

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



September 2024

Rally Day - September 8

Pastor: The Rev. Brent Damrow - bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org

Minister of Music pro tempore: Tracy Wilson - music@stockbridgeucc.org

Administrator/Sexton: Will Garrison – office@stockbridgeucc.org

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

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

September 2024

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 10:00am	2	3 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	4 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Council 7:00pm	5	6 Service League 10:30am	7 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
8 Worship 10:00am Rally Day	9	10 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	11 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Community Meal 5:30	12 Genesis Intro 5:30-6:30pm Genesis Diving Deeper 7:00-8:00pm	13 Service League 10:30am	14 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
15 Kids' Choir 9:15am Worship 10:00am Connections Class 11:30am	16 Theology Book Group 5:15-6:45pm	17 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	18 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	19	20 Service League 10:30am Newsletter deadline	21 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
22 Worship 10:00am Adult Ed Gathering 11:30am	23 Workshop on Community Organizing 7-9 P.M.	24 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	25 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 <i>Lenox Garden Club</i> <i>1:00</i>	26 Genesis Intro 5:30-6:30pm Genesis Diving Deeper 7:00-8:00pm	27 Service League 10:30am	28 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
29 Kids' Choir 9:15am Worship 10:00am	30 Theology Book Group 5:15-6:45pm			Yoga Classes are Wednesdays at 9:00am		



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

September 2024 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Grace and peace to you. I hope that your summer was a gift full of blessings. I am very much looking forward to September 8th, the start of the program year here at the church, and the fullness that comes with it.

We call the kick-off Rally Sunday. It comes from the idea that we are rallying back after summer takes us in so many directions. We rally to resume the Sunday morning habit of gathering at church for worship, learning, and fellowship. We rally the choir to sing in the loft. We rally the teachers and the students to resume Sunday School. We rally the kinds of programs that bring us together to be church and to accept the costs and joys of discipleship. We name September 8th Rally Sunday, to remember what we do.

Some other churches use the term Re-Covenanting Sunday. That name addresses less of the what and more the why. At the heart of being church is the idea and practice of Covenant. Yes, that includes the truth of our covenant with God – the one that binds us together with the holy and the human in love. It also includes the formal covenant members make to this church when they join. A covenant is a holy promise that binds people together. A covenant comes with mutual responsibilities for the parties that are involved. Covenants are undertaken likewise for mutual benefit.

At the heart of becoming church is the practice of gathering together, of rallying, yes for our own benefit and for the joys and blessings that come with it, but also for the sake of the other too. We

come that we might see those we love and so that all who come can be seen and invited into a true sense of community. We come because we know the ways that church is good for us and because we want to be part of extending that goodness to others. We come in the church to remember that God so loves the world (us included) and so that we might love God and the whole world too!

To make all of that happen on Sundays (and throughout the week) we rely on the generosity of the congregation. Yes, we rely on your financial contributions to fund the programs. But equally importantly we rely on your time and your talent too. All our programs need volunteers. The act of volunteering is one way we honor the mutuality of our covenant. The wonderful thing is that we know, don't we, that even as such volunteering helps others it is a blessing to us too.

On September 8th, I will be preaching in joy about covenant. On that day and in the weeks to follow you will hear about some critical volunteer needs – especially those we rely on to make Sundays happen (greeters, worship helpers, Sunday School teachers/assistants, and fellowship time hosts). You will also hear about additional places that could use your engagement. You will have the chance to ask questions and sign up. Of course, if you don't want to wait until Rally Sunday, feel free to call Will in the church office and he will get you connected to a volunteer role. I can't wait for both the "what" and the "why" that will be at the heart of September 8th .

Come and See,

Pastor Brent

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

Rally Day!

As summer winds down, we traditionally gather for a special Sunday. This church calls it Rally Day – other UCC churches call it Re- Covenanting Sunday. Both names describe what is at the heart of that Sunday – a joyful day to reconnect in relationship and faith.

On September 8 we kick-off the 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 celebrate our Sunday community, even as we set off on new adventures together as a church.

Following worship, there is a special fellowship hour planned, including lunch, a treasure hunt, and other family-friendly activities. Mark your calendars, bring your friends and family, come and see!

