

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262

September 2022

Rally Day - September 11

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*

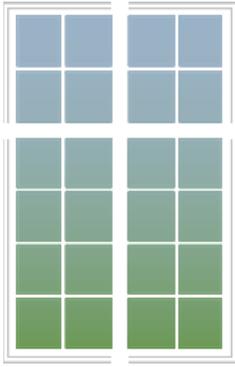
Office hours: 9:00-2:00, Monday - Friday



September 2022

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Livestream worship at stockbridgeucc.org				1 Choir Open House 6:00pm	2 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	3 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
4 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> Communion	5 Labor Day office closed	6 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	7 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Council 7:00pm	8 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	9 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	10 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
11 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> <i>Rally Day</i>	12 Spiritual Direction 2:00pm	13 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	14 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm	15 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	16 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	17 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i> Food, Fire, and Song 5:00pm
18 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i>	19	20 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> Newsletter deadline	21 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	22 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	23 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	24 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
25 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered Outdoors</i> & <i>online</i>	26	27 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	28 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm	29 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	30 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

September 2022 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Have you picked out your outfit yet? Have you imagined where you might sit? Have you thought about who you are looking forward to seeing or maybe bringing? Have you been told that you are off the hook for making lunch reservations afterward?

I hope so, but if not there still is time (although not much), because Rally Day is September 11th!

Rally Sunday as we know it here in Stockbridge, is a day of great joy. As Peggy Bendroth wrote for the Congregational Library in 2009, the name comes from the idea of “rallying the forces again for the work of fall and winter.” Peggy suggests that the concept incorporates both ideas of preparation and energy/restoration. For instance, a general rallies troops for an upcoming campaign, when a sick person is recovering that person is said to be rallying, and perhaps my favorite example from Peggy is that “when a bookbinder brings together in one place the different sections of a book to be bound into one” that process is known as “rallying the book.”

There is much reason for joy in our rallying this particular year. The Choir will be back in the loft not just for a particular Sunday but in an ongoing way! I can already see our beautiful gaggle of children gathered on the rug up front before bouncing off to Sunday School. This year Growth and Fellowship is even setting out a picnic lunch on the lawn after worship along with our traditional activities. All of it, appropriately, to accomplish what the bookbinder sets out to do: bring the various chapters of our adventures and lives to be bound together in the love of God and neighbor.

This year, more than most, coming back together is so important. I continue to be amazed by and grateful for the incredible resilience of this church through this pandemic. We have found ways to stay together, even if not as fully as we would like. We have found ways to answer the call of God to be agents of love, even if it has meant doing so over Zoom. We have been forced to grow and change. We have found new ways of being and understanding. Bringing those chapters together in our combined story is as important now as it has ever been.

Some folks will need to continue connecting in creative ways and we will continue trying as a church to reach out to them and make that connection fuller and more personal. For others let us commit to attending in person for there is such great joy and meaning in our physical, embodied connection. We see each other cry and smile. We hear each other sing and share. We watch each other move and make meaning. We open up to share even as we open our hearts to receive what the other has to share. Can you picture the joy and meaning of it all? I hope so.

We will need to be patient and kind for the world has changed in the last few years and so have we. There will be new passions to explore, new joys to share, new hurts to heal, and new ways we have come to know and engage our still-speaking, still-loving, still-transforming God. While this Rally Day will be overflowing with joy it will also be embedded with change. Let us rally! Let us gather! Let us prepare not just to come back to church but to BE church!

Pastor Brent

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September 1 Nick Pohl
Mary Hart
September 2 Margot Wise
Allison Tracy
September 5 Cindy Brown
Sara Zanin
September 6 Jackie Hawkins
September 7 Les Freeman III
David Schneider
September 10 John Frelinghuysen
Lee Dixon
September 11 Mark Bachman
September 15 Bob Doerr
September 20 Brian Hyatt
September 22 Adrianna Duhon Rix
September 23 Patty Fadding
September 24 Barbara Kershner
September 25 Shirley Blanchard
September 27 Lois Hall
Linda Frelinghuysen
John McKinstry
Mishel Kulibaba-Epstein
September 28 Tracy Schneyer

Food, Fire and Song

Back by Popular Demand!

The first of these events was easygoing, fun, and refreshing—which was the plan! People brought their own picnic and a blanket or chairs. Some desserts were traded around. We lit a beautiful fire, and Bert Marshall led us in sing-along favorites and hymns, interspersed with a couple of his own thoughtful and entertaining original songs. We had kids and their parents, other adults, and folks from Lee where Bert used to be the pastor.

