

Glad Tidings

First Congregational Church
of West Brookfield
United Church of Christ
May 2026

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

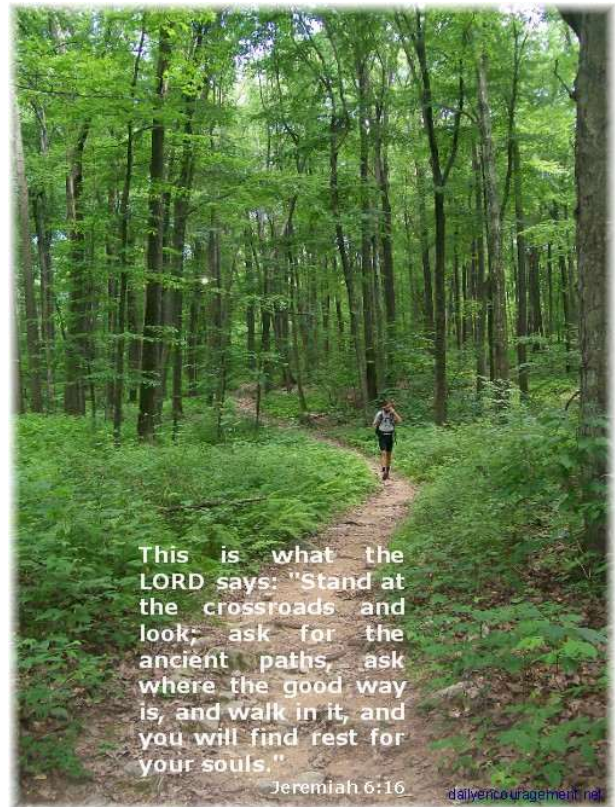


From Our Pastor

Dear Friends,

What difference does the resurrection of Jesus make for us in our day to day living in this fractured world of ours? Throughout this season of Easter that is one the questions I've tried to address in sermons. A few days ago, I stumbled upon a poem that very creatively addresses that same issue. The poem is called "Good Paths," and I'd like to share it here:

***Resurrection is not just comfort,
it's courage. It's a signpost.
It points to the victory
of love and nonviolence
over evil, death and injustice.
It indicates the good path
where our good shepherd leads us,
through the shadowed valley of suffering,
to bring to the table of grace
even our enemies.
For, dying, love endures.
Failing, love wins.
So we follow good paths
with courage to live gently,
to serve humbly, to forgive freely,
to risk boldly for the sake of the vulnerable.
Such is the path to life
that can't be taken from us, even by death,
an abundantly fruiting tree,
rooted in the eternal heart of God.***



This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16

dailyencouragement.net

***So nourished in this peculiar green pasture
of dying and rising,
and so gently led
by our dying and rising shepherd,
with love and courage we go.***
— Steve Garnaas-Holmes, “**Good Paths**”

Let us go forth throughout the remainder of this Easter season, and through the year ahead, with grace, courage, and hope inspired by the love of God made known to us, and instilled in us, by Jesus, the Risen Christ. Grace and peace,

Doug



Dismas Farm Dinner

Dismas Farm dinner will be at the church on **Tuesday, May 12th**
Dinner is at 6 pm.

Help us to welcome the gents from the farm and Emma and Ann, who work with them. Please contact Angela or Deanna, if you are planning to come, and if you would be bringing something to share at the table!

Dismas Volunteers:

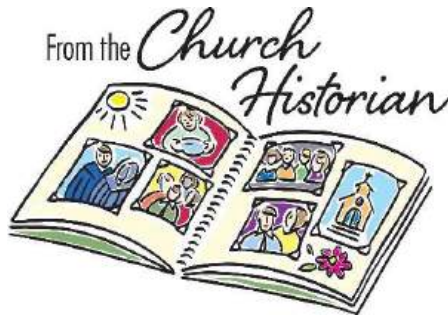
Deanna Randall - 413-436-7849 or drandall444@comcast.net

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

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

Historian report – May 2026

I am continuing my research on the history of our church's First Parish organization and the gift of land to it, which was made in 1791 by noted West Brookfield figures Dwight Foster and David Hitchcock. That land was deeded to the First Parish for public use, and it is known today as the Common of West Brookfield.



I am compiling a document on that history. My current document (revision #2) traces that history up through the 19th century. Included in that document are copies of the two deeds given to our First Parish in 1791 (Worcester Registry of Deeds) and also maps of that section of West Brookfield as it evolved through the 19th century. In time, I will add more recent information to

that document, which bears this title: Monday, November 7, 1791 - A Day to Celebrate.

