



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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**June 2023**

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

Minister of Music: Peter Frost - [music@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:music@stockbridgeucc.org)

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

Financial Secretary: Marion Pomeroy - [finance@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:finance@stockbridgeucc.org)

CE Coordinator for Youth and Children: Julian Vallen - [ce@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:ce@stockbridgeucc.org)

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

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

# June 2023

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>
Livestream worship at <a href="http://stockbridgeucc.org">stockbridgeucc.org</a>				1 Bell Choir 4:00pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	2 Service League 10:30am Acts Small Group 12:00 noon	3 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
4 CE Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m. Special Congregational Meeting 11:00am Youth Field Trip – Mission House 11:30am	5	6 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	7 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm Council 7:00pm <i>B'Shalom Chorale rehearsal 7:00pm</i>	8 Bell Choir 4:00pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	9 Service League 10:30am <i>BWHS Graduation rehearsal 1:00pm</i>	10 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
11 Worship 10:00 a.m. Celebration of choir Gathered & online <i>BWHS Graduation 2:00pm</i>	12	13 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	14 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm Community Supper 5:30pm <i>B'Shalom Chorale rehearsal 7:00pm</i>	15	16 Service League 10:30am	17 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
18 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i>	19	20 Brent's Sabbath Day Newsletter deadline <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	21 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm <i>B'Shalom Chorale rehearsal 7:00pm</i>	22	23 Service League 10:30am	24 <i>Haskell-Schneyer Wedding</i> <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
25 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered &amp; online</i> Affordable Housing Forum 11:30am	26	27 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	28 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm	29	30 Service League 10:30am	



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## June 2023 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace be unto you. I give thanks to God for you and for this shared journey that we undertake together. There is an opening in the air - can you feel it? Flowers are opening to the warmth and promise of Spring. Businesses and attractions are opening to an influx of visitors. Our offerings at the church are expanding and deepening welcoming all ages to explore. The grip of the pandemic is loosening, and imaginations are opening to the possibilities that might yet come to be.

Recently I encountered a Guest Essay in the New York Times written by Brad Stulberg entitled “For People to Know Us, We Need to Show Up.” It begins with the same premise that our scriptures do – “humans...need one another; We are stronger and more robust when enmeshed with others in community.” It is the same axiom that we have been following this Easter season through the Book of Acts. Showing up, sharing food and prayers, and life and resources.

Stulberg though takes that truth a step further articulating what I think we lived before the pandemic – what I hope we might live again. That is this, “for people to really know us, we need to show up consistently. Over time, what starts out as obligation becomes less about something we have to do and more about something we want to do, something we can’t imagine living without.” Stulberg writes from a relational truth – that knowing each other profoundly matters, it transforms, it creates.

The pandemic revealed an important blessing – the gift of quietness – the chance to dive deeply into relationships with a few – to let go of things that aren’t so important that we might find simple beauty. Of course, part of that was bound up with the challenges of an airborne and very serious respiratory illness that compelled caution and distance but unfortunately over time also created separation. This is not an argument of going back anywhere but rather a nudge toward a both/and – a call to community and

connection – a reminder of a truth we not only knew but lived and found life-giving.

We have and will continue to create ways for connection that make it easier for many and possible for many others. We will Zoom and livestream and gather outdoors. We need to show up for any of it to matter. Show up regularly, show up consistently, show up fully – sharing the joys and concerns of our lives – our thoughts and our dreams - our hopes and fears – our laughter and our tears. Compared to many organizations, Church tends not to impose requirements for attendance. Soccer teams, Non-Profit Boards, schools, and community enterprises do. We, as the church, simply beam in gratitude when folks come and resist any imposition of guilt or attendance taking. While that does have risks, I think it reminds us that this thing called faith is best undertaken voluntarily – most efficacious when it is a chosen obligation for then it is taken on with hearts wide open.

