



First Congregational Church of West Brookfield  
United Church of Christ

June 2026

# ***Glad Tidings***

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Dear Friends,

On Sunday, May 24th in worship we celebrated Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit when the followers of Jesus experienced the miracle of becoming a people — and the oneness of humanity. I mentioned at the beginning of our time together on Sunday that our paraments (the beautiful handmade hangings on the pulpit, lectern, and communion table, as well as our banners) had been changed to red for Pentecost Sunday. According to the Christian calendar, those paraments are supposed to be changed to green after being up for only one Sunday. This year, however, we are going to leave them up through the end of June to remind us of the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives and in the life of our community of faith.

Throughout this next month I hope that we will be inspired to reflect upon the work of the Spirit on the original Pentecost, as well as where we find the Spirit at work in our journeys of faith. To jump start our reflections I thought I would include in this message an excerpt from Christian historian and theologian Diana Butler Bass's Pentecost Sunday meditation. She began: "Pentecost is sometimes called the "birthday of the church." A great wind howls from the skies, flames blaze above the heads of Jesus's followers, and a huge crowd hears the Word of God in their own languages.

"But it is the birth of something much bigger — the birth of a new humanity, a new creation. 'In the last days,' God declares, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon *all flesh.*' *All flesh.* Not just some people. Literally, in Greek, "the whole of human nature" or "every physical body." Pentecost is a story of the world's baptism in holy fire. In it, you hear echoes of a more ancient tale — God appearing to Moses in a burning bush on holy ground. This poem, 'Celestial fire' by Eleazar Ben Kaller expresses it well:"



*Now an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a blazing fire –  
a fire that devours fire;  
a fire that burns in things dry and moist;  
a fire that glows amid snow and ice;  
a fire that is like a crouching lion;  
a fire that reveals itself in many forms;  
a fire that is, and never expires;  
a fire that shines and roars; a fire that blazes and sparkles;  
a fire that flies in a storm wind;  
a fire that burns without wood;  
a fire that renews itself every day;  
a fire that is not fanned by fire;  
a fire that billows like palm branches;  
a fire whose sparks are flashes of lightning;  
a fire black as a raven;  
a fire, curled, like the colours of the rainbows!*

Dr. Bass adds: “The flame never went out. It has always been burning, turning hatred and injustice to ash. But on that Pentecost, the holy wind exploded like a wildfire on the crowd, across the world, and through the cosmos. The power that Moses witnessed, they all witnessed. The divine fire.

She concludes: “All people are God’s people. All people. The Spirit didn’t discriminate. The Spirit didn’t draw distinctions. Pentecost doesn’t birth *a* church. It isn’t the birth of *the* Church. Pentecost is the extension of the holiest of all moments — the naming of the One who sets the cosmos ablaze — in conversation with us, on this ground. God’s burning breath remade the universe, restored the oneness of all creation, and birthed a new humanity. All ground is scorched with holiness, all bodies soaked with the Spirit. All. All. All.”

When we adopted our Covenant of Welcome on May 3, we affirmed that the work and blessing of the Spirit on that first Pentecost continues on in our ministry, restoring the oneness of all creation, birthing a new humanity. As we “live into” that Covenant we will welcome all who come to join us in worship and ministry, recognizing that all bodies are soaked with the Spirit. Al. All. All.

Grace and peace,

*Doug*



**Open and Affirming Committee** on Sunday, May 3, our church held a special meeting to vote on our *Covenant of Welcome*. The Open and Affirming Committee is thrilled to report that the covenant passed with near unanimity! Their next step was to submit an application to the United Church of Christ (our denomination) for official ONA status and become another of the almost 2000 churches in the UCC to declare themselves Open and Affirming of all people, specifically those in the

LGBTQIA+ community. The ONA Coalition quickly got back to us to affirm our new status!

We celebrated this milestone on Sunday, May 10 with a group photo (see below). Truly something to celebrate!

