

News from the Pews

First Congregational Church/UCC
Ashfield, MA 01330

JUNE 2018

MINISTER'S MOMENT

I was recently able to attend an interim minister-specific seminar sponsored by MACUCC entitled, "Who is Your Neighbor?" The objective was to help transitional ministers and churches learn about "strategies for discovering the longing, needs, burdens, and dreams of your neighbors."

An important component of the gathering was an introduction to the **MissionInsite** database that our conference provides member churches access to, in order to allow them to do some amazing local and regional demographic study. More specifically MissionInsite offers a data-driven window into all sorts of information about what's going on in a geographic region, using the same for metrics that big companies like Google and Facebook gather and use to market and brand with.

In a congregational setting, there are some very useful ways this can help a local church with its planning and decision-making. One way is by providing **information about trends** in a particular region or town or collection of towns and cities. For example, one of the presenters told a story about working with a church in transition that was located in the midst of a 55+ years mature adult settlement community and was trying to "grow" by reaching out to "young families." It might seem obvious from our vantage point that this could prove to be a difficult strategy to choose, but everything this congregation knew about "growth" and "health" pointed to the need to incorporate new, younger people with children into their spiritual community! Problem was, their MissionInsite data quickly revealed there were very few young families with children within a 10 mile radius of the church! Where would these people come from, and how would they learn about the church? Who was really in their community that would have an interest in the church?

Another way in which MissionInsite offers fantastic information to churches, is by helping to **identify ministry opportunities**. The information, available in a variety of different reports, can allow us to answer questions about what communities need and want, which allows the church to ask "Who beyond us shares our goals and vision in order to partner with?" Ministry as an outward - facing, Spirit-guided response to what God is calling us to do, is always about linking gifts and energies up with partners so that the partnership can offer better opportunities for witness and possibility. If we wish to make a difference, getting good information about those who can help our dream become more than a possibility is a real boost.

Moving forward into June and the summer, our **Envisioning** process will be able to incorporate insights gleaned from meal discussions, survey input, and "Pillar" group recommendations. The task of drafting a Church Profile and pulling together a team for a Search Committee is described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter, but the exciting thing is, we will also be able to make some informed choices about the direction our church can choose to pursue.

Many of you have been so active and thoughtful as we've had the chance to gather for meals and share our thoughts. Special thanks goes out to all our hosts who have graciously welcomed church family into their homes! Make sure you continue to be a part of it all during the next first Sunday meeting on June 3rd, where some looks at the feedback we've been receiving will be discussed. The process of tapping into things like MissionInsite is underway; stay tuned for the next part of the story!

<http://missioninsite.com/our-solutions/nconnect/overview>

Pastor Nada

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ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Interim Pastor: Rev. Nada Sellers: church 628-4470. Sunday Morning Worship is at 10am.. Children and Sunday School are concurrent with Worship. The governing body of the church is its members, who traditionally gather the second Sunday of March, June, September and December at 11:30 am for the Monthly Congregational Meeting.

Call or email the church clerk, Wendy Pree (628-3875)

wendypree@gmail.com; or the church moderator, Keith Obert (978-502-9166), obert@aol.com

with any issues/concerns you wish to include on the agenda by the Wednesday preceding the meeting.

FRIENDS AND MEMBERS ARE WARMLY WELCOMED

News from the Pews is published monthly by the Ashfield Parish, First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ; P.O. Box 515; Main Street; Ashfield, MA 01330 (423-628-4470). Deadline for copy is the 24th day of the month and may be emailed to the editor, Victoria Nelson at nelsonvictoria173@gmail.com

June Choir News 2018

Summer Music Plans

On the **first Sunday** of June, July, August, and September, Amy Roberts-Crawford, Organist at First Congregational Church, will lead the **Ashtones** - anyone from Choir and the community interested in singing. Rehearsals for the 10 a.m. services are at 9:15, and everyone is welcome.

Current planning for other Sundays during the summer months is in process, and will include vocal soloists and instrumentalists from both the church and the local area as well as the following:

Sun. June 10, Choir members led by Margery Heins will sing highlights during the morning service from the May Recital Chorus concert.

July 11 Rehearsal and the annual summer Choir potluck will be held.

