

News from the Pews

"the voice of the congregation"

First Congregational Church/UCC

Ashfield, MA 01330

NOVEMBER 2018

Thanksgiving Message

Once again fall is upon us and we are all looking forward to the holiday season. This is a time that can be especially hard for those who are wondering where they will get the food for their families during this time of celebration as well as for the coming year. Thanks to the many wonderful volunteers and generous donors the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry has been able to help folks do this for the past 30 years.

I would love to be able to report that the need has gone down but that is not the case. In this great country of plenty there are still too many folks who struggle to feed their families. At a time when most families need both parents to work and single parents often hold down 2 jobs, all it takes is the loss of one job, a divorce, a medical emergency with inadequate insurance to cover expenses, a loss of transportation in our area that has no public transportation and the balance can tip. The holidays can be a very stressful time.

With **your** help **we** are able to help. We have incredibly hard working volunteers and the organizational structure to keep the food coming but we need the money to make it happen. In 2017 we distributed 106,519 pounds of food from the Food Bank of Western Mass. Add to that the food we buy from local vendors, local food drives, donations from area farmers and citizens and you have a sizable amount of food. Twice a month we serve 400-450 people with supplemental food, 38% of whom are children.

We were able to get \$126,775 worth of food or about 70% of the food we distributed for no cost through the Food Bank of Western Mass. 59 % of the foods were perishables, fresh veggies, dairy, and meat. We are trying to encourage healthy eating by providing more fresh, local food. Several local farmers and families donate fresh veggies and dairy to help with out effort. St. John's Church has stepped up with their SPIN program that has been donating personal care items.

We are asking again this year for your generous donations so that we can continue this important work. Please give what you can to help others share the spirit of the holidays and get through the winter with enough healthy food. (See donor form page 6)

On behalf of our clients and our volunteers we thank you and wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a healthy, happy New Year.

Pat Thayer

President, Hilltown Churches Food Pantry

IN THIS ISSUE

Pat Thayer	1
Choir News	2
Remembering Marilyn	2
From the Trustees	3
Little Free Library	3
Dancing / Stewardship	3
Daria's Poem	4
Search and Call`	4
Organ Restoration	4
Rev. Margaret Keyser	4
PEW'S NEWS	5
Rosa's Fall Festival	5
Needed Thanks	5
"Sanctuary"	5
Dorie's Photos	5
Deacons Report	6
Council on Aging	6
Happy Birthday	6
Food Pantry Form	6
Calendar	7

ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Ministry - the Congregation
628-4470, home 625-6967.
Sunday morning Worship is at
10:00 am. 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

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editor, **Victoria Nelson** at
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NOVEMBER CHOIR NEWS

The Choir at First Congregational
Church will sing for services on
November 4 and 18. This month Choir
focuses on getting ready for Thanks-
giving Sunday, the Sunday before
Thanksgiving - also Stewardship Sunday. By tradition, the Choir will be
joined by guest singers from the Greenfield Community College Chorus on
Nov. 18. Special music for the day will include "Old One Hundredth" as the
introit, and two anthems for peace: Mendelssohn's "Grant Us Thy Peace,"
and a Gospel number, "Peace by Piece" by Robbie Solomon. Soloists from
from both choirs will be featured. Ted Murray will play trumpet, and Amy
Roberts-Crawford, Organist at the church, accompanies on the piano while
the organ is out for restoration.



At the final rehearsal of the month, **Nov. 28**, the Choir begins rehearsals f
or Advent and Christmas!

Anyone interested in Youth and/or Adult Choir should contact
Margery Heins at 625-8461 or speak to her after church.

NOVEMBER CHOIR SCHEDULE

Sat. Nov. 3 - Set clocks back 1 hour

Sun. Nov. 4 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service

Weds. Nov. 7 - Annual Fall Potluck at the Marshall's;
arrive starting 5:45; rehearsal at 7:15, after supper

Sun. Nov. 11 - No Choir

Weds. Nov. 14 - 7:15 Rehearsal

Sun. Nov. 18 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service
(Thanksgiving Sunday, Stewardship Sunday)

**Tues. Nov. 20 - 6:00 Rehearsal for anyone interested; 7:00 West
County Thanksgiving Service at Trinity Church, Shelburne
Falls.**

Weds. Nov. 21 - No Choir

Sun. Nov. 25 - No Choir

Weds. Nov. 28 - 7:15 Rehearsal

Sun. Dec. 2 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service



"Remembering Marilyn"

GCC Chorus Full Performance - November 11

GCC Chorus will perform a varied program of works by
Monteverdi, Croft, Bach, Pitoni, Mendelssohn, R. Thompson,
Nelson, Carey and R. Solomon at **3 p.m., Sunday, November
11** in Sloan Theater, Greenfield Community College. With
Margery Heins, conductor; Henry Gaida, the group's new
accompanist; soloists from the chorus; and guest
instrumentalists. Admission free.

