

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**August 2024**

### **Land Acknowledgement**

*It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking, gathering, and worshiping on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite*

*tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.*

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

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

# August 2024

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>
Yoga Classes are Wednesdays at 9:00am				1 Second Nature Arts in JE Room, kitchen, and nursery 9-3:15	2 Second Nature Arts in JE Room, kitchen, and nursery 9-3:15 Service League 10:30am	3  Al-Anon 5:00pm
4 Worship 10:00am	5 Brent's Sabbath Day Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm	6 Brent's Sabbath Day Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm	7 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Council 7:00pm	8 Summer Fair set up 9am-12:00noon	9 Summer Fair set up 9am-3pm	10  Summer Fair Al-Anon 5:00pm
11 Worship 10:00am	12	13 Brent's Sabbath Day Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm	14 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Community Meal 5:30	15	16 Service League 10:30am Newsletter deadline	17  Al-Anon 5:00pm
18 Worship 10:00am Celebration of Peter & Fimi Church picnic	19	20 Brent's Sabbath Day Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm	21 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	22	23	24  Al-Anon 5:00pm
25 Worship 10:00am	26	27 Brent's Sabbath Day Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm	28 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00	29	30 Service League 10:30am	31



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## August 2024 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Yesterday afternoon and evening I had such a great day at work that I knew I had to share it with you. Yesterday afternoon and evening I sat in three consecutive meetings spanning six plus hours. While it might sound crazy, it was amazing!

I was blessed with connecting with a couple dozen people who love this church and are practicing loving God and neighbor too. Some could best measure the length of their connection to this church in decades, while others maybe better in years or months. Each meeting held a different and significant purpose. In each meeting sharing, listening, imagining, reflecting, and praying were in abundance.

The first was a gathering of leaders committed to seeing our Capital Campaign through. We celebrated significant accomplishments, reflected on the generosity of those who have contributed, identified remaining projects, and discerned a way to find the resources not just to do them, but to do them well in ways that reflect our faith and serve the community. Every time there was an obstacle, someone offered wisdom and hope. What could have been a daunting exercise ended up being an inspiring opportunity. We will need help and we see a good way forward.

The second was a gathering to do the pre-work that will enable our search for a new Minister of Music to be fruitful and to ensure

we have prepared the program, the congregation, and the systems to welcome and support whoever is called to serve. We focused on what we have learned, areas that need loving attention, and ways to engage the Board of Music, the Council and the congregation. Music matters to this church – how we make that music, how we support those who lead it, and how we bathe it all in joy and relationship are critical questions. Thanks to this meeting I have deep hope that all will be invited to engage them together.

The third emerged from the All-Boards Meeting involving representatives from Deacons, G & F, C.E., Mission and Action and the Church Council. Each of those groups rely on volunteers not just to get the work done, but to engage in the faith, relationship, and meaning of being church. The two-hour open, respectful, creative, and prayerful exchange explored how we might share the needs with and invite participation from the congregation in ministries that bless the church, the community, and those who volunteer.

Yesterday I was privileged to sit with remarkable people for six straight hours of meetings that were rich in relationship, purpose, and possibility. Praise be to God. I knew I had to share it with you.

In gratitude and hope,

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 24	Joe Roy
August 25	Natalie Doerr
August 26	Jon Geldert
August 27	David Cooper
August 29	Joshua Hall
August 31	Steven Bankert

## Active Prayer of Thanksgiving

Reinstituting the practice of an “Active Prayer of Thanksgiving” on communion Sundays has been a beautiful and tangible gesture of support for those who are facing food insecurity in our local community.

On July 21, we received donations of food and funds for the People’s Pantry in Great Barrington. Thank you for your generosity!

Although we plan to engage in this “Active Prayer” monthly, we will be postponing our next food pantry collection until **Sunday, September 8**. On that day, the collection will support our church’s Pop-up Pantry. We are ALWAYS happy to receive contributions in the meantime!

\*\*At this time, our own Pop-up Pantry is especially in need of **nut-free butter** (as alternative to peanut butter).

~ Board of Mission & Action

## What Energizes You?

### A Workshop on Community Organizing Monday September 23, 7-9 P.M.

“If we don’t get more volunteers for \_\_\_\_\_, we might not be able to run this program anymore.”

“That’s a great idea, we should try that! But who will make it happen?”

“I have a passion for \_\_\_\_\_, but I feel like I’m going it alone.”

Do these comments sound familiar, whether from church or other volunteer organizations you’re a part of? Enter community organizing.

Community organizing skills are often used in social justice work, but they can be applied wherever a community is strengthened by people working together.

