

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



April 2022

Pastor: The Rev. Brent Damrow

Administrator: Will Garrison – office@stockbridgeucc.org

Financial Secretary: Ron Hanft – rphanft@yahoo.com

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

www.facebook.com/stockbridgeucc

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday: Bible Study, 1:00 p.m. *Online*

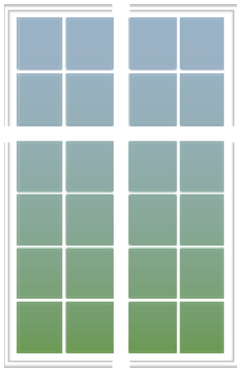
Wednesday: Morning Prayer, 8:00 a.m. *Online*

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

April 2022

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Online worship at stockbridgeucc.org					1 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	2 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
3 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> Stockbridge Fest Choir 1:00-3:00pm	4 Lenten Book Study 12:00-1:30pm	5 Gospel of Luke Study 12:00noon <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> Gospel of Luke Study 7:00pm	6 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Church Council 7:00pm	7 Lenten Book Study 5:30-7:00pm Zoom	8 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am	9 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
10 Palm Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> Stockbridge Fest Choir 1:00-3:00pm	11 Lenten Book Study 12:00-1:30pm Spiritual Direction 2:00pm	12 Gospel of Luke Study 12:00noon <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> Gospel of Luke 7:00pm	13 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Christian Ed 5:00pm Music 7:00pm	14 Lenten Book Study 5:30-7:00pm Zoom Maundy Thursday 7:00pm <i>gathered</i> (Zoom gatherings <i>TBA</i>)	15 Service League 10:00am Good Friday 6:30pm Stations of the Cross, Shrine of Divine Mercy	16 SFC 10:00-12:00 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
17 Intergenerational Easter Service 9:00am Breakfast 9:30am Egg Hunt 10:00am Festival Service 10:30am	18 Office closed Pastor Brent away this week.	19 Gospel of Luke Study 12:00noon <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> Gospel of Luke 7:00pm	20 Newsletter deadline Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm Trustees 5:00pm Deacons 7:30pm	21	22 Service League 10:00am Childrens Concert 6:00pm	23 SFC 10:00-12:00 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
24 Worship 10:00 a.m. <i>Gathered & online</i> Stockbridge Fest Choir 1:00-3:00pm	25	26 <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i>	27 Morning Prayer 8 am Bible Study 1:00pm M & A 5:00pm G & F 6:00pm	28	29 Brent's Sabbath Day Service League 10:00am SFC 4:00-6:00pm	30 <i>Stockbridge Golf Club 8:30am</i> Stockbridge Fest Chorus concert 5:00pm



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

April 2022 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Do you feel it yet? We have spent Lent abiding in hope. Can you see it glimmering on the horizon yet? Has it made its way to abide in your heart, your imagination, or your yearnings? Do you notice a change in your step or your behavior? If not, there is still time, for Lent is a powerful season especially if we don't just observe it on the calendar but in our living. The current pontiff, Pope Francis, observes that "Lent comes providentially to shake us from our lethargy." Is hope building yet?

When I was in Divinity School the then General Minister and President of the UCC, John Thomas, met with all the students affiliated with the UCC. In a long conversation spanning most of the afternoon and into dinner, he focused his wisdom on the blessings and challenges of our non-hierarchical, covenantal way of being church. His charge to us has stuck with me all these years later because he forced me to rethink a word I thought I knew. He charged us all to be pontiffs – a title that has come to be synonymous with and limited to the Pope. The power of the charge was his revelation that the etymology of the word points to a more expansive meaning of "bridge-builder." Ever since then, I have embraced that part of my role as Pastor is to stand in the middle of our world, our community, and our congregation to look it all in the eye and then to get to work building bridges. I want to extend that charge to you too because we desperately need bridge-builders in these moments.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, I pray that we rethink another familiar word – resurrection. While it has become synonymous

with, and unfortunately sometimes limited to what God did to Jesus on that Sunday morning, it needs to be at the heart of what we do as bridge builders every morning. The etymology of that word points to a more expansive meaning of "rising again" or "resurgence." How desperately do we need that right now?

