

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**September 2023**

***Rally Sunday - September 10***

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

# September 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 Service League 10:30am	2 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
3 Outdoor Worship 10:00 am Gathered & online	4 <b>Labor Day</b> Office closed All-church Tag Sale 9:00-12:00	5 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	6 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm Council 7:00pm	7 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	8 Service League 10:30am	9 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
10 Rally Sunday Worship 10:00am Gathered & online	11	12 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	13 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Bible Study 1:00pm Church supper 5:30pm	14 Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	15 Service League 10:30am	16 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
17 Worship 10:00am Gathered & online Storyteller meeting 11:30am	18	19 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	20 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study 1:00pm Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	21 Newsletter deadline Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	22 Service League 10:30am	23 Cathedral of the Beloved prep 9:00-1:00 <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
24 "Wholehearted Faith" in-person 8:30am Worship 10:00am Story-mapping lecture 11:30am Cathedral of the Beloved served 12:00 Pittsfield	25 "Wholehearted Faith" hybrid 9:00am	26 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	27 Morning Prayer 8 am <i>Yoga 9:00am</i> Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study 1:00pm Discovering the Bible 5:45pm	28 "Wholehearted Faith" online 4:00pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	29 Service League 10:30am	30 <i>Wedding 4:00pm</i> <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i> Soprano Riot Concert 7:30pm



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## September 2023 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

Wow – what a full summer. I hope that you have enjoyed this blessing and the myriad of opportunities to find truth, beauty, peace, and hope (including all we have shared here at #4 Main Street). I certainly have – it has been rich and good.

I also have to say that I am excited about the new program year that is due to arrive on our doorstep shortly starting with Rally Day on September 10. There is a way of coming back together that feels strengthening. There is an energy in all of the programs that feels rejuvenating. There is a sense of a new beginning that never fails to arrive with new hope too.

This year, though, I am particularly excited. This year, we will be jumping into the story of the Bible and experience its sweep from creation to the early days of the church.

For the last ten years, we have followed the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) to get the readings for worship on Sunday. The RCL is wonderful – each week assigning four different readings from different parts of the Bible. The RCL does not hold back from challenging readings and it often groups readings together from week to week to explore particular stories more deeply. Over the course of the three years, the RCL helps to ensure that we have the chance to explore the breadth of the stories, theology, and history of our faith.

This year we will use the Narrative Lectionary. It provides a single reading for each week. It lays out the year to bring us into the sweep of the larger story. From the story of Creation on Rally Sunday we will go through Hebrew Scripture in the Fall joining our own lives to the formation and history of the people of faith. In Advent we will hear the prophetic call heralding the arrival of the Messiah. In Epiphany we see that revelation through the lens of the stories of Christ leading naturally through

Lent and Easter at which point we join the story of the early days of the church. Over the course of this one year, we are swept through this story that we might not just learn it but find our own place in it.

In addition to the sweep of the story there are other benefits. The same story we are exploring in the Sanctuary will be the one brought to life with our children in the classroom. The ability to plan ahead for Music and special events will be much easier and more effective as we already know every reading for the year. We will in the coming year, choose a reading on some Sundays to fit our particular needs or program (like we do now), but all facets of church – worship, service, music, learning, fellowship, and even those who guide our buildings and grounds will know where we are heading and can link in as desired and helpful.

This approach will also beautifully dovetail with something else I am thrilled about – a comprehensive year-long Bible study. Nothing is quite like reading the Bible in its narrative arc and doing so with other people. We will be using a new curriculum this year through Kerygma that does go from Genesis to Revelation utilizing key passages (and hence manageable reading loads) while still conveying the fullness of the story. These full studies are pure magic in how they connect each of us to the Bible and each other. They are less about becoming experts and more about seeing the connections, engaging the story, and discovering new things. More about the two different ways I hope to lead such an undertaking can be found on page 5.

I hope you have enjoyed the summer – I hope you are as excited as I am about the possibilities here at #4 Main Street to dive into the amazing story of our faith together. Come and see!