SAVE THE DATE: Don't worry, if you couldn't make it to this one, we're planning another for **September 17** – that's a Saturday – with everything a half-hour earlier. Come anytime, and know that some deacons will show up around 4:30 to set things up, the fire will be lit at 5:00pm, and the singing will start at 5:30. Song leader TBA. (Marshmallows will be provided.)



Notes from the Administrator

If you would like to receive an emailed pdf version of the newsletter (it's in color!) instead of a paper one in the mail, please let Will know. New subscribers welcomed, too!

An Invitation to Wednesday Bible Study

“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, YOU are WELCOME here!” Sound familiar? Well, you are also welcome to Bible study Wednesdays from 1-2pm. It doesn’t even matter where you are because we meet via Zoom. Rick Floyd, a retired UCC pastor and church member, ably guides us as we ponder the readings, ask questions, and try to guess where Brent will focus on Sunday. Each week’s text is different, so you need not worry about having missed a week.

You are welcome whether you have been studying the Bible for years or are just beginning to find your way around. I have really enjoyed getting to know Rick and the other participants. It is easy to access the link: go to the church website and scroll down on the left to “Upcoming Events”. Hope to see you!

~ Janet Canning



Board of Deacons

Our Board met for the third time since the All-Boards Meeting, and in that time I have been struck at the bright spirit that seems to pervade our interactions. Yes, this is the same group that was having so much fun catching up with each other at the All-Boards Meeting that we failed to come up with a single goal. And yet, despite all this conviviality, I think at least one goal has emerged: we want to revisit the ways we currently incorporate prayer into our worship life



with the hope of making sure this aspect of our common life is as enriching and meaningful as possible.

To this end, at our August meeting we followed an Inverted Agenda. We tried to have a discussion about prayer in July, but the time slot, predictably at the end of the agenda, got bumped by the “business” parts of the agenda. With an inverted agenda, we shook things up a bit by opening with our traditional closing prayer (The Lord’s Prayer, an adapted version from New Zealand—which is already geographically inverted, right?). We moved into our discussion with a moderated, yet lively, brainstorming session, and saved the business for whatever time was left, about twenty minutes. By that time, we were really into the inversion, voting to approve the previous minutes, seconding a motion to do so, then making the motion, in that order. Naturally, we closed with the opening devotion.

During the meeting, one of our deacons commented on the felt tension between ritual and novelty in prayer practices. This deacon found meaning and drawbacks to both, and hoped we could find a balance between them as we continue our exploration. I trust we will. Please

feel free to talk to any of us about what you feel is good – or lacking – in the way we currently do prayer in our services. The deacons look forward to sharing more of our ideas soon -- just as soon, that is, as we return to our right-side-up minds.

~ Ted Randolph

FOOD, FUN, & FELLOWSHIP

News from Growth & Fellowship

Rally Day Cookout

September 11, 2022

Greetings from the Growth & Fellowship crew! Rally Day is coming up fast. Don’t miss this special Sunday with music, song and the start of Sunday school and fall activities!

G & F will be serving a lunch after church on the lawn. The menu includes: grilled burgers, hot dogs, chips and cold drinks – and yes, gluten free and vegan options will be available. Please bring a dessert you would like to share. Look for sign up details to come in the weekly E-Newsletter (in your email every Thursday), OR, you can call Will at the office to RSVP at 413-298-3137.



Our congregation will celebrate **All Saints Day** on Sunday October 30 with a special service of remembrances. Remembering those we love will continue during Fellowship Coffee Hour with an opportunity for you to share something that brings you warm memories of a loved one who has passed away. Details in the next newsletter.

One more thing... we are looking for volunteers to help Growth & Fellowship serve during Fellowship/Coffee Hour. The set up and cleanup is greatly simplified, so please consider taking a turn!

SAVE THE DATE

It's that time again! The **Lake Mahkeenac Radio Theater** is coming back Saturday November 5th at 6 pm. This is our biennial fundraising event sponsored by the Church Council....Guaranteed to be an evening of merriment!

This year, the show is featuring:

Folksinging sensation, JoAnne Redding

Lake Mahkeenac Radio Players, Christopher Brophy and Rikke Borge

Double divas, Erin Nafziger and Nellie Rustick *Head writer and host*, David Anderegg

Watch this space for more information!



