

Glad Tidings

*First Congregational Church of
West Brookfield
United Church of Christ
April 2025*



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

From Our New Bridge Pastor

Gradual Easter

Spring is here! Not that you'd know it—the landscape is still bleak, gray, dead. But, in little more than a month, the grass will be green, the trees will blossom, and we will hear the birds' songs (the goldfinches have already taken over our feeders!). A sense of joy and happiness will fill the earth; nature will have come to life again. It has been said that springtime is nature executing her Easter liturgy. In every corner of her vast creation-cathedral a thousand voices will be shouting (*"Alle ----!"*); the voices of creatures that have come to life.

Henry Van Dyke wrote that the first day of Spring is one thing; the first spring day is quite another. Lives are feeling the grayness in these weeks when winter begrudges giving way to spring; I hear quite a few people expressing anxiety and discomfort, dissatisfaction, and dreariness in their lives these past weeks. Seasonal Affective Disorder? Cultural conflict? For some it is a slight shading; for others it is a great darkening.

But a sense of joy and happiness and hope will soon fill the world. At Easter we will celebrate resurrection; the fresh reminder that Jesus' rising from the dead can awaken us to the world of life within and around us. God's beauty and love are waiting to burst into sight again. We too will come to life again.

But the change in us, like the change in the landscape around us, will not be instantaneous. The transformation is starting now. Nature is already bursting forth in the dank soil, and we need to more deeply breathe in the power of Easter's new life. As we take in each of the stories of Jesus' resurrection impact in the coming weeks may we also find Jesus showing us resurrection, of new and full life, complete and joyful life.

I pray that, in the coming weeks, each of us will find God's beauty and love in our own lives, and that we will share that beauty and love right where we have been planted.

Hosanna!
Pastor Dennis

First Life in Holy Week

*As Holy Week leads us into Easter's New Life,
please include these opportunities for prayer and worship on your calendar:*

Palm Sunday Worship, April 13, 10 am: Don't miss the Palm Sunday parade! Worship begins in Fellowship Hall with a celebratory procession into the Sanctuary, and the singing of *All Glory, Laud and Honor!* (Those with mobility concerns are welcome to await us in their sanctuary seats.)

Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:00 pm. Our remembrance of Jesus' last mandate (thus the word "Maundy") to his disciples, his Last Supper, and our participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We then experience the service of Tenebrae, the darkening shadows of Holy Week denial and betrayal, through the stories of scripture. Youth and adults will participate in leadership; the congregation of George Whitefield United Methodist Church will join us.

Good Friday Cross Walk, April 18, 12 Noon. We gather on the front lawn of the church, joining with the ecumenical community in following Jesus' Holy Week journey, and in Good Friday reflection. This is a contemplative experience, moving through the town common, enhanced with scripture and singing.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise, 6:00 am: This long-standing service, held on Foster Hill Road, welcomes Easter's Resurrection news with the sunrise. Breakfast following is offered at George Whitefield United Methodist Church.

Easter Worship, 10:00 am.

We will celebrate Resurrection and New Life...with scripture, our songs, Choir, bright flowers and joy bursting forth!



Holy Week

From our Boards and Committees

Church Council - The next Church Council meeting will be held on Sunday, April 13th. Please note the meeting has been moved from the third Sunday to the second Sunday due to Easter being on April 20th.

COFFEE TIME - *The weekly coffee hours have been going great! We all love to fellowship with each other not to mention that the coffee and snacks are great too. Thanks to all for the wonderful treats! Hope to see you at the next coffee hour.*



Board of Deacons

We were invited to share Ash Wednesday at the George Whitmore Whitefield Methodist Church with Pastor Sandy and our friends along with our new Bridge Pastor Dennis TeBeest. This ecumenical service was a lovely time of reflection and we were grateful to have been invited to join them.

HOLY WEEK is just around the corner! (See the message from Pastor Dennis for details)
We hope you can join us for:

PALM SUNDAY – April 13th

MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 17th

GOOD FRIDAY – April 18th

EASTER – April 20th

Volunteering...

