santa Barbara Music Publishing of California, and Zintzo Music. In May, his new major choral composition "Cantata 2020: a diary" was premiered by 12 singers, 4 instrumentalists, and a reader. For further information about his composition, please go to peterfrostmusic.com.



Peter has lived with his wife Hui-Mei Lin (aka Fimi) in Hawthorne since 1992. Fimi is a concert pianist, made her solo NY debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall as the winner of the Artists International Piano Competition. She received her Master degree from the Juilliard School and a DMA from CUNY. Fimi has taught at the Kings College, SUNY Purchase, and Sacred Heart Univ.

She has been a music director/organist since 1983, serving three churches over 39 years. Fimi has recently retired from Briarcliff Congregational Church in Westchester where he directed the adult choir, children's choir and ran a concert series to benefit different charities. She also established a music scholarship program in assisting students who have financial difficulties, to pursue their music education. She will unofficially be Peter's assistant at FCC as much as she can in the worship service, accompanying the choir, playing piano/organ, or assist in organizing concerts. For more information, please visit huimeilinpiano.com

Peter and Fimi have two sons, Connor, currently living in Vermont, and Liam in Manhattan. They are musicians who create music and perform with their own bands.

There will be a Meet and Greet event following Sunday worship August 7. Please come and welcome Peter to the church community.

Board of Mission & Action

Addressing Food Insecurity Far and Near (We Bought a Cow!)

FAR: Afghanistan Food Relief Project

The following email came from Nick Pohl's colleague, Abdul, who lives in the US. Some identifying details have been deleted due to safety concerns. Nick's comments follow the email.

Hi Nick,

The \$250 check your congregation donated for poor Afghan families was received. I transferred the funds (along with another \$100 of my own donation) to my brother, who with the help of my other brothers, purchased a cow for 29,000 Afghani.

On Saturday July 9th which was the first day of biggest Muslim holiday festival, Eid-al- adha the meat was prepared in halal Islamic traditional way and distributed to 50 different poor families in four different villages.

The decision to purchase the cow and distribute meat was made because every year on the first day of Eid-al-adha people who can afford it make meat donation to the poor and poor families expect to receive meat. This year a lot of people couldn't afford to make such donations and so we decided to use it to get the cow and distribute the meat so that people will have something.

Thank you so much for all your help in getting your congregation to make such a donation. It benefited 50 families who go several weeks without having a proper meal.

Thanks, again for all you did (and do). ~ Abdul

Nick's comments:

As I read through his [Abdul's] report, I was struck by a sense of how the impact our contribution was felt in the lives of people. Unfortunately, in philanthropy, often it's difficult

to know where contributions go, and even harder to feel the donations working on the ground. But in this case, looking at the pictures of the cow, I am seeing how our simple act of donating had an exponentially sized impact on the ground. Not only did it feed people, it became a central component to a cultural and religious tradition, which I can only imagine helped people feel a sense of normalcy during an unimaginably trying time. As we all crawl out of the depths of the

pandemic, where our traditions were seemingly uprooted overnight, I think we can all relate to how important these things are to a sense of well-being, our sense of what it means to be a human.

Father Gregory Boyle, founder of Home Boy Industries, talks about "going to the margins" in life not to make change, but to BE changed. One way to read this is as a reminder to leave expectations at the door.

Never in a million years

would I have thought about donating a cow, I think I am too culturally displaced to see the wisdom in this. But as soon as I read Abdul's note, and looked at the pictures (which I immediately wanted to name, by the way) I said to myself, "well, duh, that makes a ton a freaking sense."

Lastly, what I find so inspiring about all of this is that this donation was given with a generous heaping of faith. Abdul isn't a vetted 501(c)3 organization. He doesn't have staff, or even a clear idea of where's he's going with all of this. He's just a guy who wants to make a difference and who is willing to stand up and do something. After our M&A meeting where we decided to contribute to this cause, I recalled thinking, "this *might work?????" But then again, faith isn't really faith if there isn't a little bit of doubt sprinkled in, right?

Anyhow, I hope you find this as inspirational as I did.

