

News from the Pews

"the voice of the congregation"

First Congregational Church UCC

Ashfield, MA 01330

MARCH 2019

FOUNDATION

"Start children off on the right path.

And even when they are old, they will not turn away from it."

-Proverbs 22:6

Foundation: *the lowest load-bearing part of a building, typically below ground level.*

There is no doubt that the tradition I was trained in as a child had many flaws. However, the load-bearing part of that training has stayed with me for six decades: the knowledge that we are all children of God who deserve love and justice, and the desire to know God.

Our Faith Formation group, parents, and the deacons have been wrestling with this goal for our Sunday School for quite some time. While the Search and Call Committee continues its work, we have a plan for this Spring and Summer. After reviewing a number of Sunday School curriculum, the top favorite is: "A Joyful Path".

Sue Fuller (Marie's daughter) teaches Mindful Movement for children. She is highly regarded in our community, and agreed to come two Sundays a month to lead our school. She will integrate her mindfulness work with "A Joyful Path". Our wildly kid-popular Mae Rice-Lesure will continue each Sunday.

Lest adults feel neglected: "Bubble-Up Theology" continues to build on foundations for adults every month. And a number of people have said they are interested in a bible/psalm study group in the future. Construction continues.

The journey that started from my Sunday School days has been a wild ride. I have never been afraid to explore, because the foundation has been strong. Our church desires that same foundation for our children.

Construction workers, unite!

Alice Barrett, deacon

For information about "A Joyful Path": progressivechristianity.org then click on "curriculum".

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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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24th day of the month and
may be emailed to the
editor, Victoria Nelson at
nelsonvictoria173@gmail.com
nelsonvictoria173@gmail.com**

March Choir News

Let's hope that, during the remainder of winter, we do not have to cancel any more Choir rehearsals! The Wednesday Choir rehearsal schedule has been close to impossible due to weather up until now! Nevertheless, Choir offerings on Sunday mornings in February have been enthusiastically received by the congregation.

On March 3, the last Sunday before Lent, the Choir is planning glorious music by Haydn and Vivaldi with Ted Murray, trumpet, and Youth singers.

On March 10, the first Sunday in Lent, the Choir will sing Renaissance music.

On March 17, don't miss "Irish Blessing" by contemporary English composer Bob Chilcott, and

on March 31 the Congregational and Episcopal Choirs will sing jointly at St. John's.

March Choir Schedule

Sun. March 3 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service

Weds. March 6 - Note time change - 7:45 Rehearsal

Sat. March 9 - Set clocks ahead 1 hour

Sun. March 10 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service

Weds. March 13 - 7:15 Rehearsal

Sun. March 17 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service

Weds./Sun. March 20/24 - No Choir

Weds. March 27 - 7:15 Rehearsal

Sun. Mar. 31 - 9:00 Rehearsal and 10:00 Service at St. John's

-Margery Heins



From the Trustees...

Missing Tree Trunk!

We believe that sometime between Friday night, February 15, and Saturday morning, February 16, the large maple tree trunk in the front of the church was removed, but nobody seems to know who took it. If you see it somewhere, please let Nancy Hoff know. She had planned to have it converted into wooden planks for a church related project in memory and honor of Al Pieropan.

Organ Chamber Work

We've now finished refurbishing the large open chamber at the front of the sanctuary that houses our organ. As you can see, it is now completely paneled in Masonite sheathing to better reflect sound and improve the acoustics of the organ when it is reinstalled. By painting the walls and ceiling white and the floor light gray, we've created a brighter space. Next, we will install LED lighting to better illuminate the chamber, and that will make it especially well lit as an aid in future tuning and routine service calls.

Sanctuary Lighting

On Sunday evening, February 24, Jeannine Haas, Richard Pree, and Ted Murray met with Wade Clement, our electrician, to finalize plans for the lighting of the chancel and choir area. Currently planned are two vertical and three horizontal arrays of track lighting. Each track will have two control channels and dimmer switches that will permit a variety of lighting effects. In combination, the 5 arrays should enable us to achieve good lighting effects for both church services and different types of performances, such as concerts, plays, and panel discussions.

