

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



May 2025

Spring Fair - May 10

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

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

Financial Secretary: Marion Pomeroy - finance@stockbridgeucc.org

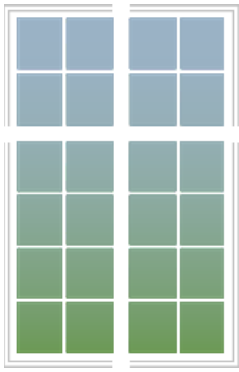
(413) 298-3137 | www.stockbridgeucc.org

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

May 2025

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<i>Yoga Classes Wednesdays, at 9:00am</i>	<i>2nd Nature Arts M-T-W, 3:15 – 5:30pm</i>			1	2 Service League 10:30am	3 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
4 Worship 10:00am	5	6 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i>	7 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Council 7:00pm	8	9 Service League 10:30am	10 Spring Fair 10am-1:00pm <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
11 Worship 10:00am	12	13 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i>	14 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Community Supper 5:30pm	15 <i>Tuesday Club fundraiser concert – Wanda Huston 5:00pm</i>	16 Service League 10:30am	17 <i>Birch Festival Concert 3:00pm Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
18 Worship 10:00am Annual Meeting 11:15am	19	20 Newsletter deadline Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i>	21 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 8:00pm	22	23 Service League 10:30am	24 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
25 Worship 10:00am	26 Memorial Day <i>Parade program in sanctuary</i>	27 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm AA 8:00pm</i>	28 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study Zoom 1:00	29 <i>Book Club – How Firm a Foundation – 6:00pm</i>	30 Service League 10:30am	31 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

May 2025 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Easter was such a joy! Thank you to all who helped plan, implement, or participate in worship, music, fellowship, egg hunts, flowers and more. There was good news to be shared, and we did! We now face the same question that the early followers of Christ did - *now what?* The answer might be simpler than we imagine. The early church followed a couple of guidelines that can show us our way too.

First, they spent their time together, **sharing**. The Book of Acts records they gathered regularly, every day, to share food, share prayers, sing, and share what they had to meet what others needed. Some of these things we do in official church planned activities – I hope as an Easter church we continue to imagine new and different ways of doings so. I also hope we remember that those things also can take place on individual levels.

As an Easter church, how can we consider what others congregation need and if we have something to share? Jesus taught that giving means sharing whether that person had anything to offer us or not. Who in our congregation could use a phone call, a visit, a chocolate chip cookie, a prayer, or perhaps a hand with the project? Who in our congregation might benefit from a walk, some social time, or just being remembered?

Second, they understood that they didn't



need to find their path. They knew that the Spirit would guide them to their calling. As an Easter church, how might we open our hearts and lives and be still long enough to discern our calling in our need-filled world? How can we discern where the Spirit is leading us?

As we enter Easter, I offer questions rather than answers hoping that we, like the early church spend time together praying, sharing, and listening. That we, like them, might set out on a course that matters. Acts describes a moment when, through their sharing, no one had any needs. While that seems daunting, it also seems more than worth trying. Are we ready to be Easter people?

I hope and pray so. Come and be.

Brent

Music Notes

If I cannot fly, let me sing. ~ Stephen Sondheim

Where words fail, music speaks. ~ Hans
Christian Andersen

*Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can
calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the
most magnificent and delightful presents God
has given us.* ~ Martin Luther

*Music is an angel
Singing out from the skies as she flies*

*Music is love
Music is the food of all moods
Music is perfect and it is good for you*
~ Sylvia Chidi

The Search Committee for the Minister of Music was tasked with recommending a single candidate to the Church Council for hiring. We started this process in September with Liza Catino, Chair, Brian Farrell, Board of Music representative, Cindy Brown, Jon Geldert, Deb McMenamy, Gary Schieneman, and Brent Damrow, ex-officio. We agreed that we were looking for someone with strong musicality who was equally comfortable on the organ and piano; a person with knowledge of church music—a true church musician; a strong teacher and director; and a kind person who can create meaningful and collaborative relationships.

We identified best practices in hiring, advertised the position, and shared information with the congregation, meeting regularly to accomplish these goals. We started to receive resumés in October and sent follow-up essay questions for further clarification. After our first interviews, one candidate outshined the rest. **Sean Lewis** impressed us with his musicianship, his depth and breadth of experience, his excellent teaching and conducting abilities, his maturity, his kindness and humility.

