

Glad Tidings

First Congregational Church of
West Brookfield
United Church of Christ
May 2024

36 North Main Street, PO Box 371
West Brookfield, MA 01585 508-867-7078
Our website: Westbrookfieldcongregationalucc.org
On Facebook: First Congregational Church of
West Brookfield, UCC



Where Is God?

The man whispered,
“God speak to me”
And a Meadowlark sang.
But, the man did not hear.

So the man yelled,
“God speak to me”
And the thunder rolled across the sky.
But, the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said,
“God let me see you”
And the sun shined brightly.
But, the man did not see.

And, the man shouted.
“God show me a miracle.”
And, a life was born.
But, the man did not notice.

So, the man cried out in despair,
“Touch me God, and let me know you are here.”
Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man.
But, the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

The man cried,
“God I need your help!”
And an email arrived reaching out with good news and encouragement.
But, the man deleted it and continued crying.

God is always around us in the little and simple things that we take for granted!



Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way that you expect.

WEST BROOKFIELD'S ASPARAGUS, FLOWER & HERITAGE FESTIVAL SATURDAY MAY 18th!



Spring is in the air which means that the Asparagus Festival is just around the corner! If you are new to W. Brookfield and our church community, the Asparagus Festival is a huge and beautiful celebration of spring in New England! This town-sponsored event takes place on the town common and features art vendors, crafters, growers and food vendors from across our area. It is a very important day in the life of West Brookfield – and our church.

Our church participates by offering our **Famous Asparagus Chowder!** This chowder has been made since year one of the festival – in fact the festival was actually started by our church many years ago, but we gave it up when it became too big. We have been serving our famous chowder every year since. Because last year's response to setting our chowder tent up on the church lawn was so successful, we are doing it again! We will be selling our **HOT** asparagus chowder (by the cup) -- and offering our **COLD** chowder (by the quart) from both a tent on the common AND one on the church lawn.

Always Seeking Volunteers....

If you *have never* volunteered before just know that this is a super fun day in the life of our church filled with hard work and warm fellowship! Please volunteer! You'll be glad you did.

Ways to Participate:

Kitchen Help Week Of – Chop hundreds and hundreds of vegetables. Times TBA. Call Karen Andersen if interested (413-230-7476)

Friday night May 17th: Set up of tents, tables, chairs at our two sights – 6 pm

Saturday, May 18th – 7:30 am: Carry out all supplies to lawn tents and common tent

Saturday Shifts: Work the tents by serving hot & cold chowder to patrons, keep supplies ready, fill coolers with soda, haul chowder, take orders, cashiering, etc.

BIGGEST AREA OF NEED:

Saturday End of Day – approx. 2 - 4 pm: CLEAN UP: Put away pop-up tents, tables, chairs, coolers, return supplies to church, clean-up everywhere.

PLEASE, IF YOU PLAN TO HELP, PLEASE LET US KNOW IN ADVANCE. As has happened before, many people plan to be there but don't tell us so we go into the day thinking we will be short-handed. We would truly appreciate notice. Thanks,

Set up/Breakdown Crew Signup sheets are posted!

Donate

Karen Andersen has posted *Donations Needed* sheets on the sliding doors in the Fellowship Hall. Please see what you can offer. Items needed include: quarts of half & half, pounds of butter, & chicken broth. See sign-up sheets for more details. *Monetary donations* are always welcome. Let someone else do your shopping!

Fran Graveson's last day with us was April 7th. We had a small farewell thank you coffee hour with a cake. We gave her an afghan, FCC ornaments and flowers along with cards. We will miss her but wish her all the best in her future walk with Christ.

The Bridge committee is currently in the process of finding someone to carry us through until we hire a Designated Term Pastor. Thus far we have had Rev. Julie Olmsted & Rev. Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin for pulpit supply.

Nancy Arsenault, Pat Jackman, David FitzGerald, JoAnne Bakulski & Karen Murphy

Designated Term Pastoral Search Committee

Our Church's Designated Term Pastor search profile has been available online to UCC clergy since January 26, and so far we have received no profiles from any potentially interested UCC clergy. Given this situation, our search committee has conferred with both Southern New England Conference staff members and also our Church Council. The result is that the following two steps are now being considered to increase interest in the DTP position we are offering.