July 15 is Sanderson Reunion Sunday, and the Choir will sing.

For more information about singing with the Choir, call Margery Heins at 625-8461.

Capital Campaign News

Due to unavoidable delays, First Congregational Church is still anticipating the removal of its 1903 George W. Reed tracker organ for restoration at the Northampton workshop of organ builder William F. Czelusniak. The long-awaited removal process has been rescheduled several times, but is now firmly set to begin Monday, **June 25**, and completed by **July 10**. Onlookers are welcome to view the process - with or without cameras. When the dust settles, it will be a year-plus before the organ is back. A large, temporary curtain will cover the entire area where we now see façade pipes, manuals, and stops. It will take some getting used to, but it's only temporary!

On Sunday, May 13, Mother's Day, also Choir Sunday, First Congregational Church blessed the departing organ as part of this annual musical service. Special music for organ and trumpets as well as anthems sung by the Choir were a major part of the worship service. Included were "Holy is God the Lord," an eight-part movement from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* for Choir and women's quartet; the lively spiritual "I'm Gonna Sing;" and the familiar benediction by Peter Lutkin, "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," subtitled by the composer "A Farewell Anthem."

In the near future, several additional Capital Campaign projects will take place, including renovation of the organ chamber, installation of new and improved chancel lighting, and paving the church driveway. Also planned is a series of meetings by the Façade Pipe Decor Study Group under the leadership of Liz Van Guilder. The first meeting was held in early May, and Study Group members are planning June visits to other Massachusetts organs crafted by George Reed during the early 20th century. They will begin by viewing examples of stenciled façade pipes in Palmer and Charlton. The group plans to bring back pictures for all to see.

The church's Capital Campaign ***Make a Joyful Noise*** continues to be exceedingly grateful to all!!

Margery Heins

From the Trustees

Spring Clean Up

Thanks to all who helped on the rainy, cold Sunday of April 29, we got a few things done around the church to spruce up for spring. Spring has been a bit elusive this year, nevertheless, we feel ready for the warm sun of summer and appreciate your help.

Removal of the Organ

Current plans are for the organ to be removed starting June 25 and completed by July 10. In its absence, we plan to cover the empty chamber with some drapes. Then it will be another 12-15 months before the fully restored organ is reinstalled.

Paving Project

Plans are now being made to pave the driveways and back parking lot during the week of July 9-13. Preparatory grading will most likely take place the latter part of the prior week. And we are managing both the organ removal and paving work so as to avoid interference between the two projects. (Indeed, we have a lot going on, but we think it is all do-able. Gordy Van Guilder, on behalf of the Food Pantry and our church, is very capably heading up the paving project for us, aided by Annie Cheatham and Richard Pree, and we are coordinating with Bill Czelusniak re: the organ work.)

Exterior Painting of the Church

With the return of warm weather the work crew provided by the Sheriff's office has returned to complete the painting, and we expect work to be completed by sometime the week of June 4, if not before. Chris Haddad has been overseeing this work on our behalf, and the church has never looked better!

Church Security

Working with Ashfield's Police Chief, Beth Bezio, we have initiated a review of security and emergency procedures for the church. We are looking into ways we can better handle any medical, fire, or other emergencies should they occur. Though plans are still incomplete, we may hold a few educational sessions at future congregational meetings.

Ted Murray

"Camperships" Available for This Summer!

Summer is almost upon us and with it the season of summer camp.

If you could use some help with camp fees, the church will again be able to provide some "campership" funds for church children. We are able to do this because of a generous anonymous donation to our Mission and Social Justice Ministry.

We may not always be able to fulfill every request or to contribute the full requested amount. That depends on the number and size of the requests we receive. However, we will do what we can.

Please email Diana and Bruce Bennett at bennettb1792@gmail.com or call us at 628-4523 (h) with the following information:

Your Name.

Your phone number and/or email address.

The Camp Name and Camp Fee for each child.

The amount, if any, you are able to contribute yourself, toward the cost. (optional)

We hope to hear by Friday, June 8, at the latest from everyone who needs help with camp scholarships. Please contact us if you have any questions about this program too.

