



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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



November 2024

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

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

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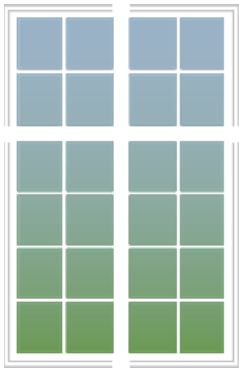
(413) 298-3137 | www.stockbridgeucc.org

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

November 2024

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>2nd Nature Arts: M-T-W 3:15-5:30pm classroom</i></p> <p>3</p> <p>Worship 10:00am - All Saints Day SFC rehearsal 1:00pm Youth Group: Games and Sundaes 5:00pm</p>	<p><i>Yoga Classes are Wednesdays at 9:00am</i></p> <p>4</p>	<p>Save the Date! Advent Party and Potluck lunch December 1.</p> <p>5</p> <p>Election Day – sanctuary open; service at 7:00pm <i>Second Nature 9:00am-3:30pm Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i></p>	<p>6</p> <p>Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Council 7:00pm</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Service League 10:30am</p>	<p>2</p> <p><i>SGC Board 8am Al-Anon 5:00pm Lake Mahkeenac Radio Show 6:00pm</i></p>
<p>10</p> <p>Kids' Choir 9:15am Worship 10:00am Consecration Sunday SFC rehearsal 1:00pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Veterans Day – office closed <i>Second Nature 9:00am-3:30pm Theology Book Group 5:30-7:00pm</i></p>	<p>12</p> <p>Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p>Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Community Meal 5:30</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Genesis Study 6:45pm – Room 4</p>	<p>15</p> <p><i>Second Nature 9:00am-3:30pm</i> Service League 10:30am</p>	<p>16</p> <p><i>Stockbridge Golf Club Board 8:30am SFC rehearsal 10am Al-Anon 5:00pm</i></p>
<p>17</p> <p>Worship 10:00am SFC rehearsal 1:00pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Newsletter deadline</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Tuesday Club 1:45pm Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i></p>	<p>20</p> <p>Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Genesis Study 6:45pm – Room 4</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Service League 10:30am</p>	<p>23</p> <p><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i></p>
<p>24</p> <p>Kids' Choir 9:15am Worship 10:00am SFC rehearsal 1:00pm</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i></p>	<p>27</p> <p>Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Thanksgiving Day – Office closed</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Service League 10:30am Office closed</p>	<p>30</p> <p><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i></p>



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

November 2024 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

November is always a liminal space. Liminal spaces are great gifts in that they are those in between times where we hold on to what has been even as we lean into what might yet be. This November is a particularly liminal time. Summer has held on into a long and beautiful lingering fall. If nothing else, November promises to bring more significant changes not only in weather but in our scenery. The final stubborn leaves will drift to the ground. One kind of beauty yields to another.

This November we will also experience a profound liminal space in terms of the forces and leaders who will shape our lives. The month begins with the elections. As we approach that day, I know that stress and tension are rising. I know that much is at stake and that how each and all those elections turn out will have a bearing on the lived reality of our lives. The church will open up on Election Day to allow people who would like to pray or find a sense of peace to do so in our beautiful and venerable sanctuary finishing with a prayer service at 7:00 PM. (Please see page 11 for more details). Our 200-year-old sanctuary bears witness to the fact that we have made it through such elections before and we will again.

The end of November, however, will also mark the end of our church year. Advent always kicks off the new church year. Advent has the power to let the stress and tension of

whatever happens in November to drift to the ground like all the dead and dried out leaves are doing now. No matter who wins in November and whether that brings us joy or sorrow, Advent begins a new church year in hope, peace, love, and joy. Advent rightly turns our attention to the power that has the true and profound bearing on the lived reality of our lives – God’s love in Jesus. Advent invites us to allow earthly power to yield to God’s power, justice, and mercy.

The time between November 5th and December 1st will be a profound time of liminality. During that time, we will honor the reality of our lives and our world and how it is changing both in hopeful and concerning ways. We need to do so fully and yet loosely. The gift of this liminality is that we know a new future is coming. We will once again spend Advent practicing waiting, engaging story, and gathering together - all that we might this year even more deeply remember who we are and who we belong.

If during the coming month you feel stressed or tense or worried or overwhelmed, remember that you are not alone. Reach out to me or to anyone in our church and we will make it through like we always do, together. Come and see.

