

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

PO Box 825 Stockbridge MA 01262



**November 2023**

***Consecration Sunday - November 12***

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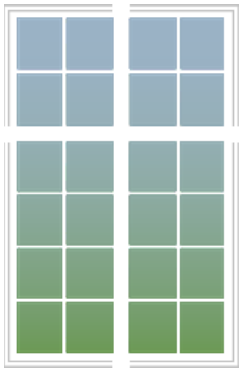
(413) 298-3137 | [www.stockbridgeucc.org](http://www.stockbridgeucc.org)

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

# November 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>
			1 Morning Prayer 8 am Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Council 7:00pm	2 Bell choir 4:30pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	3 Service League 10:30am Concert 7:30pm	4 Music on Main 3:00pm <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
5 Worship 10:00am Gathered & online Youth Group – Corn Maze 11:30am SFC rehearsal 1:00pm	6 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	7 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	8 Morning Prayer 8 am Discovering 11:45am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Walking 5:00pm Church supper 5:30pm Discovering 5:45pm	9 Bell choir 4:30pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	10 Service League 10:30am	11 <i>Stockbridge Golf Club in Classroom 8:30am</i>  <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
12 Worship 10:00am <b>Consecration Sunday</b> Gathered & online SFC rehearsal 1:00pm Berkshire Assn. Annual Meeting	13	14 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Tuesday Club 1:45pm</i> <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	15 Morning Prayer 8 am Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Meetings of the Boards 5:00pm – 9:00pm	16 Bell choir 4:30pm Choir rehearsal 7:00pm	17 Service League 10:30am Newsletter deadline	18 <i>Stockbridge Golf Club in Classroom 8:30am</i>  <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
19 Worship 10:00am Gathered & online SFC rehearsal 1:00pm	20	21 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	22 Morning Prayer 8 am Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study Zoom 1:00	23 <b>Thanksgiving Day</b> Worship service 10:30am Thanksgiving dinner to follow	24	25 <i>Stockbridge Golf Club in JE Room 8:30am</i>  <i>Al-Anon 5:00pm</i>
26 <b>Advent begins</b> Worship 10:00am Gathered & online SFC rehearsal 1:00pm	27 "Wholehearted Faith" hybrid 9:00am	28 Brent's Sabbath Day <i>Al-Anon 7:00pm</i> <i>AA 8:00pm</i>	29 Morning Prayer 8 am Discovering the Bible 11:45am Bible Study Zoom 1:00 Discovering 5:45pm	30 Holly Fair prep "Wholehearted Faith" online 4:00pm	<b>Livestream worship at stockbridgeucc.org</b>	<i>Yoga is offered each Wednesday morning at 9:00am</i>



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

## November 2023 Newsletter

Dear Church Family,

November is a special month. It is a month that begins with memory and ends with preparation. It is a month that includes both harvest and Thanksgiving. It is a month when seasons change and while life slows down it also moves toward. It is a month perfect for being church.

We begin with All Saints Sunday – a day to remember both our own loved ones who have gone before AND those from this church family who maybe we never met, but on whose shoulders we stand. It is a day of looking back in grief and gratitude AND a day to look forward remembering that our lives in this place and on this planet are also not limitless and so a chance to remember what matters, what we have learned from those we honor, and how we want to spend the rest of our days not and never in fear but in faith.

We end the month with the start of Advent – the beginning of our waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ – both as we look back to the stable AND as we look forward to Christ's coming at the culmination of all of God's plans and creating. This year in the Narrative Lectionary we are gifted with the timeless words of prophets who both foretell that event in Bethlehem AND call us to reflect on our own way of living. It is a time both to wait for the indwelling of Christ AND to recall the truth of his presence in this moment.

As farmers across the Berkshires and the nation "raise the song of harvest home" and as "all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin," we too look back at the liturgical year that has been AND give thanks for the bounty of blessings



we have found in our living. We will engage our stewardship process in November both as an act of gratitude for what has been AND as a way of looking forward to support the ministries, programs, buildings, and staff that help us live into our purpose of being God's love.