To view that document, go to my Google Drive folder with information on our church, which I am sharing and continuing to add documents to as my research continues:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WKYMBDAMgxt_unYZfBik9cJdaR2GnukX?usp=sharing

Doug Showalter



Open and Affirming Committee – Special Vote Meeting This Sunday!

Over the past few weeks, the Open and Affirming Committee has had many timely discussions regarding the welcoming covenant that has been proposed for our church. With a desire to be as welcoming to *all* groups named in the document, the committee has changed the name of the covenant to “Covenant of Welcome”. We feel this is a better expression of everyone’s hearts and minds based on the discussions we have had with all of you. In order for this covenant to be adopted by our church, 80% of the active members in attendance and voting at this meeting must vote in the affirmative, however the committee is hoping for 90% or higher in affirmative votes as a “unanimous or nearly unanimous” vote is needed to submit the covenant to the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ for certification.

This is a primary goal of the committee.

The special church meeting to vote on this covenant will be held on **Sunday, May 3rd** following our morning worship service (**this Sunday!**). Please remember that *everyone* is invited to attend this meeting but only the votes of church members will be included in

the total count. This meeting will be available via Zoom for those who request the link. Email Terry at terryle56@yahoo.com. Please note that regardless of the results of the vote on May 3rd, education and awareness of the groups mentioned in our covenant will continue.

Vocab List Available

REMINDER: Still puzzled about the acronyms you see and hear about the LGBTQIA+ community?

A vocabulary list with definitions is located on the table beneath the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Please help yourself to a copy – and PLEASE see any member of the ONA Committee with questions.

Comma Pin. What's That?

Recently your Open and Affirming Committee purchased small pins that are in the shape of a comma and are the colors of the rainbow. These pins are a symbol in the United Church of Christ of thinking that is open and welcoming. Currently we are out of pins but more have been ordered and will be available on the back table of the sanctuary soon. If you would like to show your support for welcome, please take one and wear it proudly!



The [United Church of Christ](#) (UCC) comma pin represents the "God is Still Speaking" ministry, highlighting a belief in continuing spiritual revelation and a welcoming, inclusive faith. Based on the quote, "Never place a period where God has placed a comma," attributed to [Gracie Allen](#), it symbolizes that God's word is still evolving and not limited to the past.

Key Meanings of the UCC Comma:

- **"God is Still Speaking":** The core message is that God continues to speak through new situations, diverse people, and modern times, making it a "continuing testament" rather than a finished story.
- **Openness to New Truths:** It signifies that while the faith is 2,000 years old, our thinking is not.
- **Inclusivity and Welcome:** The comma, often in rainbow colors (as seen on [UCC Resources](#)), is a symbol of welcoming all, including the LGBTQ+ community
- **Progressive Tradition:** It draws inspiration from Pilgrim ancestor John Robinson, who believed God had "more light and truth to break forth from his holy Word".

The comma was introduced as a logo in 2004 as part of a campaign to emphasize that the church is open to new ideas and and that faith is an ongoing journey.

"God is still speaking" is not a marketing program. "God is still speaking" is a *theological movement*.
– Ron Buford, architect of the Still Speaking Initiative



Please remember to use the calendar that is hanging in the Fellowship Hall if you have a meeting or other event planned. Our church is getting busier by the day and we want to avoid any mishaps in scheduling.

Our pest control people have sprayed the outside perimeter. However, we are still having lots of bee sightings in the bushes out front. Feel free to enter the church through the back door if you are more comfortable. These bees don't typically bother anyone.

Also, please check with a Parish Board member if you would like to donate something to the church. It will save us from having to pay to get rid of stuff we don't need. If you have something you would like to donate for the GIANT raffle at our White Christmas event, see Dee Blanton or Angela Carville before leaving anything in the raffle room.

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



FYI, one of the Bose speaker towers is broken. We attempted to have it fixed but it is not repairable. With the help of Mike Spencer, we are purchasing a new Bose L1 Pro32 tower.

Thanks Mike!



RECORDING SERMONS

We have recently purchased a video camcorder to record the sermons and special music. These videos will be uploaded to our YouTube channel as well as the West Brookfield Access channel once they are perfected. Therefore, there won't be any more Facebook videos so the videographer in training can focus on learning the ropes.



WEST BROOKFIELD'S ASPARAGUS, FLOWER & HERITAGE FESTIVAL SATURDAY MAY 16th!

10 am – 3 pm

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 16th**, for West Brookfield's annual Asparagus, Flower and Heritage Festival held on the town common. 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 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 for our church.

The festival runs from 10 am - 3 pm.

What do we do?

Our church participates by offering our **Famous Asparagus Chowder** which is a highlight of the festival. 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. Our kitchen crew works for days to create gallons upon gallons of the delectable treat! Be certain to visit our chowder tent on our church lawn during the festival and enjoy a cup.

