

*The First Congregational Church, UCC  
PO Box 825  
Stockbridge MA 01262*



## **November 2020**

Pastor: The Rev. Brent Damrow – [bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:bdamrow@stockbridgeucc.org)  
Minister of Music: Dr. Sándor Szabó - [music@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:music@stockbridgeucc.org)  
Administrator: Will Garrison – [office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org)  
Financial Secretary: Ron Hanft – [rphanft@yahoo.com](mailto:rphanft@yahoo.com)

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

[www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc](https://www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m. *Online*

Wednesday Morning Prayer: 8:00 a.m. *Online*

Thursday Morning Prayer: 8:00 a.m. *Gathered, under the tent*

Office hours: 9:00-1:00, Monday - Friday

### **Stewardship 2021 – At the heart of being church.**

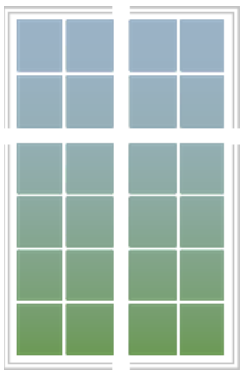


We hope that you have received your Stewardship Letter (mailed 10/14), we hope that you are tuning in to worship to hear the messages, we plan to mail pledge cards and more information 10/27 and we will hold Consecration Sunday (when we hope cards are returned) on November 8. If you have not received your information or have questions, please contact the Church Office.

# November 2020

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>
1 All Saints Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>online</i>	2	3 Election Day	4 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Church Council 7:00 p.m.	5 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the trees</i>	6 Service League 12:00 noon	7
8 Welcoming New Members Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>gathered &amp; online</i>	9	10	11 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Christian Ed 5:00 pm Mission & Action 5:30 pm	12 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the trees</i>	13 Service League 12:00 noon	14
15 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>online</i>	16	17	18 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm Trustees 5:30 pm Deacons 6:30 pm G & F 7:30 pm.	19 Gathered Morning Prayer 8:00 a.m. <i>under the trees</i>	20 Service League 12:00 noon	21
22 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>online</i>	23	24	25 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00 pm <i>Last Day of Berkshire Waldorf High School</i>	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29 Advent begins Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>online</i>	30					Calendar is subject to change. Please check the church website for updates.
					Online worship is at stockbridgeucc.org	
				Pastor Brent's office hours by appointment, call church office.		



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## November 2020 Newsletter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Resilience is an important word for our reality right now. One definition describes the kind of resilience that is tough, strong, and enduring; the ability to weather the storm. The second definition is equally compelling. It focuses instead on flexibility and suppleness; it is the ability to absorb energy, release it, and spring back into shape. Each have potency to meet the needs of these moments.

The issues that we are facing as a church, a community, a country, and a people require resilience. No matter what happens on November 3, no matter how quickly a vaccine is created/ distributed, no matter how harsh/gentle a winter we might be facing we will need resilience to find our way not back to what was but forward to what can yet be. Resilience enables us to engage rather than avoid. Resilience enables hopeful engagement rather than reactive problem solving. It allows us to open to loving neighbor rather than circling the wagons or defending our tribe. It allows us to see new impossible possibilities – which people of faith have been doing for millennia.

In the coming months much of our energy will be put into fostering resilience. These efforts will take many forms including worship, formation, fellowship, small groups, live radio shows, and even spooky organ concerts. I hope that you will pay close attention to announcements and invitations and take part. Each of these opportunities will help us

draw closer to God, one another, and the world. Equally though, they will help nurture the kind of resilience to live into these times.

I hope that in addition to the formal offerings of the church, that you might think about each other. Imagine those whose resilience might be under strain – those who have lost someone, those who are lonely, those facing health or financial issues, or those who simply haven't heard from or seen in a while. One of the reasons I encourage people to check in on Sundays is to hear who is there and take joy in it. The other reason is to hear who isn't so that I might reach out to them.

The Bible honestly portrays that the human condition often needs patience and endurance. Sarah and Abraham did not have the child for whom they yearned for decades. It would be forty years of wandering in the wilderness in search of the promised land and significantly longer that the people endured exile before returning. Even Easter required long days of resilience in the face of what seemed to be disaster.

When the pandemic started, we emphasized two things: (1) do not fear and (2) we will make it through this together. If we those things, lean on the hope of our faith, and stay connected to God and neighbor we will find and nurture the resilience that will see us through. If any of those things for you are struggling under the weight of these times, please reach out to me or to any of your church family and we will be there for you.