In November one Liturgical Year comes to a close so that another may start. In November we offer a special worship service AND a Thanksgiving mid-day dinner on Thanksgiving so that we can be fed spiritually AND literally. In November I have come to learn here in the Berkshires we slow down from all of the summer activities, and we come back together to share both our stories from those adventures AND the hopes we have for the days to come.

I love November! This year I can't wait to look backward. This year I can't wait to look forward. This year, most of all, I can't wait to live in the moment and to do so together.

Come and see!

In hope and Gratitude,

***Pastor Brent***

## HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 3 Ken Fogarty  
November 5 Diane Piraino  
                  Deb McMenemy  
                  Virginia Schneider  
November 7 Holland Eaton  
November 8 Betsey McKearnan  
November 9 Tim Bosworth  
November 11 David Anderegg  
November 12 Peter Wise  
November 13 Meryle Epstein  
November 18 Trudy Fadding  
                  Anna Duhon  
November 23 Rich Geiler  
November 27 Judi Peyron  
                  Marcia Miner  
November 30 Will Garrison



## Procter Hall

The Procter Hall Proceeds Working Group was tasked by Council to make recommendations to the congregation on the use of potential proceeds from the sale of Procter Hall. We have begun our group discussion and welcome your input. Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Working Group with your thoughts.

- Carl Bradford (bradfordc39@gmail.com)
- Joe Catino (j.catino@comcast.net)
- Louis Forouhar-Graff (louiefgraff@gmail.com)
- Diane Piraino (pirainodiane@hotmail.com)
- Nick Pohl (pohnemilp@yahoo.com)
- Patty Strauch (patricia\_strauch@hotmail.com)

## JE Room Art Show

### *Bible Verses*

The bookshelves in the Jonathan Edwards Room are decorated with lovely pages of prominent Bible verses, colored by Olga Schwede. Pray, Meditate, and Enjoy!

## A Note from the Financial Secretary

It's that time of year when we look to finish projects before year's end. Completing our financial commitments is no different. "Where am I on my 2023 pledge?" you ask. Look no further!

You will receive a record of your pledge status during the month of November (mid-late November). Be sure to check your EMAIL inbox for this information (exception made for those who have no email on file or have made special request).

If you would like to have your pledge status sooner, I am happy to provide that. Simply email me at [finance@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:finance@stockbridgeucc.org) or call the church office.

Marion Pomeroy

## Dates to Remember

November 23: Ecumenical Thanksgiving  
                  Worship 10:30 (here)  
November 23 Thanksgiving Dinner  
                  after worship - approx. 11:30  
November 26 Advent Begins  
December 17 Intergenerational  
                  Christmas Pageant  
December 24 No morning worship  
December 24 Christmas Eve Worship -  
                  5:00 p.m.  
December 25 - January 2  
                  Church Office Closed

## A Moment for Stewardship



My name is Elisabeth Bellows and I am one of the newest members of this congregation. As a new member, I am hoping that your congregation's "story" will influence me and I am also hoping that my life story will impact the

congregation, particularly over the years to come. So here is a brief introduction to my story.

I grew up in New England in an academic family. Upon graduating from medical school, I moved out to California to have that quintessential California experience. I raised two sons with my husband Vince, and I attended the local UCC church for 10 years. Upon retirement, I found myself longing for New England and small-town community. So my husband and I moved to Stockbridge and I joined FCC just over 12 months ago.

One thing that I can say, right up front, is that I am hungry for community. I hunger for an intergenerational community. A place to talk about faith and spirituality and all those big topics that fascinate me. A community that is serious about music. A community that provides support in times of trouble. A liberal, progressive, do-good community. A community that brings great casseroles to potluck events.