Margery Heins

From the Trustees:

Meeting with Rev. Margaret Keyser

At the suggestion of the Deacons, the Trustees recently met with Rev. Margaret Keyser to review and discuss the past several months in the life of our church. We all know that this was a hard time: ultimately Rev. Nada Sellers, our Interim Pastor, resigned.

- So what were we to make of it all?
- Are there still outstanding issues of concern?
- Is there more that we need to do during this interim period before finding and calling a new pastor?

Margaret helped us understand more fully the answers to these questions, and she has agreed to facilitate a similar session for the entire congregation on:

Sunday, November 11, from 1-3 PM. We hope that everyone who can possibly be there will join us for this important event.

Parking Lot Progress

Not only is the shed back in place, it is now electrified! The Food Pantry has now completed wiring to power its freezer as well as internal lighting and a small external nightlight. There is even an external service plug on the backside of the shed. And, to remind us not to go over the bank at the back edge of the parking lot, we've installed prominent marker poles. Similarly, smaller "snow sticks" are now along the west (exit) driveway to help guide you past the paved ridge next to the building. During winter weather, drive carefully.

Little Free Library

George Butler has proposed building a small installation that will be in the form of a small weatherproof cabinet mounted on a post near the sidewalk to the east of our entrance driveway. Sponsored by the Missions and Social Justice Committee, it will house a collection of "give and take" books of interest to our members and available to the surrounding community as well. Many thanks to George for his entrepreneurship in bringing this idea and project forward.
New HDTV

As recently demonstrated at our Dance Party on October 20, (see Caroline Mack,s experience below) we have a large new HDTV with sound bar mounted on the back wall of the stage area in our Green Room. This replaces the old, more cumbersome TV and rolling stand we used to have. Jointly sponsored by our Christian Education Committee and Missions and Social Justice Committee, it is funded by recent distributions from our endowment funds. This new installation will be used for educational and missions films, documentaries, and other presentations by groups such as the Citizens Climate Lobby. With the aid of a small camera in our sanctuary, it is also capable of transmitting services for weddings, funerals, and other occasions to an overflow audience in the Green Room.

Thanks to Richard Prée in particular who oversaw the specification, purchase, and installation of the new equipment, we are becoming much more technologically current, and better because of it!

Ted Murray

Dancing Under Starlight...Celebrating Stewardship

Did you ever attend something when you said to yourself, "Oh I wish all of my friends could be here?"

Well, I had that very experience last Saturday night October 20th. The evening started in Friendship Hall with a huge spread of finger foods—enough to fortify us for the impending dance extravaganza that followed a little while later. But before we put our dancing shoes on or took them off, a surprise visitor, the "Mighty Hunter" appeared in his hunting garb right there in Friendship Hall. He was searching and calling for a pastor, he was determined, and we loved his resolve—cheering him on with wild abandon. There was a rumor that the mystery hunter was Ted Murray, but I am not convinced. Then Daria read a fantastic poem written for the occasion. (see next page) Thank you Daria!! Afterward, we ascended the stairs to the Green Room where tiny white lights lighted up the room. Thank you Bruce for transforming our large meeting space to a starlit ballroom! We were met by the exquisite smile of DJ Pree who did an amazing job of playing tunes that got us moving, boogieing, twisting, line dancing, salsa-ing, fox trotting, twirling, singing and we even had some Hallelujah experiences—right there on the dance floor. We rocked and we rolled the Green room -- I bet no one has ever said that before! It was so much fun. I wish everyone reading this had been there. As it turned out there were about 50 of us. The idea of the evening came about at a Stewardship meeting where we wanted to honor and celebrate all the hard work that all of us have done in the past year. After all, we are all stewards of this wonderful church. Hooray!!!



...Caroline Mack

Of course, good stewardship also means financially supporting our church. When we distribute our annual stewardship letter and pledge forms in early November, we hope everyone will prayerfully consider just how important this church is... for us as members, for our friends and neighbors, for our surrounding community, and for clients we serve through the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry.

We are in the midst of searching for a new pastor, and to attract strong candidates, we will need to provide competitive compensation and benefits more nearly in line with modern expectations. At the same time, we need to find ways to adequately pay our staff and meet the rising costs of all the other mission and social justice projects, educational initiatives, and outreach efforts in which we engage.

To support our annual operating costs, we will need a solid base of pledged income for the coming year. We trust that all of us, by working together and doing our part to be generous in our financial support, can ensure that our church will be a spiritual and cultural heart of our community and the surrounding Hilltowns.