SURVEY NEWS FROM WENDY

We've been on a bit of a roller coaster lately. Just keep your seat belt on. Through this Interim time we've been exploring "Who we are now", "What is God calling us to do", and more .. all very important questions. This summer we are planning on our organ being removed for restoration, having our driveway paved, the outside of our church painted, and hosting plays. Meanwhile, we continue with Sunday morning worship and caring for our beloved community. We are exploring our Faith Formation and the idea of hiring a Sunday School Coordinator; our Outreach and Belonging group talks about setting up a possible "Welcoming Team"; and our Stewardship and Resource Management talks about possibly renting the church more. We've shared very interesting dreams. This Interim period has been both celebratory and hard, but that's how life is - rich and complicated. We need to celebrate each other, all of us. See God in all of us. So, here we go, forward, with God's help and the blessings of all his/her children.

Much love and blessings to all,
Wendy, Clerk

Outreach and Belonging

Members: Dianna Bennett, Stein Feick, John Cordes, Daria Fisk, Ardath Garfield, Jeannine Haas, Susannah Lee, Sherrill Hogen, Rochelle Nahmias, Victoria Nelson, Richard Pree, Barbara Schauer, Carolyn Smith, Dan Trenholm, Dianna Young, Mollie Whittaker

Charge: Will go directly to mission and direction, networking, branding, and how we pursue new linkages and welcome new people in; greeting, gathering info on guests, managing data, staying in touch with UCC resources; keep track of who is missing, and following up; event planning

Some questions: Can we videotape or audiotape our services and post them on the website? Should we form a Welcoming Committee which could be a standing committee? What resources exist in other churches and UCC? Could we form a book group to study *Weird Church*? Focus on foundation question of Who Are We? (See Mariel Kinsey's piece "Thomas and John.") How can this work continue?

Faith Formation

Members: Alex and Joe Osterman, Robin and Alex Wilson, Daria Fisk, Bruce Bennett, Judy Haupt, Leslie Fraser, Caroline Mack, Berkley and Tom McChesney, Alice Barrett, Carolyn Wallace, Satch Hoff

Satch spoke about short range and long range goals: what activities are possible in the short term while we continue to engage in long term thinking about Faith Formation?

Some questions: How to attract and keep families? How to grow a program from where we are? Can we find a coordinator who could help design the program and work alongside a new pastor? How to connect with teens? How to create a service component for teens? How to incorporate kids more into the services, make services more inter-generational? Add faith formation to settled pastor's job? Consider fiscal implications of hiring a Children's Education Director. How to develop Adult Faith Formation? (see Genesis – Spiritual Life and Conference Center)

Stewardship and Resources

Members: Annie Cheatham, Richard Clarity, Leslie Fraser, Marie Fuller, Ann Gibson, Judy Haupt, Ted & Caroline Murray, Richard & Wendy Pree, Holly Westcott, Wayne Wickland

Finances: Review and document our financial practices; professionalize our investment policies; review risk management policies; look at how we can use our financial resources creatively to support our mission

Building: Envision use of the building in the context of the wider community; review mix of paid and gratis use of space; consider improvements to the building to encourage additional use; develop strategies for increasing the use of the building; consider implications of additional use of the building

Congregation: Gather information from congregation through small dinner series and survey; (for dinners, hosts can reach out to those not at this meeting to invite them to dinners); do a skills and gifts inventory of the congregation; review church governance structure to see if we can organize more effectively; consider how the church structure informs our support of projects/our neighbors; research demographic changes, societal trends in churches in general that might affect our church

Introduction of the Communications Team

Next steps: Dinner groups; survey; establish group to work on Profile; establish Search Committee;

Communications Team: Ted Murray, Wendy Pree and Annie Cheatham

Communications Team is here to facilitate process and will apply what they are doing to form a Profile Committee, collating information from surveys, information from dinners, and sifting through all gathered information.