March 10 Congregational Meeting

Please plan to stay for our next Congregational Meeting after church services on **Sunday, March 10**. Part of that meeting will be devoted to a continuation of our discussion about how we might use any "overage" funds from our successful capital campaign. Current projections show that we may have as much as \$18,000 available after all pledges are paid in and all

current contracted work is completed. But what to do with such funds?

Currently, these are the projects and costs under consideration:

- Decorating the organ façade pipes (\$1,900-\$42,200, depending on option)
- Energy efficient windows for Friendship Hall (\$12,000-\$15,500, per 3 proposals)
- Remodel a portion of the kitchen (~\$10,000)
- Additional sanctuary lighting for performances (\$6,000-\$7,000)
- Restored Steinway baby grand piano for sanctuary (\$6,500)

Clearly, we can not do all these things, but conceivably we might do more than one project, depending on which combination, if any, was of interest, and for which we had sufficient funds.

With respect to the different pipe decoration options, Bill Czelusniak, who is overseeing the restoration of the organ, wrote in an email: "[We are not] wedded to any particular design, décor, or option before you. Several ideas remain attractive and appear to be effective to the final result, as well as "affordable".

[However]...I want to express that our collective corporate opinion here is that your Congregation ultimately **MUST** approve and support **SOME** form of pipe-façade redecoration during the organ restoration itself. ...when a huge amount of money is spent to restore a pipe organ, its function, and its sound, there must be some external and visual symbol displayed of the interior work done, lest folks not realize what has happened, or even that anything has happened."

More of what he has written, and Frequently Asked Questions (with answers!) about all the different options are available in handouts at the bulletin board in lower Friendship Hall. Please take some of these materials to read prior to March 10. We want as many people as possible to be involved in our decision making. It is the "congregational way."

Ted Murray

Congregational Meeting Sunday, March 10

Following worship and coffee hour, we will gather for our March Congregational Meeting. Much business of the church will be covered, including preparing for our May meeting, when we'll discuss and vote on our "overages" - monies hopefully left over after we've completed all the other things we had hoped to do with our Capital Campaign funds. There are several options and a limited amount of money, @ \$18,000, so we need to choose wisely. Check out the information posted on the downstairs bulletin board - the one closest to the kitchen - and pick up information from the various packets.

Greenfield Community College Chorus
presents a program of
Baroque and Classical Choral Music

Margery Heins, Conductor; Henry Gaida, Accompanist
With soloists from the chorus

Preview Concert: **Friday, March 8**, 12:15-12:45 pm.
Sloan Theater, GCC

Music by Purcell, Vivaldi, Gluck, Mozart, Schubert,
and Latrobe

Free concert - come relax and enjoy the music!

St. John's Episcopal and the First Congregational Church: Two Spiritual Houses of Worship in Ashfield

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

We, the members and friends of St. John's Episcopal Church and the First Congregational Church of Ashfield, resolve to grow in love and deepen our shared commitment to the Gospel. We will explore opportunities for more collaboration between our two congregations.

Background: Congregations of Christian worshippers have been gathering in Ashfield for 256 years. The founding of the First Congregational Church in 1763 made it possible for the Town of Ashfield to be incorporated. And in 1828, St. John's Episcopal Church was consecrated. The two churches have collaborated to create Fall Festival, the *Ashfield News*, the Hilltown Churches' Food Pantry, Vacation Bible School, NuDay Syria, Share the Warmth, and many other projects. Throughout history, both churches have been led by people who have tried to follow Jesus's call to love God and love their neighbors as themselves.

Today St. John's Episcopal and the First Congregational Church have opportunities to work together to serve a population that is aging and communities that are changing. Ashfield has had a second-home population for many decades, and that will continue as Franklin County becomes more and more like Berkshire County where over 50% of properties are held by out-of-town owners. On the aging front, Ashfield has the second oldest population in Franklin County after Heath. The average age of our region's residents is over 60.

Even though our communities are home to many people who follow spiritual traditions other than Christianity (a Buddhist sangha meets weekly in Ashfield, for example), there are no other houses of Christian worship in Ashfield. And so the gatherings at each church demonstrate a commitment of two communities to deepen their spiritual lives by being together in prayer, in song, in reflection on teachings of the Bible. This weekly witness has power. At a time of secularism, of the loss of community, of international and national turmoil, a gathering of people to pray is a profound statement of hope.

