

Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year ♪ Happy New Year



The Link



First Congregational Church of Stoughton, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

January 2021

Our Vision

*We are called together to embrace God's transformation of our lives and our world
by becoming and serving as Christ's disciples.*



Dear Friends,

Blessings and peace to you as we ring in the New Year! I pray that your hearts and homes will be filled throughout the year with the love and joy of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

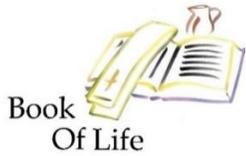
I am hopeful that 2021 will be a year of healing as we begin to emerge from the pandemic. After so many months of heartbreak and loss, it's encouraging that vaccines are now being administered to our health care workers and others who are at high risk of contracting the virus. Let us continue to pray for the families of all who have died from COVID-19, for those who are suffering from it now, and for the effectiveness of the vaccine. May the day come soon when this devastating virus will be contained.

As we wait for that time to arrive - and it will - let's do whatever we can to cultivate hope and optimism in our lives. Log in to Zoom on Sunday mornings to worship with people who love you. Call in to our Wednesday morning prayer time - the 30 minutes you set aside to be with God will change your day for the better. If you feel down or discouraged, send a card to someone who might be lonely or make a donation to our church's Needy Persons Fund or to the Stoughton Food Pantry Foundation. Whenever we do something to help others it can also have a positive effect on our own lives. And fresh air is restorative, so try to get outside and breathe deeply whenever you can, even if it's just for a few minutes. The season of winter is full of God's glory and will invigorate you.

I am grateful for each of you and pray for God's blessings to be upon you and those you love in this New Year. May 2021 bring peace and hope to each of us and may our church continue to be a place where we are strengthened in our call to follow Jesus.

With every blessing of the New Year,

Pastor Mary



Death:

Karen Gay, whose graveside service was led by Pastor Mary at Evergreen Cemetery on December 16.



A huge thank you goes out to **Ginny Gibson** for providing music for our Advent worship services, and to **John Baglole** and **Russ Clough** for their technical assistance with worship. We once again thank **Marcia Olson** for her continued and successful efforts in selling Attic Treasures and Knitted Goods on Facebook Marketplace. Marcia has been assisted by **Stephanie Clough**, and has raised over \$7600 for our church. We thank the members of our mask ministry for resuming their work to help keep our community safe, and **Maurine Upton** for her faithfulness in collecting and redeeming bottles and cans to help support the work of our church. We are very blessed!



Farewell, Flo and Jon!

We send our blessings to Flo and Jon Ledin as they relocate to Florida. We are especially grateful for Flo's support of our community garden, her participation in our prayer shawl ministry and our newly-created mask ministry, and for her years of cooking for the Church Fair. May Flo and Jon find every happiness in their new home!



Sign up to get **The Link** delivered directly to your email inbox each month by sending your name and email address to Link@uccstoughton.org. Or drop a note with your contact information in the offering plate on Sunday. Let us know if your address or email has changed as well so you never miss an issue. The Link is also posted on our website at www.uccstoughton.org. Printed copies are available in the literature rack in the church lobby.



Articles for the **February LINK** will be due by **January 17**. Contact the church office with any changes or additions to the church calendar.



Quick Connect

For those who prefer to call in to our Zoom gatherings, here is the information you will need:

Sunday worship - 10:00 am: Dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter Meeting ID 811 4826 1177

Wednesday prayer - 10:00 am: Dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter Meeting ID 862 2469 5175

Church Council - second Mondays at 7:00 pm: Dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter Meeting ID 837 8927 2962

Attic Treasures



Our Church Fair may have been postponed until spring 2021, but you can still shop for just that right gift, find that hidden gem, or snag a bargain. Don't miss out! We have been regularly posting selected items from Attic Treasures on [Facebook Marketplace](#) - and you can shop now! Here's how:

- Go to Facebook Marketplace (<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/109554902404443/>).
- Type "**Online Church Fair**" in the Search Marketplace box.
- Most items that pop up at the top of this search have Stoughton MA listed as the location of the seller.
- Click on one of those items, scroll down to **Seller Information** and click on **Marcia Olson**. You can also scroll down that post and see all the treasures currently for sale that day.