*Pastor Brent*

## HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

September 1 Nick Pohl  
Mary Hart  
September 2 Margot Wise  
Allison Tracy  
September 5 Cindy Brown  
Sara Zanin  
September 7 Les Freeman III  
David Schneider  
September 10 John Frelinghuysen  
September 11 Mark Bachman  
September 15 Bob Doerr  
September 20 Brian Hyatt  
September 22 Adrianna Duhon Rix  
September 23 Patty Fadding  
September 24 Barbara Kershner  
September 25 Shirley Blanchard  
September 27 Linda Frelinghuysen  
John McKinstry  
Mishel Kulibaba-Epstein  
September 28 Tracy Schneyer

Inspired by a similar installation on a visit to Charleston, SC, Holland Brown brought back the idea for a **prayer garden** here at the church. This colorful project has engaged the community and is bringing meaning and beauty to Main Street. Thank you to Holland and Don for the idea and for making it happen. Come and see!



p.s. If you have ideas to share or if you have seen something at another church that inspire you - give us a call!

## Uncle Sam...Peter wants YOU to join us.... in the choir!

It is time to sing again! The choir will be welcomed back into worship on September 10.

We are seriously in need of sopranos and tenors to balance our group. With one of our altos on leave this year, we could use another alto or two as well.

We rehearse from 7-8:30 on Thursdays starting on September 7.

Coming out of Covid we began singing only on the 1st and 3rd (with some exceptions) Sundays of the month. I am hoping to field enough singers on the off Sundays to sing and lead us from the loft during our hymnody. We could really use another four or five singers to be able to pull this off. The reason being is that many of us in the choir are able to travel pretty regularly. I find this true

most often with choirs today.

If you love to sing and are interested in joining us, please send me an email at [peterfrostmusic@gmail.com](mailto:peterfrostmusic@gmail.com).

I hope to see you in September.

Best regards, Peter

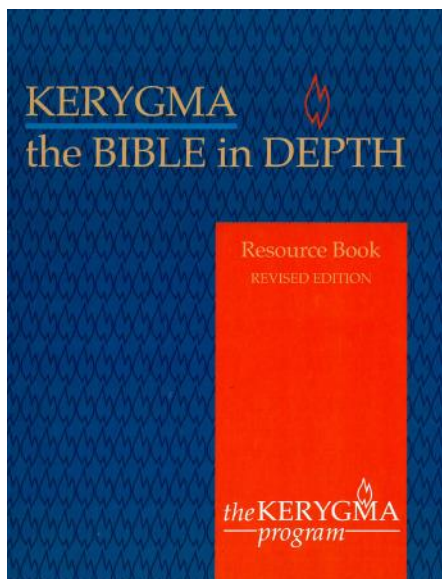




## Comprehensive Bible Study ~ led by Pastor Brent

There is simply nothing quite like reading and considering the full Bible together. There is wonder in discovering new details or meaning in stories we thought we knew so well. There are connections between the stories that are suddenly illuminated either in ways we hadn't noticed or because our life situation now helps us to see them. There is the gift of struggling with challenging passages – even those that have caused hurt or pain. There is the beauty of hearing others' perspectives that help shape our own. There is the whole arc of it that puts the life and teachings of Jesus in context. There is, of course, the kind of relationships that develop when you spend intentional and thoughtful time with others pursuing something good.

This year, I am delighted to lead a new curriculum “**Kerygma: Discovering the Bible (A New Generation)**.” There are thirty lessons to this study, and it is laid out to take us from Genesis to Revelation. Thus far, I have found the study guide to be thoughtful and thought provoking. It provides enough information to stimulate good exploration without bogging the user down in too much detail. The reading load usually includes about seven fairly short readings easily spread out through the week (ideal) or handled more intensely if needed. There are good questions and activities that not only get at what the material is all about, but why it matters for



us today. There is a copy of the Curriculum in the small conference room on the table. Feel free to take a look (and please leave it for others to do the same).

Beyond the curriculum, participants are encouraged to have a study Bible for their use. I am happy to help you pick one out that suits you. While we invite people to cover the costs of the workbook (\$35) and Bible (if needed), the church never wants study to be a financial burden, so it is never a requirement.