The stories that we have encountered this lethargy-shaking Lent and the ones we will see on full display in the weeks to come remind us of two important things. The first is that we do not undertake our journey alone or for the first time, Christ has already walked this path and he is with us now. The second is that we won't always get it right, but if we stick together, and follow the way of Christ a new far more expansive way life will be found. I don't know exactly "what" is needed right now or "what" the new life will look like. I do know that "how" we engage these moments will make all the difference. If we embrace the love, the service, the strength, the humility, the compassion, and the Spirit of Christ as our way of facing the truth of Easter together as church and in the middle of our world resurgence is not only possible but unavoidable.

I hope you will engage the opportunities that are on the way. I hope you will engage one another and this world. I look forward to resurrection with and through each of you and all of us together.

In sure hope,

Pastor Brent

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 2	Olga Schwede Hannah Alsdorf
April 7	Bronly Boyd Casey Jones Margo Davis
April 8	Virginia Berry
April 11	Tracy Wilson
April 12	Olivia Doerr
April 18	Jack Brown
April 19	Anna Grace Nimmo
April 22	Keith Raftery
April 23	Seth Ivas
April 26	Chet Douglass
April 27	Ivy Cote
April 30	Samuel Connor

Brewing Coffee and Greeting Worshippers

The smell of coffee was in the air of the JE room on the first Sunday of Spring – the first of what we hope are many well-attended fellowship hours ahead in 2022. We have greatly simplified our approach to fellowship hour, and we need the help of the congregation for hosting. Please don't be shy and sign up online by visiting the Fellowship & Community [page](#) on the church website, or by contacting the church office.

The change in weather is also a great time to be outside and be a greeter! G&F would love your help with greeting at the front door of the church. You can also sign up [online](#), or by calling or emailing the church office.



And don't forget to add your **anchor of hope** to the display in the JE Room. You'll find blank anchors in the JE Room.
~ The Board of Growth and Fellowship

Treasurer Tidbits

Welcome to Treasurer Tidbits, a place for fun financial information! I hope these Tidbits will give you some new ideas about how you can help to support our Church. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Did you know you can donate a vehicle you no longer need?

You can donate almost any type of vehicle as a tax-deductible gift to the First Congregational Church of Stockbridge, through a program run by Charitable Adult Rides and Services, Inc (CARS, Inc.) It is quick and easy, and in addition to supporting the work of our Church, it is tax-deductible. Even if your car, boat, truck, or RV hasn't run in years . . . don't worry . . . they will arrange for towing at no charge to you!

Just call 855-500-RIDE (855-500-7433). Or you can see all details and frequently asked questions, and submit an online form at careasy.org/nonprofit/stockbridge.ucc or on our website on the "Give" page.

A Vehicle Donation Representative will schedule a pickup that is convenient for you as well as provide you with confirmation of your donation.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have... and I look forward to sharing the next Treasurer Tidbit with you!

Patty Strauch, Treasurer



Ron Hanft retiring as Financial Secretary

After a decade of serving us all as Financial Secretary, Ron Hanft is retiring. We are full of gratitude and thanksgiving for his skill, dedication, and patience in completing his tasks, and wish him well with the extra hours he can now devote to other interests. Ron will continue to grace us as occasional organist, and as valued volunteer in a number of areas.

Following are excerpts from Ron's gracious and inspiring resignation letter:

... I am so thankful for the community of faith that we all are a part of, and for the message and mission that we carry forward together. My work as Financial Secretary has been a small piece of all that; but it has been a very large piece of my experience with the church -- helping, I hope, to facilitate some of the ways we support each other; and certainly helping me to be more engaged with our members and friends. For all that, I am deeply grateful.

Now, it is time for us to take another step forward. It is time for a fresh face, new energy, skills, and stamina in the position of Financial Secretary. ...

I began as Financial Secretary in 2012 and it seems that moving on now, 10 years later, would make it a good run; and a good time to call it a wrap... Thank you for trusting me and entrusting me with this special opportunity to be engaged with you and our church...

While Ron leaves big shoes to fill, there is no doubt that the position of Financial Secretary will be the perfect fit for someone in our church community, or beyond.

Weekly hours average 5-10 hours, although the work is highly seasonal. Much of the work can be done remotely and hours are flexible. Currently, compensation includes a stipend, although there is a volunteer component. Church membership is not a requirement for the position.