Pauline Productions



Rylan Morsbach who wowed audiences with his one-man performance of Pauline Pro's *Scaramouche Jones* at Three Sisters Sanctuary (2010) returns to Ashfield to perform in Pauline Productions' *I Am My Own Wife* by playwright Doug Wright. This modern classic tells the fascinating true life story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, born Lothar Berfelde, who remarkably survived both Nazi Germany and Soviet controlled Berlin as a transgender woman. Actor Rylan Morsbach portrays over 30 characters in this tour-de-force performance as we follow the many threads that make up Charlotte's life. *"An experience that is intellectual, theatrical, funny, and poignant...and without forgiveness and sentiment unravels the story of one life."* NYTheatre.com.

What: *I Am My Own Wife*, by Doug Wright, Pulitzer-Prize winning play

When: Thurs. May 31 7pm
Friday June 1 and Saturday June 2 at 8pm
Sun June 3 at 4pm, followed by a Discussion
and
Wednesday June 6 and Thursday June 7 at 7pm
Friday June 8 and Sat June 9 at 8pm
(Running Time is 90 minutes)

Where: First Congregational Church of Ashfield, Sanctuary
429 Main St., Ashfield (Route 116 across from Town Hall)

Who: Pauline Productions Theatre Co., Jeannine Haas, Artistic Director
Directed by Trey Morehouse and Starring Rylan Morsbach

Tickets: \$18-22 BrownPaperTickets.com, Tickets at Door are \$25

We are looking for box office help for the June performances.

Artistic Director Jeannine Haas invites audiences to participate in the Discussion after Sunday's matinee. Even if you see the show on another date, you may attend the talk-back which will begin around 5:30 pm on Sunday June 3. The theatre company

Land Day

In 1976, Israel confiscated a large amount of Palestinian land and then killed six of the Palestinians who protested. Each year since, Palestinians have commemorated this sad event as "Land Day."

Palestine has been divided by Israel into the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Most of the inhabitants are the children and grandchildren of refugees from the Israeli occupation of centuries-old Palestinian homelands. Those in Gaza have suffered a harsh Israeli blockade for so long that the U.N. Says Gaza will be completely unlivable by 2020.

This year, Gazans have decided to observe Land Day by holding a massive peaceful march of the people up to the Israeli-built border wall, seeking their justifiable right of return to their homes. This happened on March 30th. They were met by massive numbers of Israeli troops, including 100 snipers.

A few among the 10,000+ Gazan marchers threw some rocks and rolled some burning tires on their own land in the direction of the wall. The Israeli soldiers opened fire. Eighteen Palestinians were killed and over 1500 wounded as a result, many children, many in critical condition, people far from the wall, people shot while praying.

On April 6th, Palestinians peacefully marched again. According to the *Washington Post*, some of them burned tires near the wall, trying to block the view of Israeli snipers. Seven Palestinians were killed; 293 wounded by gunfire, 25 seriously. Hundreds suffered tear gas and other injuries. They plan to march each Friday before noon prayers till May 15th.

The U.S. blocked a U.N. Security Council resolution to condemn the Israeli Army actions. Our tax money is paying for this. Is this really what we stand for?

Bruce Bennett
Ashfield

[Postscript: After seven weeks, over one hundred Palestinians have been killed and over 7,000 have been injured.]

Second Annual Franklin County PRIDE March, June 23, 2018

Actually, there is a whole lot more going on than this. Can you imagine? The full schedule of events is near the end of this article, if you wish to make a whole day of it, but let me start with the part that we do as one group.

Some people call it a 'parade,' but it's officially a 'march,' because we all walk together in support of the rights of, and in celebration with, all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming (LGBTQIA) people throughout this country and the world. Until all are free, none are free.

The March starts at the Greenfield Middle School, 195 Federal St (opposite the Bank of America branch office).

We are asked to assemble there, ready to march, by 11:30 am.

The march starts **at 12 noon** and **heads down Federal St. to the Greenfield Energy Park, at 50 Miles St.**, (off Main St, down beyond the Mesa Verde restaurant).

At the Energy Park, a Rally & Festival will take place from 1 to 3 pm. Some people might want to stay for the Festival after the March and others may need to get back home right away. We might possibly arrange carpooling for either situation, if we plan ahead.

As promised, here is the schedule of events for the whole day:

10am-11am: Gay 5k! Meet at Greenfield Town Common with your rainbow gear on!

12pm-1pm: Franklin County Pride March starting at Greenfield Middle School.

