

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**May 2023      Annual Meeting and All-Church Birthday Party - May 21**

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

# May 2023

## The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge

| <b>Sunday</b>   | <b>Monday</b>  | <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>Wednesday</b>   | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>Friday</b>  | <b>Saturday</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Livestream worship at <a href="http://stockbridgeucc.org">stockbridgeucc.org</a>                              | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
|   |  | Brent's Sabbath Day<br><i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i><br><i>AA 8:00pm</i>                                     | Morning Prayer 8 am<br>Acts Small Group 8:30<br>Bible Study 1:00pm<br>Council 7:00pm   | Bell Choir 4:00pm<br>Choir rehearsal 7:00pm                              | Service League 10:30am<br>Acts Small Group 12:00 noon                | Memorial Service 11:00am<br><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>                                |
| 7<br>Worship 10:00 a.m.<br><i>Gathered &amp; online</i><br>Art Show reception 11:30am<br>Music on Main 3:00pm | 8<br><i>Spiritual Path of Aging</i><br>In person 4:30pm; via Zoom at 7:00pm  | 9<br>Brent's Sabbath Day<br><i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i><br><i>AA 8:00pm</i>                                | 10<br>Morning Prayer 8 am<br>Acts Small Group 8:30<br><i>Yoga 9:00am</i><br>Bible Study 1:00pm<br>Church Dinner 5:30pm                   | 11<br>Bell Choir 4:00pm<br>Choir rehearsal 7:00pm                        | 12<br>Service League 10:30am<br>Acts Small Group 12:00 noon          | 13<br>Connections Class 9:00am – 12:30pm<br><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>                |
| 14<br>Worship 10:00 a.m.<br><i>Gathered &amp; online</i>  | 15<br><i>Spiritual Path of Aging</i><br>In person 4:30pm; via Zoom at 7:00pm | 16<br>Brent's Sabbath Day<br><i>Tuesday Club 1:30pm</i><br><i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i><br><i>AA 8:00pm</i> | 17<br>Morning Prayer 8 am<br>Acts Small Group 8:30<br><i>Yoga 9:00am</i><br>Bible Study 1:00pm<br>Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm | 18<br>Bell Choir 4:00pm<br>Choir rehearsal 7:00pm                        | 19<br>Service League 10:30am<br>Acts Small Group 12:00 noon          | 20<br><i>Berkshire Lyric Young Singers concert 3:00</i><br><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i> |
| 21<br>Worship 10:00 a.m.<br><i>Gathered &amp; online</i><br>Annual Meeting and All-Church Birthday Party      | 22<br><i>Spiritual Path of Aging</i><br>In person 4:30pm                     | 23<br>Brent's Sabbath Day<br><i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i><br><i>AA 8:00pm</i>                               | 24<br>Morning Prayer 8 am<br>Acts Small Group 8:30<br><i>Yoga 9:00am</i><br>Bible Study 1:00pm   | 25<br>Newsletter deadline<br>Bell Choir 4:00pm<br>Choir rehearsal 7:00pm | 26<br>Service League 10:30am<br>Acts Small Group 12:00 noon          | 27<br><i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>  |
| 28<br>Worship 10:00 a.m.<br><i>Gathered &amp; online</i>  | 29<br>Memorial Day – office closed   | 30<br>Brent's Sabbath Day<br><i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i><br><i>AA 8:00pm</i>                               | 31<br>Morning Prayer 8 am<br>Acts Small Group 8:30<br><i>Yoga 9:00am</i><br>Bible Study 1:00pm   |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |  |  | <b>Acts Small Groups</b><br>Wednesdays – Zoom<br>Fridays – in person |  |



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## May 2023 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Christ is Risen! What a joy Easter was this year. From the blast of brass to the shower of colors; from calls to worship led wholeheartedly by young ones to a scrumptious brunch served by culinary ones; from the chill of the morning air to the warmth of love everywhere; from the search for colorful eggs to our collective search for answers and questions; and from the choir making a joyful and beautiful noise to our own prayers and confessions lifted in truth and hope it was a day to remember.