I plan to offer this study in two different ways:

**Hybrid Mid-Day – Begins Wednesday, September 20**, planned for Wednesdays 11:45am until 1:00pm (*alternatively, it could be done on another weekday*)

Gathered in person and on-line, this approach will tackle one section weekly. We will engage the lesson while also building relationships with each other.

**Evening In Person-In Depth – Begins Wednesday, September 27**, planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month 5:45-7:45

This approach will tackle two sections every other week. Given the length and the in-person dimension, we will allow the conversation to lead us deeply into those places of mutual interest. On the second Wednesdays we will start by grabbing some food at the community supper; on fourth Wednesdays we will figure out whether and how to add some food into our gathering.

Given the nature of this study, it is important for people to make a commitment to being present when possible. Obviously, most people will not be able attend all the sessions, but we hope this will be a priority for the people who sign up. Please contact Pastor Brent with any questions, fears, hopes, or dilemmas.

## From the Service League

Well, we pulled off another Summer Fair on August 12, with a LOT of help from our friends, listed here in no particular order (and please let me know if I've forgotten anyone!): Jay and Terry Wise, Christine Rasmussen, Elizabeth Young, Elizabeth Bellows, Ted Randolph, David Andregg, Chad McCormick, Anna Smith, Hope Ponsart, Corinne Burke, Charlotte Rogers, Mark Fadding, Gene Kalish, Cindy Brown, Will Garrison, Vicky Cooper, Olga Schwede, Diane Fogarty, Maria Carr, and electronic payment wizard Patty Strauch. Thanks to all of you for helping to arrange flowers, serve shoppers, set up and clean up, and to the many who donated baked goods, treasures for Grandma's Attic, flowers and vegetables - this list is so much longer than our membership list that it is very obvious that we couldn't do this without you! We are so grateful for your support and participation. We hope you also had some fun, we did! And we netted about \$1200, according to our Treasurer, Anne Fix, and now we have the pleasure of distributing that to some of our favorite causes. Next up: The Holly Fair, December 2.

We missed our members Jane and Helen McCormick, who were attending the wedding of their great-nephew Christopher in Woodstock, Vermont. Even Service League Fairs bow to



wonderful life events and family gatherings.

They also yield to medical emergencies, and our President, Anne Hutchinson, was temporarily sidelined by acute appendicitis necessitating surgery. It doesn't seem fair, after she just got rid of that ankle boot. Could there be a biblical analogy here? Luckily, VP Nancy Wilcox kept us organized in Anne's absence.

By the time you read this, Labor Day will be bearing down on us and we will be asking ourselves and each other how Summer could possibly go by so quickly. I'll let you know if I figure that out, and meanwhile, enjoy the last lovely days.

~ Margaret Hornick, for the Service League



Members of the Justice Task Force led a field trip to the Mission House on August 20 to view the Mohican history exhibit *Our Lands, Our Home, Our Heart*.

The Stockbridge Library will host artwork by four Stockbridge-Munsee artists from Wisconsin beginning Sept 7. The exhibit will include beadwork by Reva Fuhrman, graphic design by Jesse Martin, and landscape paintings by Rebecca Burr. Painting reproductions and notecards by Terri O'Connor will be available.





## A Call to Prayer

This season as we start the new church program year, the **Deacons** have been considering what we hope to accomplish. We have been talking about our experience of prayer, both private and collective, and we decided that this work could be useful for the congregation as a whole. When we have prayer time during our worship service, does it work? Does it work for you?

How can we deepen our engagement in communal prayer? We want to take this moment to ask you: how does prayer time feel for you? Are there reasons you don't want to lift up a prayer? What could change that would make that easier for you? And when you do lift up a prayer, do you feel your prayer is received by the congregation? Please take the time to engage one of us in conversation about this, or email any one of us with your thoughts. We are thinking, discussing, and, yes, praying on this topic and we could use your help.

