

# *News from the Pews*

*"the voice of the congregation"*

First Congregational Church UCC

Ashfield, MA 01330

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

Dear Friends,

You may be wondering what the Search and Call Committee has been doing since you voted to approve our recommendation of David Jones as our new minister. No, sipping champagne is not on the agenda yet. No, we will not leave David on the church doorstep with a "Good Luck" card. We will be meeting with him to discuss his first week with us, the first services. We will go over the committees and specific people (treasurer, music department, etc.) he will want to meet with shortly. We want to guarantee that he doesn't work hours over his commitment to us, and he can ease in to our church family.

David will be able to choose his Pastoral Support Committee, and we will help out until he is able to do so.

As much as possible, we will help David and Caity ease into their new home.

All of us, church members and friends, will help with all of these things. We just don't want to set him out onto Ashfield Lake in a reed basket.

After that, we will invent reasons to meet. Our work together has been a wonderful, sacred experience. Thank you all for your support and encouragement and trust. It has been an honor to serve on this committee, and to be part of this congregation.

*Alice Barrett* for the **Search and Call Committee**

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## ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Pastor David Jones 628-4470  
[onesdavidmclen@gmail.com](mailto:onesdavidmclen@gmail.com)

Sunday morning Worship is at 10: a.m. 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 a.m. for the Monthly Congregational Meeting.

Call or email the church clerk, Wendy Pree (628-3875), [wendypree@gmail.com](mailto:wendypree@gmail.com); or the church Moderator, Keith Obert (978-502-9166), [obert@aol.com](mailto: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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**Deadline for copy is the 24th day of the month and may be emailed to the editor, Victoria Nelson at [nelsonvictoria173@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonvictoria173@gmail.com).**

## ***New Beginnings Prayer:***

*Ever-present God, we have an abundance of gratitude for the light and grace you have given us in the past few months. We are especially aware of this as we are in the midst of the beginning again feeling in the weeks and months ahead. We have no intention of going into this very important time in our congregation's history without your guidance.*

*We know that you love us as we are, and that you don't want us to stay that way. We agree!*

*Help us to accept the mystery of your divine generosity and let us use your gifts for the health of our congregation going forward. As Nancy Sykes taught us in a recent service, using Genesis 4: 1-4, when we do our best, you, God, provide the promise of more love which fortifies our ability to be of service. She also taught that when we are in an unfamiliar land (or circumstance), there are angels to guide us. We can both **find** those angels and **be** those angels!*

*We pray for David and Caity's safe travel in the days ahead. We are so excited that they are joining us. Help us to see how we can be angels to them.*

*Thank you for all of these blessings,  
Amen*

**Caroline Mack**

## ***Choir News***

September means the start of a new Choir season! In the Choir we don't like to see the end of summer, but we do love to get together to sing!

The Choir schedule for September is listed below. Anyone interested in joining Choir is invited to "Come and Sing" on Sunday, Sept. 8 (no previous rehearsal is required,) or call Margery Heins, Choir Director, at 625-8461 for more information about Adult and/or Youth Choir.

Sunday, Sept. 1 will be the last "Ashtones" Sunday of the summer, when everyone is invited to sing with this more informal group under the direction of Amy Roberts-Crawford, Pianist and Organist. Rehearsal will be 9:15 for the 10:00 service.

### **September Choir Schedule:**

**Sun. 9/1 - 9:15 Rehearsal (Ashtones); 10:00 Service**

**Sun. 9/8 - 9:00 Rehearsal (Choir starts); 10:00 Service**

**Weds. 9/11 - 7:15 Rehearsal**

**Sun. 9/15 - 9:15 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service**

**Weds. 9/18 & Sun. 9/22 - No Choir**

**Weds. 9/25 - 7:15 Rehearsal**

**Sun. 9/29 - 9:00 Rehearsal; 10:00 Service**

**-- Margery Heins**

## From the Trustees

**George Howes Fund.:** After considerable discussion, the Trustees have recommended, and the Church Council has endorsed, the following motion to be presented at our next Congregational Meeting: That we transfer the George N. Howes Fund (currently about \$1,500) to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund for use as the Pastor sees fit, including the spending of both interest and principal.

As currently specified, the Howes fund is restricted to using only its small amount of interest to augment the minister's discretionary fund, and since the fund was started with \$1,000 from the General Fund, little, if any, use has been made of it. We would rather see it deployed as originally intended in a more significant way than it has been used to date.

**Small Dinner Groups:** With the arrival of our new settled pastor, we are planning a number of small dinner parties. They will give many of us the opportunity to welcome David and Caity more personally. The informal gatherings also will give us a chance to reflect together on our church's future and its priorities. How do we make our church more welcoming to others? Are there ways we can improve faith formation and deepen our spiritual lives? How might we serve and interact with our surrounding communities through mission work? And so forth. Lots of food for thought...to be shared over food during our meals together.

### September 11th - An Opportunity to Reflect

In remembrance of the nearly 3,000 people who perished on September 11th, 2001, our church will be open from 8:30am to 10:30am for meditation and prayer. The church bells will ring at the times of the attacks and candles will be available to light for the victims.