Pastor Brent

HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 3 Ken Fogarty
November 5 Diane Piraino
 Deb McMenamy
 Virginia Schneider
November 7 Holland Eaton
November 8 Betsey McKearnan
November 9 Tim Bosworth
November 11 David Anderegg
November 12 Peter Wise
November 13 Meryle Epstein
November 18 Trudy Fadding
 Anna Duhon
November 23 Rich Geiler
November 27 Judi Peyron
 Marcia Miner
November 30 Will Garrison

Wednesday Community Supper

Eating together nourishes our bodies and our souls. All are welcome to a dinner on **November 13** 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



Dancing in the Kitchen

News from Growth & Fellowship

It's been a joy to see how our church family comes together each Sunday after worship to meet new friends and catch up with old friends. Our Board aims to provide a comfortable and welcoming place for Fellowship, whether it's an "ordinary" Sunday (are any Sundays truly ordinary?), or a special occasion. We couldn't do it without your enthusiasm, and enthusiastic support.

Each week we have a number of spontaneous volunteers lending a hand in the kitchen, setting up tables and chairs in the JE Room, and offering a gracious welcome to everyone. Spontaneity can be the best part about coffee hour. It's especially fun when young people join the "not so young" people in the kitchen. (One Sunday we broke out dancing!) Of equal importance, though, is maintaining a stream of coffee hour hosts and greeters on the calendar, through Breeze.

Our system for volunteer sign up is still getting its feet wet. Breeze can seem intimidating to use, but once you've tried it a couple of times, it truly is a breeze. The signup system requires some planning ahead before it's possible to push the button and make a commitment. Be assured, though, that there is also a feature that allows you to cancel a signup, when unforeseen conflicts occur. Check it out whenever you receive an email invitation from Will, and sign on a week with Growth & Fellowship, you won't be sorry. There's a lot of love in serving one another.

Something new for early arrivals before Worship is a simple spread — coffee, danish, and the newspaper. Singers, teachers, students, and parents seem glad to have that early welcome which ties nicely into after Worship Fellowship. The coffee is plentiful, hot through coffee hour. Volunteers will be glad to know that making coffee is no longer a task in hosting.

Our next special Sunday, in December, will be the advent craft and potluck. Look for updates. It was terrific fun last year. You won't want to miss it.

See you Sunday(s)!

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

Warm Clothing Needed

As you may know, Ted and I have many relatives living in the mountains of North Carolina. In the wake of Hurricane Helene, which brought high winds and dropped heavy rain on September 26, they are still dealing with power outages, downed trees, washed out roads, flooded yards, spotty cell service, and lack of running water. Thankfully, their homes were, mostly, spared and they had no significant loss of belongings. Others were much less fortunate. In speaking with family there about how we could help, they suggested a warm clothing drive.

In response, until November 3, we will be working with the youth group on a clothing drive for hurricane victims. We are looking for clean, gently worn garments, without stains, rips, missing buttons or broken zippers. We will take fall and winter clothing for any age. You can leave clothing on the table in the Sunday School room and we will bring it with us when we visit North Carolina in mid-November.

We do not want you to purchase clothing for this drive. We merely ask that, as you get out your warm clothes, you think about what you have and might not need. Think of it as Marie Kondo (the life-changing magic of tidying up) meets Matthew 25:36 (*I was naked and you gave me clothing*). Does that sweater still spark joy? If not, we'll gladly take it to someone else.

~ Diane Piraino

From the Music Department

I am very excited, as I know you all are, to see the kids choir singing on the last Sunday of each month. I want to thank Liza Catino for pulling this all together and to the kids and their very supportive parents for coming to two rehearsals prior to church on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. It is also great to see and hear our wonderful bell choir! Thank you, Mary Jo, for leading this group! Our church is so fortunate to have such a bounty of talent; many churches in Berkshire County do not have a children's choir nor a bell choir.

Our mighty adult choir continues to sing two Sundays a month and I am so grateful to all of

them for their dedication, not to mention their amazing ability to sight read or learn pieces very quickly. In November, the choir will sing on November 3 to celebrate All Saints Day and on November 17 for an all-Mendelssohn morning. Following the service on November 17, there will be a brief rehearsal to look at the anthems for Advent and Christmas which we'll be singing on December 1 and December 15, in addition to Christmas Eve.

On Sunday, November 10, we will be offering music selections to complement the story of Jonah, as well as honor the blessings of our pledges to the Stewardship effort.

Festival Chorus has started up rehearsals for our December 14th concert. Works by Vaughan Williams will feature contralto Vira Slywotzky singing the Magnificat with women's voices, and John Demler soloing in the Fantasia on Christmas Carols with the full chorus. We will also be doing several of David Anderegg's advent pieces.