Peace and blessings,

*Brent*

**RESILIENCE**  
*Learning to bounce back*



# OUR SHARED LIFE TOGETHER

We will be including prayers in the weekly emails, including those gathered in Sunday worship. If you have a name you would like to add, please contact the church office.

## HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 3	Ken Fogarty	November 11	David Anderegg
November 4	Sandor Szabo	November 12	Peter Wise
November 5	Diane Piraino	November 13	Meryle Epstein
	Deb McMenamy	November 18	Trudy Fadding & Anna Duhon
November 7	Holland Brown	November 25	Kristofer Kennedy
November 8	Betsey McKearnan	November 27	Judi Peyron & Marcia Miner
		November 30	Will Garrison

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHURCH

### From the Organ Bench: Faure's Requiem

On Sunday, November 1, at the 10:00am worship service, Andrea Bargabos, *soprano* and Jack Brown, *baritone* will sing several solo sections from Faure's sublime masterwork *Requiem*.

Fauré was a fine organist and in 1896 was appointed to the prestigious Madeleine church in Paris. He was also an excellent teacher, and perhaps because of his renowned expertise as organist and teacher only slowly gained recognition as a composer. He eventually became professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, and its Director 1905 to 1920.

The *Requiem* was composed in 1888, when Fauré was in his forties, quite probably in response to the recent death of his father. Shortly after its first performance, Faure's mother also died, giving the work an added poignancy. In 1900, under some pressure from his publishers, he reluctantly agreed to the release of a revised version containing additional instrumental parts designed to broaden the work's appeal. Nowadays it is such a firm favourite that it comes as a surprise to learn that it did not gain widespread popularity until the nineteen-fifties. In its sequence of movements the *Requiem* departs significantly from the standard liturgical text. Fauré included two new sections, the lyrical Pie Jesu and the transcendent In Paradisum, with its soaring vocal line and murmuring harp accompaniment. He also omitted the Dies Irae and Tuba Mirum - for most composers an opportunity to exploit to the full the dramatic possibilities of all the available choral and orchestral forces. Consequently the prevailing mood

is one of peacefulness and serenity, and the work has often been described, quite justly, as a Requiem without the Last Judgement. Of the many settings of the *Requiem*, this is probably the most widely loved. In comparison with the large-scale masterpieces of Verdi, Brahms and Berlioz, Faure's setting seems gentle and unassuming, yet it is this very quality of understatement which contributes so eloquently to the work's universal appeal. Whether the *Requiem* is performed in one of its orchestral versions or simply with organ accompaniment, it is impossible not to be moved by the ethereal beauty of this humble masterpiece. ~ Sándor Szabó, Minister of Music

### Worship @ Home

Do you have a special place at home set up for joining the continuing livestream services? We are collecting images to share at an upcoming service. So, please light a candle, take a picture and email to [office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org).

### Board of Christian Education

Jill Wheat reports that the on-line Family Sunday School Resources are continuing and have been well received. If any family would like this information printed and delivered, please contact Jill. The CE team is working on the idea of delivering craft projects to families, perhaps one project per Advent Sunday morning via Zoom. This would be after the children's sermon time or later so that parents would be able to attend church service. We are planning a virtual Advent Celebration, details will be forthcoming.

~ Cris Raymond for The Board of CE

## Board of Deacons

I've been experiencing church as a lifeline during the pandemic. As a Deacon, there are board and planning meetings, and set-up and support to provide. But mostly I note the range of opportunities and benefits I am receiving because of my involvement as a member of the congregation. Here are a few highlights:

### Sunday Morning Service

A quiet, still hour at my work desk joining in the weekly service online. I stand up to sing, and often laugh at "how good I sound" as I join my untrained voice with soloist Jack, John, Laura, Andrea, or Deryl. Rather like singing in the shower, miracles happen!

I often close my eyes during the service: the words—prayer, songs, scripture, sermon, blessing—sink deeper into me if I remove the visual distractions and simply. When I do, the analytical part of my mind may shut off, and I can't recall the details of joys and concerns, nor repeat the logic of the sermon. I don't think my attention has failed, though—instead, the content has transcended to more abstract and meaningful connection and love.



### Evening Worship

Jon is always on the beautiful front lawn when I arrive, setting up the audio equipment that will allow us to hear God's still speaking voice. Dave the guitarist arrives; Sandor carries the keyboard out under the trees where we gather. I lay out the communion, bulletins, prayer cards, peace rocks and now—as it is darker as the service goes on—the LED candles Jake recommended we use last week for the first time.

People look happy to be there. We settle in, the music starts, Brent welcomes us, Jon sings, we have prayer and psalm, contemplation, lighting of a fire

and a lantern, more song, someone's personal faith story, communion and then, like the disciples, we go out singing.