~ Nick



NEAR: The People's Pantry, Great Barrington ThePeoplesPantryGB.org

The People's Pantry has addressed food insecurity in South County since 1999. Their goal is to "help create an environment that contributes to the building of healthy lives for individuals and families to strengthen our entire community." Dedicated volunteers, including our own Anne Hutchinson, Director of Operations, volunteer over 100 hours per week. There is one employee, a manager who works 10 hours per week.

The Pantry was initially open one day per week and provided shelf-stable food. Their increased network of suppliers now allows them to offer a wider assortment of shelf-stable goods, eggs, dairy, fresh produce and frozen meats. They partner with Berkshire Bounty (berkshirebounty.org) and Berkshire Grown (berkshiregrown.org). They receive 4,000 pounds of food from Western Mass Food Bank each month at no cost. The Pantry also partners with many local farms and businesses to provide food, contributing to the local agricultural economy.

Prior to the pandemic, the pantry served 500 individuals in a month. In response to increasing numbers, the Pantry expanded their hours by opening one evening. Community members served tripled to an average of 1,500 individuals at the height of the pandemic and demand has not slowed. Currently the pantry serves over 2,000 individuals a month, four times as high as pre-pandemic. Dramatic increases in the cost of living and diminished availability of affordable housing have significantly impacted these numbers. Pantry expenses rose more than 500% between 2018 and 2021 and have continued to increase over the past 12 months by an additional 40%.

For the first time in their 23-year history, the Pantry has found it necessary to begin a formal fundraising campaign, "Help Fill the Bag," that started June 22nd. Their goal is to raise \$300,000.00 by the end of the year.

Please consider volunteering time, donating non-perishable food items in the blue bin in the church back hallway, bringing items to church on Communion Sunday as part of our Active Prayer of Thanksgiving, or contributing financially.

Mission Trip to Ukraine - a history

In 1988, Anne Hutchinson participated in the US-USSR Bridges for Peace. Here is an excerpt from Anne's notes about this trip. The rest can be found on the church website, stockbridgeucc.org. It is on the front page under "[Latest News.](#)"

In early summer 1988 I was asked if I had a passport by a member of the Mission and Action Committee. When, I affirmed that I had, I was asked if I would like to represent the church and much more broadly my country on a citizen exchange to Ukraine (then a member of the USSR). The goal was to help break the atmosphere of animosity and fear that pervaded the US-USSR Relationship...

Kiev was a large, beautiful city. It bore no resemblance to the cold stark architecture of Moscow. Of course, we saw the best as our local committee took us to churches, hospitals, schools, heritage sites. We were asked what we wanted to see based on our professions and interests and it was arranged. We talked with many people who would only speak with us outside away from buildings in very quiet voices about their lives and concerns. We were taken to apartments where a family would live with one child in a one bedroom. The outside of the structures were Soviet cinder block, the hallways were filthy. But inside the apartments were beautiful. Hand finished wood and sewn draperies. Excellent food with wonderful aperitifs made from the fruits grown on the small family dacha. And conversation for hours about our shared concerns and the common wants of family and safety.

The 1988 Bridges group:





Jay and Terry Wise are happy to share the news of the birth of granddaughter Helen Maria Shaw on June 1. Her parents are Margot Wise and Dan Shaw.



Stockbridge SINFONIA

Tracy Wilson is Music Director for the Sinfonia and she reminds the audience that masks are required.

50th Anniversary Year!

Concerts are **FREE** and open to the public.

2022 Performances

Repertoire includes selections by Dronze, Spatz, Heitzeg, Bertaux, Dvorak, and Beethoven.

Sat., July 30, 3pm
Lenox Memorial Middle & High School

Sat., August 13, 11am
Zion Lutheran Church, Pittsfield

Sun., August 14, 6pm
Saint James Place, Great Barrington
(50th Gala Celebration to follow)

For more information, call 413.822.1318.

The Stockbridge Sinfonia 50th anniversary season is supported in part by grants from the Alford/Egremont, Becket, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Pittsfield, Richmond, and Stockbridge Cultural Councils – local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