Rev. Noah Brewer-Wallin (they/he), Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Southern New England Conference UCC, will lead a workshop on the tools of community organizing. This will help our church strengthen our ability to work together on those things that matter to us. We will learn skills for engaging each other, getting to the heart of what makes us tick, and using our energy as a church community.

Please join us for an workshop 7:00-9:00pm on Monday, September 23 in the JE Room. Dessert will be served.

This workshop is sponsored by the Social Justice Committee. We encourage attendance by all church leaders and board members, as well as any members of our church community interested in being involved with our church’s programs, including the work of each of the boards.



## Membership

Have you been visiting this church for a while and thinking about calling it home? Please contact Pastor Brent to talk about how to make this step in your faith journey. We try to offer this twice a year, so if now is not the right time, another opportunity will come soon. Pastor Brent can be reached at [bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org) or 413-298-3137 x11

## Growth & Fellowship News

The Board of Growth & Fellowship is pleased to welcome new members Bob Doerr and Tom Ruffing. Donna Jacobs will serve as Chair and Council Representative, and Ted Randolph continues to lend an historical perspective with long term experience, as well as his enthusiasm as event planner and facilitator. We are lucky that Ted brings the talents of his wife, Diane Piraino, and Tom brings his wife, Kim, to share their creativity with our Boards.

We enjoy the company of the whole congregation in worship, the JE Room, in the kitchen and on the grounds, and look forward to a year of warm fellowship. Please join us at Fellowship Hour each Sunday after service and at special events throughout the year. Our first event will be Rally Sunday, to welcome the return of the choir and Sunday School, on September 8.

We welcome volunteers with open arms and we delight in sharing our duties. If you'd like to be of serve and have fun, let any member of the Board know you would like to help out, or sign up as a volunteer on Breeze.

~ Donna Jacobs, Bob Doerr, Ted Randolph, and Tom Ruffing

### Rally Day - September 8

We start the new program year for the church! The Choir will be up in the loft, Sunday programs for children resume, adult studies launch, and more. It is a day where we share the adventures of our Sunday even as we set off on new adventures together as a church.

Mark your calendars, bring your friends and family, come and see!

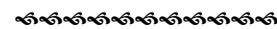


## “...dedicated to Almighty God.”

Here is an excerpt from the upcoming history of the current church building:

Two hundred years ago this August the site of what is now the Stockbridge Congregational Church was abuzz with activity while church services continued at the Second Meeting House on North Church Street. The cellar hole had been dug and the fieldstone foundation laid and faced with locally quarried marble. The brick walls were about half-way up but there were no windows yet. Just two months earlier starting in mid-June, wagon loads of freshly fired bricks made of Housatonic River-bed clay were being delivered by oxen- and horse-drawn wagons at the rate of 3,000 to 7,500 per day from the kilns of Joseph Dresser and William Cooper. Hemlock trees had been felled and taken to sawmills to be cut into dimensional lumber, but the larger oak and chestnut trees were being trimmed by broadaxe and adze to create the major timbers of the roof, belfry, and steeple. There was no interior yet; no pews, no balcony, no ceiling, no plaster finishes.

There was a lot still left to do. None-the-less, Ralph Bigelow, a 24-year old contractor with an anonymous crew of other workers managed to complete the church building in just eleven months, starting when the contract was signed on February 11, 1824, and ending when the building committee accepted it as completed on January 15, 1825. This brought to a close the first capital campaign by the congregation (the first two meeting houses having been built and paid for by town taxes) in which 90 members raised over \$6,500. The new church was “solemnly dedicated to Almighty God” five days later on Thursday, January 20, 1825.



You can read all about it and what happened after that in the upcoming book: *How Firm a Foundation: A History of the First Congregational Church, Stockbridge, Massachusetts on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Brick Church.*



## From the Service League

It was all hands on deck last Friday as we unpacked, sorted, washed, priced, and repacked a treasure trove of donations from Tim Sheehy. Much will be on display, and for sale, in Grandma's Attic very soon. In the meantime, it seems that all our members are scattering to the four winds this month - Jane McCormick is in Maine, and on her way back she may cross paths with Patty Fadding and Donna Jacobs who are heading there. Before that, Patty, Helen McCormick, and Nancy Wilcox are cruising the Boston Harbor, and Anne Hutchinson is going to the family compound in New Hampshire, while Ann Brink is en route to the annual family reunion in Elmira, New York. And your correspondent is off to Seattle to meet with son Ted and niece Gillian, and, coincidentally, to see Madonna and Mark Bachman's granddaughter Zina sing in *I Pagliacci* at the Seattle Opera. Small world!