Lastly, I don't want any of you to worry that All Work and No Play makes Tracy a dull gal! My husband, David Wampler, and I traveled to the incredibly beautiful country of Ireland September 11-22 with Pat Olson (a high school classmate of David's) and his wife, Terri. This is a picture of Pat, David and me



standing on basalt columns of Giant's Causeway in northern Ireland. The wind was about 50 mph! These columns were formed some 60 million years ago and stand as a testament to a major stage in the earth's development.

Thank you, Ron Hanft, Steve Hassmer, David Anderegg and Amy Shake for covering the music at the services while I was traveling. Once again – such a bounty of talent.

~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem

From the Service League

I've always found Queen Isabella to be an intriguing personality. We all know about Columbus, but on a recent trip to Spain I wanted to check out two sites associated with another aspect of her reign. One is the facade of the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes, where she



ordered the display of the manacles of captured Christians, after she conquered and drove out the Moors. The second is the choir at the magnificent Cathedral of Toledo, where she commissioned the carving of the choir stalls to tell the story of the conquest of Granada (the last of those



Moors). I'm no fan of religious wars, but you do have to admit that this is one monarch who knew how to publicize her achievements.

What does this have to do with the Holly Fair? Well, we could extrapolate from Isabella's experience. We don't have Columbus to go raise funds in the new world, but we do have the Service League. We won't be hanging any manacles or commissioning any carvings, but we will be selling baked goods, crafts, greenery, homemade gifts, and all kinds of other goodies at the HOLLY FAIR, December 7. Please mark your calendars, and please answer the call for donations and a helping hand when it comes from Helen McCormick or Nancy Wilcox. And please come!

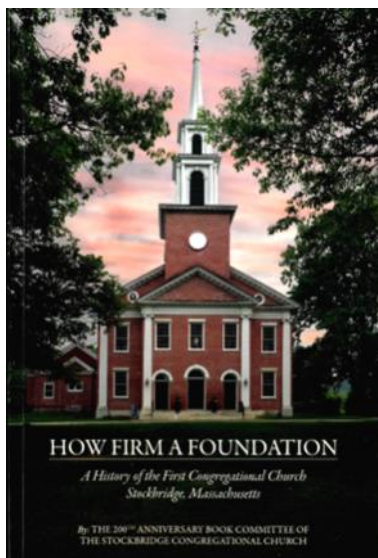
Margaret Hornick, for the Service League

How Firm a Foundation

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 is on sale. Beat the Christmas rush! Available in the church office and during Fellowship Hour Sunday.

Hard cover \$30;
soft cover \$22 -
cash/check/
Venmo.



Minister of Music Search - Update

The search committee, chaired by Liza Catino, has met twice and has identified its screening process and the initial steps to screen and explore candidates. Speaking of candidates, the job has been posted and applications have been coming in both locally and regionally/nationally. If you are aware of a possible candidate please contact Will Garrison who can provide materials and talk you through the process.

The Board of Music is also undertaking work to help better understand our desires regarding music at the church and the current culture of music at the church. Their goal is to help make sure we are ready to welcome in the successful candidate. They are requesting people fill out a survey which will be available every Sunday after worship and through the Church Office.

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is in the midst of planning for and receiving pledges for our 2025 budget. As you know, we are working to get enough now pledges to cover our expected expenses for next year.



Expenses for next year will be up only a little from this year, mostly due to inflation of our costs. However, we do have a budget deficit this year so we need a bit more in pledges if you can for next year to get us back in the black. You will or have received more detailed information on our expected budget for next year in our mailings and talks from the pulpit and hopefully you can help us this year with an increase in your giving!

There are many reasons that we all belong to our church, and probably a similar diversity in reasons that we give money to support the church. We love our God and we love our church, but some of us belong and give mostly due to a strong conviction of faith. Others of us love this community of faith and wonderful people who belong to the church and give for this. We have people who give to help support initiatives that they love, while others give more to support the church because others may not be able to do as much. The reasons we give are diverse and varied, but they all support this wonderful organization that we call “church” here in Stockbridge.

The committee thanks you for your continued support of this place and your love for this community.