1pm-3pm: Franklin County Pride Rally & Festival at Energy Park in Greenfield. Speakers, Live Music, Vendors, and More!

3pm-6pm: Franklin County Pride Tea Dance sponsored by Hawks & Reed at The Pushkin!

7pm-10pm: Post-Franklin County Pride Concert! Featuring KAKI KING w/s/g Treya, Pamela Means, Wooly Mar at Hawks & Reed!

Contact **Bruce Bennett**
(bennettb1792@gmail.com or 628-4523)

If you are interested or even just curious about the Franklin County PRIDE event. By the way, our church is an official sponsor of Franklin County PRIDE. Check out their website: <https://www.franklincountypride.org> or find them on Facebook. Stay tuned to Wendy Pree's weekly emails and weekly bulletin announcements for more details. We had a great turnout last year for the 1st Annual...Let's step up and do even better! Thanks!

Survey Research and Dinner Gatherings – Huge Success!!!!

The Stewardship and Resource Management pillar group **initiated a draft of a congregational survey** in preparation for establishing a Profile Committee. From that pillar group, Ted Murray, Wendy Prée, and Annie Cheatham presented a draft along with a proposed timeline at the Envisioning session on May 6.

During the week of May 6-13, they worked with others to fine tune the questions, create an online survey format, and prepare paper copies for people without email accounts. By May 13, all members and friends of the church had been notified about the survey, either by email or snail mail. Two boxes were placed in the church to receive paper copies. Over the next two weeks, announcements were made on Sundays, and email reminders encouraged all to respond. As of May 30, 64 people have responded. This exceeds a 40% response which is fantastic! Usually surveys muster only 10-20% response rate.

Special thanks to Leslie Fraser, Ann Gibson, Daria Fisk, Stein Feick, Honey Boyden, Alice Barrett, Betty Lesure, Berkeley McChesney, Phil Schuster and Richard Clarity who helped with survey drafts, online formatting, hard copy mailings, and data entry.

To review and read all responses to the survey, follow this link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1NUJer97sJRGpoQgPrFh-iqCuXGFciugCdyYH9-80VfK/edit?ts=5af06a97#responses>

Also during the last 4 weeks, **six dinners gatherings** were hosted by community members: Murrays (2 dinners), Cheatham/Gibson, Prées, Leslie Fraser and Jack Cavolick, and Clarity/Mack. Three questions were discussed at the dinners: Who are we now? Who is our neighbor? Who is God calling us to become? Forty-four people participated in these events!

Attendees were:

- 1) At the Murrays on April 15 the Stewardship and Resource Management pillar group – Judy Haupf, Holly Wescott, Wayne Wickland, Annie Cheatham, Ann Gibson, Richard Clarity, Wendy Prée and Richard Prée;
- 2) At the Murrays on May 15 -- Stein Feick, Margaret Boone, Caron and Mike Bromberg, Victoria Nelson, Dianna and Bruce Bennett, Nada;
- 3) Cheatham/Gibson: Victoria Nelson, Betty Lesure, Carolyn Wallace, Ardath Garfield, Sherrill Hogen, and Liz Van Guilder;
- 4) Mack/Clarity: Susannah Lee, Rochelle Nahmias, Dan Trenholm, Maryellen Abbatiello, Dianna Young, and Victoria Nelson;
- 5) Prées: Mollie Whittaker, Victoria Nelson, Berkeley and Tom McChesney, Margery Heins, Phil Schuster, Shirley Scott, Keith Obert, Joe and Alex Osterman, Wayne Wickland, and Hetty Startup;
- 6) Fraser/Cavolick: Marie Fuller, Holly Wescott, Judy Haupt, Daria Fisk, Joan Arsenault, Yenna Yi, Deborah Dill, and Hetty Startup

As you can see, Victoria Nelson gets the prize for Most Frequent Dinner Guest! So ask her about her experiences as she has a broad view of the dinner gatherings.

Momentum is building! On Wednesday, May 30, there was a pizza party at the church during which we discussed the answers to the surveys and the notes from the dinner gatherings. Our thoughts will be shared with the Profile Committee members when they are chosen.