Do you notice anything here? The First Congregational Church checks ALL of the boxes on my ideal community description! What other gathering would provide all these things that I want? FCC is a one-stop shop for me. I don't need to join any other clubs! So when I pledge money to FCC, I am giving to a community that I care about. And in keeping my church community financially healthy, I am taking care of myself and my neighbor.

There is another part of this annual pledge that is more difficult to talk about. It's the God thing. You know, I don't pray with any regularity. And I only read the Bible in preparation for Bible study classes. But it's very clear to me that my spiritual development involves participating in a lot of church programs. Sharing time, talent, energy, and creativity is a big part of my spiritual life and my self-expression.

But I think that pledging is ALSO a spiritual activity. A kind of communication between me and God. Pledging reminds me to align my financial priorities with God's plan. It's a way of saying "here I am God, call on me." My pledge says that I want to make a commitment to walk with Jesus and to lead my life more in accordance with his teachings. For me, the financial commitment strengthens my inner spiritual growth, the community that I care about, and all those church programs that I participate in. I want to develop a Christian lifestyle that goes beyond Sunday worship. I want my spiritual life to manifest in THIS world, in THIS town, in THIS congregation. Therefore, I consider my annual pledge to be a prayer, a devotion, a discipline, and a joyous celebration of belonging to this faith community. AMEN.

*Elisabeth presented these remarks during worship service, October 22.*



Watch your mailbox for pledge cards, coming soon!

## Consecration Sunday

Our pledges will be offered during worship on Consecration Sunday, November 12.

*Please plan to bring your pledge card on that day or mail it to the church to arrive by November 12.*

## From the Service League

Summer has most definitely given way to Fall, and we all know what comes next. Depending on your viewpoint, you may think of snow tires, decamping to Florida, ice dams, or any number of other possibilities, but we in the Service League are of one mind - our thoughts are trained on the Holly Fair. This year it will arrive on Saturday, December 2, and take over the better part of the education wing. You know how much we count on your help. This year our greens team is going to focus on centerpieces and small table decorations, so if you have bowls, baskets, vases, or Christmas-themed mugs you don't use, we'd love to have them! And if there are any crafters out there, we'd be happy to include some of your handiwork on our hand-mades table. If you're a jam, jelly, relish, or pickle maker, think about sharing some of the bounty. And of course, we will come asking for baked goods, and we always welcome donations to Grandma's Attic. It's all good!

In October, we helped host a reception for the memorial for Margaret Northrup, a Stockbridge resident who, with her husband the late Gordon Northrup, was a long-time member of the Festival Chorus. And we're helping out at Ronnie Cummingham's presentation of "A Childhood in Words and Song Part 2" on October 21, which she's performing in support of the fund to restore the church organ. On the homefront, Patty Fadding's helped celebrate grandson Nicholas' marriage to Sophie.

That's all for this month!

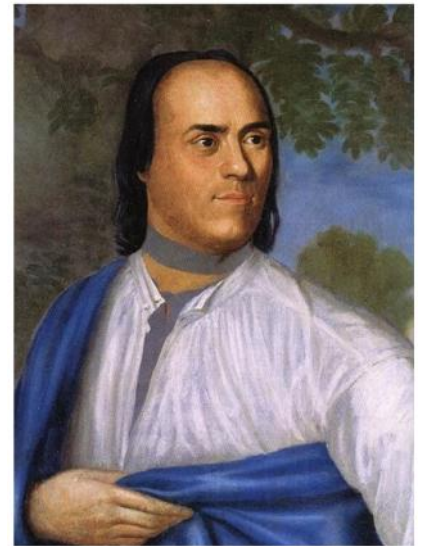
Margaret Hornick, for the Service League



## The Brothertown Indian Nation

On October 12, The First Congregational Church, welcomed members of the Brothertown Indian Nation. They were in Stockbridge to tour the library, burial grounds and Mission House as part of a week-long journey to their homelands. Will Garrison, Charlotte Rodgers and Niti Martin greeted them and a light lunch was enjoyed by all as shared stories about the Justice Task Force and the history of FCC. The group presented us with a hand carved shell and other mementos of our time together.