If you feel that this might be your calling and would like to apply, request more information, or can suggest someone for whom this might be a good fit, contact Brent, Will, or me.

Thank you,

Peace,

Cathy Clark, Moderator





Holy Week and Easter 2022

This year we encounter these events through the lens of hope and the reality of our times. We invite your full participation so that together we experience the breadth and depth of the human condition, God's love, and the impossible possibilities offered then and now. Come and see!



Palm Sunday – April 10

Wave palms, sing Hosanna, receive communion, welcome Christ to Bethlehem. Worship at **10:00 a.m.** will be joyful. Brass will ring forth in triumph and usher us into the somber strains of Holy Week.

We are planning to welcome new members at this service and will celebrate communion as we look ahead to the upper room.

We will bring palms or communion to anyone who is unable to come to worship on Sunday – email office@stockbridgeucc.org to request. The service will be live-streamed.



Maundy Thursday – April 14

Gather with Jesus and the disciples in the Upper Room to remember the story of deliverance and to prepare for Christ's passion. The gathered service at **7:00 p.m.** will include communion and Luke's telling of the story.

Coinciding with night fall, the Tenebrae tradition will bring the story to life. As different voices from the congregation read the story, twelve candles (representing the disciples) will be extinguished until the light of Christ burns alone in the dark room. It is a simple but profound experience.

We will also offer a Zoom service of light at various times in the evening- including one designed to be intergenerational. More information regarding these virtual options will be coming soon.



Good Friday – April 15

We will gather at **6:30 p.m.** to walk the Stations of the Cross at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy (Stockbridge). This flat course winds through the scenes from the trial to the tomb. Along the way we will use a beautiful prayer liturgy from Australia that tells the story of each station and offers a prayer. We walk it together as family and community.

While part of the power of this experience comes through the movement and the physical encounter with the stations, we will offer a virtual option for those unable to be present. In case of inclement weather, that option will be expanded into an on-line service.



Easter Sunday – April 17

Christ is Risen! Come to the tomb and see the stone which has been rolled away. Step into the chamber and see the linens folded neatly. Come out and be told that all things are new, that life has defeated death, that the impossible is possible.

This year we are planning a full day to meet the joy of the moment and the diverse needs of our congregation and community. There is much work yet to be done on the details but here is a sketch of the day with planned times. As soon as the details are ironed out, we will communicate to you.

9:00 a.m. Intergenerational Service

This thirty (or so)-minute service will tell the story, evoke the thrill of Easter, engage the gathered, and make a joyful if not raucous noise. Complete with butterflies, alleluia ribbons, a short message, and singing, this will be a less-formal but no-less-deep way to experience Easter.

Easter Continental Breakfast & Egg Hunt

After the Intergenerational Service and before the Traditional “Festival” Service, all are welcome to come and enjoy pastries, fruit, coffee, and juice. The breakfast will begin at **9:30 a.m.** with the Egg Hunt to take place at **10:00 a.m.**

10:30 a.m. Festival Service

Our grand and glorious Easter Worship will feature preludes beginning at 10:15, the sounds of the bell choir, and, hopefully, a vocal choir. Through word, prayer, message, song, and liturgy we will rejoice and remember the story that changes everything.



A crew from Comalli Electric spent much of two weeks installing emergency lighting and exit signs. Running wires in a brick building built in 1824 took a lot of skill! And they succeeded in keeping the emergency lights as low profile as possible.



Capital Campaign

Updates and Spring Musings

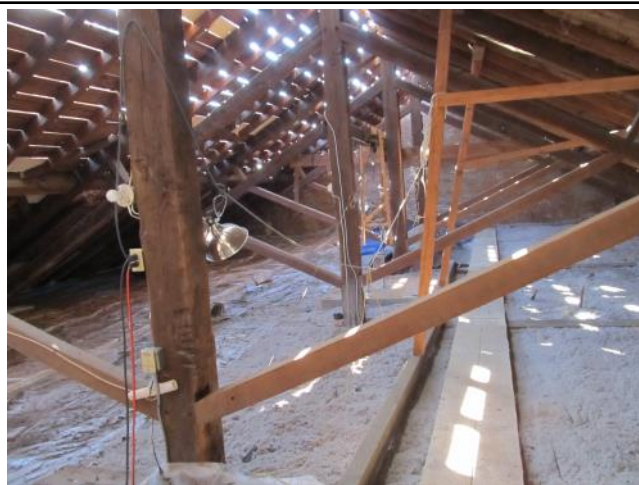
I was just looking at what I wrote for the Capital Campaign last month when I paused to admire the Pieropan watercolor that is the heart of our logo. I got to thinking about those line drawings on the comics page or in Highlights magazine, where you have to find six differences between two versions. Of course, the logo is a beautiful painting with any