From the Service League

That Summer Fair we've been talking about for the last two months? We're now looking at it in the rearview mirror, with relief and a great deal of gratitude to the many who pitched in to make it a success. I'm going to do my very best to name everyone who helped. Thanks for donations of baked goods, to Deb McMenamy, Marcia Miner, Christine Rasmussen, Liza Catino, Diane Fogarty, Cathy Clark, Judi Peyron, Mary Jane Dunlop, Olga Schwede, Cindy Brown, Nancy Donovan, Josh Hall, Diane Piraino, and Brent and Jake Damrow. Terry Wise, Ted Randolph. and Gene Kalish helped with set-up and take down, and Anna Smith, Patty Strauch, and Terry Wise with sales.

Donations of flowers and vegetables came from David Anderegg, Harold French, and Chad McCormick; and, in a class by herself, thanks to Maria Carr, whose one-of-a-kind hand-painted bird houses were a big hit with shoppers. Then there are those anonymous elves who just drop goodies off - whoever you are, we thank you! To the many who donated the items that make up the ever-changing inventory of Grandma's Attic, thank you!

And to everyone who asks if we're still taking donations, the answer is always yes. The Holly Fair will be here before you know it (December 3, to be exact) and we are always delighted to see what treasures your boxes contain. If I've

neglected to mention anyone, I do apologize - please let me know!

Just so you know that we're not all work and no play, we had fun helping Helen McCormick celebrate a milestone birthday (80!) recently on Cherry Hill Road with family and friends. Unfortunately I have no photos to prove it, but trust me, Helen can still dance a mean jig.

Less happily, we hosted a reception after the memorial service for our beloved Joyce Hovey, who cheerfully and generously supported our many projects over many years. Joyce's presence always made everything better, wherever she was.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League



The Capital Campaign is On the Move!

Greetings from the Capital Campaign Committee! We hope you will look for the logo, and check out the updates that will be coming to you in each newsletter! With your support, several critical projects have already been completed, with many more to come:

The Church Building

- ◆ Stockbridge Stone reshaped and reset the sanctuary front steps to control water into the foundation and meet building codes for step height and railings.
- ◆ Green Collar, Inc. added vapor barriers and insulation throughout the building; exterior painting is underway.
- ◆ The wizards from Comalli Group installed electrical upgrades and emergency exit lighting throughout the building; Carl Audia Construction renovated the offices and hallway.

The Manse

- ◆ Ron Petkus of Stockbridge Stone returned to rebuild two chimneys and to remove one.
- ◆ The garage received a new double-wide door and electrical upgrades. The garage, like the Manse, will be getting new roofs in the next month.



The Next Big Project

- ◆ Look for work to begin soon on the new universal access entrance to the JE Room! This project will take several weeks and will affect access and use of the JE Room. Look for current notices or contact the church office for any restrictions during construction.

There is much for us to celebrate, and there is so much more to come! A partial list includes: JE Room roof repair, critical repair work on Pipe Organ, repairing roof and siding at the Manse, refurbishment of our Steeple and renovation of the JE Room and Kitchen.

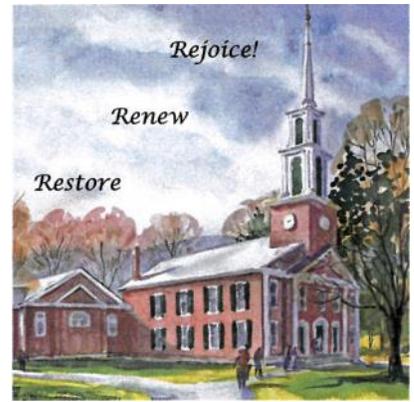
We are making great strides, with 116 pledges from church members and other friends of the church. We received a Community Preservation Grant from the town of Stockbridge covering part of the universal access entrance project. **But we have not yet met our Campaign fundraising goal!** Together, we have raised \$735,036 - a great achievement - but \$850,000 is required to complete the projects that have been deemed essential!

If you have already made a pledge, thank you! Please send in **your contribution for 2022 as soon as possible**, so the church can continue progress on these important Campaign projects. **If you have not yet made a pledge, there is still time!** Please **consider** a one-time gift or you can spread your gift over three years.

A terrific video is available via the website or by clicking [here](#).

It is a great beginning. Watch your church Restore! Renew! And Rejoice!

If you would like to learn more contact: Cathy Clark, 413 528-9949, ceclark@aol.com



Mission & Action

Meal Train

A reflection from Ronnie Cunningham:

“When I first returned home from the hospital, I felt a little helpless as, due to Covid, I left before I'd been shown how to dress, take a shower and other everyday tasks. I requested help from the Meal Train, as I couldn't stand long enough to cook nor had the inclination to do so. I received meals from four church members. Each meal was enough for two and even four meals. I only needed to pop them into the microwave. I am deeply grateful not only for the prepared meals but also for the companionship as each person stopped to talk for a while.