The Brothertown Indian Nation is rooted in early and pre-colonial times, and members of the current community are made up of the descendants of Mohegan, Eastern Pequot, Mashantucket Pequot, Niantic, Narragansett, Montauk and Tunxis peoples that come to practice Christianity. They moved west to New York, and later, Wisconsin, where they live today. Unlike the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican Community, the Brothertown Nation is not a federally recognized Indian Tribe.



*"An Indian Priest," recently identified as Samson Occom, painted by Nathaniel Smitbert, 1751-56. Bowdoin College Museum of Art.*

It was wonderful opportunity to share information, and learn more of the history of this group. We learned that a key leader was Samson Occom, a Christian minister who devoted his life to spreading Christianity to indigenous people. Occom was part of a movement to move Christian indigenous people west – in the hope of giving them greater opportunity for owning land and leading a better life.

To read more about the Brothertown Indian Nation, visit [www.brothertownindians.org](http://www.brothertownindians.org)

## Our Scholars - FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

We want to introduce you to this year's First Church Scholars, to whom we were pleased to be able to award grants of \$1000 each. For those of you who may not be aware of the scholarship fund, it is a dedicated account funded by memorial and honorary donations, and with support from the Service League. Any member, child of a member, or child of a staff member who is matriculated at an accredited college may apply. The amount of the grant may vary from year to year, depending on the number of applicants and the performance of the fund.

This year, grants were awarded to Lucy Garrison, (Will's daughter), who just began her freshman year at Mount Holyoke College, to Anna Grace Nimmo, (Joan's daughter), who is entering her second year in Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business, working toward her MS in Business Analytics, and to Gabriel Davis-Hollander, (Margo's son) who is a senior at UMASS/Amherst. Gabriel is studying economics and philosophy and is writing his honors thesis on the food industry.



## Thanksgiving is Coming!

We'd like to continue the tradition of a holiday meal following service on Thanksgiving morning, November 23. Growth and Fellowship will donate the turkey to this Potluck lunch. If you think you'd like to participate and bring a dish you'd like to share, contact Donna Jacobs at [donnajacobsmw@aol.com](mailto:donnajacobsmw@aol.com).

All are welcome.



## News from Mission & Action

### Cathedral of the Beloved

A note from Martha Congdon (COTB staff) after the meal we served on September 24:

*Oh my, what your church offered was such a delight. THANK YOU so very much for the generous table – home-made nourishing food in such abundance and a team of folks to serve and mingle. It is such a gift to us, this community, for your presence and generosity that feeds, not only the body, but the heart and soul as you turn up regularly -- which is the heart of relationship in our circle. Thankful, so very thankful.*

*Then there was the rain..... you seemed to come prepared and were such good sports about it all. We got a good run on it all - folks even sitting to eat. A few said to me as I was gathering the soaked tablecloths.. oh go ahead and take it, I am going to sit here and eat though, I am used to the weather. It always brings me up short to remember my privilege and comfort as I scurry to not get wet - in my raincoat!!! Grateful for all the lessons and your good will and smiles on the other side, sharing the pictures you took there as well as the experience. I love that the pictures you sent me include the making of the food - totally making this the full circle event that it is. Grateful.*

*And Blessed -- blessed by the fullness of it all -- we were together, I forget the rest! We will shiver and laugh and roll our eyes at the rainy ending, and we really are blessed by doing it together. When you join in the circle, we are blessed on all levels. Yes -- blessed.*

*Please come and celebrate with us anytime even without bringing a meal. Share the stories. I hope you are getting a chance to know some of the folks.*

*We welcome anyone to our other touchpoints too - Wednesday, 9:30AM at Zion Lutheran on First next to the Common for Contemplation and Communion. Thursday at 10:30-12 - drop in or stay for coffee at Dottie's in Pittsfield. We have fun and heart-moving moments every place.*