cosmetic blemishes artfully concealed in the brushstrokes, but there is one very obvious building feature that would be different in a sister watercolor done today. Can you find it? I'm not talking about the Memorial Garden fence, by the way.

Looking at the logo, I realized how much else has been done on the parts of the church visible in this painting. Quite recently the front steps, the windows, and the shutters have been restored. A while before that, in 2011, the whole sanctuary roof was re-shingled, and, while not visible, a major restoration of the structure holding up that roof was undertaken as part of the same project. Around the same time, the steeple was repainted and a bespoke weathervane created and installed. Go back to the mid '90s and you have our last formal capital campaign, whose target was the shoring up of the balcony and the steeple (as well as interior remodeling that defines the way the sanctuary looks now).

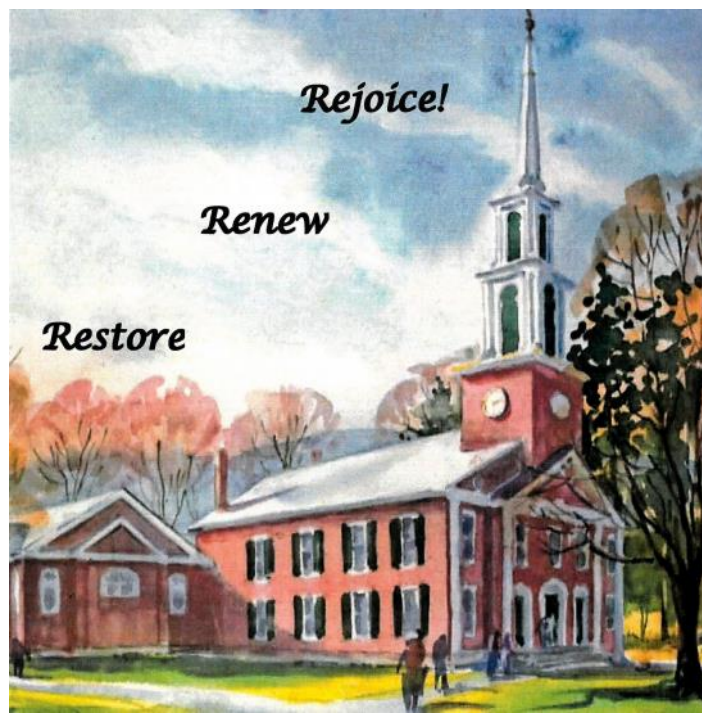
Go look up at the façade of the church at the lower corners of the pediment to see the



unmatched brick and mortar that shows where steel beams were inserted from the outside at the base of the bell tower.

These are all marks of a heritage of loving (and costly) upkeep whose previous chapters reach far into the past. We are writing the present chapter, and I am excited to be a part of it. Aren't you? Some paragraphs will stand for a long time to come, while others will need frequent revision. By God's grace, the picture of this church, both its building and its people, will remain as vibrant and fresh as a spring watercolor for many, many years to come.

Rejoice! ~ Ted Randolph



Meal Train

Mission & Action has teamed up with the Deacons to restart our church's Meal Train system. We've set up a Meal Train program online that will help us to organize meals for people who need them.

If you, or someone you know, has a need for some prepared meals, for example: after injury or surgery, or during illness, or some other crisis, you can just tell Pastor Brent, or our office administrator Will Garrison, or any member of the Deacons or Mission & Action.

We will then reach out to you to find out what you need. You can streamline the Meal Train to be exactly what would work for you, such as: what foods you prefer, and what days you would like meals delivered.

We will then send out an alert to the congregation, and people who would like to volunteer to cook can sign up online. Or if you're not on the computer, just contact the church office by phone and we can sign you up.