As I live alone, that was equally important.”

Food Box Program (formerly the School Backpack Program)

Last month, Mission & Action contributed \$500.00 to the Food Box Program, which provides boxes of food to 50 families at Muddy Brook School during the summer months.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day

Save the date! **October 15th, 9-3**

Help Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity work on their first house in Great Barrington! If you would like to take part, look for a sign up sheet in the JE Room, or call Martha Floyd 413.445.5704.

September Challenges: Construct and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

We encourage any and all to make donations to one or both of these important organizations during the month of September. As an incentive, Mission & Action is offering matching funds for donations, up to \$500.00 for each organization. Please make your check out to First Congregational Church UCC Stockbridge with notation “Construct” or “ASFP” on memo line.

Construct is the the leading nonprofit provider of affordable housing and supportive services in the

Southern Berkshires, Construct exists to help people in- and out-of crisis. Their mission is to provide neighbors of low and moderate incomes with affordable housing solutions through rental assistance and related support services.

Construct is hosting an **Open House, Thursday, September 22, 5pm**, 316A State Road, Great Barrington.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention funds research, education, advocacy and support for those affected by suicide. Out of the Darkness Community Walks nationwide support ASFP’s mission to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. Jill Fleming will participate in the Pittsfield Walk on October 1.

The People’s Pantry

Mission & Action contributed \$677.00 to “Help Fill the Bag,” the Great Barrington People’s Pantry fundraising campaign. The number of individuals served by the Pantry has quadrupled over the past few years, and the need is great. Remember to bring shelf

stable food items, paper products and toiletries to church October 2, World Communion Sunday, as part of our Active Prayer of Thanksgiving following communion. And/or you may make a financial contribution, with checks payable to First Congregational Church UCC Stockbridge with notation “People’s Pantry.”

The organ, 1930s. Courtesy Stockbridge Library & Archives





The Ballot Box-Your Vote Counts

From Southern New England Conference website (sneucc.org): “Voting is one of the most - if not the most - powerful tools we have as people of faith. Why? Because voting takes your caring values into the public square and thereby into other people’s lives. Your vote matters, not just in the big national election years, but in all the local and state elections in between, because politicians pay attention to the priorities of people who vote.”

As we prepare to vote in the Massachusetts primary election on September 6, **did you know?**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Primary Stats:

Election Year	Registered Voters	Total Votes cast	Turnout Percentage
2020	4,666,299	1,706,992	36.58%

From the Massachusetts Secretary of State’s [website](#).

Afghan Resettlement-Jewish Family Service of Western Mass: The Hussaini Family

August marked the one year anniversary of the fall of Kabul triggering a mass exodus of Afghans. JFS has successfully resettled almost 200 Afghans in Western Mass, helping to create safety, security and a new sense of belonging for our new Afghan neighbors.

We are pleased to be partners with the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of Southern Berkshire, as one of 11 HOST (Host Organization Support Teams) and 150 volunteers.



The Hussaini family continues to settle into their home in Pittsfield. Children, Zahra (age 9) and Ali (age 6), have attended English as Second Language (ESL) lessons and several camps over the summer and are starting a new school year-even taking the school bus! Husain, father, is working at CompuWorks and is completing driver’s education. Fatema, mother, has continued ESL classes and she and Marwa (age 2) have participated in Berkshire outings with the other women in her class to Mt. Greylock, picnic and swimming at Onota Lake, The Norman Rockwell Museum. JFS in partnership with Berkshire Community College, added this experiential learning to their ESL curriculum, giving the women a chance to connect with each other.

Justice Task Force

Sunday September 18, 2022

11:30 – 12:30 (will begin after services)

Grab a cup of coffee and come to first discussions of the Justice Task Force (JTF). Church Council authorized the creation of the JTF in the spring, after several discussions on the topic of Land Acknowledgement. Three major components identify the scope of the JTF:

1. Establish Frameworks and Definitions
2. Engage the practice of Land Acknowledgement
3. Make recommendations back to Church Council and M & A

The initial work of the Justice Task Force is projected to last for 12 months, using a framework that will engage the congregation and create opportunities for education, constructive dialog and action around justice issues. The work of the JTF is under the Mission & Action Board.

The first meeting will include brainstorming, a discussion on Land Acknowledgement and establishment of meeting times and communication modes.