Check back frequently as items will be posted throughout the rest of the year. Many are snatched up quickly! Items are also posted to several local area yard sale Facebook pages like Online Yard Sale of Stoughton, MA. We hope to be posting knit goods, jewelry, and seasonal items for sale online as well. If you have any items to donate, let [Marcia](#) know. Helpers are always welcome for pricing and sorting items. Please keep those donations coming!



Stoughton Food Pantries

Due to the pandemic, there are many people in our own community who are in need of food assistance. If you are looking for practical ways to help your neighbors, please consider making a monetary donation to the Stoughton Food Pantries.

To donate by credit card:

[Food Pantry Foundation of Stoughton](#)

To donate by check please mail to:

Food Pantry Foundation of Stoughton
P.O. Box 757
Stoughton, MA 02072

Your donation will be equally divided between the Ilse Marks Food Pantry and the St. Anthony's Free Market Pantry. May God bless you for your generosity!



What's Happening This Month?

Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

- **Sunday Online Worship at 10:00 AM.** We worship online together each Sunday morning at 10:00 AM during the winter. You may connect online or by phone. The Zoom link is sent out each Friday in Pastor Mary's weekly email. For those who prefer to call in, dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter Meeting ID 811 4826 1177.

If you do not get this weekly email, contact the church office at office@uccstoughton.org. Portions of the online service will be recorded and posted to our YouTube site as soon as it is available and a link to the recording will be posted on the church [website](#). If you have any questions or concerns about this service or our plans to reopen the church building, please contact **Pastor Mary** at 774-571-7307. More details about worship will be communicated via Constant Contact, email and our Facebook page. We know that God will be glorified no matter how or where we worship! Be sure to join us for a few minutes of fellowship immediately following the service.

5

The Link

- **Wednesday Prayer Service: Pastor Mary** leads a brief 30-minute prayer service by way of a conference call each Wednesday morning at 10:00 AM. Dial 1-253-215-8782 and when prompted, enter the Meeting ID 862 2469 5175. There will be a scripture reading and time for the sharing of our prayer concerns. This weekly gathering is open to all, so if you have a friend who might find this opportunity to connect helpful. Please share the information.
- **Pastor Mary** has set up a private Facebook group called **UCC Stoughton Prayer**. No one sees the posts except group members, so it is a safe place to share your prayer requests, pray for others in our community, or just vent. If you have a Facebook account and would like to join the group let Pastor Mary know.
- **Church Council** meets on the **2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm via Zoom**. These meetings are open to everyone, not just Council members. If you would like to attend via Zoom, please contact Pastor Mary and she will send you the link to the meeting. If you prefer to call in by telephone, dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter Meeting ID 837 8927 2962,
- Remember to check our [Facebook page](#), church website (<http://www.uccstoughton.org/>) and the **Quick Connect** information found elsewhere in The Link.



Opportunities to Serve

- **Feb 17 (Wed): Mainspring House:** This is this next date we are scheduled to provide dinner for Brockton's homeless shelter. Although we cannot serve dinner due to the pandemic, food donations are still needed. If you can make a casserole or make a monetary donation to defray the cost of salad and dessert, please contact **Anita Keenan** (keenans21@gmail.com | 781-244-7742). You can always make your casserole early and we can keep it in the downstairs church freezer any time before **Sunday, February 14**. Contact Anita if you need a foil baking pan and recipe.
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Although we cannot yet meet in person, we encourage you all to continue to knit prayer shawls for those who need to feel God's loving care wrapped around them.
- **Mask Ministry:** As we are experiencing another surge in COVID-19 infections now that the cold weather has arrived and we spend more time indoors, the need for face masks is greater than ever. The Mask Ministry team has started making masks again and have been distributing them to the Outdoor Church of Cambridge, Father Bill's and Mainspring House, the local Red Cross and Soupman of Brockton. To date this fall and winter we have distributed 518 face masks. There is plenty of fabric and elastic at the church if you are interested in joining our team. Please contact Marcia Olson (baglole.olson@verizon.net | 781-344-9547) to find out how you can help.