There is an epidemic of loneliness right now in the world. Showing up to church regularly, undertaking that voluntary obligation consistently, and sharing repeatedly is good. Good for the community, good for depth, good for our health, and good for so much more. Obligation means commitment and planning. It means not canceling when it might feel tempting to do so. It means engaging in something over and over until the beauty and benefit of the activity really begin to shine – and with the church, it means it doesn’t just shine for us, but for all of us – not just in our church but in our community and the world. Spiritual teacher Ram Dass once mused in life “We’re all just walking each other home” to which Stulberg responds, “That’s only true if we don’t constantly cancel our walking plans.” I lovingly say to you, “Show up...take on the obligation to be in each other’s lives and to abide in the presence of God. Show up...build, create, be vulnerable, share love, learn, give, serve, grow for it is good for humans to be connected and it only happens when we show up!” Come and see!

In love and hope, Pastor Brent

## HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAYS

June 1	Lynda Morse
June 2	Rebecca Hall
June 6	Evelyn Battaglia Beth Rodgers
June 7	Mary Hoeltzel Barbara Moore
June 12	Michael Deegan
June 12	Joe Catino
June 13	Anne Hutchinson
June 16	Thomas Frelinghuysen
June 19	Fiona Brown Jean Stackhouse Ruth Wheat
June 21	Gary Cilley
June 24	Anne Fix
June 26	Pat LaBagh
June 28	Becky Smith



## Growth & Fellowship

Greetings from the Growth & Fellowship (G&F) crew! We hope that you are enjoying the beginning of a beautiful Berkshire summer! This May we say goodbye and thank you to G & F Board members Brian Hyatt and Holland Brown. Brian is always around to lend a hand, bake

## Music News



We are looking forward to Sunday, June 11th which has been designated Choir Appreciation Sunday. Often not recognized as such, singing in the choir is one of the greatest offerings an individual can give the church. To rehearse every week and sing on alternate Sundays is real dedication. The choir will sing five anthems on the 11th. The choir has chosen two of their favorite anthems to bring back. The other three are new to us. I hope you will join us for this morning of jubilant song and put your hands together for our wonderful choir.

~ Peter Frost, Minister of Music



goodies and, of course, clean up! Holland has chaired this board and shared her many talents with us all! We have Holland to thank for home delivered holiday breads, special bookmarks for visitors, yummy brunches, delicious pies and great ideas that focus on fellowship! We thank you and we will miss you!

We hope to see you at Fellowship hour immediately after worship. This summer we will keep it easy with lemonade, water, coffee, tea and lite bites. On nice days, we may gather outside. If you have time to volunteer, we encourage you to sign up to host a Fellowship coffee hour. The sign-up sheet is in the JE Room – we're also looking for friendly faces to greet people as they arrive to worship. For more information, reach out to Will in the office, or just chat with us!

~Charlotte Rodgers, Brian Ferrell, Donna Jacobs & Ted Randolph

## ***Mark Your Calendars***

June 4 10:00 CE Sunday and New Members:

- Gary & Beth Cilley
- Claudia Cooke
- Marty Noyes and
- Tim Bosworth

June 4 11:00 Special Congregational Meeting

June 4 11:30 Youth Group to Mission House

June 11 Choir Appreciation Sunday; communion will be celebrated

## **Call to Meeting, June 4**

We hereby call a Special Congregational Meeting for Sunday, June 4, at 11:00am following worship.

The agenda for the meeting will include discussion and voting on a plan for:

1. Conveyance of Procter Hall to Berkshire Waldorf High School and
2. Use of funds from the sale.

Jeremy Ridenour, Clerk

Ron Hanft, Moderator

## **Notes from the Church Office**

- If you are reading this newsletter on paper, and would prefer to be emailed a pdf (in color!), please let Will know.
- The US Postal Service is getting stricter about not delivering mail without the church's PO Box. Please use the approved address: **PO Box 825**, Stockbridge MA 01262. Joking with the nice folks at the Stockbridge post office that the church predates the postal service has not proved effective.