Board of Deacons: Miles Wheat (chair); Sarah Conly, Michael Deegan, Ken Ward, Drea Pecor, David Anderegg

## Become a Storyteller!

This year Christian Education invites you to join in teaching our children by becoming a storyteller. We want our adults to get to know

our kids and our kids to get to know our adults. We want our kids to learn about the stories of our faith even as they help us learn too.

On Sundays during part of worship, the kids will explore the same story we are using in worship. We are looking for volunteers to read that story to them and then help bring the story to life. CE will equip volunteers with the story, some possible learning goals, and a few options regarding activities that you could use. Pastor Brent will provide a simple reference sheet about the context and characters of the story. Volunteers can look at the upcoming stories and pick the date/story that works best for them.

You do not need to be a Biblical expert, instead we want to attract a broad cross-section of the church so that our kids don't just get to know the Bible, but their church family.

On Sunday, September 17th after worship, you are invited to come to the classrooms to learn more. We will share examples from the first two weeks and look at the upcoming calendar. There is no obligation if you come. You could choose a single Sunday to be storyteller or get involved more regularly. If you are interested but can't come on the 17th, please let Will Garrison know in the church office and someone will reach out to you.

Questions? Call Kim Ruffing or Pastor Brent





## News from Mission & Action

We had a beautiful sunny Berkshire day on July 22, when we served over 100 meals to the guests on the lawn of St Joseph’s Church in Pittsfield. A touching worship service began at 1:00 before the meal.

We resumed the tradition of serving a meal to Cathedral of the Beloved, started by Hal and Ann Brink’s Mission & Action Board prior to the pandemic.

The Saturday kitchen crew, Carl & Stephanie Bradford, Rick & Martha Floyd, Cindy Brown and Ronnie Cunningham, baked over 400 chicken drumsticks, bagged individual servings of cornbread and cut and bagged watermelon slices!

Sunday morning began with the heating of baked beans in 3 large crockpots. At 12, the serving crew, Carl & Stephanie Bradford, Jack & Cindy Brown, Beth & Gary Cilley, and Rick & Martha Floyd, transported chicken drumsticks, baked beans, cornbread, coleslaw, bottled water, ice and coffee to Pittsfield.

The guests were very appreciative of the meal and several comments of “best meal ever” were heard! It was the largest number of meals COTB has served.

**September 24th we have another opportunity to cook and serve to feed our Pittsfield brothers and sisters. Please sign up in the JE room to help cook on Saturday, the 23rd and/or serve on Sunday, the 24th.**

## MISSION & ACTION RECENT EXPENDITURES

- \$500 to UCC for Hawaii fire relief (National Needs).
- \$500 to Chef Andre, World Central Kitchen, for Ukraine food relief (International Needs).
- \$500 to UCC’s annual offering, Our Church’s Wider Mission (National/International Needs).



## “Wholehearted Faith” Book Study

Last year’s small group studies of Rachel Held Evans book “Inspired” led to many rich discussions and new perspectives on stories in the Bible. Her writing style is very accessible and she shares reflections on her faith with honesty, humor and humility. She died tragically at the early age of 37. The book “Wholehearted Faith” was completed by her colleague Jeff Chu and was published posthumously.

This year, the Christian Education Committee invites you to join us as we read Evans’ final book, *Wholehearted Faith*. We are offering three to four small group sessions that will meet monthly beginning in late September and ending in April. Our hope is that meeting monthly will not only afford the opportunity for wonderful discussions but also that it will give us time for reflection and action as we strive to live in Wholehearted Faith. Each meeting will be an hour and a half.

We plan to offer this study in three different ways, all beginning in late September:

- Sunday Morning In-Person, starts Sept 24 (not on Choir Sundays) – 8:30 – 9:50am
- Morning Hybrid – Mondays 9:00-10:30am, starts Sept 25. Gathered in person and on-line.
- Afternoon On-line - Thursdays 4:00-5:30pm, starts September 28.

Substitute days/times can be chosen at first meetings by the group.

Reach out to Will Garrison to sign up for a section. Questions - please contact Kim Ruffing.

While we invite people to cover the costs of the book (\$18), the church never wants study to be a financial burden, so it is never a requirement.