Volunteers Needed

BIGGEST AREA OF NEED:

Volunteers are always needed at the end of the day on Saturday as by then the kitchen crew and the tent crew have been working all day, are tired and need help!

CLEAN UP JOBS INCLUDE:

Put away pop-up tents (3)

Clean-up our space on the town common

Carry tables, chairs, coolers, boxes of supplies to Fellowship Hall, basement or shed

Clean-up everywhere on the church lawn.

In addition to Saturday clean up, **Friday evening set-up of tents and tables is needed**. This is moderately heavy work so keep that in mind when thinking about lending a hand. Set-up is generally around 5 pm but the exact time will be determined as we get closer. With enough people the job is generally completed within an hour. Please sign up so we can contact you with the start time.

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

Friday Set up/Saturday Breakdown Crew Signup sheets are posted!

Grocery Donations Needed

Karen Andersen has posted *Donations Needed* sheets on the sliding doors in the Fellowship Hall. Please see what you can offer. You **MUST** sign-up (or call Karen A.) to donate as quantities are exact. In addition, monetary *donations* are always welcome. Let someone else do your shopping!

Please note the details about products.

36 pounds of salted butter (*not* unsalted)

155 cartons chicken broth (32 Oz. or larger, *not*-fat-free or unsalted)

69 Half gallons of Half N Half (*not* fat-free)

Also please note that all donations must be at the church

NO LATER THAN SUNDAY MAY 10TH.

*KEY POINT: when you drop off your donation you **MUST** cross it off of the sign up sheet so the kitchen will know it has arrived. This small gesture on your part saves the kitchen crew time!
Thanks.

Our Menu

Our menu includes AMAZING asparagus chowder, cold drinks and wonderful homemade brownies! Don't miss your chance to get this once-a-year treat!

Where can I get hot chowder? – At the HOT CHOWDER TENT ON THE CHURCH LAWN

Where can I get cold chowder to-go?

**AT EITHER OF THE TWO COLD CHOWDER TENTS:
ONE ON THE CHURCH LAWN AND ONE ON THE COMMON.**

Be sure to take a cold quart or two home for later!

Your Asparagus Festival TENT Committee: Karen Murphy, Linda Barron, Terry Hall, Angela Carville, KITCHEN: Karen Andersen, Wally Hall

Kitchen Crew: JoAnn Bukulski, Debbie Steltzer, Dave Steltzer, Mary Beth Czaja, Mike Murphy, Mike Spencer AND Many Other Hard-Working Volunteers!



Susan Johnson – 5/2
Dave Steltzer – 5/3
Barbara Bengle – 5/12
Jim Haynes – 5/13
Christine Showalter – 5/14
David Fitzgerald – 5/21
Jaclyn von Bleicken – 5/24

Pastor Doug & Karen Williamson – 5/18

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR CHURCH OFFICERS & CHAIRS

Moderator: Dee Blanton – deebanton86@gmail.com
Deacon Chair: Terry Hall – terryle56@yahoo.com
Parish Board: Karen 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

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Doug Williamson – 913-387-9974 – djwnscaa@gmail.com
Office Hours- Wednesday by appointment & Friday 9:30am – 12:00, 1:00 – 2:00pm

Church Secretary – Bonni Holmes – fccwbworship@gmail.com
Office Hours – Friday 8 am – 10 am

Please note – The *Glad Tidings* deadline for June is Tuesday, May 26th

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Website: westbrookfieldcongregationalucc.org
Facebook: First Congregational Church of West Brookfield, UCC
Instagram: Search @firstcongowestbrookfield



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.*

MAY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 Worship 10 am Coffee & Fellowship Parish Board SPECIAL VOTE	4	5	6 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am Bible Study 5:15 – 6:30	7 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	8	9
10  Worship 10 am Sunday School Coffee & Fellowship AF Donation Deadline	11	12 Dismas Farm Potluck dinner at the church 6pm	13 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am Bible Study 5:15 – 6:30pm	14 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	15	16 Asparagus, Heritage and Flower Festival 10-3
17 Worship 10 am Coffee & Fellowship Church Council	18	19	20 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	21 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	22	23
24 Worship 10 am Sunday School Coffee & Fellowship Deacons	25 	26 <i>Glad Tidings Deadline</i>	27 Sharing Cupboard 10 – 11:30 am	28 Sharing Cupboard 7 – 8 pm	29	30
31 Worship 10 am Coffee & Fellowship						



- mayo,
- mustard,
- ketchup,
- cookies,
- crackers
- cereal
- coffee

Thanks to the wonderful community outreach, our shelves are well stocked with other items. Please leave all donations in the donation box at the church entry.

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