The Committee recently met to discuss next steps and will be discussing a few options with the Church Council on May 31st. At our recent meeting, it was agreed that we would rehang our welcoming sign on the church lawn as it has been in the past, and ask the two local papers to publish our new status with an interview and photo. They will meet with our committee soon. It has already appeared on our Facebook page and will be on our church website soon. Be certain to tell your friends and family about our church's newfound status and invite them to join us!

Please watch this space for periodic updates regarding future plans and thank you for the support you gave to this very important step for our ever-welcoming church.

Remember: There is a vocabulary list with definitions to assist in understanding our LGBTQI+ brothers and sisters located on the table under the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Please help yourself to a copy.



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



**Welcome the newest ONA church in the  
Southern New England Conference!**

Dear ONA family:

Please join us in welcoming First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, MA as a newly-certified Open and Affirming congregation!

As ONA church #1,954, First Congregational is now part of the largest and fastest-growing LGBTQ-affirming church movement in the world! We're proud of the congregation and grateful to the church's leadership for the hard work that led to this milestone in their history.

Please join the entire Open and Affirming movement in celebrating First Congregational, and join us in prayer that their ONA covenant will be a blessing to their LGBTQ+ neighbors.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Derek A. Terry".

Rev. Derek Terry  
ONA Coalition Acting Executive Director

**Open And Affirming Coalition  
United Church of Christ  
1300 East Ninth Street  
Suite 1100  
Cleveland, OH 44114  
[www.openandaffirming.org](http://www.openandaffirming.org)**

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The church's ONA Covenant reads:

We, the members of the First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC, are a people of faith, following Jesus and sharing God's abundant love, believing each of us is created in God's image. We seek to demonstrate God's love through respect and care for one another. We celebrate and learn from differences in race, culture, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, economic and political background, and physical and cognitive challenges. We welcome those who have no church home, need strength, want to follow Christ, or are seekers in their spiritual lives. All are invited to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry and mission of this church as we strive to grow in a safe and nurturing community of faith. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

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The Open and Affirming movement is growing through the generous support of congregations, Conferences and individuals. We receive no direct funding from Our Church's Wider Mission. Please visit [openandaffirming.org](http://openandaffirming.org) to learn more about our work.



The Board provided all the women in the church with a beautiful carnation on Mother's Day this year. Father's Day is coming up. What might *they* receive??

Our thanks to all of you who have offered to assist the board with duties when they are short-handed. It is appreciated!

Our thanks to Wyatt and Justin who continue to serve as our acolytes each Sunday.

Reminders:

- Our communion bread is gluten-free and our cup is non-alcoholic (juice with no artificial sweeteners).
- If you have a prayer request, remember to write it in the red book that is on the back table.
- Although the reader schedule has been made for this year, occasionally we have cancellations. Please let Pastor Doug know if you would like to be on the cancellation list.
- Please let any deacon know if you have a question about our Sunday morning services.

Pat Jackman, Chris Showalter, Nancy Arsenault, Debbie Decoste, Linda Daskowski, Deanna Randall and Terry Hall



**Dismas Farm Dinner**

At the Farm  
Tuesday, June 9th  
6pm

We are going to take some asparagus chowder which is safely frozen now until needed. Please check with Angela or Deanna if you can add something to the meal!

Dismas Volunteers  
Deanna Randall (413)436-7849 or [drandall444@comcast.net](mailto:drandall444@comcast.net)  
Millie Gushue (413) 436-7125 or [gushoo@comcast.net](mailto:gushoo@comcast.net)  
Angela Carville (508) 347-1148 or [angelacarville@gmail.com](mailto:angelacarville@gmail.com)

# Asparagus, Heritage and Flower Festival - A Roaring Success!

We planned, they came, and we had an incredible day!

The weather was picture perfect and the crowds were bigger than ever. We sold gallons and gallons of asparagus chowder and tons of brownies.

*There was frequent and loud laughter from many corners of our lawn and kitchen - - - who was having a better time, the volunteers or the patrons??*

Thanks to everyone who donated the **groceries**, gave **monetary support** or volunteered **their time** to help on Friday and Saturday. It was ALL appreciated!