1. Our search committee is reviewing our search profile and focusing particularly on simplifying the Designated Term Goals that our new DTP would be considered responsible for accomplishing, in addition to the usual responsibilities a minister has in serving a church.

2. Members of our church who work with its finances are considering whether it would be feasible or not for our church to increase the amount of compensation being offered for this 3 year position, particularly to increase it from the present 1/2-time position to a 3/4-time one. We have now learned from the SNEUCC that churches offering 3/4-time DTP positions tend to receive about three to four times as many applicants as those offering 1/2-time DTP positions. If it is considered feasible to increase that compensation, a request to do so will be presented to our congregation for discussion and its vote.

More information will be forthcoming on the above items as work is done on them.

On April 14, our search committee held an informal, special meeting of our church to begin working on the Designated Term Goal to **Review and Strengthen our Practice of Being a Welcoming Church**. We thank all who came to that meeting and shared their ideas about ways to accomplish that goal. We are now inviting our parishioners to volunteer to help implement such ideas. Our committee recognizes that the efforts of our own parishioners will be absolutely necessary to achieve this important goal. So, please consider volunteering. And, to volunteer, please speak with any member of our search committee. **Thank you!**

New Committee Formed!

At the meeting that was held on April 14th volunteers stepped forward to get things started with our goal of being an even more welcoming church. Exploring what it means to be An Open and Affirming church has been discussed in Church Council for many months now (actually years) and Doug Showalter, Karen Murphy and Terry Hall stepped forward to form this committee. Linda Barron and Mary Deotte are interested in assisting with guidance and consulting. We are seeking others! If you are interested in helping the committee form a plan to guide the church in the exploration of being an ONA church please contact Doug, Karen or Terry – and watch for updates from this group over the summer. **Thank you!**

Music Committee

The Music Committee had an interview for the position of Music Director with a talented young lady who lives in Greenfield, MA. She is not sure she wants such a long commute, so we have put her on our list of substitutes. We will continue to enjoy the music that Stephen Page and Mike Spencer bring to us.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR CHURCH OFFICERS & CHAIRS

Moderator: Dee Blanton – deebanton86@gmail.com

Deacon Chair: Karen Murphy – kmurphy718@charter.net

Parish Board Co-Chairs: Wally Hall – terryle56@yahoo.com & Mike Murphy – kmurphy718@charter.net

Treasurer – Mary Deotte – hombai@yahoo.com

Collector: Deanna Randall – drandall444@comcast.net

Clerk: Terry Hall – terryle56@yahoo.com

Church Phone: 508-867-7078

Parish Board

Spring is finally here. We are looking at ways to beautify our space. One of the ways is to clear out old and unneeded items throughout our building. The fencing that was used years ago for the Flea Market will be sold at the Flea Market this year. We will be cleaning and setting up more space downstairs for our Sunday School.

The big white Sanctuary clock has been brought to a clock repair be cleaned up. We are looking into the repair of the steeple clock as well.

The Parish Board is aware that the red lights are on again on the mini-splits and they are working on a resolution. The units are still functioning properly.

If there is anyone that has a utility trailer and can help in transporting a scissor lift from Warren to the church and back please contact the Murphys: kmurphy718@charter.net. The goal is to clean the ceiling fans in the sanctuary.

We ask that you continue to write any building issues and needed repairs in the book that is in the Parish mailbox. Thank you.

Mike Murphy, Wally Hall, Linda Daskowski & Juan Bacigalupi

Bridge Search Committee

We have been very hard at work to secure another bridge minister for our church and we have a few leads to pursue. We will keep the congregation updated when there is news to share. If you have questions about our process, where we go to find bridge ministers, how it all works, etc. please ask. We are happy to share our plans with you.

Karen Murphy, Angela Carville, Mary Deotte, Pat Jackman, and Terry Hall

Thank You's

From Pastor Fran Graveson!

We received the following card from Pastor Fran recently.

*To everyone at First Congregational Church of West Brookfield,
I want to send this note of thanks. I enjoyed our time together. Thank you for a wonderful reception after my last service. And thank you for all of the wonderful sentiments in the many cards I received. Also, a big thank you for the thoughtful gifts!*

The orchid is beautiful and fits perfectly on my mantle. My cat, Thomas, immediately became friends with the wooden cat statue that can keep him company when I am at work. And the blanket and Christmas ornaments will be forever memories of our time together.