Hospitality

Thanks to all who have met the “Breeze” challenge and have graciously volunteered to fill one of our Hospitality roles on Sunday. It’s been a learning curve, and still not quite mastered, but Breeze is indeed helping us connect. With practice, it will be a “breeze.”

Hospitality is a relatively new designation, and includes Greeters, Readers, Ushers, and Fellowship Hour hosts who make each Sunday rich and meaningful. One of the pleasures of serving in these roles is getting to know each other. Our relationships grow over time, often over coffee, and we truly find family here.

Growth & Fellowship has already begun to put plans into place, and we are excited about Rally Day when we will create a fun filled Fellowship Hour, coordinating with Christian Education.

Has the Summer really gone by this fast? We are days away from the return of Sunday School and Choir. Let’s celebrate!

~ Donna Jacobs, for Growth & Fellowship



Deacons’ Update

Communion Elements: First, an apology from Elizabeth Young for the pieces of bread that fell apart in the grape juice during August Communion. I bought the wrong gluten-free bread, as was clear to some of you! The unsightly mess that resulted led to a lively discussion of the suitability of different breads, our associations with “wafers,” and the practice of intinction as a communion ritual. We will be following up on the (surprisingly interesting!) discussion in the months to come, as we learn more about the history and practice of intinction; explore the spiritual, emotional and physical experience of dipping bread versus receiving it separately from the cup; and survey the various ways our communion elements might be prepared and served. If you have experiences or opinions about intinction or communion you’d like to share with us, please talk to a Deacon at coffee hour sometime soon. We are curious and friendly, and we will share your input with Pastor Brent as our discussion continues.

What Energizes You?

A Workshop on Community Organizing

Monday September 23, 7-9 P.M.

Please join the Social Justice committee as Rev. Noah Brewer-Wallin (they/he), Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Southern New England Conference UCC, leads a workshop on the tools of community organizing. We will learn about improving communication and building church family.

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.

For more info, contact Charlotte Rodgers or Diane Piraino.

Dessert will be served, of course.



Uh oh....they're back....

Yes dear people, it's time to SAVE THE DATE for the biennial edition of the Lake Mahkeenac Radio Theater! We're dusting off the applause sign and warming up our vocal cords for the next show, to take place on SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2 at 6 pm in the sanctuary. We've got another stellar line-up this year, including rising star tenor Alec Hicks, improv masters Christopher Brophy and Rikke Borge, beloved troubadour (and member of our church family) Bruce Mandel, and a special guest appearance by the impossibly talented singer and actor Doug Williams (also a member of our church family).

Tracy Wilson will tickle the ivories, and the show is written and hosted by David Anderegg. We guarantee an evening of delightful music, lots of laughs, a few tears, and, as always, no political humor.

This is a major fund-raiser for the church, so please put it on your calendar, plan to come, and bring all your friends and relations! And the pie contest is on the docket as well, so start testing your recipes now! Hope to see you all on November 2. ~ David Anderegg



New Bibles

The Board of Deacons has arranged to acquire 60 new Bibles for the sanctuary. You have the opportunity to sponsor Bible with a donation of \$15 to cover the cost of the book. The Deacons will gladly install a bookplate in memory or in honor of someone you name. We anticipate blessing the Bibles on September 15. While they don't all have to have a bookplate by then, we encourage you to submit your request and donation promptly. Please contact Will in the church if you are interested.

~ Elizabeth Young for the Board of Deacons

From the Service League

We've done it again! The Summer Fair is over, the tables are folded up stashed, the chairs back in position, and the proceeds counted. It's not quite the final tally, but it looks as if we've cleared about \$1600 to devote to various mission projects.

And, as always, there is a long list of helpers to thank. I embark on this part with trepidation, as so many people pitch in that I worry I'll omit someone - so if you know of anyone left off the list, please tell me! Meanwhile, with that caveat, here goes: Big thanks (in no particular order) to Diane Fogarty, Christine Rasmussen, Terry Wise, Elizabeth Young, JoAnn Levitt, Chad McCormick, Erving Henderson, Scarlett Richter, Linda Hoddy, Anna Smith, Liza Catino, Ted Randolph, Cindy Brown, Elisabeth Bellows, Patty Strauch, Hope and John Ponsart, and, of course, Will Garrison and Brent Damrow. I'm not even going to try to name all the generous folks who donated baked goods, produce, flowers and plants, and canned treats as they're too numerous and often anonymous. You know who you are! Thank you for all you do and for making it possible for those of us in the Service League to continue to put on our fundraisers. I've said it before and I'll say it again - we couldn't do it without you.