Your Stewardship Committee: B. Bennett, A. Cheatham, A. Gibson, C. Mack, R. Prée, T. Murray

Oct 20, 2018: A celebration for our church

Whole heated, full hearted, mostly wide awake,
Pray and resonate together for ourselves and the
whole world's sake. Trying to be fully present, whether
joy or woe Meeting, greeting, each of us. Learning
how to grow. Like Jack and the beanstalk, who knows
how far we'll go. Where spirit leads we follow, trusting
in ourselves. The Lord infuses our inner being...
sometimes nymphs, sometimes elves. Mostly we don't
do magic spells, Like bibbitty, bobbitty, boo, Though in
this Halloween time, some might, But probably not me
or you.

But Taise weaves its magic here, music our balm and
prayer. We've spirit in this congregation... more than
enough to share. And hope combined with work we
find Offers light where otherwise blind. If climate crisis
overwhelms, we rally and lobby together, So rays of
hope ignite the dark and all too stormy weather. Some
fly to far off climes, collecting all their nickels and
dimes. To Palestine they go by plane, to congressional
offices maybe by train And keep it up whether
sunshine or rain. No easy answers, but led by the
heart. Listening to each other's a long-lost art. But in
this church together we gather and each of us does
his or her part.

So now after meetings galore, pot lucks too many to
name, Close to victory we proclaim. We're still
together, holding strong Though the road has been
bumpy and certainly long. Now after so much talk and
thought, Why not party a little with dance steps we
were taught? And even without steps 1,2,3, Let's let
down our hair, banish all frowns and celebrate with a
grand old spree. My spirit's in you and you in me, And
the Lord dwells here, I'm betting you'll agree. Love
your neighbor as yourself, and magic happens ...
You'll see.

Daria Fisk

From the Search and Call Committee:

Hi everyone,

We, the Search and Call gang of eight, have met several
times. On Saturday October 20th we had a wonderful 3 hour
workshop/ retreat with Rev. Nancy Sykes.

During our meetings and our homework we are following the
UCC guidelines spelled out in "guide to Pastoral Search and
Call" and the guidance given to us from both the Profile and
the Survey —in other words, we are listening to the voices
from the congregation. You are with us!!!

We would appreciate it if you would hold us in prayer. We need
your prayers! Thank you.

**Alice Barrett, Margaret Boone, Octavia Crawford, Caroline Mack,
Keith Obert, Richard Pree, Krissy Screiber, Holly Wescott**

November Organ Restoration News

On October 28 the Pipe Decor Study Group met with Liz Van
Guilder, Chair. This was the group's third meeting - to
continue brainstorming on the issue of how to restore our
George Reed facade pipes in a historically correct spirit. The
Study Group has continued to visit other organs, and
everyone at church is encouraged to learn about this
fascinating aspect of organ restoration! To get a start, please
refer to the article in October's NFTP. Both this article, and
photos of original George Reed organ pipe decor - and of
pipe decor by other builders - will be posted on the sanctuary
"Organ Restoration" bulletin board by the time you receive
this newsletter.

Margery Heins,
Committee Member

Special Invitation to our entire Congregation, Sunday, November 11, 1 p.m.

Following our 10 a.m. worship **Sunday, Nov. 11** - and an extended Coffee Hour - there will be a
special event. At 1 p.m. the entire Congregation is invited to meet with the **Rev. Margaret Keyser**, our
consultant, a world-renowned expert from South Africa who specializes in conflict transformation and
reconciliation. This is a time to share any concerns, conflicts, questions, fears, even lingering hurts
that any of us have about what has gone on in the last year...anything at all left over from the
changes that are going on. This will be an all congregation meeting where we want to hear what is
important to all of us. Earlier this year, the MA/UCC recommended that the Deacons meet with
Margaret; the Deacons found her services invaluable as they navigated the troubled waters of the
Interim period. The Trustees met with her in October, and on **Nov. 11th** the congregation will have an
opportunity to meet with her. We hope many church members and friends participate in this unique
opportunity to hear from, share with, and learn from this insightful and helpful teacher. Questions?
Speak with a Deacon.



"At the Ashfield Fall Festival, I raised money for the Heifer Project. Heifer International is a project that addresses hunger and poverty all around the globe by providing livestock to the families who would benefit from an additional food source, and brings awareness to poverty all over the world. I was trying to raise money for Heifer so that they could give this wonderful gift to even more families. I brought my family's chickens and our dog Korky to attract attention over to where I was. I let people hold and touch the chickens, as some people had never before even seen a chicken! I told passersby about Heifer and what the work they were doing was and why it was important. A lot of people got really interested and said that they would make a bigger goal on line. That was wonderful, too. My goal was to raise \$240. That is enough to buy two pigs! I am proud to say though, that I raised \$260!!! Thank you to you all who did get a chance to donate, and if you did not, I really encourage you to do so."
Thanks!-Rosa



Needed/Thanks:

Thanks to Barbara Schauer for donating a microwave to the church.