I send blessings of God's love and comfort to you as you continue your journey.

"In God we live, move, and have our being". Acts 17:28.

Pastor Fran



Coffee & Celebration!

Each month a different committee or board in our church offers a time of coffee and sharing for a celebration of all birthdays and anniversaries for that month. This coffee hour is offered on the LAST Sunday of each month.

Coffee Hour for May: Pastor Parish Relations Board



From Our Church Office

Church Secretary – Terry Hall – terryle56@yahoo.com

Office Hours – Friday 12 pm – 3 pm (Most Fridays, but not all. Call first – 508-867-7078)

Fellowship Hall Bulletin Board & Church Calendar

The Church Community Calendar is located on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall and is checked often. **Be sure to add all your meeting dates and times to the calendar** so that they may appear in the monthly newsletter and to prevent conflicts in the church office. **Thanks to all who are continuing to use this calendar. The use of this small tool goes a long way in keeping all of us organized. Keep up the good work!**

Please note – The *Glad Tidings* deadline for June is Monday, May 20th.

Updated 2024 Directory Corrections

An updated directory was sent out last month. Please make note of the following corrections:

Jim & Ellen Haynes CORRECT email address is: hayjimell23@gmail.com

Deb Macklin's phone number is 413-559-7153 (do not use 413-559-7154)

Terry Hall, Church Secretary

SOCIAL MEDIA IN OUR CHURCH

As was announced in last month's newsletter, we have hired Brooke Canada to update and maintain our church website and Facebook pages and to create and maintain an **Instagram** account for our church. It is understood that to reach people today an organization needs to be very visible in the online world.

We Now Have A Church Instagram Account!

Are you on Instagram? Would you like to follow First Congregational? You can!

Search @firstcongwestbrookfield to check us out.



Brooke Canada is a digital marketing specialist for the United Church of Christ (national offices), and is a life-long UCC member. She lives with her husband Tim, daughter Abby, and dog Laney, in North Brookfield. She and her family love fostering dogs for New England Lab Rescue and often have one or two extra furry friends at their house. Brooke loves to garden, quilt, and read and is currently a member of two book clubs and one sewing group.

Welcome to First Congregational, Brooke!

May Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday!

Peter Dirlam – 2nd Susan Johnson – 2nd Dave Steltzer – 3rd

Mark Howard – 7th Dotti Fullam – 9th Barbara Bengle – 12th Jim Haynes – 13th

Chris Showalter – 14th David FitzGerald – 21st Jaclyn von Bleicken – 24th



Happy Anniversary!

May 2024

<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>
			1 Sharing Cupboard 10-11:30 am	2 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	3 DTS Committee 11 am	4
5 Worship 10 am Communion Rev. Doug Showalter – Guest minister	6	7	8 Sharing Cupboard 10-11:30 am	9 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	10	11
12 Worship 10 am Rev. Julie Olmsted – Guest minister	13	14 Dismas Dinner at the church Potluck 6p.m.	15 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	16 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	17	18 Asparagus, Flower & Heritage Festival 10 – 4
19 Worship 10 am Rev. Julie Olmsted – Guest minister	20 Glad Tidings Deadline	21	22 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	23 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	24	25
26 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour: Pastor Parish Relations	27	28	29 5 th week: Sharing Cupboard Closed	30 5 th week: Sharing Cupboard Closed	31	



Our Mission and Vision Statement: We are a church where all are welcome to worship together, to share in fellowship and to grow spiritually in our journey with Christ. We value justice, diversity, and freedom of expression. We strive to serve our community and all God's creation and to spread the love of God to all people.

Save the dates

ROUGH SEAS, SAFE HARBOR

a concert of seafaring songs by

WINGS OF SONG community chorus

- **SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024 ~ 7:30 PM**
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Webster MA
- **SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024 ~ 7:30 PM**
First Church of Monson, Cong'l, Monson MA
- **SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 ~ 2:30 PM**
St. Joachim Chapel, Fiskdale MA



More information: www.wingsofsong.org

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