Future Possibilities: We would like to see more collaboration between the two churches. Shared worship at least twice a year, perhaps more often. We would like to offer joint retreats, book groups, field trips, visits to other churches. We would like to share mission work through Cathedral of the Light, the SPIN and Share the Warmth programs with the Food Pantry, and other ideas that will benefit those in need in Franklin County.

Current Status: This resolution has been passed by St. John's Vestry. Our Church Council is recommending that the congregation discuss and vote on it at the Congregational Meeting on March 10.

Bruce Bennett and Annie Cheatham have represented our church in this discussion. If you want more information, direct questions to either of them.

Prayer given at the Women's Retreat:

Loving Kindness May I be well, loving and peaceful. May all beings be well, loving and peaceful. May I be at ease in my body, feeling the ground beneath my seat and feet, letting my back be long and straight, enjoying breath as it rises and falls and rises. May I know and be intimate with body-mind, whatever its feeling or mood, calm or agitated, tired or energetic, irritated or friendly. Breathing in and out, in and out, aware, moment by moment, May I be attentive and gentle toward my own discomfort and suffering. May I be attentive and grateful for my own joy and well-being. May I move toward others freely and with openness. May I receive others with sympathy and understanding. May I move toward the suffering of others with peaceful and attentive confidence. May I continually cultivate the ground of peace for myself and others and persist, mindful and dedicated to this work, independent of results. May I know that my peace and the world's peace are not separate; that our peace in the world is a result of our work for justice. May all beings be well, happy and peaceful. Amen!

By Natalie Goldberg, version by Maylie Scott

First Congregational Church of Ashfield along with Pauline Productions

PRESENT:

The 2nd ANNUAL HILLTOWN VARIETY SHOW
Saturday April 27 at 7pm

COME BE A PART OF IT!

"Show us what you've got"(aka audition--but we just need to know what will be in the show)

Sat. March 23 11am-12:30 pm

Thurs. March 27 6:30-8 pm

Dress Rehearsal: Friday April 26th 6pm-10pm
SHOW Saturday April 27th 7pm

For more info and to reserve a spot:

Paulinelive@gmail.com or call Jeannine at 413-588-1534

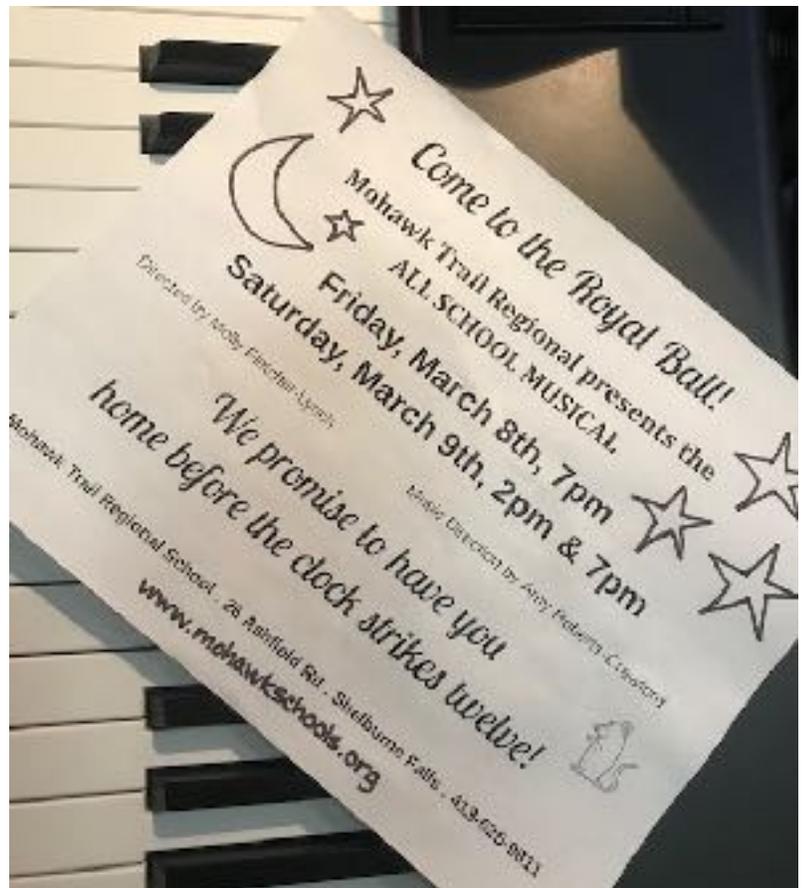
**All talents welcome from reading a poem, puppets, improv,
stand-up, juggling, playing an instrument etc.**