*Thankful, grateful and blessed.*

### Appalachian Trail Ministry

*Dear members of the Mission & Action Board, Thank you for your generous donation to this year's Appalachian Trail Ministry in Sheffield. Though you were unable to send a team to staff our Corner of Kindness, your contribution will become seed money for our 2024 supplies. 568 hikers found relief and refreshment at our tent, often at critical points in their journey. Thank you for your kindness.*

*~ With gratitude, Jill Graham*



### Photo and text from Christ Trinity website

Every summer for eight weeks, the [Christ Trinity Church and First Congregational Church of Sheffield] Appalachian Trail Magic tent is open to greet and serve hikers. The tent is staffed by area volunteers and by visiting church groups from near and far.



## Veterans Affairs

*Dear Members of First Congregational Church of Stockbridge,*

*On behalf of the VA Central Western MA patients and staff, we would like to extend our appreciation to you for your toiletries and undershirts.*

*It is through the efforts of community partners like you that allow us to continue the quality care and services that we seek to provide for our deserving Veterans. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you again for future events.*

*Thank you for your continued support and advocacy.*

*~ Sincerely, Brian Ryan, VAVS Manager*

## Save Lives and Bring Hope

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Mission: Save Lives and Bring Hope to Those Affected by Suicide

Mission and Action is donating \$250.00 to this organization to help those affected by suicide.

Please support Jill Fleming in her efforts to raise additional funds by going to [afsp.org](http://afsp.org) or clicking on this link:

[Jill and David Fleming - Fundraising For American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(afsp.org\)](http://afsp.org)

Suicide is a public health problem and affects people of all ages. It is a leading cause of death in the United States. Suicide can also be prevented — more investment in suicide prevention, education, and research will prevent the untimely deaths of thousands of Americans each year.

## Mission & Action Recent Expenditures

- \$500 to UCC's annual offering, Neighbors in Need (\$100 UCC Missions, \$400 National/International Needs).

## Art Show - Held Over!

The **Stockbridge Library and Archives** has extended the exhibit featuring artwork by four Stockbridge-Munsee artists from Wisconsin. It is now on view through November. The exhibit includes 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.

## Justice Task Force

On September 24, the Justice Task Force was delighted to host Maggie Bennett, a member the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, who was visiting from Wisconsin. Maggie uses story mapping, a technique which bridges geographic information systems, photography, history, and archaeology, to tell the story of the Stockbridge-Munsee people. She discussed the travels of the community and the importance of Christianity in her culture.

On the Church Life / Service & Justice page of the church website you can find a YouTube link to the recording of her talk, where she answers many questions about tribal history, as well as current tribal life and issues. You can also find a link there to her lecture, in a readable and illustrated format. Please take a look.

## Emails

In addition to the church-wide email blast sent on Thursdays, the Board of Christian Education sends an email on Fridays highlighting stories and activities for each Sunday. If you are interested in receiving the CE email (or, of course, the church-wide one), contact the church office.

## Rally Day - The Story Continues

### Seed Spitting!

Watermelon seeds were flying on Rally Day and we were on the edge of our Tyvek in suspense. With over 15 contestants, the crown (made by Jake) eventually went to Adam Brown with a spit of 27'9 7/8" distance after a spit-off with his wife, Hannah. This power couple spat 23'7" and 23'7 1/4 " in the preliminaries. Hannah then spat 25'1" in the finals (shattering Nick Pohl's 2019, 25', record) before sharing her tongue-curling technique with Adam. Was that a mistake? Or does that give her the prize for Miss Congeniality? In any case, Adam, with Hannah's technique, then sent a seed flying over 6 feet farther than he had before.