Charlotte Rodgers wrote in the first Stewardship letter:

This year will find the church engaged in many programs and activities that feed us spiritually and provide outreach to the community. Any day you drop by you will find a buzz of activity: volunteers working to stock food in the popular Pop-up Pantry, kids from the Second Nature Arts after school program playing and crafting, and students from The Berkshire Waldorf High School rehearsing Shakespeare. Volunteers are busy preparing for the annual Holly Fair and the Giving Tree, a program that provides gifts to 100 local individuals and families. Our church’s mission outreach responds to needs that are local, national and international. The monthly Community Supper, prepared by many hands, serves a meal open to all with good food and an opportunity for fellowship!

Save the Date!

Advent Party and Potluck lunch
December 1.



New Members Welcomed Oct 20

The **Brown/Fries** family is happy to be joining the church! We live in Sandisfield and love spending time outside together and enjoying music.



Hannah Fries grew up in New Hampshire and is a life-long UCC member. She is a writer and an editor at Storey Publishing, a North Adams-based imprint of Hachette Book Group. A couple of her favorite recent editing projects is a kids book about decomposers called *World of Rot* and Maria Popova's stunning book *The Universe in Verse: 15 Portals to Wonder through Science & Poetry*. As a writer, she has authored a collection of poems called *Little Terrarium*, a collection of readings and prompts called *Being with Trees*, and is working on a book of short essays that will be published by Storey in 2026. She loves to garden, cross-country ski, and get out in the woods, and she sings regularly in the Cantilena Chamber Choir.

Adam Brown grew up in east Texas before migrating north for graduate school and work in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Nonetheless, he and Hannah didn't meet until they both ended up in the Berkshires, Adam at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Hannah at Orion magazine. Now Adam is a consulting forester and can be found wandering the woods of Berkshire County and beyond to create ecological forest management plans for private landowners, land trusts, and municipalities. Adam is also a telemark skier and a deer hunter, providing a fairly reliable source of venison to stock the freezer all year.

Amos Brown is 7 1/2 years old and in second grade at the Farmington River School in Otis. He is a math whiz who also enjoys reading and learning fascinating facts about animals and science. He tears up the neighborhood on his bike and skis all the slopes at Otis Ridge. He also takes piano lessons and loves to sing and even compose his own piano pieces.

Oscar Brown is 3 1/2. He loves trucks, construction equipment, and anything else with a motor. He also draws awesome pictures and has mastered the balance bike. With a vivid imagination and a knack for storytelling, he keeps us all on our toes!

Lisa Johnson

Originally from Texas, my family landed in Great Barrington, MA where I spent my formative years. It did not take long for New England to become my spiritual home, which still anchors me though I live in Saratoga Springs, NY.

My career was in Higher Education at the SUNY, Empire State University. As a faculty member, I



taught business classes State-side and overseas (face-to-face) in the University's onsite International Programs in Albania, Greece, Prague, Cyprus, Lebanon, Taiwan, and the Dominican Republic. I spent program development time in Singapore and Ireland – for eight weeks! International traveling was exciting and humbling as I met students and learned about their culture, traditions, and day-to-day challenges

(some directly experienced with them). Retired for less than a year, I spend time rediscovering activities put on hold – music, photography (amateur), reading, computer work, and taking care of my 3 Shih Tzu dogs! . . . and discovering new activities – pickleball, yoga, concerts, art projects . . . I am an avid gardener and spend a lot of time in the yard. I am excited to join and engage in this next spiritual journey.

Randy Johnson

I was born in Dallas, Texas and moved permanently to the Berkshires in 1985. The Berkshires have held a special place in my heart since my family lived in Great Barrington in the mid-1960s.

In 2003, I married a very special person and the love of my life, Jackie Browner. Jackie has a wonderful son, Evan Kenward, his wife Kerry and a sweet grandson Lucas. I am very close to them and love them as my own.



Over the years, we have hosted many international exchange students and guests from Rotary and the Berkshire County Day School. We now have “family” all over the world and connect with them often.

I was Superintendent of the Pittsfield Cemetery for 15 years. Then I started a real estate appraisal business (Berkshire Appraisal Services, LLC) and operated it until 2020. At that point Jackie and I closed the office and retired.

I have been a member of the Pittsfield Rotary Club since 1988. Both Jackie and I have volunteered at Tanglewood for over 30 years. The Berkshires’ cultural activities are dear to my heart. I have a close connection to The Berkshire Museum and started to volunteer there when I was 16 years old.

I am happy to become a member of First Congregational Church and am delighted that my sister, Lisa Johnson, will become a member, too.

Joanne Conroy



Cathedral of the Beloved



On October 27 the Board of Mission and Action partnered with the West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church to serve a hot and healthy meal at the Cathedral of the Beloved in Pittsfield. Meatball subs, fresh salad, apples and cookies were gratefully received by approximately 100 people in attendance.