We stand on the cusp of a new beginning and even a new life; there is no better time than now. Because for the next eight weeks, we will be in the longest season of the liturgical year - Easter. Biblically the Easter Season features a treasure of the Bible we often forget about – the Book of Acts. It is the story of what the early followers of Jesus did in the wake of his birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. It is a dynamic story of change and possibility. It includes the coming of the Holy Spirit - that same Spirit that can lead to our own change and to finding the possibilities that are before us.

On Easter Sunday there was a palpable energy in this place. My prayer is that it is an Easter energy – one of emergence rather than return. Jesus' resurrection did not launch that earlier movement to return to what had been. The disciples and Jesus did not plan a reunion tour to visit all the places they had been together. Instead, it was a catalyst to propel those same disciples to live into the way

Christ had shown them, to bear witness to his ministry, and to become something new, living, and alive. I pray that the same might be true for us today, and I invite you to join me as we try to follow in their footsteps.

This Easter Season we will offer a small group study on the Book of Acts – it will be a fantastic way to remember the early followers and not just what they did but how. Central to their discernment of a new path was how they forged community – by gathering, eating, praying, and sharing. Our world, our times, and our challenges are different, but I believe that those three things can be the catalyst for our own times as we emerge from the pandemic into a new way of being church and as we look at our own world, times, and challenges humbly, courageously, and faithfully.

One invitation I extend to you is the chance to gather like they did – for a meal and for some prayer. On the second Wednesday of each month, a community supper will be served in the J.E. Room. All are invited to come and simply receive the meal as a gift and a chance for fellowship. While those who genuinely want to help or contribute, can – this project is not about more doing, rather it is about being together, eating together, sharing our lives, and finding joy. More information about these suppers can be found on page \_\_ of this newsletter.

For now, keep reveling in the Easter Spirit – keep finding joy and looking for important questions. Keep remembering what Alleluia looks like and remember that Christ is risen. For now, mark your calendars for May 10th to come and eat together. Blessings to you as we live into the transformative change that Easter is.

In gratitude, Pastor Brent

## HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS

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



## Music News

I was thrilled with the sound and performance of the choir for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter. What fun it was to have the Berkshire Brass with us. We are now busy preparing music for *Choir Sunday* on June 11. It is hard to believe that my first season with the choir is coming to a close. I think if I did not keep so busy, life would not fly by so fast. I actually believe this but I never seem to adjust my life accordingly.

We are still in need of sopranos and tenors who can join us consistently. Let me know if you are interested.

~ Peter Frost, Minister of Music

## Growth & Fellowship

### All Church Birthday Party - Bake a Cake!

May 21, after service, in the JE Room  
The All-Church Birthday Party returns. Join the congregation in this joy-filled fellowship celebration as we parade and eat cake! We need volunteers to bake a cake (or two?). Call Holland or Charlotte, or click [here](#) for more details.

If you have questions or you'd like to help out at Fellowship Hour any week of the year, please reach out to Holland Eaton or Charlotte Rodgers. The signup sheet to volunteer is located on the JE Room bulletin board.



## From the Financial Secretary:

In the past, pledge progress statements have been mailed to you at intervals during the year. These statements have indicated your progress toward meeting your annual stewardship pledge. If you have made an annual pledge or a Capital Campaign pledge, you should receive a pledge status statement by early May.

If you have an email address on file with the church, this statement will be emailed to you. Otherwise, a paper statement will be mailed to you as in the past. However, if you do not wish to have statements emailed to you in the future, please let us know. You may call the church office or email me at [finance@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:finance@stockbridgeucc.org)

Of course, you may contact me at any time during the year to obtain a quick update on your pledge status/ giving record. I'm always happy to help in that way.