We're calling it a win-win for Hannah and Adam. Jon Geldert came in second with a distance of 20' 11 1/2 inches. Ted Randolph, at 20' 3/4" was disqualified by the judge because of his semi-pro status, leaving Cathy Clark and Elizabeth Evans tied for third at 19'5".

In the "just wait until I'm taller" division, Khalil, Jake, and Amos are all looking good and will be serious future contenders. In the seedling division, Avianna and Gwendolyn spat a combined 13' even.

Lastly in the "When you spit watermelon seeds, do not let your left cheek know what your right cheek is doing" division, Pastor Brent's distance will remain a secret.

~ Diane Piraino



### Youth Group - On the Move!

The Youth Group brainstormed a few ideas at Benedict Pond in September. Here's what we've got lined up so far as a result:

**Corn Maze and Treasure Hunt** - November 5 at Taft Farms. We'll get lost and found again in a curious maze, hunt for treasure, hike, and eat doughnuts of course! If your child is planning on participating, we hope they've signed up already! If not, or if you have any questions, talk to Terry Wise or one of the other leaders, and we'll figure it out.

**All-Church Advent Craft Party and Potluck Lunch** – On the First Sunday of Advent, December 3, the Youth Group will participate in the Advent Craft Party, this year preceded by a potluck lunch. Lunch will begin about 11:30, followed by the party, which will end at 1:30 or so. A special service/charitable activity will be added to the mix for the Youth.



PLEASE NOTE: This event is open to all, is not just the Youth Group. Children and adults of all ages are invited. It is fine to come just for the lunch, but we do ask that you bring a dish to share if you are able. More details to follow.

**Winterlights** – Friday, January 5, 2024. On the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany, the Youth Group and their friends, plus a few adult chaperones, will bathe in the mystery and spectacle of light. This will happen as winter darkness falls at Naumkeag's Winterlights installation. Again, more details to follow.

Organized by: Terry Wise, Josh Hall, Ted Randolph, Diane Piraino

## God in the Wilderness

A monthly Walking Pilgrimage

The date for the first walking pilgrimage would be Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 5:00pm ( then every second Wednesday).

Even God didn't work 24/7. God rested on the seventh day. Nature is a great teacher and role model for finding balance between work and life, serving and relishing as well as the urge to over-manage instead of trusting what we cannot see. We seek refuge in the wilderness to refuel our life in faith.

God in the Wilderness program aims to deepen and broaden our faith while enriching our church-community connections. *Seek ye first the kingdom, all these things shall be added as well.* Mathew 6:33

Structure and Goals:

- A. Through a once-monthly walking pilgrimage, church members will be encouraged to acknowledge the power of direct relationship with God in the Wilderness of Stockbridge's walking paths.
- B. Through fellowship, spiritual/religious context paired to the liturgical season, direct interaction with the natural world via 45-60 minutes walks, prayer and stated intention at the beginning and ending of each walk, participants will be supported to deepen their relationship with their faith, their church, and themselves.
- C. Once monthly walks offer an embodied connection to stated intention, foci, and teachings.
- D. A church sponsored Covid-safe alternative for connecting with others

*Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but on the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God. You shall not do any work... Exodus 20:8-9*

Facilitated by Margo Davis, MSW, LICSW  
Questions? margobradleydavis@gmail.com

## Wednesday Community Dinner: Taco Bar!

Eating together nourishes our bodies and our souls. All are welcome to a taco bar dinner on **November 8** 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

### Ronnie Cunningham's *A Childhood in Word and Song* Part 2 was a hit!



*What a wonderful presentation! Ronnie, your storytelling is compelling, really brings the listener inside the scene.*

*Thank you for sharing!*

Cindy Brown



**Muneko Otani,  
violin**

**Ronald  
Feldman, cello**

**Hui-Mei Lin, piano**



**Works by  
Lili Boulanger  
Beethoven  
Brahms**



**Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 3PM**

**Suggested Donation: \$25**

**4 Main St. Stockbridge, MA 01262**

**Information and Reservations:**

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



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