Some 15 members of our church, including five children/youth were on hand on the lawn in front of Saint Joseph's. In addition, a

I can't tell you how meaningful it was to serve at Cathedral of the Beloved. There's so much that's wrong with the world right now that the chance to do something good and true and pure was a huge gift to me.
- Jon Geldert

group of people gathered on Saturday in West Stockbridge to do the initial food preparation.

All of it brought warmth and joy both to those who volunteered and to those who showed up to participate and eat. After it was over, a leader of the Cathedral program pulled our kids aside and emotionally thanked them. He thanked them for what they did on that day but also for the peace and joy it brought to him knowing that the future is in good hands. The equally positive response from the kids was a joy to behold.

Youth Group: Games and Sundaes

November 3, 5:00pm - 7:30pm

All youth who are 10 years or older. Bring a friend! We will gather in the JE Room, dinner will be served. Make your own ice cream sundaes; card games and board games.

The Kids Choir added their voices - with a couple of guest stars - at the end of the service on October 27. Kids Choir rehearsals are the second and fourth Sundays of the month.



Family News (and music!)




CONCERTS AT THE CHURCH

Featuring

Kalish & Walker

Emily Kalish, violin and Kyle Walker, piano in a program entitled

"For the Beauty of the Earth"




Sunday, November 10, 1 pm

In this era of climate crisis, when caring for our fragile planet is more important than ever, how can music play a role? The works on this program, old and new, portray our connections to the natural world. This program inspires an appreciation of Earth's beauty and offers an oasis for reflecting on our commitment to its stewardship.

Suggested Donation: \$10 at the door

First United Methodist Church of Hillsdale
State Highway 23 and State Route 22, Hillsdale, NY 12529

Presented by Cheryl Jones, Music Director

This program is made possible in part by a grant from the Rheinstrom Hill Community Foundation

Election Day Prayer

One of the earliest teachings in the Bible is that it is not good for human beings to be alone. That maxim holds true on a day like Election Day. This has been a very long and contentious election cycle highlighted of course by the presidential election. We know that Election Day will have consequences. We know that there will still be issues left unresolved and division among people in our community and nation. We also know however that in the end we answer to a higher authority and no matter who wins on this particular day that God will continue to be with us, laying before us the costs and the joys of discipleship, and inviting us into deeper loving relationship.

So that no one need be alone, and so that we can gather together in a place of beauty, safety, and hope, the board of deacons invites you to come to our sanctuary on Election Day beginning at 7:00AM. Throughout the day there will be gentle music playing in the sanctuary, there will be written prayers and readings and reflection guides for you, Candles that may be lit, and there will be volunteers on hand to help you should you need it.



At 7:00 PM we will hold a prayer service as polls begin to close on the East Coast. This prayer service will be a time of common prayer, reflection, music, and togetherness. There will be no advocacy for any candidate, platform, or issue. Instead, we will draw our hearts and minds together with each other and ground ourselves in God's goodness.

If you have questions or wish to volunteer to be a helper in the sanctuary, please contact Pastor Brent. We will have signage outside, but make sure to let anyone who is looking for a place of peace and quiet, of truth and beauty, of hope and community know that they are welcome here.



J.E. Room and Kitchen Project

Contractor Ejner Handberg building the drawers for the kitchen cabinets in 1957. Nearly seventy years later, the JE Room/Kitchen Working Group is finishing their renovation recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

PUT ON YOUR
PARTY PANTS
FOR



**THE LAKE MAHKEENAC
RADIO THEATER**

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 2nd
6PM

An evening of storytelling, singing, and all-around merriment!

Tenor angel Alec Hicks

**The Lake Mahkeenac Radio Players
Christopher Brophy and Rikke Borge**

Folk rock giant Bruce Mandel

Pianist extraordinaire Tracy Wilson

Head writer and host David Anderegg

**and featuring special guest
opera and theater superstar Douglas Williams**



**PRO-AM
PIE CONTEST**

*All entries available
for purchase after
the show!*




\$25 Suggested Donation

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT
CHARITABLE PROGRAMS AND
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
OF THE 1824 STOCKBRIDGE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

4 MAIN STREET, STOCKBRIDGE
413.298.3137



**OUR GUARANTEE:
NO ELECTION JOKES!**

LIVESTREAM AT [STOCKBRIDGEUCC.ORG/RADIOTHEATER](https://stockbridgeucc.org/radioteater)