As we put the equipment and materials away after the service, I sense myself slipping into Sunday night, a time that used to be stressful for me as I contemplated the week of work ahead. Now I feel at peace, ready to meet whatever the week brings. I know that I'll have Morning Prayer to help keep me connected to God and church.

### Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer provides an opportunity to pause and take note of one's reactions to the events—both large and small, personal and political, frightening and joyful—that are stirring inside us. And then to "turn them over to God in prayer," as the old song says. At each meeting, we each identify something that may be coming between us and God, and let it go. We name a "bright spot," a source of gratitude, blessing and joy. We pray for others and ourselves. We hear each other with love, kindness and understanding. Sometimes we laugh: last week I declared (probably quite dramatically) that I don't know what I'm going to do about winter. How am I going to be able to exercise? Off to my left, spaced so she wasn't quite in my line of sight, Terry said, "Get a warmer coat." There was a pause while I processed this advice, and then we all cracked up.

Maybe, with church as my lifeline, winter won't be quite as hard as I feared.

~ Elizabeth Young for the Deacons

## Church Art News

Hoping the pandemic retreat is finding you in some personal creative spirit and associated accomplishments. Due to the fact that the JE Room in our church is void of visits and Art Show viewers, we will embark on a new adventure. Church photographers are invited to contribute photographs on any subject related to your faith to be enjoyed by all. Please email images to Will, and enjoy the process of sharing "visual faith" in the time we wait to be able to worship on a regular basis again. Sending blessing of good health and great photography.

Olga Schwede

## Music News

### UCC Publishes David Anderegg Composition

You may remember a beautiful song, "Now," written in memory of George Floyd by David Anderegg. The text is taken from "The Souls of Black Folk" by W.E.B. Du Bois. It was sung by Nellie Rustic as the closing song in our Sunday, June 5th, streaming service.

This song was selected by the UCC Musicians Association for publication in the Fall 2020 issue of their journal, *Worship Music & Ministry*. For a reprint of this song, along with a bio and comment by David, contact Ron Hanft: rphanft@yahoo.com or 413-232-4179.

## Service League

We moved inside in the nick of time! A storm of biblical proportions took out the tent shortly after our change of venue - there was wind, there was hail, there was everything but a plague of locusts. We're grateful to be back indoors, on the Steiner School's day off, though it does feel a bit strange to be sitting spread out at individual tables in the JE Room instead of hunkered over our crafts projects in the classroom. But we're doing our best to adapt, and to find a way to continue our mission work.

This week we began a new tradition, which we'll continue at our monthly meetings, of bringing items for the People's Pantry with a focus on women's needs. Anne Hutchinson tells us there's plenty of food, thanks to generous donors and subsidies, but personal items and toiletries are often unavailable. We're going to try to fill that gap. Anne has also found a way to provide shelter for shoppers and volunteers as the weather gets colder - the company that made the new cart corrals for the Big Y will make a similar design for the People's Pantry. And in case Anne didn't have enough to do, she's agreed to take over as President of the Service League, from Jackie Hawkins, who's served as our ever-cheerful, always-willing leader and organizer for many years. Thank you, Jackie, and thank you, Anne!

We also made memorial gifts to the People's Pantry, Hospice Care of the Berkshires, and the Sonsini Center, on behalf of our members Patty Fadding and Helen McCormick, who recently lost

their husbands, and in memory of our own Nell Ezequelle, who died in July.

As we noted in an earlier Newsletter, the pandemic has forced us to cancel this year's Holly Fair. But we do have a stockpile of some goodies, and would love to offer them to you. Anne Fix has made her wonderful **jams and jellies**; see the list below. We are also selling **scrubbies** and **catnip nice**, and will happily bake **pies** for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Let us know what you need, and pick-up or delivery can be arranged.

Grape, low sugar  
Grape jam  
Strawberry jam  
Seedless raspberry jam  
Low sugar seedless raspberry jam  
Semi-seedless raspberry jam  
Orange marmalade

Jams and jellies are each \$7.00 for an 8-ounce jar. We will be happy to provide other prices on request. Contact Margaret Hornick, [mhhornick@gmail.com](mailto:mhhornick@gmail.com), to order.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League

## Mission & Action

As the Christmas season draws near, please plan to engage with us in the Giving Tree program this year! We've reached out to area social services agencies to provide our congregation with the opportunity to give gifts to families in need. We try to provide each person with three gifts (an item of clothing, a household item or a toy, and a book).

Look for full details in a special E News that will come out on or around November 12<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to volunteer to help the M & A Committee to sort and deliver gifts in December, please reach out to Charlotte at 978-618-5767.