Now, we're going to take a very brief break before we start all over again, for the Holly Fair, which will be here before we know it (December 7, to be exact). You'll be hearing more from us about that, but meanwhile, it's not too soon to mark your calendars.

Margaret Hornick, for the Service League



Roaming the high seas
(well, Boston Harbor)

SECOND NATURE ARTS: CREATIVE PLAYDATE PROGRAM

2024 FALL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 16- DECEMBER 12 | GRADES K-4

Mondays - Tuesdays - Wednesdays - Thursdays | 3:45-5:15pm

& Special Half Day & Full Day Programs

at The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Pro Tempore: Choir News

Hello choir members and anyone interested in singing in the choir: please join us, starting Sunday, September 8! It's Rally Day and we will all rally to start the church year off with joy, music and new ideas on many fronts. I have offered to serve as Minister of Music pro tempore through December and into the new year as the church mounts a search for a new Minister of Music. I welcome any and all input from anyone about favorite anthems, musical ideas for special occasions, and anything else music-related, and I am working to put a manageable schedule in place for everyone.

Adult Choir: we will sing twice a month, the first and third weeks in the months of October, November and December. September is unique as Sept. 8 is the second Sunday, so choir will sing Sunday, September 8, then again Sunday, September 22.

On the Sundays the choir sings, please gather in the loft at 8:55 am for warm ups, run the hymns, learn the introit, prayer response and offertory anthem. We'll leave 10 minutes to run a new anthem for the following choir Sunday. There will be no Thursday evening choir rehearsals in the pro tempore season.

Additional rehearsals: we WILL have additional rehearsals from 11:30 to 12:15 on these Sundays: October 20 (for November anthems), November 17 (for Advent and Christmas music), and December 15 for Christmas Eve music.

All anthems and special music for the current month will be made available in a basket in the music office by the beginning of each month.

Kid's Choir and Bells: we are excited to be including them in the fall-Advent season! Stay tuned for more details and schedule.

Festival Chorus: starts up Sunday, October 6, from 1 to 3 pm, and takes place every Sunday up to the concert date of Saturday, December 14. The main selection for the concert will be Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols, featuring John Demler, plus anthems by



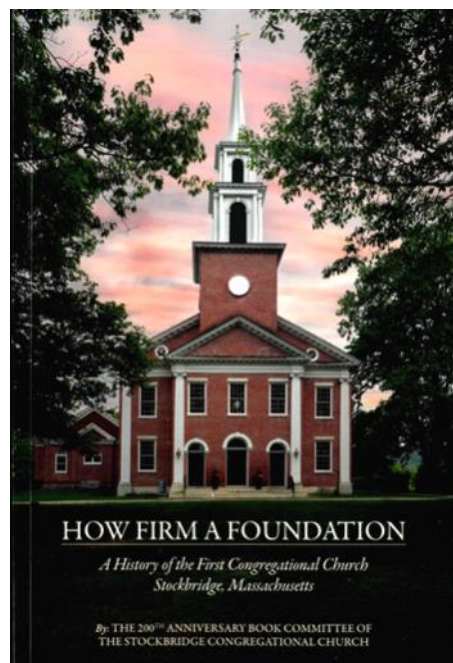
David Stone, Dale Jergenson, and David Anderegg. Dues are \$40 to cover the cost of music and some expenses. Any interested singer is invited to come and check us out; no audition is necessary.

~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tempore



The History Book is here!

The history book team is pleased to announce that *How Firm a Foundation: A History of the First Congregational Church, Stockbridge, Massachusetts on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Brick Church* has been delivered. Available in the church office and during Fellowship Hour Sunday. Hard cover \$30; soft cover \$22 - cash/check/Venmo.