Sean is a church musician, organist and pianist, music director, and music educator with more than 30 years of deep and varied experience. He has served in a variety of denominations in Connecticut, including his current position at the Brookfield Congregational Church. He is the Director of Music and Performing Arts at Holy

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 9	Don Eaton
May 10	Sarah Conly
May 12	Erving Henderson
May 18	Marissa Peyron
May 19	Marie Raftery
May 20	Terry Wise
	Jeremy Ridenour
May 22	Gene Kalish
	Diane Fogarty
May 24	David McCarthy
May 26	Suzanne Dower
May 27	Cary Quigley
	Marc Fadding
May 30	Ed Ivas

Cross High School in Waterbury; is on the adjunct music faculty at Northwest Connecticut Community College; has been involved in countless musical theater productions, and (of particular interest to Jon, a lifelong fan) is pianist and singer for a Billy Joel tribute band.

Sean is eminently qualified, well-rounded, and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and technical expertise to our church.

As we have reiterated throughout this process, we were not attempting to find the perfect person, we wanted to hire the right person. And in Sean Lewis, we have the right person.

Sean, having been approved by Church Council on April 16, will start his new job as Minister of Music on Sunday, June 8. We look forward to experiencing Sean's gifts together as a congregation as we continue to engage in our mission as a church together.

And let the whole church sing: Hallelujah!

~ Liza Catino and Jon Geldert



**CELEBRATE 260 YEARS of CHRISTIAN SERVICE
1765 - 2025**

MEMBERS, FAMILIES and FRIENDS

**You are cordially invited to attend
the
Richmond Congregational Church Closing Worship Service***

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025 at 3:00 P.M.

***This service will be live-streamed on Zoom.**

Flower Power!

**Flowers for the Communion
Table**



The Board of Deacons is undertaking a new take on an old process: flowers for the Communion table. Since the passing of our dear Jackie Hawkins, flowers on the communion table have been occasional and unpredictable. We have organized a simple process whereby members of the congregation can sign up to provide flowers for Sunday worship.

You can sign up to provide flowers using the online registration form [here](#), on the website, or in the weekly email. If you have any questions, ask a Deacon!

**Lost, Found, but still
here...**

Last chance! The usual forgotten and misplaced winter gear (including one very impressive hat) has accumulated in the office hallway. Please check to see if your cold-weather items are missing from your closet. Unclaimed items will eventually be given away to charitable agencies.

LOST&FOUND



Pete's Sweeper Service cleaned up three years' worth of sand and salt.

From the Service League

I promise, this is the last time I'm going to bring up this topic - the one where I mention that we're having our Spring Fair on May 10, in the JE Room, from 10 - 1. We're trying something new this year, seasonally speaking, and we'll see how it works out. As I write this, I'm using the idea of "Spring" in the aspirational sense, as it's 37 degrees outside, but hope does spring eternal; surely, by May 10, we can expect the real thing, right? In any event, some things won't change. For example, there will be crafts, Grandma's Attic, Cindy's Cafe, and those always popular baked goods, and there will no doubt be a phone call from Helen McCormick or Nancy Wilcox asking for your contributions.

And if you're starting seedlings, for flowers or vegetables, we'd love to have some of those too. Regardless, please come, shop, hang out, and help us raise some funds for our mission projects.

The weather was still on the wintery side on Palm Sunday, but that didn't stop Helen from taking a turn on the donkey. Kids come in all ages! ~ Margaret Hornick



Book Club! Michael Lynch will lead a three-week discussion about *How Firm a Foundation: A History of the First Congregational Church, Stockbridge, Massachusetts on the Occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Brick Church*. May 29, June 5 & 12, 6:00-7:00pm. Call the church office if interested.

KUDOS to all who assisted with our celebration of Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music Pro Tempore

The Board of Music extends its appreciation to all who helped with the celebration of Tracy on April 6:

Michael Deegan, Brian Farrell, Janet and John Canning, Linda Hoddy, Mary Hoeltzel, Mary Jo Erickson Connor and the Bell Choir, Cindy and Jack Brown, Jo Ann Levitt, Will Garrison, Marion Pomeroy, Patty Strauch, Terry Wise, Donna Jacobs, Drea Pecor, and Rev. Brent Damrow.



What do Deacons do on their off hours? See the baby animals at Hancock Shaker Village, of course! Photo of David Anderegge by Gary Cilley.

Dear Congregation,

I cannot thank you enough for the outpouring of love and gratitude at the celebration on April 6 for my work as Music Director Pro Tempore. My wish for every one of you is that you, too, could have such a heartwarming, personal gift of thanksgiving. Thank you to Brent, the Board of Music (Cake! Flowers! Gift certificate to Zinci!), church choir, bell friends, deacons, and all who joined in the litany. Thank you to Cindy Brown for the photos, seen here.