And one more thing... remember to give generously to the Peoples Pantry! You can do so by volunteering, donating food items or by sending a check to the church - noting that it is a donation to the pantry. Find out more at <https://www.thepeoplespantrygb.org/>

~ Charlotte Rodgers on behalf of Sarah Conly, Patty Fadding, Nick Pohl, Patty Strauch, Bruce Wilkins and Sara Zanin

## Giving Tree Holiday Gift Program

As the Christmas season comes closer, please plan to engage with Mission & Action in the annual Giving Tree program! We've reached out to area social services agencies to provide our congregation with the opportunity to give gifts to families in need. As in prior years, we try to provide each person with three gifts (an item of clothing, a household item or a toy, and a book).

As you shop, think about grabbing gift cards (CVS, Big Y, Price Chopper) that can be used in South County. **This year you will be able to go on-line and select your family. Full details will be sent in a special E-News email on or around November 12<sup>th</sup>. You can then shop, and drop your wrapped gifts at the church.**

**Questions? Contact Charlotte Rodgers 978-618-5767**



## The Church Garden

The Church Garden prospered this summer under the tender care of Sarah Boyd, Stephanie Bradford, Liz Murray, Anna Smith and Lenore Sundberg. We enriched the soil with compost and other amendments, we planted, we watered, and we brought our harvested produce to CHP (Community Health Program) on Rt. 7 in Great Barrington every Wednesday morning from early July to mid-September. Green beans, cucumbers, Swiss chard, tomatoes, kale, basil, parsley and chives were packaged and displayed on open shelves just outside the CHP offices, where it was available to anyone in need. Following the first hard frost we will do a final garden clean up. A large container filled with pink chrysanthemums, courtesy of Stephanie, will remain, adding color and beauty to the spot well into the fall.



## People's Pantry

The People's Pantry continues to feed about 200 people each week, about twice as many as this time last year. Thank you so much to the church family who provide resources and manpower. Cindy Brown and Nancy Wilcox deliver food to five individuals and families. The Service League members donate needed items each month such as toiletries. Donated funds buy and deliver, through our church paper product source, 200 rolls of TP every week. Diane Piraino manages the website plus volunteering. Margaret Hornick drops in to provide moral support when she sees my car parked outside Saint James Place.

As all food is distributed outdoors, we are working on a plan for winter that keeps the volunteers able to feel their toes and does not endanger our clients.

~ Anne



## STEWARDSHIP PROFILE

by Margaret Hornick

### Cathy Clark and Ed Ivas Like to Fix Things.

The headline for this article could just as easily be "Cub Reporter Lands Dream Assignment".

Picture the setting - a sheltered patio, surrounded by the waning blooms of summer, overlooking the green mowed fields toward an 18th Century post-and-beam barn - in which I had the pleasure of talking to Ed Ivas and Cathy Clark about their decision to enhance their relationship to the

Church through some creative stewardship. I asked them to walk me through their decision-making process, while I drank red zinger tea and ate molasses cookies.

Cathy talked about financial practicalities, and housekeeping.

She noted that while the

pandemic has been financially devastating for many people, for retirees on fixed incomes, it has often been a boon - expenses have declined while incomes have remained constant. And as the stock market has mysteriously continued to remain at record highs, Ed and Cathy addressed the good problem that this presents by deciding to donate appreciated stock to the Church. (As the Church's current moderator, Cathy is intimately familiar with the long, and costly, to-do list of projects, mostly deferred maintenance, that the Church is facing, and that are all unbudgeted.) As for the housekeeping, she said that every Sunday morning, when she tuned in to the live-streamed service, she couldn't help noticing the smudges on the wall behind the lectern when Brent spoke. She knew just the person who could touch up some problem spots on the walls, and quickly brought him in.



All this is part of an ethos that Ed and Cathy share: Look around, see what needs to be done, and do it. This is reflected in their lives in many ways - in the wheelchair-assistance dogs that they have raised over the years, the grandchildren to whom they provide emotional and moral support, the monarch butterflies that Cathy hatches. Ed had been fixing his plane at nearby Walter Koladza Airport, but took time off to meet with me. (Though he was an Army man, the cap he was wearing, emblazoned with the Marines logo, was a show of solidarity with his granddaughter

Delaney, currently stationed in Pensacola and studying aircraft maintenance.) While Cathy focused on the practical, Ed talked about the Church's mission. Though he continues to worship at St. Peter's, where he's been a member for many years, he was effusive in his admiration of

Brent's leadership, and especially pleased with the return of families and young children to the congregation. He spoke of the ways in which Brent's sermons always provide him with guidance he can use in his daily life.