If you have volunteered to be a reader or help with coffee hours, please remember to check the service schedule weekly that is hung up on the bulletin board. We ask if you can't make your agreed upon day that you try to find a replacement and mark the schedule accordingly. Karen has been emailing/texting the person(s) that are on duty for the coming week.

If you have agreed to be a reader your Scripture will now be printed from the *New Revised Standard Version* website and put on the lectern for you on Sunday morning.

Name tags...?

We are seeking your opinion.... We are discussing whether or not to use name tags each week. This is a regular practice for some churches. It is easier to get to know each other if you know someone's name. For our regular parishioners your name tag would be available for you when you get to church. Please let a Deacon know what you think of this idea.

***SPECIAL REQUESTS**

We would like to have a volunteer each week to help with greeting folks as they come in. If you would be willing to help, please see Karen Murphy.

We are also considering doing Facebook Live again on the firsts Sunday of the month for communion. If you are willing to help with this ministry, please contact Karen at kmurphy718@charter.net.

Designated Term Pastoral Search Committee

Our search committee continues to be very busy as we interview prospective candidates for our church's 3/4-time DTP position. We appreciate the patience of our church as we pursue this important project. We are looking for a candidate who will be a "good fit" for our congregation and serve it well as we move into the future. When our committee has chosen a very good candidate and negotiated, with the approval of our Parish Board, a Call Agreement with that candidate, a Candidating Sunday will be scheduled for our congregation to meet and vote on that candidate. Our church's bylaws indicate the following: "A Minister may be called for an indefinite time by a 90% affirmative vote of the Members of the Church/First Parish present at a duly called Special Meeting."

In our United Church of Christ, at the conclusion of their 3 years of service, a Designated Term Pastor may become a Settled Pastor of their church, if that church and that DTP both desire and agree to that.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Showalter, Terry Hall, Linda Barron, Angela Carville

Parish Board

Our new church secretary, Bonni Holmes is working out beautifully. She and Terry have been training over the past few weeks and as can be seen in our lovely Sunday morning bulletins, Bonni is doing a great job. She is in the church office on Friday mornings from 9 am – 11 am and will be happy to chat with you if you have questions for her or would just like to get to know her better. Be sure to call in advance (church office 508-867-7078). If you have something for the bulletin, email announcements or the monthly newsletter please send it to fccwbworship@gmail.com. Remember, all announcements need to be completely written including date, time and person to contact. It is not Bonni's job to write your announcement for you. Thank you for understanding this.

We would also like to thank Terry Hall for being our secretary for so many years we can't even count. Thank you, Terry, for everything!

The church has gone green with reusable cups, plates and utensils each week for coffee hour. We are currently using the dishwasher every week and it is going well. Please note that the dishwasher needs to be run regularly to keep it in good working order. Using reusable dishes and running the dishwasher solves two problems!

JUST A REMINDER: Please do not approach a Parish Board member or our handyman Dave on Sundays with a fix-it problem or a concern. We ask that you be respectful of our worship time and write anything that may need to be addressed in the notebook that is located in the Parish Board mailbox. The exception of course would be an emergency situation. Dave and the Parish Board members can also be reached via email or phone. Their numbers are in the church directory.

Dave Steltzer, Wally Hall, Juan Bacigalupi, Mike Murphy, and Linda Daskowski

Thank you

Open And Affirming Exploration Committee



The committee would like to thank Stephanie Beland for sharing her story with the congregation on Sunday, March 23rd. It was warm and enlightening. Following our service, a video on how other United Church of Christ churches have evolved in their Open & Affirming journey was viewed by all in attendance. A brief discussion afterward was helpful and informative. Copies of the materials from both Beverly Prestwood-Taylor and Doug Showalter's bible studies were shared. More copies are available upon request. In addition, a Q&A handout was shared. More copies are available on the table in the Fellowship Hall if needed. While the members of the committee will be available for questions and discussion, we will be taking a brief hiatus from formal plans until after the Asparagus Festival on May 17th. Watch for other O&A education events this summer.