The total raised from all your efforts to support our church missions and our church infrastructure was just shy of \$10,000. A very successful day, indeed!

*And we'll do it again next year!*

Thanks, everyone!

Your Asparagus Festival Kitchen and Tent Crews - and Committee

PS - Are you new to the church and missed it this year, but want to know more? See Karen Andersen, Karen Murphy, Terry Hall, Angela Carville or Linda Barron for all the details!





Did you see it??? Did you hear it??? We purchased a new BOSE tower speaker for the Sanctuary. Thanks to Mike Spencer for assisting to make that happen.

Summer is here and the heat is with it. Please be mindful of checking to make sure the air conditioners are not on before you leave doors open.

Wood chips were put down along the back of the driveway to help with appearance and keeping down the weeds. Thank you to all that helped with this.

We are making progress with the cleaning and organizing of the basement. Thank you to our anonymous donor for the shelving that was purchased to tidy things up. We ask that you don't put items downstairs that you think "somebody will use it" unless you speak to the Parish Board.

It is getting more important to use and check the calendar that is hanging in the fellowship hall before you make any plans to use the church. We are a VERY BUSY Church. Beginning June 2<sup>nd</sup> and every Tuesday and Thursday Alcoholics Anonymous will be meeting in the fellowship hall from 7:30pm – 8:30pm. If you are not a participant it is important to respect their anonymity and not enter the church during their meetings.

A special **THANK YOU!** to John Lapierre for fixing the dishwasher from the Asparagus Festival kitchen crew.

Parish: Juan Bacigalupi, Karen Murphy, Dave Stelzer (handyman) Wally Hall, Mike Murphy & Doug Showalter (assistants)



### ***A Special Thank You***

Local trash removal company, Burdett's came to our church on Monday morning after the festival and took multiple bags of our trash at no charge.

*We are not one of their regular customers; they just did it because they are a nice company.*

They are local and have a great reputation for affordability and dependability. If you are seeking a trash removal company, give them a call!

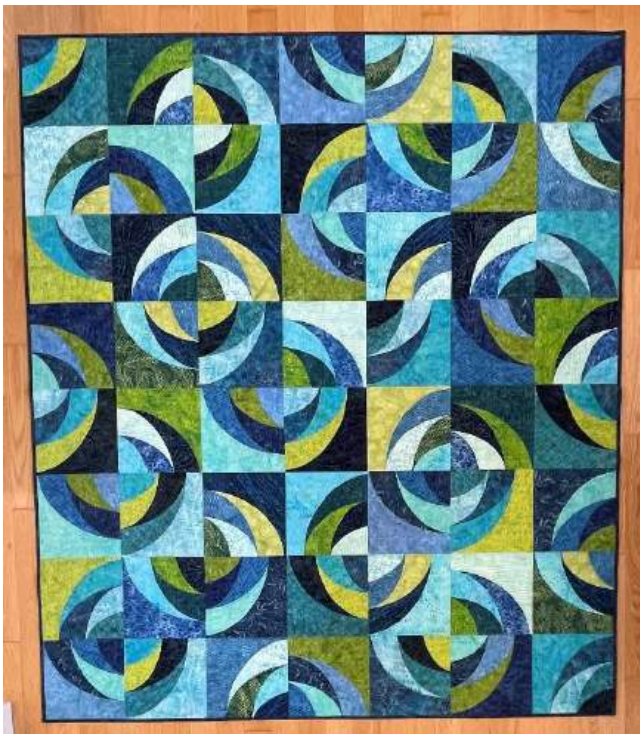




This year's annual quilt raffle will be for a beautiful quilt made by Mary Deotte called "Blue Onion". It is approximately 68" x 78", made entirely from gorgeous batik fabrics. Tickets will be sold for \$5 each or 3/\$10. All proceeds will be added to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. This fund helps folks in our community with specific needs such as help with their car, help with heating oil, help with temporary housing, etc.

Let's all support this important fundraiser -  
we can make a big difference in someone's life when we work together.  
Please see Dee Blanton or Karen Murphy for tickets.