Report of the Capital Campaign to the Congregation: August 2024

It is with joy that we bring you this update from the Capital Campaign. 2024 marks year three of our church's campaign to *Restore! Renew! And Rejoice!* With support and blessings from the congregation, we began in early 2022 to raise the \$850,000 in individual pledges and \$300,000 in grants needed to complete the identified projects. We are very grateful for receiving, so far, \$755,000 in pledges and \$200,000 in grants. We believe we have excellent prospects for an additional \$150,000 in grants. However, we still need an additional \$100,000 in individual pledges.

In his 2022 letter to the congregation, Pastor Brent summarized our hopes for this important campaign: *"We do not just aim to restore these buildings for the sake of history, but to equip them to meet the needs of these times. We do not just aim to fix ailing systems, but to make them more effective, efficient, and green. We do not just aim to shore up structures or address aesthetics, but to make this place more durable, accessible, comfortable, welcoming, usable, and safe."*

We celebrate having received \$684,000 of the pledges already made, and we look forward to the balance of \$71,000 being given by the end of this year. Below is an overview of the projects completed to date, the projects that are currently underway, and the projects yet to be completed in 2025 -2026 and beyond.

Completed Projects

- Refurbish marble entry steps and install custom hand railings, roofing JE room
- Manse chimney, bathroom remodel and garage roof repair
- Refurbish and paint sanctuary pews, baseboards and windows/sills
- Refresh and update administration, meeting and classroom spaces
- Design and build accessible ramp entrance into the JE room

Projects in Process

- Repair and paint steeple, portico and repoint bricks
- Refurbish and repair organ



- Begin vision and design work on the JE/ Kitchen renovation

Projects to begin in 2025

- Main electrical upgrades
- JE Room/Kitchen renovation
- Narthex improvements, repair and paint

Future Projects

- Manse exterior repairs
- Furnaces/HVAC/Solar panels

So, what is next? Members of the Capital Campaign Committee are preparing for the new round of grant requests. Other members will be reaching out to members and friends of the congregation to pledge again – as the need for \$100,000 additional funding is real! We are facing unanticipated (and urgent) additional projects, and cost estimates now exceed those of 3 years ago. The Trustees are overseeing the Capital Campaign funds and are scheduling the project work in phases to be efficient and cost effective.

We ask for your support and your prayers, as this important work continues. If you would like more information, reach out to Ron Hanft, Moderator or Don Rodgers, Trustees for more information.

Meet The First Congregational Church Scholars

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to award grants of \$1000 each to five college students from our congregation. They are Hannah Alsdorf, who will be entering Oberlin College, where she plans to study art; Olivia Doerr, who is at Columbia University; Lucy Garrison, returning to Mount Holyoke College as a sophomore; Erving Henderson, who's matriculating at Springfield College to pursue a five-year professional degree as an Athletic Trainer, while also playing on the men's soccer team; and Ella Smith, who is a senior and a second year pharmacy student at Western New England University. You can see pictures of Lucy, Ella, Hannah, and Erving below.

Margaret Hornick, for the Scholarship Committee

Thank you so much, this will be a huge help to my academics! Attached to this email is a photo of me at my white coat ceremony.

Currently I am in pharmacy school at Western New England University. When I'm not studying I am enjoying spending time with my family and friends and I also enjoy going on runs when I am home from school for the summer. I recently joined a pharmacy fraternity called AZO and I am now the social chair in the fraternity.

Thanks, Ella Smith

Thank you so much for this incredibly generous scholarship! The church has been such an important place for me throughout my whole life and it means so much to me to have the support of the congregation moving into this next stage of my life. As I've grown older and learned about what our church teaches, I've begun to appreciate more how in a world where religion is sometimes used as a tool of hate and oppression, our church preaches love, acceptance, and lifting each other up. I am so grateful to have been a part of this community, and I cannot thank you enough for this scholarship!

With gratitude, Hannah Alsdorf

Thank you so much for the generous scholarship! I am entering my sophomore year at Mount Holyoke College, where I plan to major in history and minor in music. I sing in the choir and jazz ensemble and enjoy taking dance classes, including a Renaissance and Baroque Dance class! In my spare time, I enjoy taking walks and exploring the local public libraries. I also had the opportunity to attend the South Hadley UCC church, which was a wonderful experience.