Christian Education

To emphasize emotional security and educational continuity for children in the Sunday School Program, CE will be staffing Sunday School somewhat differently in the fall this year from Rally Day through Christmas. The primary goals are to provide maximum opportunity for:

1. The children to attach to each other and to the concept and reality of Church;
2. CE to continue to expand our offerings for families with children of different ages (including Youth Group, Intergenerational Worship, potential Confirmation Class, etc.);
3. Children and Youth to interact with other Boards at church;

4. CE to facilitate the recruiting, hiring, orientation and initial phase of having a staff member dedicated to CE;
5. and most importantly,
6. The Church to become even more of a reassuring, meaningful and engaging place for children during the ongoing challenges of COVID, the restoration and renovation of the church, and the big and little changes that continue to emerge in their lives.

In the temporary “Fall Semester Model,” we will continue with the Spark curriculum we have been using. A single Lead Teacher (Elizabeth Young has volunteered) will organize and lead the class consistently through the fall, and rotating Assistant Teachers who will provide different perspectives and activities at each class.

[We see the “Semester Model” as an experiment, and we will gather qualitative and quantitative feedback as we proceed. We do not anticipate that the future CE Staff Member will assume the role of Lead Teacher, nor that the Lead Teacher role will become a paid position.]

CE has plans to establish a Free Library at the church. Under the direction of librarian Vicky Cooper, the Board has obtained a wooden model library made by Massachusetts Correctional Industries (masscor) to hold the books, and members of CE will work with the children to paint the wooden “building” and stock it with books to share. Stop by and see the library in its various stages of preparation, including just as it comes to us in bare wood at Rally Day!



We will have a Nursery Attendant (usually two) available as Sunday School gets underway.

-The Board of Christian Education (Vicky Cooper, Paul Rix, Kim Ruffing, Terry Wise, and Elizabeth Young)

New Friendships with Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans Community Members

This summer, The Trustees of Reservations at the Mission House sponsored three speakers from the Stockbridge-Munsee reservation in Bowler, Wisconsin. They each made the long drive from Wisconsin, bringing family members along, and stayed for several days in an apartment specially set up for them in the Trustees office in the red barn behind Mission House. Each of them: Misty Cook, Lucy Burr (who came with her husband and baby, see photo), and Jeff Vele, presented a workshop on a Saturday and Sunday morning in the garden at the Mission House.

This seemed like an excellent opportunity to reach out in friendship, as a group of us from the church have been looking for ways to personally connect with members of the tribe on whose ancestral lands we now live. At the suggestion of Bonney Hartley, tribal Preservation Officer in Williamstown, we took turns preparing and delivering breakfast foods to each of the visitors while they were here. We had a wonderful time providing this small service and engaging in conversation while making our deliveries. The travelers were extremely appreciative and also seemed to enjoy our brief visits. Those who

participated: Lenore Sundberg, Linda Russell, Diane Piraino, Cathy Clark, Niti Martin and myself – Terry Wise.



We have one more opportunity to provide food and friendship when workshop presenter JoAnn Schedler will be at the Mission House October 9 and 10. I hope many from our congregation will make an effort to attend her 11:00 am workshops on that Saturday or Sunday.



Jared and Shannon Fadding’s wedding held in Brookfield MA on June 18. Jared is Patty Fadding’s grandson.

(right) Corinne and Gary Burke celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary with a vow renewal ceremony and celebration July 7.



Rally Day is September 11!

FOOD, FUN & FELLOWSHIP

Don't miss this special Sunday with music, song and the start of Sunday school and fall activities!

Kids! The children will come to the tent after the Children's Time for a mixer: kids and teachers will learn fun things about each other. After the church service we will have fun activities:

- ◇ Face-painting with Terry Wise
- ◇ Chalk art and bubble blowing with Elizabeth Young
- ◇ A preview of The Free Library Project with Vicky Cooper
- ◇ A fun game with Paul Rix

Parents get the kids signed up for Sunday School and adults of all stripes learn about **Adult Education offerings** scheduled throughout the fall. Invite families to visit the church on this special day that marks the annual start of Christian Education programs!

The Board of Growth & Fellowship will be serving lunch after church on the lawn. The menu includes: grilled burgers, hot dogs, chips and cold drinks – and yes, gluten free and vegan options will be available. Please bring a

dessert you would like to share. Look for sign up details to come in the weekly E Newsletter (in your email Thursday), or you can call Will at the office to RSVP at 413-298-3137.