And THANK YOU!





## **Solstice Sing for Peace and Justice**

*Songs to Cultivate Community, Compassion, and Commitment*

On Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting

### **“A Chorus for These Times”**

directed by Nym Cook with instrumentalists & guest artist  
Leslie Sweetnam.

There will be a social hour at 6pm with finger foods and snacks followed by an  
entertaining hour of music and song at 7pm.

ALL are welcome. Invite your family, friends, everybody!

This event is FREE! Donations will be accepted to support  
Abby's House!

*(Worcester's largest provider of affordable housing specifically designed to meet the needs of women and children.)*

\*If you would like to help with finger foods and snacks please contact:

Karen Murphy at: [kmurphy718@charter.net](mailto:kmurphy718@charter.net)

or call: 508-801-7692





HAPPY  
Anniversary  
FROM YOUR  
CHURCH FAMILY

Kathy Collings – 6/1  
Karen Williamson – 6/11  
Debbie Decoste – 6/19  
Phyllis Allen – 6/20  
Mike Spencer – 6/24  
Deanna Randall – 6/26  
Millie Gushue – 6/27

Doug & Christine Showalter – 6/23

#### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR CHURCH OFFICERS & CHAIRS

Moderator: Dee Blanton – [deebanton86@gmail.com](mailto:deebanton86@gmail.com)

Deacon Chair: Terry Hall – [terryle56@yahoo.com](mailto:terryle56@yahoo.com)

Parish Board: Karen Murphy – [kmurphy718@charter.net](mailto:kmurphy718@charter.net)

Treasurer – Mary Deotte – [hombai@yahoo.com](mailto:hombai@yahoo.com)

Collector: Deanna Randall – [drandall444@comcast.net](mailto:drandall444@comcast.net)

Clerk: Terry Hall – [terryle56@yahoo.com](mailto:terryle56@yahoo.com)

Church Phone: 508-867-7078

#### From Our Church Office

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Doug Williamson – 913-387-9947 – [djwnscaa@gmail.com](mailto:djwnscaa@gmail.com)

Office Hours- Wednesday by appointment & Friday 9:30am – 12:00, 1:00 – 2:00pm

Church Secretary – Bonni Holmes – [fccwbworship@gmail.com](mailto:fccwbworship@gmail.com)

Office Hours – Friday 8 am – 10 am

**Please note** – The *Glad Tidings* deadline for July is Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Website: [westbrookfieldcongregationalucc.org](http://westbrookfieldcongregationalucc.org)

Facebook: First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC

Instagram: Search @firstcongwestbrookfield



**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.*



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Post - Asparagus Festival Committee 11am	3 Sharing Cupboard 10 - 11:30 am	4 Sharing Cupboard 7 - 8 pm	5 Transition Team 1pm	6
7 Worship 10 am  Coffee & Fellowship  Choir practice	8	9 Dismas Farm Potluck dinner at the farm 6pm	10 Sharing Cupboard 10 - 11:30 am	11 Sharing Cupboard 7 - 8 pm	12	13
14 Worship 10 am  Sunday School  Coffee & Fellowship Parish Board  Deacons	15	16	17 Sharing Cupboard 10 - 11:30 am	18 Sharing Cupboard 7 - 8 pm	19	20
21 Worship 10 am  Coffee & Fellowship	22	23 <u>Glad Tidings Deadline</u>	24 Sharing Cupboard 10 - 11:30 am	25 Sharing Cupboard 7 - 8 pm	26 ONA Committee 1pm	27
28 Worship 10 am  Sunday School  Coffee & Fellowship  Church Council	29	30				

# WEST BROOKFIELD FARMER'S MARKET

ON THE  
COMMON

EVERY WEDNESDAY

3 - 6

*rain or shine*

**June - Oct**

Accepting WIC and Elder  
Coupons



First Congregational Church of W. Brookfield, UCC  
PO Box 371  
36 N. Main St  
W. Brookfield, MA 01585  
June 2026