Please join me in honoring these departed souls. May they never be forgotten.

Betty Lasure



## First Congregational Church of Ashfield celebrates 50 years of Fall Festival!

It's true! This amazing Festival has been going for 50 years with much thanks to the two churches in Ashfield who started this so long ago. The First Congregational Church will be selling Dean's Beans - Fair Trade Coffee - with our own church logo *FallFest 50th* during the Festival. Make sure to check it out (available upstairs in the church during the Festival).

Also, as part of Fall Festival, we will hold a large Tag Sale in a tent behind the church and sell *Vintage Treasures* upstairs. So, we need items to sell in both categories! As you sort through your house, barn, closets, etc.... please consider donating items to the church. We are looking for quality items for the Tag Sale and *Vintage Treasures* Sale (items that are of greater value than you might find in an ordinary Tag Sale - think Collectibles, "Antiques", etc.)

We thank you for your continued generosity and support of the church.

However, there's a catch to what we are asking for:

Please, NO TV's, electronics, computers, printers, etc. Furniture is Ok only IF you promise to take it back if it doesn't sell (write your name and contact info. on the article). Also No clothing, No books. Recycle these items or give them to someone else. If something is for the Vintage Treasures, please label your item, note your name and suggested price, if possible.

We aim to sell items that are clean, functional, and useful - with the hope of *selling* the vast number of items that are donated - not dealing with many, many items that remain after the Festival is over, so we ask for your discretion.

The shed behind the church will be open starting the Sunday before Fall Festival (10/6/19).

So much thanks to you and our wider community.

Wendy Prée, clerk

**TAG**  
**SALE**

## C.R.O.P. HUNGER WALK TIME – Cool nights, pleasant days...yes!

### Sunday, October 13th

The CWS/CROP Hunger Walks are the nation's oldest and largest citizen events raising money to feed the hungry. Money raised through CROP Hunger Walks goes for food, clean water, and related projects world-wide.

CROP began in 1947, under the wing of Church World Service (CWS), which was founded in 1946. Its primary mission was to help Midwest farm families share their grain with hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia. The Walks were started in Atlanta in the '60s, and have become an international phenomenon.

CWS partners with local people in the areas of need, and the projects are managed and sustained by people local to those areas. Fully 25% of the money raised in each CROP Hunger Walk stays in the area of the walk. That means 25% of the money we raise each year in Franklin County STAYS here in the Pioneer Valley, shared by a varying list of five local groups which provide services to local people in need. Often our own Hilltown Churches Food Pantry is one of the local groups which will receive a share of CROP Hunger Walk money.

CWS does more than food aid too. One example: refugee resettlement. We learned of Maher, his wife, and four children. After living under constant bombing for three years in their native Syria, they made it to Jordan, and then, with the help of CWS, to Pennsylvania. Now Maher is working on opening his own restaurant, and everyone is settling in.

This year, the Franklin County CROP Hunger Walk will be hosted by the First Congregational Church of Sunderland. The Walk will happen on Sunday, October 13th.

Yes, Sunday, October 13<sup>th</sup> is also the Sunday of Ashfield Fall Festival (FF). This never happened on FF weekend before, to our knowledge...always the weekend after FF, or occasionally two weeks after.

We tried to get them to change it but no luck. At least, we're told this fluke shouldn't happen again.

We're crushed, because we want to raise funds for this good cause, which is part local, and we love to take part in these Walks every year. [Last year we raised \$2870, third highest team total in the County, and we had eight human walkers (a ninth was busy attending the birth of a grandchild!) and one canine.]

We asked for everybody's input for what to do with this dilemma. What we heard most was that we can't do the Walk, because we need "all hands on deck" for Fall Festival. But, we can still raise money, as long as it doesn't pull us away from FF prep.

Most of the money we raised last year was online, but, believe it or not, that is very labor-intensive. The old-fashioned way brings in less money, but it takes up a lot less overall time. So that's what we're doing.

For those who would like to help collect donations, it's easy...really! Even easier than it used to be! Let's talk!

For those who would like to give, come down to coffee hour and see anyone who has a donation envelope. Who might that be? Find out during announcements. Check out Wendy's weekly email broadcasts.

By the way, CWS paperwork no longer is set up to record pledges of money to be given later. Just give! Also, for those who would like a receipt, they suggest giving by personal check. Questions? Please contact us.

Thanks from your "Ashfield UCC" team Walk co-chairs!  
**Bruce Bennett:** 628-4523 [bennettb1792@gmail.com](mailto:bennettb1792@gmail.com);  
**Rochelle Nahmias** tel 268-9280

**COUNCIL ON AGING**  
**Thursday, Sept. 5th**

**Pot Luck**

**Desert and beverages provided**



# WHAT'S UP IN PALESTINE?

Actually, I might say “What’s down in Palestine. Having just been there for a month, I have to say the picture is grim. And yet, there is a lot of creativity going on at the same time.