MAPLE FEST

March 16 8-1



All are gearing up for the best Maple Fest ever. Hetty has been working on getting contributions from local businesses for the Maple Fest Drawing, kitchen and dining room personnel are being lined up. Blueberry pancakes, sausage, maple products, a chance to win the drawing and more.



Team ACT is hosting a benefit for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life

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"SPELLEBRATE FOR A GOOD CAUSE"

Whoever you are, however you spell, you are welcome here!

Saturday, March 23
1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
First Congregational Church in Ashfield

Pre-registration suggested
call: 413-387-9085

Three full-year SCRABBLE® games will be played, with approx. 15 minute intervals between games.
Suggested donation is \$10.
Door Prizes! Yummy Snacks!

PETE SEEGER concert

Saturday, March 2, 7p.m.

Vermont Maple Walnut Pie

one unbaked 9" pie shell

1/2 c. light brown

sugar, packed

1/3 c. soft butter

3/4 c. granulated

sugar

3 eggs

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 c. maple syrup

1/2 c. cream

1 c. walnuts, broken in to pieces

1 teaspoon vanilla



Cream butter, add brown sugar and granulated sugar. Cream thoroughly together. Add eggs, beat well. Add salt, syrup and cream. Cook over low flame 5 min. stirring constantly. Add walnuts and vanilla. Pour into unbaked shell. Bake one hour at 350 degrees. Serve warm.

Lenten events:

Wed., March 6 / Ash Wednesday: Rev. Leslie Fraser will lead an Ash Wednesday service, 7-7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. All are invited.

Tues. March 26: West County Churches will gather for a simple meal of soup and bread at 6 p.m. at the Shelburne Center UCC Church (Rte. 2) and then worship together at 7 p.m. in a service of reflection. All are invited to attend.

Sun. March 31: On this fourth Sunday of Lent, we will worship WITH and AT St. John's Church, 10 a.m. Our choir will be joining their choir as we join in worship with our sister congregation. (Note: there will be NO service at our church that Sunday.)

Sun. April 14: Palm Sunday Worship 10 a.m.

Thurs. April 18: Maundy Thursday. We'll join for a potluck meal at our church at 6 p.m. and gather for a Service of Tenebrae at 7:30 p.m., led by Rev. Leslie Fraser.

Fri. April 19 / Good Friday. The sanctuary will be open for quiet reflection and prayer from 2-6 p.m.- ending with a period of "Bubble Up" / sharing from 5-6 p.m. We would like to display images of Jesus in the sanctuary for this event. (Please contact one of the deacons if you have a painting or image of Jesus you'd like to share.)

Sun. April 21/ Easter Sunday. Sunrise Service and pancake breakfast at Joe Giard's/Shirley Scott's in Upper Buckland. Time to be determined.

Worship at church 10 a.m.

Please let Wendy Prée (wendypree@gmail.com) or (413.628.3875) know if you'd like to order an Easter Lily, who you'd like it to be in honor of / in memory of, number of plants, etc.

Many Thanks from Share the Warmth

The Share the Warmth Committee thanks our church and all those in our congregation who support us with generous donations of warm clothing and bedding throughout the winter. Everything is displayed and given away FREE to any Food Pantry patrons from October through February. By the time this reaches you, we will be done for the year. The church also considers this a part of their local mission and gives us the Green Room every other week for our distributions.

Thank you very much!

Holly Wescott, Jude Elbaum, Joan Arsenault, Jamie Young, and Caroline Murray

Council on Aging

Thursday, March 7th

Luncheon 11:30 a.m.