And if you would like to get on the list of people who want to help, let the church office know.

Also, if you, or someone you know, needs other kinds of help, we can do that, too, such as: giving rides to doctor appointments, running errands, delivering groceries, picking up prescriptions, even providing occasional child care.

Our congregation's prayers and thoughts are always with you during any difficult time, and we would like to add our hands into the mix if you need them.

First Congregational History

As we inch closer to the 200th anniversary of our third and present building, I wanted to give everyone a sense of what the second building looked like and its location. This map is one of two known maps that shows the location (see "B" - on today's Old Meeting House Rd) of the second meeting house. No pictures of the second

meeting house exist, but historian Electa Jones did give us a good description in her 1854 history of the town:

"The house was to be fifty feet by sixty, the posts twenty-six feet long, and the steeple sixty-two feet high, and erected at the east end of the house, opposite the pulpit. The pews were to be square. The lower part of the house was entered

on three sides, aisles crossing each other at right angles; and another aisle ran quite around the house, within the wall pews. Over the pulpit was a large, roofed projection, like the framework of a canopy, designed to reflect the sound...The house was white without, but except the 'high pew,' and the pulpit, with its sounding board, all were unpainted within. No carpets, it is believed, were ever introduced, and even the comfort of a stove was for thirty years unknown."

~ Joshua Hall



Ukraine

I suspect that most of us feel heartache at the images on the evening news and internet of the malicious destruction of apartment buildings, hospitals, and countless lives in Ukraine. This time of crisis in Ukraine brings strongly to mind and heart the cultural exchange begun over thirty



years ago that our church community participated in with great enthusiasm.

The concept of the citizens' cultural exchange between Cold

War nuclear powers US and USSR was introduced from the pulpit by Rev. David Lockhart. The first Massachusetts delegation traveled to Ukraine via Moscow in the fall of 1988. Funded by "Mission in Action," as it was then known, our church sent delegates and hosted incoming groups from Ukraine until after the fall of the Soviet Union, until about 1995. I've heard from a few of my fellow delegates as we've asked one another, "Are you still in touch with any of our Ukrainian friends? Have you heard anything from them?" Unfortunately, the decades have erased these connections, but the experience of connecting with them lives on in memories.

Here are the delegates from our church who traveled to Ukraine with the Massachusetts-Ukraine Citizens Bridge, one of the state-republic matches in the Bridges for Peace organization:

- 1988 Anne Hutchinson
- 1989 Terry Wise and Suzi Chase

- 1990 Carl Bradford
- 1991 David Lockhart
- 1992 Braxton Nagle
- 1993-4 student delegates Melissa Roy, Jenney Smith, Tim Andenmatten, Nathan Guss

Digging deep at home, I found souvenirs and some notes, but may be missing some names. Many families in our congregation provided lodging, meals, and activities for our Ukrainian guests: the Lockharts, Grays, Boyds, Jeannine Booher, John and Betty Plant, and more. Carl and Stephanie Bradford renamed their house "Hotel Ukrainsky" after their fifth round of hosting.

On my own trip, I felt a distinct increase in warm welcome and generosity when we left a Moscow hotel and traveled by train to Kyiv (then Kiev), then on to Cherkassy (others to Poltava), Odessa, and Lviv (then Lvov). We were offered generous meals in community



centers and homes, in a time of Soviet rationing. It was a time of great hope, as Mikhail Gorbachev spoke of "Glasnost"

and "Perestroika" – an opening of the Soviet Union to the world. I have other memories to share, and I want to hear from our other participants. Please come forward with your stories! Carl and I agree that we should have a Sunday dedicated to sharing these stories.

The Ukrainian flag represents the blue sky above golden wheat fields. Long live Ukraine!

~ Terry Wise



The People's Pantry

Dear Friends,

One of the hats I wear these days is that of board member for The People's Pantry in Great Barrington. As such, it is my honor to thank the congregation for their recent financial donation.

You may know that the First Congregational Church of Stockbridge has had a long, supportive relationship with the Pantry. For many years, and in many locations, the church sent work crews to run the pantry on Thursday mornings. Additionally, through Mission and Action, the congregation had a monthly collection of food and/or money for food.