Opportunities to

- **Pledge Sunday** was Sunday, November 22. If you have not yet done so, please mail your pledge to the church office to the attention of the Offerings Clerk at 76 Pierce Street, Stoughton, MA 02072. You can also drop your pledge off in person by depositing it in the church mailbox to the right of the lower door at the bottom of the handicap ramp. Your offering for this year is so vital for supporting the life and ministries of our beloved church. We are grateful for your generosity.
- **Food Pantry:** Donations are still urgently needed. You can drop off your non-perishable food items each Tuesday morning at the Ilse Marks Food Pantry, 103 Pleasant St. between 8:30-10:30 AM, or you can contact director **Suzanne Blacker** (781-341-1994) to arrange for a drop off at a different time. You can also donate by credit card or check to the Stoughton Food Pantries (look for details elsewhere in The Link).
- **Bottles and Cans:** Please donate your clean, redeemable bottles and cans from your holiday events and parties. They can be left in the drop-off container at the bottom of the stairs just before the church office. Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted and the money collected is used for various church ministries and operational needs. Contact **Maurine Upton** for more information.
- **Needy Persons Fund:** Many in our community are in need during this pandemic. Our church maintains a Needy Persons fund through which we are able to offer assistance to such individuals. If you are able, please mail your donation to the church office at 76 Pierce Street, Stoughton noting Needy Persons Fund on your check. Through your generosity, we are able to help many people. *Thank you!* If you are experiencing difficult financial circumstances and could use some help through our Needy Persons' Fund, please speak to Pastor Mary in confidence.
- **Socks for Outdoor Church:** The weather is getting colder and the street outreach ministry of The Outdoor Church in Cambridge is greatly in need of warm, waterproof socks for the homeless in Harvard and Central Squares in Cambridge. We will be collecting new socks for both men and women throughout the winter. Please contact **Marcia Olson** (baglole.olson@verizon.net | 781-344-9547) if you have some to donate or you can drop them off at the church office.
- **Mitten Tree:** Area neighbors will have a warmer winter when we virtually fill the branches of our church Mitten Tree with hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves. Even though we could not hold the church fair this year, our talented knitters have been hard at work and we now have plenty of mittens and hats for you to purchase and donate to our Mitten Tree. Mittens are \$6/pr or two for \$10. Hats are also \$10 each. We will continue to collect donations through the month of January. Please send a donation to the UCC Stoughton Mitten Tree, c/o Marcia Olson, 247 Prospect St., Stoughton, MA 02072. If you prefer to pay via PayPal, please contact Marcia Olson (baglole.olson@verizon.net or via Messenger) to make arrangements. All items will be distributed to Evelyn House, the Ilse Marks Food Pantry, and other local children in need

NOTICE

Annual Budget Meeting Sunday, January 31, 2021

ALL MEMBERS, PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING
(A quorum of 16 is needed to approve the budget)

In keeping with the requirements in the Church By-laws, a congregation-wide meeting will be held on Sunday January 31, 2021 at 10:45 AM after worship.

The focus of the meeting will be a review of the church's financial position and consideration of the proposed budget for 2021.

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. 2020 Financial Status Report
3. Consideration of the 2021 budget as presented by the Board of Trustees.
4. Closing Prayer

Due to continuing COVID-19 safety restrictions against in-person gatherings, this Annual Budget Meeting will be held online via Zoom.