## **Art News**

### ***Being Grateful***

By popular demand, the Art Show in the JE Room will continue into June!

The cost of the art will be at a 50% - 75% reduction of the original price. All the proceeds will go to the Church as a gift to God and this important building and its continued ministry. I consider my artistic gifts a gift of joy from God in my life and wish to share it with my church family.

My hope is that all the art will be sold to complete the financial goal of the annual fundraiser.

To purchase a piece, please contact Will, the church administrator, or myself. The art may be taken home upon purchase. Checks may be made out to the First



Congregational Church's Capital Campaign.

Enjoy the show!

~ Olga Schwede



## From the Service League

Now I feel like a real journalist, because I have to issue corrections! First, Helen and Jane McCormick are going to their grand-nephew's wedding in Maine in August, not May, and Helen, not Jane, is traveling to Virginia for Helen's granddaughter Tess' graduation. I THINK I got it right this time, but if not, I'll hear about it, and I'll get back to you. And while we're on the subject of travel, Nancy Wilcox is headed West to see her son and his family in June. And Barb Kershner's granddaughter Kalyn Kershner graduated from the University of Redlands in April, with a major in Creative Writing. It's that time of year!

We were all pleased with the special service on May 6, to celebrate and remember the lives of Emma Drew, Nell Ezequelle, and Jackie Hawkins, three beloved members whom we lost in the last few years. Brent helped us design a lovely program of readings, hymns, and recollections, David Anderegg provided beautiful music, Will produced the programs, and Cindy Brown took the pictures you see below. Thank you all for your support. The reception afterward was a chance for everyone to mix, mingle, and

remember some more. We were especially happy to see Jackie's son Christopher and Nell's grandson Trey.

Our next benchmark is, of course, the Summer Fair, coming up on August 12. Please mark your calendars, get out your favorite cookie recipes, and keep those Grandma's Attic treasures coming in! It's always fun, it's always a good excuse to see friends and neighbors, and it's always a joy to come together to support our mission projects. We couldn't do it without you.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League



At the Annual Meeting, on May 21, Cathy Clark passed the Moderator title to Ron Hanft. Thanks to both for their service!



## Justice Task Force

### Youth Group

Come and participate in the **CE Sunday worship service** on June 4. Afterward, we will take a walk up Main Street to the Mission House, where we can spend some time looking at the special exhibit in the Carriage House in back. It's called "Our Lands, Our Home, Our Heart" and it's all about the Mohican People who lived here in the Berkshires before English settlers moved in. Where did the Mohican People come from? How did they live while here? Where did they go?"

### July 9 and August 20

Justice Task Force members will lead a walk to the Mission House exhibit "Our Lands, Our Home, Our Heart" after the worship service for anyone who would like to learn about the Mohican people who lived here before English settlers arrived, and who were the very first members of our church. Learning more about the people who later became known as the Stockbridge-Munsee tribe of the Mohican Nation is fundamental to our process of writing a land acknowledgment and formulating actions to show our respect for their descendants, who are still very much tied to this place spiritually.



## Affordable Housing Panel

Sunday June 25 at 11:30am

We welcome Carolyn Valli, CEO of Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, to our worship service Sunday, June 25! Come and hear Carolyn share the work and vision of Habitat in Berkshire County.

Then join a forum on affordable housing with:

- Carolyn Valli
- Eileen Pelletier, CEO, Berkshire Housing Services, Inc.
- Jennifer Meehan, Director of Community Engagement, Berkshire Housing Services, Inc.

There will be food, fellowship and an opportunity for questions!





## News from Mission & Action

### CATHEDRAL OF THE BELOVED ~ SIGN UP TO PARTICIPATE!

This ecumenical ministry holds a worship service and offers a free meal each Sunday afternoon on the lawn in front of St. Joseph's Church on North Street in Pittsfield. This ministry serves the marginalized, isolated, and homeless, seeking to meet people where they are on the street, and to share God's love by being part of the community.