Cathy also pointed out that charitable contributions to the Church are "one stop shopping" for those who want to make such gifts. The Church's mission is broad, varied, and flexible, and through its administrative structure members can address many needs, from homelessness and hunger in Berkshire County to displacement in Syria, by way of a single organization. Cathy and Ed view the Church as an extension of their own home - a place that is in need of constant care and attention, but which repays their investment of time, talent, and treasure with community, support, and spiritual sustenance.





### **Berkshire Waldorf High School 2020**

Stephen Sagarin, Executive Director & Faculty Chair, leading a class in the JE Room. Sharing this room and the sanctuary with this Stockbridge-based school enabled the students to have in-person classes.

### **Sunday School ca. 1955**

The “Beginners Class” in the JE Room. Until the classroom wing was built, this room was crowded on a Sunday!





## Welcoming New Members – November 8

We are delighted to announce that new members will be joining the church on November 8. Membership in the UCC is based on covenant, a holy and mutual promise that binds us as a family. It is an occasion of joy and possibility as we welcome those who are joining, honor their journeys of faith, and their gifts. It is a Sunday where we promise both to support them and promise to allow them to support us. They will be in the Sanctuary as part of our final gathered worship. Make sure that you plan to attend our streamed worship to engage in promise making and welcoming.

### Looking for Something to Do?

As we approach a time of the year where it will be harder to connect to each other, the church leadership has been contemplating ways to bring people together.

*How about a new Small Group?*

Small Groups are an excellent way to be engaged in meaningful relationship. Springing from our Church Vision, our small group program brings people together to connect – connecting folks to their faith, their neighbors, and to God.

We will be offering a small group experience that people greatly enjoyed when we offered it in 2019. It is called “Animate Practices,” an eight-week study of Christian practices including prayer, food, worship, sacraments, money, service and community. Each week offers some history of the practice and then challenges us to put what we learn into practice. Some weeks that means sharing a meal with others, other weeks to consider how much is enough, and still in other weeks exploring how service can also take place in local settings when we simply pay attention to the possibility to engage.

Want to know more? Call Pastor Brent or talk to any of the people who took part: Evelyn Battaglia, Cindy Brown, Cathy Clark, Vicky Cooper, Ivy Cote, Margo Davis, Mary Jane Dunlop, Chuck Gillett, Ron Hanft, Donna Jacobs, Joan Kopperl, Jo Ann Levitt, Liz Murray, Gary Schieneman, Jean Stackhouse, and Patty Strauch. Once we have a list of interested folks we will get started!

*How about being a Pen Pal?*

When the pandemic first started the Deacons, under the leadership of Donna Jacobs, offered the chance for people to connect as “pen pals.” Whether through e-mail, mail, or even phone calls, this practice links folks together to meet new people, to share, and to have the joy of looking forward to hearing from someone. Some of the Pen Pals were intergenerational, others involved neighbors, still others brought people together from long distances. For more information or to be paired, contact Donna.





## Church Family News

Many of us find an antidote to the stress and struggles around us in the beauty of God's creation. These fall bloomers, Anemone Montrose, are flourishing in the garden of Ron Hanft, selected and planted there in 2017 by Jon Geldert.

A fun day of fall activities in the Berkshires with my mom, Marilyn, and sister, Cindy (and her dog, Zoey!) Apples, pies, cider, and donuts at Hilltop Orchards; afternoon at TurnPark Art (with a wonderful take-out lunch from Six Depot); capped off with ice cream and cows at High Lawn Farm!  
- Patty Strauch



**Email Blasts**

Each week the church sends out one or two emails to over 200 addresses. If you no longer receive emails, please let Will know. He'll make sure you get back on the list. New subscribers welcome, too! Just call the office, 413/298-3137



## Church Family News

Anne Hutchinson sent in these two pictures: her great niece Ariana on a sunny Sunday (October 4) after services on the front lawn; Erving enjoying the trampoline in a hail storm just a few days later.

The internet connectivity project has begun! Caleb and Josh of Anteris Solutions, Inc. started to pull wires on October 22. Soon we'll have strong Wi-Fi throughout the building.



**All Church Birthday**

Top: Holland Brown making the cakes, which were then enjoyed by many, including Don Eaton and Holland, Diane Piraino and Ted Randolph, Elizabeth Young, Tim and Nini Martin. Left: Patty Strauch and Bruce Mandel. Right: Beth Rodgers, Susan Booth and friends. Bottom row: Cathy Clark and Ed Ivas, Jack and Cindy Brown.