~ Marion Pomeroy



## Call to Meeting, May 21

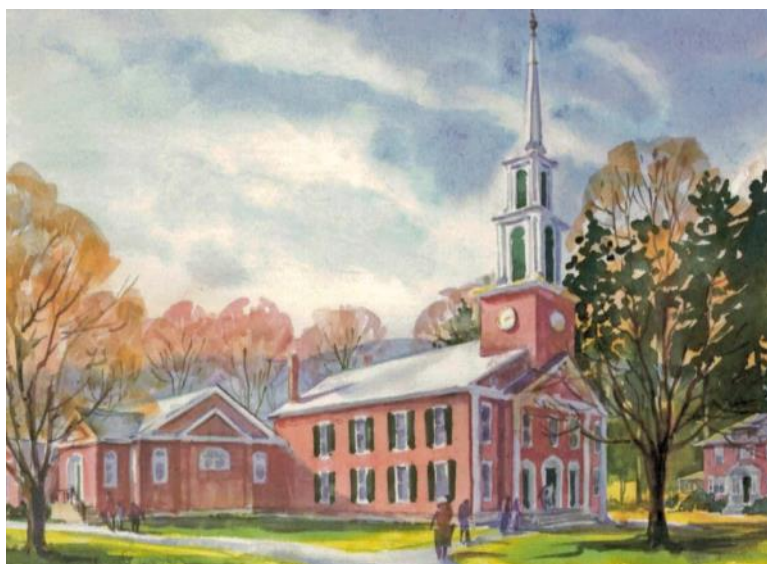
To all members of the First  
Congregational Church of the United  
Church of Christ

Stockbridge, Massachusetts:

In accordance with the By-laws of the  
Church, I hereby call the Annual  
Congregational Meeting for Sunday,  
May 21 at 11:00am, following worship.  
Included will be votes on:

- Articles of Organization
- Revised By-laws
- Nominating slate for Officers, and  
Board and Committee members
- To act upon any other business that may  
legally come before the meeting.

Jeremy Ridenour, Clerk



Watercolor drawing by Elice Pieropan (1931-2013)

## Art News

### *Being Grateful*

The Church's Capital Campaign  
Committee and I plan to hold an Art  
Show and Sale during the month of  
May in the JE Room. The cost of the  
art will be at a 50% - 75% reduction of  
the original price. All the proceeds  
will go to the Church as a gift to God  
and this important building and its  
continued ministry. I consider my  
artistic gifts a gift of joy from God in  
my life and wish to share it with my  
church family.

My hope is that all the art will be sold  
by the end of May to complete the  
financial goal of the annual fundraiser. There  
will be a reception on Sunday May 7 after the  
service, during fellowship hour.

To purchase a piece, please contact Will, the  
church administrator, or myself. The art may be



taken home upon purchase. Checks may be made  
out to the First Congregational Church's Capital  
Campaign. Enjoy the show!

~ Olga Schwede

## From the Service League

Why does it feel like this year is going by even faster than usual? It seems like we just put away the remnants of the Holly Fair and finished bedecking the Easter cross with flowers (see below), and we're already talking about the Summer Fair. I'll get back to that in a moment, but first, some other news: It's graduation and wedding time, and several of us have special family events coming up. Helen and Jane McCormick are traveling to Maine next week for the wedding of their grand-nephew, and I'm off to Kansas where my grand-nephew is also getting married. And Patty Fadding's granddaughter Trudy will be graduating from Williams College,

Jane McCormick's granddaughter Tess from the University of Virginia, and Ann Brink's grandson Noah from St. Louis University with a BS in Nursing. It's all good!

And on the other side of the spectrum of life, we've asked Brent to help us create a memorial service for three Service League members for whom we were unable to have a service at the church - Emma Drew, who died in 2017, Nell Ezequelle, whom we lost in 2020, and Jackie Hawkins, who died just last month. The service will be held on May 6, at 11:00 AM, with a reception to follow in the JE Room. All who wish to join us in remembering these dear friends are invited.



Now, about that Summer Fair - it will be held August 12, both indoors in the JE Room and (weather permitting) outdoors under the tent. We'll have our usual offerings of baked goods, crafts, home-grown vegetables and flowers, and the ever-popular Grandma's Attic. As always, we'll welcome your donations in any of those categories, and, as always, we are grateful for your faithful support.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League

## Pews Get Some TLC



April 24 - One of the painters from Artech Church Restoration removing racks, preparing to repaint the pews.