The afternoon meals serve 40-50 people, providing a total of 75-80 meals to include take-away. Churches volunteer to cook and serve a meal. We have participated in the past, and are gearing up to do it again.

Our congregation is on the schedule for two Sunday meals: **July 23 and September 24**. We need volunteers to sign up to help the Mission & Action Board to shop for groceries, cook together in the church kitchen on the Saturday before, and/or set up and serve the meal for these two dates. **Please check out the sign-up sheet on the JE Room bulletin board.**

As Jesus said in Matthew, chapter 25: "I was hungry and you gave me food. Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

### "STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH" UCC OFFERING ON PENTECOST

The "Strengthen the Church" United Church of Christ annual offering is traditionally taken on Pentecost Sunday, which was May 28 this year. For the past few years, in place of taking up a special offering during the worship service on Pentecost, our congregation has instead put part of our annual pledge money into the Mission & Action Board's operating budget, and we have given \$500 from that budget to this offering each year. Mission & Action

wanted to remind you about this important ministry that your pledge dollars are helping to support.

This offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Our support of this offering helps the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, this offering supports leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By participating in this offering, we are helping to build up the Body of Christ.

### MISSION & ACTION RECENT EXPENDITURES

- \$500 to UCC's Strengthen the Church annual Pentecost offering (UCC Mission Offerings)
- \$300 to Pittsfield's Church of the Beloved (honorarium for Rev. Jenny Gregg's April 30 preaching here, to be used for program and staffing needs) (Local Needs budget)
- \$250 to Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity Emergency Needs Fund (Local Needs budget)
- \$241 to Great Barrington's People's Pantry (Restricted Fund)





## Wednesday Dinners Continue

Eating together is a wonderfully and radically connective endeavor. It nourishes our bodies and our souls. It connects us to each other and to God from whom all blessings flow. It is both restful and restorative, sensory and stimulating. Following our launch in May with 26 people, we continue our Community Meals on the second Wednesday of the month. **The next dinner will be June 14.** You are encouraged to invite others to join you.

The food will be ready at 5:30 p.m. and we will generally serve until about 7:30 or so. People may arrive whenever is best for them and stay as long as they like. The food will be simple, nut-free, and always include a vegetarian and gluten-free option. If you have any other dietary needs, please contact the church office so that we can honor those needs too.

No one is obligated to bring anything. One of the important things about church is that it is a place where we are also served, so if this can be a gift to you, let it. For those who wish to contribute, help cook, or otherwise be involved that is wonderful and never a requirement. People who want to bring a dish can. People who wish to donate to help offset costs can. Most importantly, don't worry about obligations; simply come and be part of the meal.



I will generally start cooking around 4:00 in the church kitchen. I always enjoy company when I cook. In June I plan to make some spring risotts, salad, bread, and brownies.

As we live into these times as followers of Jesus, I hope that these meals can do for us what they did thousands of years ago to those who did the same – provide connection, purpose, love, and hope. If you have any questions or suggestions or would enjoy being part of this ministry of fellowship, don't hesitate to give me a call. I look forward to the chance to gather with you at the table with glad and generous hearts.

In gratitude,  
Pastor Brent

## Painting Project Completed!

After almost three weeks of hard work, the crew from Artech Church Restoration finished repainting the pews and windowsills and refinishing the woodwork. It looks great!

Thanks to the painters, left to right: Jaime Oliver Ramos, Alesandro Oliver Estrada, Bilsan Abel Ruiz Ramos, and Carlos Moscoso.







There were many cakes!  
All-Church  
Birthday was  
celebrated on  
May 21.



At the Annual Meeting on May 21, the following were elected to help lead the church.

**OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES  
OF THE CHURCH  
2023 – 2024**

MODERATOR        Ron Hanft  
CLERK                Jeremy Ridenour  
TREASURER        Patty Strauch  
HISTORIAN         Joshua Hall  
LIBRARIAN         Terry Wise

BOARD OF DEACONS

Michael Deegan  
Sarah Conly  
David Anderegg  
Miles Wheat  
Drea Pecor  
Ken Ward

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Terry Wise  
Kim Ruffing  
Elisabeth Bellows  
Vicky Cooper

MISSION & ACTION

Carl Bradford  
Marion Pomeroy  
Cindy Brown  
Tracy Wilson  
Martha Floyd  
Ronnie Cunningham  
Nick Pohl  
Alice Collins

GROWTH & FELLOWSHIP

Brian Farrell  
Donna Jacobs  
Charlotte Rodgers  
Ted Randolph

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Patty Strauch  
Bronly Boyd  
Joe Catino  
Joe Nicolosi  
Christine Rasmussen  
Brian Hyatt  
Don Rodgers

MUSIC

Robert Doerr  
Linda Hoddy  
Deb McMenemy  
Mary Hoeltzel  
Tom Ruffing

AT-LARGE COUNCIL

Liza Catino, Frank Russell

PASTORAL RELATIONS

Margaret Hornick, Miles Wheat, Anne Roy, Paul Rix

MINISTER OF MUSIC RELATIONS

Gary Schieneman  
Barbara Kershner  
Minister of Music appoints two additional members

CONNECTIONS

David Anderegg  
Charlotte Rodgers

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Trustees (tba)  
Music (Bob Doerr)  
CE (Vicky Cooper)  
Deacons (Ken Ward).  
At-large: Jeremy Ridenour and Carl Bradford.

COMMITTEE OF DELEGATES:

SNE CONFERENCE & BERKSHIRE  
ASSOCIATION  
Margaret Hornick  
John Canning



# THE NEW YORKER

Our own Rick Floyd had a letter published in the April 24/May 1 edition of *The New Yorker*:

## Church and State

*I was glad to see Kelefa Sanneh's article on Christian nationalism, a movement that I believe betrays both the Constitution and the Gospel ("Under God," April 3rd). As Christians exit Holy Week, we would do well to recall that Jesus was the victim of a state execution for challenging the powers that be. The Founders of this country rightly feared a national church. I wish that Sanneh had mentioned the robust rejection of Christian nationalism by many, perhaps most, practicing Christians. The organization Christians Against Christian Nationalism, for example, has put out a statement, signed by thousands of Christians across the theological and denominational spectrum who reject this movement on religious grounds.*

*The Reverend Dr. Richard L. Floyd  
Pastor Emeritus, First Church of Christ, Pittsfield*

BERKSHIRE LYRIC PRESENTS

# BRAHMS

## EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM

ERIC WHITACRE ALLELUIA  
ANSON OLDS LYRIC FANFARE

SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2023 at 3:00 PM  
SEIJI OZAWA HALL, TANGLEWOOD

THE BERKSHIRE LYRIC CHORUS  
THE LYRIC ORCHESTRA

Jack Brown, Director  
Sarah Brailey, soprano  
Woodrow Bynum, baritone

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY SEASON  
1963-2023

Tickets \$35,  
Children 6-18 free with adult  
Tickets and further information at [www.BerkshireLyric.org](http://www.BerkshireLyric.org)

**Stockbridge Sinfonia** is starting up rehearsals for its summer 2023 season entitled: **Salute to Women Composers**. Every Saturday morning, starting May 27 (but one can begin well into June) from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at Zion Lutheran Church in downtown Pittsfield. Tracy Wilson is its Music Director. Open to community members interested in playing chamber and orchestral music. String players must be comfortable playing in at least the third position. Pieces performed will be Berkshire Triptych by local composer Alice Spatz, Symphony No. 1 by Amy Beach and Scherzo from "Nonette" by Louise Farrenc. Three concerts in August: August 5 at 3 pm at Lenox

Memorial Junior and High School; Aug 12 at 3:00pm at Zion Lutheran Church; and Aug 13, 6:00 pm at Saint James Place in Great Barrington. For more information, contact Tracy at 413-822-8688.