## The Church Picnic, 2023

### Long Story Short:

"The weather cooperated by providing sunshine for the exact hours we were there! It was wonderful to be able to bring my visiting daughters and grandchildren to enjoy the water and picnic. Big thanks to the Schneyer family."  
~Terry Wise

### Longer Story:

This year's Church Picnic was a little different. First, there were soooo many youngsters there, our hosts said it might be a record. Here's a rundown of all attendees: Jay and Terry's daughters, Margot and Betsy (plus her husband David), each brought along their two kids. Diane and I were there with Diane's niece, her husband, and their two boys. Anna and Adrianna were there. Peter and Hui-Mei, Jack and Cindy, Patricia x 3 (= Strauch, Fadding, and Martin, aka Niti), Corinne, Vicky, and Linda Colvin, brought our total number to twenty-eight. We missed some of our "regulars," possibly because of the date change. The date change broke new ground by pushing the picnic into the month of August for the first time. And the final first: our hosts provided a golf cart to make it easier to get to the changing area and bathroom which they make available to us in their home. As always, thanks to Kay and Neil Holden, and Tracy Schneyer, (see photo of Tracy and Kay, above) for accommodating us in so many ways, with cart and condiments, beverages and ice, and of course, their idyllic lake.

Now back to weather, please! This was our rain date, and I was hopeful about forecast, even though an aviator I know did remind me after church that "anything was still possible." Hmm... Indeed, after church, just before the picnic was to start, the weather still felt iffy. With substantial cloud

cover and a bit of a breeze, it was okay, but not entirely inviting or reassuring.

As we arrived at Lake Mohawk, most of us were looking longingly at the few small

patches of blue showing between the clouds. My daughter and son-in-law (mentioned in last month's newsletter, and both seasoned outdoor educators) have witnessed countless campers similarly eyeing such blue patches. In their profession, they call them "sucker holes."

Dosed with such realistic viewpoints, I was very happy and relieved when, not long after we got to the lake, God answered our unspoken prayers by opening up the Biggest. Sucker. Hole. Ever. Sunshine reigned for well over an hour, and then, just as Terry said, right as people started to leave the clouds closed in quickly, as if the whole scene hadn't happened.

Ted Randolph, Cindy Brown, & Patty Fadding  
Ad hoc Church Picnic Instigators



## From the Justice Task Force

### Save the Date!

Sunday September 24 at 11:30 am

We are delighted to announce that Maggie Bennett, who is visiting her homeland from the Stockbridge Munsee Community in Wisconsin, will be speaking with us after church on September 24. Maggie uses storymapping, a technique which bridges geographic information systems, photography, history, and archaeology, to tell the story of the travels of the Stockbridge-Munsee people. Please join us in welcoming her as we learn more about the descendants of the first members of this church.

Because of Maggie's visit, we will be rescheduling Josh Hall's history presentation (originally scheduled for September 17) to a date later this fall. Watch for details about the new date.



We are continuing our work towards a land acknowledgment and appropriate accompanying action. Please check the Justice page on the church website for important resources about the Stockbridge-Munsee Community and the land acknowledgment process.



The Stockbridge-Munsee Community, the indigenous peoples of the Berkshires, opened an exhibit at the Mission House in Stockbridge, MA this spring. This exhibit is titled "Our Lands, Our Home, Our Heart / Nda'keenã , Weekeyaak , Nda'anã" and goes over Mohican history and culture, particularly in the town of Stockbridge and their many travels to their current reservation lands in Wisconsin.

As part of this exhibit, there is a five-person speaker series that will begin on September 23

Like our ancestors,  
we light the flame  
within, to illuminate  
pathways for all to see.