After much discussion, the Trustees chose Artech of Woodbury, CT to repaint the pews and windowsills. The arrival of the crew was sooner than expected, as we saved \$4,000 by fitting into their schedule. They will work 12-hour days, Monday-Friday, finishing May 5.

There will be a memorial service and worship service in the sanctuary the weekend of April 29-30, as scheduled.



## Cathedral of the Beloved

The Rev. Jenny Gregg will preach about this ministry on Sunday, April 30. It is an ecumenical ministry that holds a worship service and offers a free meal each Sunday afternoon in downtown Pittsfield. This ministry serves the marginalized, isolated, and homeless. It seeks to meet people where they are on the street, and to share God's love by being part of the community.

The meals serve 40-50 people, providing a total of 75-80 meals to include take-away. Churches volunteer to cook and serve a meal. In addition to their meal program, they offer a "Laundry Love" program where participants can do their laundry for free at a local laundromat.

Our congregation is signed up for two meals: July 23 and September 24. Volunteer to help shop, cook and/or serve! There is a sign-up sheet in the JE Room.

As Jesus said in Matthew, chapter 25: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care

of me. Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."



## Connections (New Member) Class

Saturday, May 13, 9:00am – 12:30pm

Have you been visiting this church for a while and thinking about calling it home? Then you are invited to come!

In this class, we will have the chance to talk about the ways that this church 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, me, and lay leaders. My 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 will close our time together with a light luncheon. Please RSVP to Will Garrison (298-3137 ext. 10 or

[office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org)) if you plan to attend. Childcare is available for those who might desire it. ***If you are unable to make the time for the class, please let us know and we will provide another way for you to get the information.***

In the Congregational tradition, joining a church is an event that takes place as part of worship and involves the whole congregation. We are planning to welcome new members into the church on Sunday, May 21.



## News from Mission & Action

### Survey Results: Housing is #1 Priority

A survey requesting our congregation's input for Mission & Action 2023 priorities produced 35 votes for housing, the highest category. The following article by John Bissell, President and CEO, is taken from the Greylock Federal Credit Union quarterly April newsletter, "Money Talks." It addresses the lack of quality housing in our region and describes a coalition forming in Berkshire County to build momentum toward developing more choices for renters and buyers at every price point. Here is the article:

"Housing the Berkshires: A Coalition of Change" formally launched in January 2023, led by Berkshire Housing and inspired by a study called "A Housing Vision for the Berkshires," published by 1Berkshire and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (available at 1Berkshire.com). The Coalition has initially convened more than 120 community leaders to review housing data including:

- Over 50% of all renter households are burdened by the cost of housing in our population centers;
- Local housing stock is older than similar housing stock across Massachusetts;
- The Berkshires have seen minimal new housing construction over the past decade.

As summarized in the "Housing Vision" report, "many residents find it extremely difficult to find affordable, safe and decent housing. This negatively impacts their health and ability to lead stable and productive lives." The Coalition is working to identify potential strategies to address these challenges.

The Coalition's primary vision for housing is for the Berkshires to have "an adequate supply of quality housing to meet the diverse needs of its population." The Coalition includes housing experts as well as partners who are not traditionally involved in housing matters.

It is time for all of us to get involved in finding solutions to our housing crisis. Please visit [berkshirehousing.com](http://berkshirehousing.com) to learn more, and to think about how you can make an impact. You can encourage friends and co-workers to attend the

next Coalition meeting; share the vision report with your landlord; volunteer on a community board or commission; raise your supportive voice at local hearings; and donate time and resources to non-profits focused on housing access and improvement. Together, we can create a powerful voice for change.