The onset of the pandemic necessitated a radical change in the operation of the Pantry. We had been supplementing weekly food for a small number of families with canned and dry foods that were bought from the Food Bank or donated. Many southern Berkshire residents are employed in service industries and, with the shutdown of businesses, they lost their paychecks. We suddenly were experiencing a much larger number of shoppers at the same time, meaning that we could no longer safely operate indoors. Through generous community support the Pantry was inundated with financial donations, food donations, new volunteers, and local vendor support. This congregation donated toilet paper so that every shopper could be given

some at each visit.

By the end of last year the Pantry was experiencing 2000 service visits a month (service visits are the number of people in each household by the number of times that household shops each month). Many of these households are multigenerational and/or non English speaking. In addition to dry and canned goods, we now offer meat, milk, cheese, eggs, bread and fresh fruits and vegetables every time we are open. Many local vendors donate food or order for us at a discounted cost. We are now also getting some of our meat, fruit and vegetables from local farmers, which supports their workers.

The pandemic spurred collaboration, across the county, of groups supporting food security. One of these is a collaboration between the Pantry and the Rural Food Health Network, based at Fairview Hospital, that allows the pantry to order food to go home in boxes to needy families in the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Regional School Districts.

If you are interested in regular updates on what the Pantry is up to, you can check out our website thepeoplespantrygb.org/, or follow us on Facebook: The People's Pantry, GB.

Again, many thanks for choosing this way of doing God's work in the world.

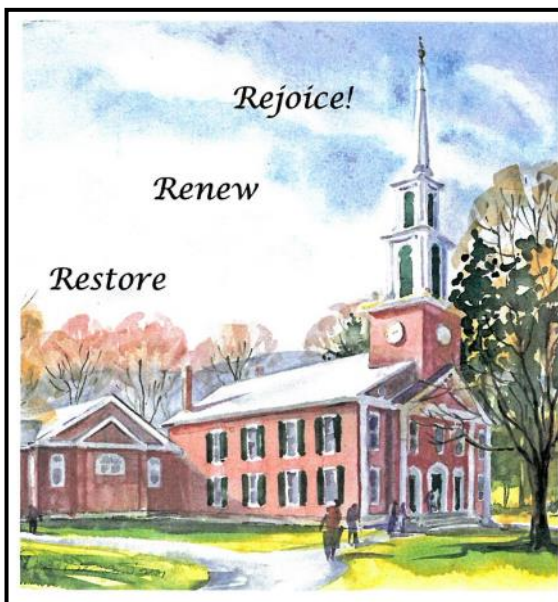
Peace, Diane Piraino

Service League

The excitement was palpable at our first business meeting since the loosening of Covid restrictions this month. If you'd walked into the classroom on that day, you would have thought we were a bunch of third graders whose teacher had left the room for five minutes. It wasn't easy, but our president Anne Hutchinson got us back on track long enough to decide to make two donations in support of Ukraine, of \$1000 each. One went to Americares, which provides refugee assistance, and another to World Central Kitchen, which mobilizes local resources to feed individuals trying to survive in disasters, whether natural or man-made.

That leads into my next point - the support we can give in this situation traces directly back to our fund-raising fairs, and to you and your support. The Holly Fair is scheduled for December 3rd this year, and one or more pop-ups will be announced. Think of us as you plant seed start, divide perennials, or clean out your closets. **We turn your clutter into compassion!** And we couldn't do it without you.

For the Service League, Margaret Hornick



**The First Congregational Church of Stockbridge, UCC
Invites you to celebrate our
Capital Campaign Kickoff!**

Sunday May 1, 2022

11:30am to 1:30pm

Stockbridge Golf Club
6 Main Street Stockbridge, MA

Light bites Lunch Buffet

Please RSVP by April 22, 2022

office@stockbridgeucc.org or

Call the church office at 413-298-3137

SAVE THE DATE !

STOCKBRIDGE FESTIVAL CHORUS

presents its Spring 2022 Concert

Saturday, April 30 at 5 pm

First Congregational Church of Stockbridge

All American Program with works by Copland, Hurd,

Wilberg, Thompson, Parker and Hogan

with premieres by Steve Murray and Anson Olds

Tickets purchased at door. 413-298-3137 for more info