Thanks to Hetty Startup for taking care of our church Facebook page these past few years; and thanks to Alice Barrett for agreeing to now take over that job.

Thanks to John Cordes for taking care of our "Wayside Pulpit" (the sign attached to the right front of the church) these past 3 years. Now needed: someone to take over that (fun!) job.

Thanks to all who helped with Fall Festival, with our net proceeds exceeding our budgeted amount.

Thanks to Chris Haddad for repairing the door to our kitchen entrance, and to the Food Pantry, for electrifying the "shed."

Remember this?

"Lord prepare me
to be a Sanctuary
pure and Holy
tried and true
and with thanksgiving
I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You."

LET'S SING IT!

Rogue's Gallery with thanks to Dorie Wojcik



Deacons Report

At the monthly Deacons meeting, we planned out the people who will lead us in Sunday services. We came to an agreement with Nancy Sykes and Ann Hallstein to be our service leaders three out of four Sundays through the winter. We are very grateful for their offering to do this. We and the Trustees are negotiating the terms of their service. This plan will leave opportunities for members of our congregation to lead services.

On Advent Sunday of Peace, December 9, Sarah Pirtle will lead our service.

As always, we prayed for people in congregation who are in special need, and sent cards to let them know we are praying for them.

We discussed the congregation's meeting with Margaret Keyser and our congregational bi-monthly meeting, and are looking forward to both.

Judy Haupt will serve as deacon for November services.

No cookies were served.

Alice Barrett



COUNCIL ON AGING

Turkey dinner
November 1st
11:45

Pot luck - turkey, dessert
and refreshments
provided.

Bring your favorite
Thanksgiving side dish!
RSVP to Charlotte
625-6270

- 1 Barbara Curtis
- 3 Brenda McGovern
- 4 John Hoffman
- 6 Caroline Mack
- 9 AJ LaBelle Noyes
- 12 Joanie Schwartz
- 13 John Cordes
- 14 Ann Gibson
- 17 Mae Rice Lesure
- 21 Scott Noyes
- 23 Eli Ahrensdorf
- 25 Avery Crawford
- 25 Erin Mansur
- 28 Daniel Bennett
- 30 Eben LaBelle
- 30 Sarah Pirtle

FOOD PANTRY DONOR FORM

HILLTOWN CHURCHES FOOD PANTRY PO BOX 161, Ashfield, Ma. 01330	
	Amount
Enclosed	
Names _____	\$200
Address _____	\$100
_____	\$ 75
Phone _____	\$ 50
E-Mail _____	\$ 25
Other	

_____ I/We wish to remain anonymous	

CALENDAR November 2018

Saturday, November 3rd - Daylight Saving Time Ends clocks back

Sun. Nov. 4: Choir 9 a.m. Worship 10 a.m. led by Pastor Nancy Sykes, followed by Coffee Hour and our **Congregational Meeting**.

Tues. Nov. 6: VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

Tues. Nov. 6: Deacons and Trustees meet at the Murray's, 7 p.m.
Food Pantry 3-6

Wed. Nov. 7: TaiChi 9:30 a.m.
Choir potluck at the Marshalls' 5:45 p.m.
Rehearsal 7:15 p.m.

Thurs. Nov. 8: Mission and Social Justice. Potluck 6 p.m., Meeting 7p.m.

Sun. Nov. 11: Worship 10 a.m. led by Rev. Ann Hallstein. Extended Coffee Hour followed by a unique opportunity: All Congregational Meeting with Rev. Margaret Keyser, 1p.m.

Tues. Nov. 13: Bubble Up 7 p.m.

Wed. Nov. 14: TaiChi 9:30 a.m. Choir rehearsal 7:15 p.m.

Sat. Nov. 17: Memorial Service for Albert Pieropan, 1 p.m.

Sun. Nov. 18: Choir 9 a.m. Thanksgiving Sunday / Worship 10 a.m. led by Pastor Nancy Sykes.
Franklin Cty. Interfaith Thanksgiving Service,
Greenfield Common, 2 p.m.
Ashfield Needles & Threads (ANTS) Material Exchange
at the church 2-4 p.m.

Tues. Nov. 20: West County Thanksgiving Service at Trinity Church,
Shelburne Falls, 7 p.m.
Arrive at 6 p.m. if you'd like to be part of the choir.
Food Pantry 3-6

Wed. Nov. 21: TaiChi 9:30 a.m.

Thurs. Nov. 22: THANKSGIVING

Sun. Nov. 25: Worship 10 a.m. led by Rev. Jenna Smith.
Ashfield Community Band rehearsal at church, 4 p.m.

Wed. Nov. 28: TaiChi 9:30 a.m. Choir rehearsal 7:15 p.m.

Sun. Dec. 2: Worship 10 a.m. Communion Sunday

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
BOX 515
ASHFIELD, MA 01330



vote vote vote vote
tuesday, november 6th