### M&A - Recent Expenditures

- \$500 to Church of the Beloved (\$250 for a meal, \$250 for laundry) (Local Needs budget)
- \$500 to One Great Hour of Sharing annual offering (UCC Missions budget)
- \$365 to People's Pantry in Great Barrington (Restricted fund)
- \$500 to UCC for Ethiopia famine/drought relief (\$250 International Needs budget, \$250 Restricted fund)
- \$500 to UCC for Mississippi tornado relief (National Needs budget)
- \$500 to UCC for Ukraine relief (\$250 International Needs budget, \$250 Restricted fund)
- 452.11 for 50 Church World Service hygiene kits (\$242.11 National/International Needs budget, \$210 Restricted fund)

### A Thank-you from Church World Services

Last month, our church assembled and sent 50 hygiene kits to Church World Service, which CWS distributes to disaster victims around our nation and the world, wherever they are needed. Here is a "thank you" from CWS:

Dear Friends: Thank you for your kind donation of Hygiene Kits to CWS. Your compassion has given individuals and families touched by disaster the tangible evidence that they matter. That someone cares. And that they are not alone. Disasters can strike anywhere, anytime. And they can take many forms: tornadoes, earthquakes, civil conflict, drought, hurricanes and more. Caring people like you – who understand the urgency of responding after a disaster – allow people in crisis to receive help when they need it, and hope for the future.

~ With deepest gratitude, Rick Santos,  
President and CEO, Church World Service



## 2023 Appalachian Trail Day of Kindness

Opportunity for Outdoor Ministry of Hospitality for Appalachian Trail hikers!

Begun in 2018 as a shared ministry of two Sheffield churches, First Congregational Church, UCC and Christ Trinity Church (Episcopal and Lutheran), “Trail Magic “is back.

They are inviting volunteers to provide a Day of Kindness this summer, June 19th-August 12th. Supplies are provided, the Sheffield churches will guide set up and clean-up, and bring most of the food. They ask for 4-5 people to sit

in the shade, grill, visit and create a corner of kindness in the world. Hospitality would be provided from 10 am to 3 pm.

Please let Martha Floyd know if you are interested. [mtalisfloyd@gmail.com](mailto:mtalisfloyd@gmail.com)



## Habitat Work Day April 22, 2023

A hearty work crew of 10 gathered at 40 Grove Street in Great Barrington on Saturday, April 22:

Gary Cilley, Colin Custer, Martha Floyd, Diane Fogarty, Jessi Nolet, Nick Pohl, Patrick White, and Terry Wise.

Missing from photo: Louie Forouhar-Graff and Miles Wheat.



It is exciting to see all the inside walls completed and the outside getting painted! The inside crew painted window frames and doors. The outside crew painted trim and cleaned the yard- raking, and picking up rocks and debris. Habitat presented all the workers with a “thank you” gift bag courtesy of Blue Q in honor of Volunteer Appreciation Week.



## An Easter Story

This year's Easter Egg Hunt was a learning experience: the difficulty matching tops and bottoms of eggs! The hours that go into preparing an event that only lasts two minutes! Each child's deliberation and delight choosing a book with stickers or with puzzles!

And then the arrival of a child I've known since birth. The toddler stood rooted in shock: *All the eggs were gone*. Inadvertently delayed, the family had arrived after the Egg Hunt, when the other children were packing up their books and chocolates and stickers and jellybeans. The tears started. I had no idea what to do.

But the children did. First a little boy began to refill eggs from his stash of loot. Then another child followed, and another. Soon there were enough eggs to spread out on the lawn once more. As the latecomer ran to collect them, I was filled with gratitude for the children of our church, who shared with alacrity, determination, and grace. By the end of the Easter Egg Hunt, I had learned again, as Jesus said, that it is children to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs.

~ Elizabeth Young



**Alleluia!**  
... with flowers and  
confetti.

Festival Service: Gwendolyn provided an enthusiastic Call to Worship.  
Holland, Charlotte, and Brian with the Board of Growth & Fellowship's Easter breakfast.



## Wednesday Dinners

Chapter 2 in the Book of Acts reports how the early followers of Jesus spent their time after the coming of the Holy Spirit. It describes a time of awe and wonder. It describes a time of service and sharing. It describes a time when every day people prayed, worshipped, and shared meals “with glad and generous hearts.” It was good and faith expanded in numbers and depth.