If you're wondering how we can be running around like this and still organize the Summer Fair, just watch - because we'll reconvene in time to open the doors to shoppers on August 10 at 10:00 AM. It's just what we do - and because we have lots of help from you. Many thanks to those who have already volunteered - we couldn't do it without you!

# Summer Fair

**Sat., Aug. 10, 2024**  
**10 am – 1 pm**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
4 Main St., Stockbridge, MA



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

## Save the Date to Celebrate Peter and Fimi!

During Fellowship Hour on **Sunday, August 18**, we will celebrate Minister of Music Peter Frost and his wife and superb pianist Hui-Mei Lin (Fimi). They have brought beautiful and diverse gifts of music and heart to our church for nearly two years. Peter's affinity toward Spirituals and his compositions have helped us catch glimpses of the holy. Together Peter and Fimi have brought many talented guest musicians to enrich our worship and the adult choir has been singing with beauty and grace.



## The Pop-up Pantry

Our congregation provides a small 24/7 self-serve pantry with non-perishable food items in a shed behind the office wing. The pantry has proved to be very popular and needed as we run through food items quickly and make frequent grocery runs. We are always happy to accept grocery donations from the congregation. A donation bin is in the back hallway. Here are some ideas:

- Box Cereal (regular and gluten free)
- Oatmeal (quick oats or box of instant packets)
- Crackers (regular and gluten free)
- Box Rice
- Mac & Cheese (regular and gluten free)
- Pasta (regular and gluten free)
- Pasta Sauce in bottles
- Box Milk
- Peanut Butter (creamy and crunchy)
- Nut-Free Butters
- Can Beans
- Can Soup
- Can Fruit and Vegetables
- Can Diced Tomatoes
- Toothbrushes & Toothpaste



## Second Nature Arts

This summer, the church is abuzz with children's chatter, art-making, and spontaneous singing from the youth participating in the Creative Playdate Program by Second Nature Arts. Since July 1st, the JE Room and the nursery have been transformed weekly by Susan Lynn Smith and her team into kid artist studios, playspaces, and reading nooks for kids ranging in age from 5.5 to 11 years old. They've created everything from glow-in-the-dark mixed media books to fantastical dreamworld sculptures and colorful textile works.

Outdoors, the fun continues with obstacle course design, four square reinvention, and crafting and "selling" tools from nature (rocks and acorns are the accepted currency), along with plenty of fort-building. Through this experience, dozens of children have formed new friendships, developed artistic skills, and discovered the magic of summer days filled with art and play.

- Bar Soap (individually wrapped)
- Lotion
- Paper grocery bags
- Other more fun non-perishable food items

MONETARY DONATIONS for grocery runs are always welcome. (Make checks payable to First Congregational Church, Memo: Pop Up Pantry or through Venmo - FCC Stockbridge: Pop-Up Pantry on "what's this for line).

### ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Many thanks to all who contributed to our active prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion on July 21. We received a bounty of goods and over \$150 in monetary contributions for the People's Pantry in Great Barrington. After Communion in September, we will be collecting for our own Pop-Up Pantry.

### JUNE MISSION & ACTION EXPENDITURES

- \$239.14 – groceries for Pop-Up Pantry (Mission and Action budget)
- \$200 – Riverbrook Employment Partnership (Mission and Action budget)

We look forward to seeing the Creative Playdate Program continue to grow as we host the fall program session which begins in September. Learn more at: [secondnaturearts.org](http://secondnaturearts.org) or [Instagram.com/2ndNatureArts](https://www.instagram.com/2ndNatureArts)



## Church Picnic: Sunday, August 18 at 12:00 noon

YOU are invited to the Church Picnic at the Schneyers' beautiful gazebo with lawn sloping down to picturesque Mohawk Lake in Glendale (see map). This is a relaxed time of picnicking, fellowship, swimming, and boating for all members of our congregation – your friends and family are welcome too. **We're asking everyone to bring their own meat & buns or main dish and their own soft drinks (no alcohol)** —a grill will be available. **Please also bring a dish to share:** salad, side dish, dessert, or munchies. Condiments, paper products (plates, napkins, cups), cutlery and ice will be provided.

This is a great day to come to church dressed for a picnic. Just don't forget to pack your bathing suit, towel, sand toys, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, and a chair or blanket. Floaties for small children are fine, but please don't bring any large rafts or boats. There are boats available at the lake. The Schneyers have a house next to the lake where we can change clothes or use the restroom, and they can drive people up and down the hill in their golf cart if needed.

Please note that parents are responsible for their own children's safety. Mohawk Lake is a private lake and our hosts kindly request no fishing, no outside boats, and no dogs. Carpooling is encouraged as parking is somewhat limited. If it rains, the rain date will be August 25. Any questions, ask Ted Randolph or Cindy Brown.