Endurance. Strength. Hope.



and ends on November 18. Registration is open. For the series, co-sponsored by The Trustees of Reservations, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, and The Clark Art Institute. This series brings members of the Tribe out to Stockbridge, MA to speak on issues relevant to the Mohican community of today. This is a free event, but space is limited, so register now to reserve your spot!" The link to the registration page is [mohican.com/community-led-workshop-](http://mohican.com/community-led-workshop-)

### ***Berkshire Beauty Art Show***

All church artists are invited to show art this September using any media: graphite, colored pencil, watercolor, oil, acrylic, multimedia, photography, small sculptures, etc. Please bring your artwork to church and place it on the shelves in the JE Room now until the end of September. Be sure to label your creation with your name, a title, media used, and contact information. Artists who wish to discuss putting their art on sale should contact me or Will Garrison in the church office.

Questions? Call me at 413/644-9846 or Will Garrison at 413/298-3137.

With Love & Blessings, Olga Schwede





## SOPRANOS RIOT FOR CHURCH

On Saturday, September 30 at 7:30 pm, there will be a Soprano Riot in our sanctuary! Our former soprano section leader, Nellie Rustick and our current soprano section leader, Amy Shake, will team up with pianist David Anderegg to present a concert of new and improved music for one and two sopranos.

Repertoire to be performed includes a selection of Aaron Copland settings of texts by Emily Dickinson, Lori Leitman’s settings of texts by Margaret Atwood, and songs by Florence Price using poems of Langston Hughes. There will also be two world premieres: the complete “Songs from a Bad Year” and “Two Vocalises for Enrique” by David Anderegg.

The suggested donation for this riot is \$20 (as always, church members may attend for a reduced donation or free if necessary). The proceeds from the riot will support all the programs of the church.

## Growth and Fellowship

We are a dedicated bunch, but there are only four of us, so don’t be surprised if we ask for a little help along the way. Here’s what we’ve got cooking (on the front burner):

**Rally Day-** G&F is providing a light lunch, with beverages and dessert. This will happen on the front lawn, weather permitting, right after church. That’s where the coffee will be also. All are encouraged to come and spend some time eating, socializing, and even playing games (organized by the CE Board). Tables and chairs will be set up, but feel free to bring your own chairs or picnic blankets.

**Name Tags** - Name tags are an important part of our extravagant welcome. At the moment, however, name tags are on vacation, as we

ponder the shortcomings of previous systems. Name tags can be messy to store. They get lost and have to be replaced. Newcomers need an easy way to quickly receive one. One week you enter through the JE Room, and another week you enter through the Narthex (probably because you noticed the smiling Greeter out front!). But where should your name tag be kept? In the JE ROOM? The Narthex?

These are some of the conundrums we face as we re-envision the storage and management of Name Tags. We might not be done by Rally Day, in which case you’ll probably be asked to write your name on a stick-on tag. But we are striving to get this right—or as right as possible—as soon as possible. Thanks for your patience.

Ted Randolph for G & F



## Wednesday Dinners Continue

Eating together nourishes our bodies and our souls. All are welcome to dinner on **Sept 13** at the church. The food will be ready at 5:30 p.m. and served until 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 include a vegetarian and gluten-free option. No one is obligated to bring anything. Those who wish to contribute, help cook, or bring a dish can. In gratitude, Pastor Brent

## SAVE THE DATE!

Please plan to be in worship on Sunday, Oct 1 as we bless and dedicate the new universal access entrance ramp that leads to the JE Room! A special service is being planned, we will celebrate World Wide Communion and enjoy fellowship after a brief ceremony. Look for further communications and details in September.

Don't miss it!



As part of our Fundraising Goal for the year, the Church will hold a Tag Sale Labor Day morning here in the church parking lot. We invite your participation in several ways, including:

- We still need volunteers for the day - contact Patty Strauch or the church office.
- Items can be donated for the church's table through Sunday, September 3.
- You can still register to host your own table; contact the church office.



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Stockbridge, Massachusetts

4 Main Street, Stockbridge, Ma 01262

**Labor day – Sept. 4**

**TAG SALE**

**9:00 am – 12:00 Noon**

**Multiple Family Tables  
plus an  
All-Church Table!**

A wide range of household goods,  
children's items, tools, etc., many useful things  
– in good condition !

**RAIN or SHINE (Rain = Indoors)  
Plentiful Parking – Restrooms  
Accessible Bldg. Entrance**