Eating together is a wonderfully and radically connective endeavor. It nourishes our bodies and our souls. It connects us to each other and to God from whom all blessings flow. It is both restful and restorative, sensory and stimulating.

Starting this Easter season, you are invited to come and eat together on the Second Wednesday of each month (beginning May 10). You are encouraged to invite others to join you. The food will be ready at 5:30 p.m. and we will generally serve until about 7:30 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 always include a vegetarian and gluten-free option. If you have any other dietary needs, please contact the church office so that we can honor those needs too. We are hoping to offer childcare during this time too.

No one is obligated to bring anything. One of the important things about church is that it is a place where we are also served, so if this can be a gift to you, let it. For those who wish to contribute, help cook, or otherwise be involved that is wonderful and never a requirement. People who want to bring a dish can.

People who wish to donate to help offset costs can. Most importantly, don't worry about obligations; simply come and be part of the meal.

I will generally start cooking around 4:00 in the church kitchen. I always enjoy company when I cook.

In my own life, I have experienced the power of these kinds of meals. At Yale Divinity School I hosted weekly Tuesday Night Dinners open to the whole community and was delighted to see dozens of people pack my tiny apartment to enjoy simple food and good company. Jon and I still revel in memories of the Manse Dinners. Each time I have seen new connections made and joy springing forth.

As we live into these times as followers of Jesus, I hope that these meals can do for us what they did thousands of years ago to those who did the same – provide connection, purpose, love, and hope. If you have any questions or suggestions or would enjoy being part of this ministry of fellowship, don't hesitate to give me a call. I look forward to the chance to gather with you at the table with glad and generous hearts.

In gratitude, Pastor Brent





**MUSIC ON MAIN PRESENTS**

**HUI-MEI LIN**  
&  
**PETER SEIDENBERG**



Performing Works By

**BEETHOVEN, BOULANGER, BRITTEN, & CHOPIN**

**HUI-MEI LIN, PIANIST**  
made her New York solo debut at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall as the winner of the Artists International Competition. She was described by the New York Times as "an excellent pianist throughout" and the Taiwan News as "a sensitive and powerful pianist."

**PETER SEIDENBERG, CELLIST**  
"Totally enchanting, inspired performances, brimming with natural, spontaneous musicianship" raved Gramophone Magazine. Mr. Seidenberg appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony, Century Orchestra of Osaka, New American Chamber Orchestra, De Paul Chamber Orchestra, and New York Chamber Soloists.

**3 PM Sunday**  
**May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STOCKBRIDGE**  
4 Main St. Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
413-298-3137

A benefit concert for the  
**MUSICIANS CONCERT FUND**  
Suggested donation \$30

**Music on Main is back!** Come to the church on May 7 to enjoy a concert featuring cellist Peter Seidenberg and pianist Hui-Mei Lin (aka Fimi) performing works by Boulanger, Beethoven, Britten and Chopin. This concert benefits the Musicians Concert Fund in order to hire musicians for concerts in the future. The admission, at the door, is a \$30 suggested donation. But please, donate what you can, it's not a set ticket price.

About the artists:

**Peter Seidenberg**, cellist-- "Totally enchanting, inspired performances, brimming with natural, spontaneous musicianship", raves Gramophone Magazine about cellist Peter Seidenberg. Mr. Seidenberg has played in major halls throughout the US, Europe, and Asia. He made his solo debut with the Chicago Symphony, and has since

appeared as soloist with many orchestras including Century Orchestra of Osaka, New American Chamber Orchestra, De Paul Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Soloists, and the Eastman-Rochester Philharmonic.

**Hui-Mei Lin**, pianist, is a native of Taiwan. She made her New York solo debut at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall as the winner of the Artists International Competition. She was described by the New York Times as "an excellent pianist throughout" and the Taiwan News as "a sensitive and powerful pianist." Concert tours have taken her to Italy, France, Canada, Taiwan, and various cities throughout the United States. Her media broadcast includes solo performances at PBS (Maryland), WQXR (New York City), Taiwan Television and China Broadcasting Company.