A job description for the Profile Committee will be discussed at the Envisioning Meeting after church on **June 3**, and voted on at the **Quarterly Meeting on June 10**. The Profile Committee will get to work in June and July writing a description of our congregation that will be used to attract a settled pastor to our community.

Thanks to all who are participating, and don't be shy. Be like Victoria!!! If you haven't responded to the survey or attended a dinner session, let us hear from you. We want to hear from YOU.

Annie, Ted, and Wendy

THE RELAY FOR LIFE

JUNE 8-9



You are invited to join a **CANCER WALK: THE RELAY FOR LIFE**
Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield, MA

anytime between 5:45 p.m. June 8 until 3 p.m. June 9

*A **FREE** way to support a mission our church has had for many years **and** a way to remember or honor someone who has been touched by cancer (and there are many in our congregation!!)*

A.C.T. (Ashfield Congregational Team) will host a potluck supper at our tent site [D-11 by the Grandstand] on Friday at 5:45. Bring a dish to share and a chair if you wish to sit. Come cheer on cancer survivors (some from our church) when they walk, run or ride in the Survivors Lap at 6 p.m. on Friday.

Then walk anytime from then on until Saturday at 3 p.m.

Currently the fund-raising team members are: Stein Feick, Wayne Wickland, Honey Boyden

Please contact one of us if you wish to make a donation to the American Cancer Society

Stein Feick is the team captain and will be at the Relay from 4:30 until about 11 p.m. on Friday, June 8. If you have any questions, please call Stein at 413-387-9085

The Relay continues through the night and into the next day though, so stop by the Fairgrounds to participate at any time.

There are many fun activities for all ages!

"I love watching the dance performances that happen close by our tent site!"

A moving sea of luminaries line the track and will be lit at 9 p.m.



CALENDAR JUNE 2018

Fri. June 1: *I Am My Own Wife*. Jeannine Haas of Pauline Productions brings us this one-man Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award play written by Doug Wright. Rylan Morsback plays over 30 characters, portraying the life of a transgender woman who survived life under both Nazi Germany and Soviet controlled Berlin. (For more info. / tickets go to brownpapertickets.com)

Sat. June 2: *I Am My Own Wife*, 8 p.m.

Sun. June 3: Worship 10 a.m. Potluck and Envisioning 2018 Meeting following worship.

I Am My Own Wife, 4 p.m.

Tues. June 5: Deacons Mtg. 7 p.m., Trustees Mtg. 7 p.m.

Wed. June 6: TaiChi 9:30, a COA sponsored event.

I Am My Own Wife, 7 p.m.

Thurs. June 7: COA lunch 11:30 a.m. *I Am My Own Wife*, 7 p.m.

Fri. June 8: Church potluck at the Greenfield Fairgrounds /

Relay For Life, 6 p.m.

I Am My Own Wife, 8 p.m. at the church

Sat. June 9: *I Am My Own Wife*, 8 p.m. (last performance)

Sun. June 10: Worship 10 a.m. Potluck and Quarterly Congregational Meeting following worship.

Thurs. June 14: Ladies' Lunch at Elmer's, 1 p.m.

Mission and Social Justice: Potluck 6 p.m.,

Meeting 7 p.m.

Fri. June 15 - Sat. June 16: UCC Tri-state Conference / Annual Meeting

Sun. June 17: Worship 10 a.m.

Tues. June 19: Bubble Up Theology 7 p.m.

Sat. June 23: Franklin County. **Pride Parade**, 1-4 p.m.

Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield

Sun. June 24: Worship 10 a.m.

Mon. June 25: Czelusniak et Dugal start removing the George W. Reed organ for restoration

Thurs. June 28: Ladies' Lunch at Elmer's 1 p.m.

Fri. June 29: **Village Harmony Concert** at the church.

Sat. June 30: Our long time treasurer, **Marie Fuller**, retires.

Party to celebrate her service **July 1** at the

Ashfield Lake (Also our annual Lakeside Service

July 1, 10 a.m. at the Ashfield Lake.)

First Congregational Church / UCC
BOX 519
Ashfield, MA 01330



THE RELAY FOR LIFE

June 8 until 3 pm
June 9

You're invited to the pot luck at 5:45
Franklin County Fairgrounds
Greenfield, MA