~ Lucy Garrison



Hannah Alsdorf



Ella Smith



Erving Henderson



Lucy Garrison

Family & Community News



Mark and Madonna Bachman visited daughter Jessica's family along with Ted and Thomas to watch granddaughter Zina perform as a village town girl in Seattle Opera's production of *Pagliacci*. Zina is front row, third from right. It's been a fantastic summer for them all.



On September 29 at 3:00 PM in Lee, the wider church community will help celebrate the Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig's installation as Pastor of First Congregational Church of Lee. Please mark it on your calendars. Everyone is invited.

Connections Class

Sunday, September 15*

11:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Lunch provided!

Have you been visiting this church and thinking about calling it home? Then you are invited to come to a gathering we call Connections!

We will talk about what membership means and what it is and isn't. We will look at how we and the United Church of Christ fit into *Christianity* including both our bold and progressive history as well as our open and hopeful vision for the future. The class includes conversations exploring our personal stories, the stories of our faith, the church's rich history, and the variety of programs and opportunities offered through the church. We will offer this class again, but maybe this is the right time for you. Please RSVP to Will Garrison (298-3137 or office@stockbridgeucc.org). Let Will know if childcare would be helpful. Questions? Please contact Brent. *If Sunday does not work, we are also holding some time on Saturday the 14th (from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. ending with lunch.)



Wednesday Community Dinner

Eating together nourishes our bodies and our souls. All are welcome to a dinner on **September 11** at the church. The food will be ready at 5:30 p.m. and served until 6:30 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 include a vegetarian and gluten-free option.

No one is obligated to bring anything. Those who wish to contribute, help cook, or bring a dish can. In gratitude, Pastor Brent

ANNOUNCING...

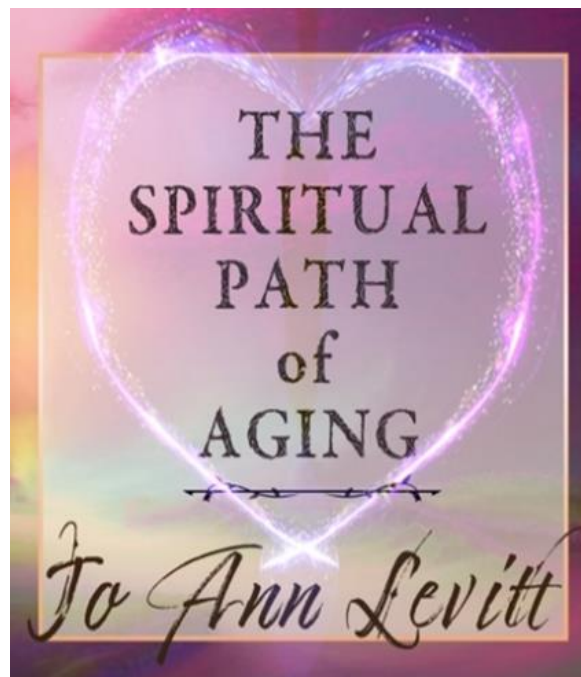
A Brand-new Audiobook

by JO ANN LEVITT

With great thanks to the 10 elder members of this congregation who participated in our spring group discussion on spiritual aging in 2023. Without your help, this book would never have come about. So, thank you all very much! Enclosed are many of our conversations and shared insights, along with tools for creating joy and transformation in our later years. Order your copy now, and embrace your aging journey with newfound wisdom!!

Available from [Audible](#) or (hard copy or audiobook) from [Amazon](#).

Thank you for your support!!



Fall Adult Education: Finding Grounding in Shifting Times

This Fall, Christian Education will offer two separate, yet connected, approaches to our turbulent times. Theology and Biblical Study both strive to explore how we understand God and, in turn, how that shapes how we live. Jeremy Ridenour will be leading a theology book discussion while Pastor Brent embarks on a discussion on our origin stories as told in Genesis. While the studies will be distinct, we plan to bring the groups together to share what they have learned. The groups are described below:

Theology: This class will engage the text [Jürgen Moltmann in Plain English](#) by amateur theologian Stephen Morrison. This book is an accessible introduction to Moltmann's theology. Moltmann was one of the most famous theologians of the second half of the 20th century who died this past June. His theology focused on central concepts such as the Trinity, hope, the crucifixion, the kingdom of God, and social justice. Moltmann's theology was

influential on the development of liberation and feminist theology. The group will meet for five sessions every other Monday from 5:15-6:45, beginning on September 16th and will invite participants to reflect upon the ways they think about and encounter God in their faith journey. If interested, please email Jeremy at jeremy.ridenour@gmail.com