The grim part is due to an accelerated rate of oppressive measures against Palestinians by Israel’s Zionist leaders, and the increasing power and aggressiveness by right wing settlers.

What does this look like? The checkpoints that separate Palestinians from Israelis, and even from each other, are modernized and enlarged steel structures like we have for security in airports. The settlements which are all on stolen Palestinian land are growing in number and size, some are larger than Greenfield. Laws being passed by the Israeli parliament are ever more segregationist, so that Israel is commonly called an apartheid state. Settlers are more frequently attacking Palestinian farmers, burning their crops, stealing and polluting their water sources.

It seems that these forces, that have long tried to control or discourage Palestinians so that they will leave the country, have been encouraged by Donald Trump’s rhetoric and encouragement.

So how do Palestinians keep themselves from violent reactions. Of course, some do become violent and despairing, but our friend, Mohammed Sawalha, is an example of someone who believes in nonviolent creative resistance. That’s why our church has been sending his Palestinian House of Friendship (PHF) donations for the last 10 years or so. I got to visit two of the three summer camps PHF holds every year and could see the kids making crafts, learning the traditional “Debka” dance, listening to talks about nutrition and cheering as a chemistry teacher did some neat tricks with flame and water. I got to sit in the new recording studio that young people can use year-round to develop musical talent, and volunteers can use to do oral

histories of community elders.

I also got to volunteer at the Palestine Museum of Natural History. I have lots of photos of the museum, and I hope to show them to you soon, but for now I will list some of its accomplishments. In its 5 years of existence, PMNH and PIBS have rehabilitated 3 acres of dry, abandoned land in the city of Bethlehem, planted indigenous trees like olive, almond, apricot, lemon and pear, created a vertical vegetable garden from plastic bottles attached to the wall, built a greenhouse that has an aquaponic system of irrigation and fertilization, complete with live fish. All that as well as professional indoor displays of Palestine’s rich and diverse insect and animal life, plus an Ethnography Museum to display and protect old farm tools. (Visit their website: [palestinature.org](http://palestinature.org).)

I am running out of space, but not admiration for what our friends are doing to promote life and love in Palestine.

**Sherrill Hogen**



# WELCOME



Photo by Gerard McGovern

**PASTOR David McLean Jones  
and  
Caity Mann**



# Calendar September 2019

## SEPTEMBER

- 1
- 2
- 3 Nancy Marshall
- 4 Amar Abbatiello
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12 *Joel Arsenault*
- 13
- 14 Pam Snow  
Sandi McArthur
- 15
- 16 Helen Hodges
- 17 Warren Kirkpatrick  
Helen Boyden  
Carl Doerner
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21 Sherrill Hogen '38
- 22 Liam Wallace
- 23 Annie Cheatham  
Margery Heins
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27 Bill Wickland '67
- 28 Dianna Young
- 29
- 30
- 31

**Sun. Sept. 1:** Worship service 10 a.m. led by Rev. Ann Hallstein and Pastor Nancy Sykes, with Rev. Leslie Fraser and our new settled pastor David McLean Jones also participating in the service. Music provided by Amy Roberts-Crawford and the Ashtones (rehearsal 9:15 a.m.). Special Coffee Hour to follow in celebration of Ann and Nancy and their ministry with us this past year.

**Tues. Sept. 3:** Deacons Mtg. 7 p.m. Trustees Mtg. 7 p.m.

**Wed. Sept. 4:** TaiChi 9:30 a.m. Fall Festival planning meeting 7 p.m.

**Thurs. Sept. 5:** COA luncheon, noon.

**Sun. Sept. 8:** Choir rehearsal 9 a.m. - a "Come and Sing" rehearsal. Worship 10 a.m. led by David McLean Jones, as he begins his service as our settled pastor. Music provided by Amy Roberts-Crawford and the choir, as directed by Margery Heins. Special Coffee Hour to follow to welcome David and his wife, Caity.

**Tues. Sept. 10:** Food Pantry distribution 3-6 p.m.

**Wed. Sept. 11:** TaiChi 9:30 a.m. Lions Mtg. 6 p.m. Choir rehearsal 7:15 p.m. 9/11 Remembrance in sanctuary 8:30am-10:30am

**Thurs. Sept. 12:** Mission and Social Justice 3-5 p.m.

**Sun. Sept. 15:** Worship 10 a.m. with David McLean Jones leading our service and Amy Roberts-Crawford providing our music. Following the service we will have Coffee Hour and a Congregational Meeting.

**Tues. Sept. 17:** Bubble Up Theology 7 p.m.

**Wed. Sept. 18:** TaiChi 9:30 a.m.

**Sun. Sept. 22:** Worship 10 a.m. led by David McLean Jones

**Mon. Sept. 23:** Stewardship Mtg at the Prée's 4 p.m.

**Tues. Sept. 24:** Food Pantry distribution 3-6 p.m.

**Sun. Sept. 29:** Worship 10 a.m. led by David McLean Jones

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Photo by George Butler

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