Information on how to connect to the meeting, either by computer or by phone, will be sent out in Pastor Mary's weekly emails and published in the January 2021 Link.

Copies of the Proposed 2021 budget and 2020 Financial Status Report will be emailed to all members for review by **Sunday, January 17, 2021.**

Members without email access may request a copy be sent by U.S. mail by contacting the Church Moderator, Marcia Olson at 781-344-9547 no later than **Sunday, January 17, 2021.**

UCC Stoughton is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: **Sunday Worship/Annual Budget Meeting**

Time: January 31, 2021 10:00 AM for worship and 10:45 AM for the Annual Budget Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81148261177>

To call in by phone, dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter
Meeting ID: 811 4826 1177



Have You Sent in Your Pledge?

A message from The Trustees

It seems like years since we were last able to meet. We trust this letter finds you all healthy and happy. The good news is, with the recent approval of a vaccine we may soon be able to, once again, gather non-virtually.

As you can imagine, the good work of our church has been, to a degree, slowed but, nevertheless, it continues. Within the first half of the upcoming year, we pray that society opens and our role in Stoughton's, as well as the wider community, expands to pre-pandemic levels.

This cannot happen without your help. We recently completed our Stewardship campaign and we appreciate all that pledged. However, to date, we have only received approximately half our usual offerings. Without your continued support, the work of the church will be severely impacted. If you have simply forgotten, we ask that you return your pledge form as soon as you can. If you have lost your form, please contact the church office for another (see contact information at the bottom of this message). If due to the pandemic your financial situation has changed, any amount helps, and know that you will be in our prayers.

Remember, there are a couple of ways you can continue to honor your pledge and continue your support:

Write a check:

First Congregational Church of Stoughton
76 Pierce Street Stoughton, MA 02072
ATTN: Offering Clerk

Pay Online:

Follow this [link](http://www.uccstoughton.org/) to the Church website: <http://www.uccstoughton.org/>

Click on the [Online Giving](#) option

Click on the Contribute Securely Online Now Button.

Fill in the boxes as directed. (This, by the way, is an excellent way to ensure that your support continues year round...not just in these trying times.)

Please return a pledge card whether you pay by check or donate online. We need to know your pledge amount in order to present an accurate 2021 budget at the Annual Budget Meeting on January 31.

We need your help and we pray you can see your way to the continued support of our church. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the church officers. Blessings and a very Happy New Year.

The people on this list may not be able to receive visitors during this time. Please think of dropping them a card or note



AT HOME, IN NURSING HOMES, AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES
For those who wish to send greetings, the following list is included:

Wayne Alholm
 149 Homeland Drive
 Whitman, MA 02382
 (781) 523-1640

Doris Bamberg
 Copley at Stoughton Nursing Care Center
 380 Sumner Street
 Stoughton, MA 02072
 (781) 341-2300

Barbara Bingamon
 The Arbors
 2121 Central Street
 Room 328
 Stoughton, MA 02072

Charles Bittner
 Life Care Center, Room 282
 546 South Street East
 Raynham, MA 02767

Amanda Cushing
 103 Benson Road
 Stoughton MA 02072

Dorothy Dawe
 The Arbors
 2121 Central Street Apt 112
 Stoughton, MA 02072

Judy Giannangelo
 148A Britton Ave
 Stoughton, MA 02072

Maizie John
 996 Canton Ave.
 Milton MA 02186

Betty Lambert
 West Acres Rehab and Nursing Center
 Room 311B
 804 Pleasant Street
 Brockton, MA
 02301

Rev. Jean Lenk
 229 Old Plymouth Road
 Sagamore Beach, MA. 02562

Al Manson
 130 Plain Drive
 Stoughton, MA 02072

Muriel Rowland
 92 Cedar Hill Dr. Apt. 202
 Windsor, VT 05089

Ruth Scrivens
 18 Daly Dr.
 Stoughton, MA 02072