



# The Link



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

**June 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,

With the approval of Church Council, I will be taking a one-month unpaid leave of absence from my duties as your pastor beginning on August 2. The idea of extended time away for pastors is grounded in the biblical teaching of the Sabbath, which God shared with Moses in the Ten Commandments. This is not an extended vacation, but rather, a time of rest and rejuvenation designed to support my physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

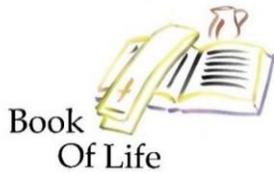
It is a very common practice for a church to offer its pastor a period of time away from active ministry every 5-7 years in order to keep the pastor healthy and ready for the next stretch of ministry ahead. I am currently in my 9th year of serving our church and that, coupled with the difficulties that the pandemic has caused me personally and in my role as your pastor, is what led me to request some intentional time away from my ministry. All of my clergy colleagues who have taken sabbaticals have benefited from them, and they are a well-established ministry practice.

As far as church life is concerned, I will be helping our Worship and Music Ministry Team to plan the worship services on the four Sundays in August that I will be away. I have arranged for my friend and colleague Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, who is also a member of our church, to cover any pastoral emergencies that may arise during this time.

I ask you to please keep our church a priority during my brief absence. I hope that you will remain faithful in attending, in serving, in giving, and in every other way God calls you to participate in the life of our faith community. I am praying that my time away will be one of growth for our congregation as a whole and for me personally.

In Faith,

Pastor Mary



Death:

Paul Christensen, who died on May 5. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

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Thank you to **Marcia Olson** for coordinating the recent church yard sale, and all those who helped her. It was a huge undertaking and we appreciate the efforts of the many people who worked to make it a successful day. To date approximately \$4500 has been raised for the 2021 Church Fair. We thank **Joan Roan** for her faithfulness and creativity in updating our church bulletin boards and **Ed** and **Gale Porter** for their maintenance of the church grounds. Thanks also go out to the crew who helped with the church yard cleanup last month: **Kevin Monahan, Janet Clough, Caroline, Chris,** and **Drew Cesario, Ed** and **Gale Porter, Marcia Olson, Susan Hill,** and **Lori Saville.** Thank you to **Russ Clough,** who has taken the lead in streaming our in-person worship services to Zoom for the benefit of those who cannot be with us. Finally, we are grateful for the two groups who have been working diligently these past few months: the **Financial Viability Team** and the **Safe Church Reopening Team.** We are very blessed!

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### Annual Reports Due June 30

In this strange pandemic year when much church activity has been on hiatus, all active boards, committees and ministry teams should submit a brief report to the **Church Office by June 30.** Please email your reports to [office@uccstoughton.org](mailto:office@uccstoughton.org) and to Marcia Olson at [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net).



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

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### June/July Worship Services

During the month of June we will meet in the sanctuary for worship on **June 6, 13, and 27**. Pastor Mary's scheduled Sunday off is June 20, so a service will be held on Zoom. In July, we will worship in the sanctuary on **July 4 and 11**. Pastor Mary will be away at UCC General Synod on July 18 and her scheduled Sunday off is July 25, so worship will likely be on Zoom. Please check Pastor Mary's Friday emails and our church Facebook page and website for further updates.

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### 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

Sunday worship recordings – YouTube -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6ig4pUwSRhn9bBAqUzeTsg>

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



## What's Happening This Month?

### Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

#### Opportunities

- Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM.** We worship together each Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. While safe reopening guidelines are in transition and time off plans make our Sunday worship schedules this summer somewhat less routine, please pay careful attention to Pastor Mary's weekly emails and other church communications for the dates when Sunday worship will be held in the sanctuary or only on Zoom. **Until further guidance is given by the Safe Opening Team, face masks and socially distancing will be required for all who attend indoor worship.** Look for details and the Zoom link for online services in **Pastor Mary's** weekly Friday email, or on our Facebook or website page ([www.uccstoughton.org](http://www.uccstoughton.org)). For online services you may connect online or by phone. 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](mailto:office@uccstoughton.org). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact **Pastor Mary** at 774-571-7307.
- Church YouTube Channel** - Sunday worship services are recorded and made available later in the day on UCC Stoughton's YouTube channel. You will also be able to view any of our past services. Just go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6ig4pUwSRhn9bBAqUzeTsg>.
- June 13 (Sun) Special Congregational Church Meeting** Immediately following worship. Look for details elsewhere in The Link.
- Wednesday Prayer Service: Pastor Mary** leads a 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.
- UCC Stoughton Prayer** is a private Facebook group where you can safely share your prayer requests, pray for others in our community, or just vent. No one sees the posts except group members. 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. Contact Pastor Mary 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 attend by telephone, call 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

- **Jun 16 (Wed) Mainspring House:** This is this next date we are scheduled to provide dinner for Brockton's homeless shelter. If you can make a casserole or give a monetary donation to defray the cost of salad and dessert, please contact **Anita Keenan** ([keenans21@gmail.com](mailto:keenans21@gmail.com) | 781-244-7742). Casseroles must be delivered to the church by **Sunday, June 13** and stored in the downstairs freezer. Contact Anita if you need a foil baking pan and recipe or to make arrangements to drop off your casserole.
- **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.



## Opportunities to

- **Food Pantry:** Donations are still urgently needed. Now that we have resumed indoor worship, you can bring your non-perishable food items to church on Communion Sunday each month or leave them in the Giving Corner in the church lobby at any time. Please check the expiration dates. You can also donate online at (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/food-pantry-foundation-of-stoughton-incYou>) or by sending a check to the to the Food Pantry Foundation of Stoughton, PO Box 757, Stoughton, MA 02072.
- **Bottles and Cans:** Please donate your clean, redeemable bottles and cans. Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted and the money collected is used for various church ministries and operational needs. Cans and bottles can be left in the drop-off container at the bottom of the stairs just before the church office or 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.



## Special Congregational Meeting

### Sunday, June 13, 2021

Church Council has called a Special Congregational Meeting on **Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 10:45 AM** to discuss results of the UCC Stoughton Future Options meeting led by the Financial Viability Group on Sunday, May 16 and to vote on which option(s) to pursue. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary immediately following worship. All church members are requested to attend in person.

#### Agenda

1. Opening Prayer.
2. Summary of the Project 275 Financial Viability All Church Meeting held on May 16, 2021 to assess the seriousness of our church's financial situation and present the results of the preference ballot for which future option(s) to pursue.
3. Congregational vote on which option(s) to authorize Church Council to investigate and to put before the congregation for a final vote at a future congregational meeting.
4. Closing Prayer.

If you have any questions, please refer to the informational packet that was sent to all church members in May or contact Marcia Olson, Church Moderator at 339-987-1730 or [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net).

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

*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

*Ruth Scrivens*  
 18 Daly Dr.  
 Stoughton, MA 02072