Thank you to Will, my colleague and fellow staff member, to bring the bulletins, newsletters, choir set ups, sanctuary needs, etc. up to completion (we couldn't have done the organ restoration without his patient attention to the details needed by Czelusniak et Dugal team.)

Thank you especially to the choir for that magnificent *Worthy is the Lamb* on Easter. That Amen will be in my heart forever.

With love and deepest appreciation,

Tracy





Good Friday: Stations of the Cross

Members and friends of the church gathered on top of Eden Hill to walk the powerful stations of the cross. The fourteen stations use life-sized bronze statues to recreate the steps Jesus took from judgement to tomb. Using a set of prayers and reflections on each station and through sung prayer the group traveled to each station before a blessing sent us on our way. The stations are open to the public during daylight hours.



Stockbridge Festival Chorus Sings to a Packed House April 12

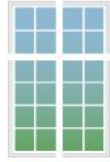
Congratulations to the SFC whose recent concert offered the gift of the Mozart Requiem and David Stone's *In the Darkest Hour* to a standing-room only crowd.

The Chorus, under the direction of Tracy Wilson, is a part of the church and welcomes the broader community in both to participate and enjoy. They will resume in the Fall in preparation for their annual Christmas program.

If you are interested in being a part of the Chorus or helping out - please be in touch with Tracy.



Drivers needed for Kimball Farms (Lenox) members and friends to attend Sunday worship. Right now, rides are mostly being provided by Donna Jacobs. If you have some availability to help her out occasionally, she'd love to hear from you at donnajacobsmw@aol.com



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
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Stockbridge, Massachusetts

To all members of The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

In accordance with the By-laws of the Church, we hereby call the Annual
Congregational Meeting for Sunday, May 18 at 11:00am, following worship.
Included will be votes to approve:

1. Nominating slate for Officers, and Board and Committee members
2. To act upon any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Charlotte Rodgers, Clerk

Ron Hanft, Moderator

Connections Class

Have you been visiting this church for a while and thinking about calling it home? Then you are invited to come to a gathering we call **Connections!** The next class will be soon, the exact date to be determined.

We will have the chance to 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 will include conversations with one another, Pastor Brent, and lay leaders. Our hope is that you will learn more about each other, the church's rich history, as well as the many programs, small groups, opportunities for service,

and other ministries that are available to you *whether or not* you decide to join.

We try to offer this class twice a year, so if now is not the right time, another opportunity will come soon.

Please indicate interest, and possible dates that fit your schedule to Will Garrison (298-3137 or office@stockbridgeucc.org). Childcare is available for those who might desire it. Questions? Please contact Pastor Brent.



Board of Mission & Action

Cathedral of the Beloved ~ APRIL 5/6

On April 6 members of our congregation served a hot meal for the Cathedral of the Beloved in Pittsfield. A main dish of ham and scalloped potatoes as well as salad, dinner rolls and cookies was served to approximately 45 people with enough for people to take home additional meals.

Many thanks to the following volunteers who made this important outreach possible:

SHOP

- Marion Pomeroy
- Alice Collins
- Cathy Clark

COOK Saturday April 5 in our church kitchen

- Anne Hutchinson
- Stephanie Bradford
- John and Janet Canning
- Nick Pohl
- Casey Jones
- Lilly Hassmer
- Noah Hassmer
- Mia Freeman
- Anna Smith

SERVE Sunday April 6 at the First United Methodist Church, Pittsfield

- Nick Pohl
- Holland Eaton
- Casey Jones
- Lilly Hassmer
- Noah Hassmer
- Vicky Cooper
- Marion Pomeroy
- Ashley Collins
- Khalil Haddir
- Lisa Johnson
- Tess Holmes

One Great Hour of Sharing

On March 30 we joined with UCC churches across the country to give to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS).

OGHS is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. The news reminds us daily of the broken places in our world that need tending.

Many, many thanks to our community for your support - in excess of \$1,000!





Palm Sunday and Easter

The Deacons arranged for two donkeys to bring the Palm Sunday story to life. Brass complimented a beautiful Easter music program while the annual Easter Egg included treasures of candy and books. The flowered cross was a highlight of worship - thank you Sarah, Michael, and Drea!



Spring Fair

Sat., May 10, 2025
10 am – 1 pm

Grandma's Attic
Baked Goods • Crafts
Plant Starts • Tea Room

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
4 Main St., Stockbridge, MA