Your ONA Exploration Committee

Karen Murphy, Angela Carville, Doug Showalter, Pat Jackman, Stephanie Beland, Beverly Prestwood-Taylor and Terry Hall

West Brookfield Asparagus, Flower and Heritage Festival is coming!



Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 17th, for the town of West Brookfield's annual Asparagus, Flower and Heritage Festival held on the town common. The festival runs from 10 am - 4 pm and features artisans, flower vendors, crafters, kid's activities and wonderful food! A highlight of the festival is our church's delicious and famous asparagus chowder. Our kitchen crew works for days to create gallon upon gallons of the delectable treat! Be certain to visit our chowder tent on our church lawn during the festival.

Volunteers Needed - Many volunteers will be needed during the week to cut vegetables for the chowder and on the day of, to serve the chowder to our customers. Watch for the signup sheets that will be posted on the siding doors of the Fellowship Hall if you can lend a hand.

Questions? See a member of the committee: Karen Andersen, JoAnn Bakulski, Linda Barron, Angela Carville, Karen & Mike Murphy, Wally & Terry Hall



Dismas Farm Dinners

Dismas Farm dinner will be at the farm on Tuesday, April 8. If you can make a contribution to send to the farm, please contact Deanna or Angela. Al and Deanna will take the meal to the farm in time for dinner at 6.

Dismas Volunteers:

Deanna Randall - 413-436-7849
or drandall444@comcast.net

Millie Gushue - 413-436-7125;
or gushoo@comcast.net

Angela Carville - 508-347-1148 or
angelacarville67@gmail.com

Thank you for your support of this important ministry!

Tri-Parish Community Church 19th Annual Plant, Bake, Tag & Craft Sale

Hardwick Town Common

Saturday, May 17th & Sunday, May 18th

10 am - 3 pm

Held rain or shine!

12' x 12' spaces are available - \$35

Email mcrevier1.mc@gmail.com

for an application



Paul Andersen – 4/3
Daniel Mazzaresse – 4/7
Lois Bennett – 4/10
Greg Dwelly – 4/14
Kathy O'Donnell – 4/15
Elaina Iris Cole – 4/16
Herrick Spencer – 4/19
Alan Rock – 4/21
Ken Elowe – 4/24

Paul & Karen Andersen – 4/14

Mary & Greg Deotte – 4/21



As our church grows and more young children arrive with their parents, our need for a Nursery attendant increases. The only requirements are a love for babies, toddlers, and children up to age 5, plus a Cori check. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer.

Thank you,

Nancy Arsenault

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

From Our Church Office

Church Secretary – Bonni Holmes – fccwbworship@gmail.com

Office Hours – Friday 9 am – 11 am

Please note – The *Glad Tidings* deadline for May is Wednesday, April 23rd.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Website: westbrookfieldcongregationalucc.org

Facebook: First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC

Instagram: Search @firstcongowestbrookfield

APRIL

<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>
		1	2 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	3 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	4	5
6 Worship 10 am Pastor Dennis Parish Board Meeting Coffee & Fellowship	7	8 Dismas Farm Potluck dinner at the farm 6pm	9 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	10 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	11	12
13 PALM SUNDAY Worship 10 am Pastor Dennis Sunday School Church Council Coffee & Fellowship	14	15	16 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	17 MAUNDY THURSDAY Service at 7:00pm Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	18 GOOD FRIDAY Service on the common at 12:00pm	19
20 EASTER Sunrise Service 6am Worship 10 am Pastor Dennis	21	22	23 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am <i>Glad Tidings Deadline</i>	24 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	25	26
27 Worship 10 am Pastor Dennis Sunday School Coffee & Fellowship	28	29	30			

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday Worship, April 13, 10 am

Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7:00 pm.

Good Friday Cross Walk, April 18, 12 Noon.

EASTER SUNDAY, April 20

- **Ecumenical Easter Sunrise, 6:00 am:**
- **Easter Worship, 10:00 am**



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.*

First Congregational Church of W. Brookfield, UCC
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36 N. Main St
W. Brookfield, MA 01585
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