Bible: Brent will offer two levels of study on Genesis – an introductory look at the stories (based on a “Disciples” curriculum) of Genesis and a diving deeper tract using Marilynne Robinson's new work Genesis. In both cases our task will be to look at what these stories tell us about God and how they shape our lives. You can self-select into the level or talk to Brent about what might work best. These classes will meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month beginning on September 12 and ending on November 14. The intro class will meet from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. and the diving deeper from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. The time from 6:30 – 7:00 will be set aside for food and connection. If interested, please contact Brent or the church office.

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge MA
Performance vs Budget Income Expense Report
As of July 31, 2024

	<u>Actual</u> Income & Expense As of 07/31/2024	<u>Target</u> Numbers (7 months of total budget)	<u>2024 Budget</u> Approved at Feb 4 2024 Budget Mtg
Income			
32000 · Income			
32100 · Pledges			
32101 · Pledge Commitments	144,489.16	138,833.33	238,000.00
32102 · Pledge Growth & Additional	516.81	2,916.67	5,000.00
32104 · Add'l Budget Gifts & Pledges	1,817.75	0.00	0.00
32200 · Loose Offering	8,972.95	8,540.00	14,640.00
32300 · Facility Use	7,195.97	6,416.67	11,000.00
32400 · Fundraisers	0.00	2,333.33	4,000.00
32500 · Gifts	250.00	2,625.00	4,500.00
32600 · Golf Club Parking	1,600.00	933.33	1,600.00
41100 · Endowment Fund Transfer	39,143.53	39,143.49	67,103.13
41350 · Music Minister Fund Transfer	5,250.00	9,333.33	16,000.00
Total 45000 · Interest	1.75	0.00	
Total Income	<u>210,472.28</u>	<u>212,515.12</u>	<u>364,311.63</u>
Expense			
Total 51000 · Minister - salary & benefits	69,276.43	69,642.61	119,387.33
Total 52000 · Music Director - salary & bnfts	31,909.63	31,948.81	54,769.38
Total 53000 · Administrator - salary & bnfts	22,169.93	22,170.62	38,006.77
Total 53600 · Sexton - salary & bnfts	9,314.70	9,313.03	15,965.20
Total 54000 · Financial Secretary - sal & bnf	3,426.07	3,426.14	5,873.38
Total 61000 · Board of Christian Education	2,866.38	4,083.33	7,000.00
Total 62000 · Growth & Fellowship	1,616.74	2,333.33	4,000.00
Total 63000 · Board of Deacons	4,942.94	5,135.67	8,804.00
Total 64000 · Board of Music	5,887.44	6,002.50	10,290.00
Total 65000 · Mission & Action	8,057.57	10,470.83	17,950.00
Total 66000 · Administrative / Council	7,209.07	8,820.00	15,120.00
Total 67000 · Trustees & Maintenance	42,098.03	48,137.11	82,520.76
69000 · Capital Reserve	1,250.00	1,458.33	2,500.00
Total Expense	<u>210,024.93</u>	<u>222,942.31</u>	<u>382,186.82</u>
	<u>447.35</u>	<u>-10,427.19</u>	<u>-17,875.19</u>

Treasurer's Budget Update

Here is the latest budget update, showing our numbers through July 31, 2024, and presented as a one-page summary. If you would like to

see a full 3-page copy of the budget, please reach out to me or to Will in the office.

Our income from pledges, loose offerings, and facility use continues to be strong and in line with our budget projections. And through the good work of all of our Boards, we are both supporting our missions, programs, and administrative needs and staying below budget projections on expenses. This, combined with salary and benefit savings we will realize with the resignation of our Minister of Music, will bring us, by year end, substantially below the gap budget of -\$17,875.19 which the congregation passed at the February Budget Meeting. While it is too early to give an exact final budget number for the year, I feel confident that we will end at less than a -\$7,000 gap. I will continue to share financial updates, and I am also happy to provide more details, and to answer any questions you may have about our Budget.

Patty Strauch, Treasurer