Soup and Bread
Dessert and Beverages
provided

Calendar March 2019



MARCH

- 1 Gordy VanGuilder
- 2
- 3 Anna Wilson
- 4 (Mimi Pieropan)
- 5
- 6 Susannah Lee
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11 Lydia Bennett
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15 Daria Fisk
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23 Nathan Morrison
- 24 Ted Murray
- 25
- 26 Benjamin Lizotte
- 27 Sebastian Demarino
- 28 Abigail Schreiber
- 29
- 30
- 31 Deb Lapollo

First, we are grateful to be blessed with the gifts of Rev. Ann Hallstein and Pastor Nancy Sykes, who continue to provide worship leadership the majority of our Sunday morning services while we continue through this Interim Period. Second, we celebrate Sue Fuller joining our Sunday School team. Sue will teach a combination of *Mindful Movement* and our church curriculum *Joyful Path* the first and third Sundays of each month throughout the school year, with Mae Rice-Lesure being her assistant on those particular Sundays and leading Sunday School on the alternate Sundays.

Sat. March 2: Family Sing Pete Seeger Concert 7 p.m. Come and enjoy the songs that Pete Seeger made famous, as sung by several of our local musicians including Lorre Wyatt, Sarah Pirtle, Charlie King, Elias Stegeman, Rosa Stegeman, and more. Donations welcome.

Sun. March 3: Choir 9 a.m. Worship 10 a.m. led by Pastor Nancy Sykes. Sunday School / Mindful Movement with Sue Fuller and Mae Rice Lesure.

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

Wed. March 6: TaiChi 9:30-10:30, a COA sponsored event. Ash Wednesday Service in the Sanctuary, led by Rev. Leslie Fraser, 7-7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal 7:45 p.m. (Note time change due to Ash Wed. service.)

Thurs. March 7: Council on Aging Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.

Sat. March 9: Citizens' Climate Lobby 12-2 p.m. SET CLOCKS AHEAD 1 HR

Sun. March 10: Choir 9 a.m. Worship 10 a.m. led by Rev. Ann Hallstein. Mae Rice Lesure leading Sunday School.

Congregational meeting to follow worship.

Tues. March 12: Food Pantry Distribution 3-6 p.m.

Wed. March 13: TaiChi 9:30-10:30, a COA sponsored event. Choir rehearsal 7:15 p.m.

Thurs. March 14: Mission and Social Justice 3-4:30 p.m.

Sat. March 16: Pancake Breakfast and Maple Fest 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Come on down to the church and bring your friends and your appetite. This is an "all you can eat" breakfast, featuring local maple syrup and blueberries, fresh pancakes and scrambled eggs, coffee and OJ \$10.

Sun. March 17: Choir 9 a.m. Worship 10 a.m. led by Holly Wescott. Sue Fuller and Mae Rice Lesure leading Sunday School / Mindful Movement.

St. Patrick's Day

Wed. March 20: TaiChi 9:30-10:30, a COA sponsored event.

FIRST DAY OF SPRING !

Sat. March 23: Variety Show Audition 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
(Variety Show: April 27, 7 p.m.)

Sat. March 23: Scrabble Tournament 1-4 p.m. a benefit for the American Cancer Society. Call 413.387.9085 to pre-register.

Sun. March 24: Rev. Ann Hallstein to lead our 10 a.m. worship service, Amy Roberts-Crawford to provide our music, Mae Rice Lesure to lead our Sunday School.

Tues. March 26: Food Pantry Distribution 3-6 p.m. West County Lenten Service at Shelburne Center Church, Rte. 2. Gather for simple meal of soup/bread 6 p.m., Service of Reflection 7 p.m. All are invited.

Wed. March 27: Choir rehearsal 7:15 p.m.

Thurs. March 28: Variety Show audition 6:30-8 p.m.
(Variety Show: April 27, 7 p.m.)

Sun. March 31: Joint service at St. John's, 10 a.m. with our choir joining their musicians.

Note: There will be no service at the First Congregational Church this Sunday. We are worshipping *with* and *at* St. John's.

First Congregational Church UCC
P.O.Box 519
Ashfield, MA 01330



Happy St.Patrick's Day !



FIRST DAY OF SPRING
MARCH 20th

