



The Link



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

November 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,

Our annual stewardship season is now underway, and each of us is being asked to prayerfully determine how we will support our beloved church in 2022. This year's stewardship theme – "Rooted in Love" – is inspired by Psalm 1: "They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season."

As I think about this verse it reminds me of all the ways our congregation helps root my life in God through our devotion to worship, service, and prayer. I pray this is true in your life as well.

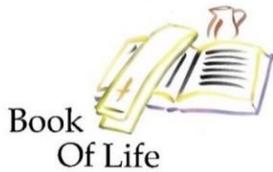
While there are many ways we can support our congregation, the annual stewardship campaign provides a chance to think in a particular and prayerful way about the choices we make with our money in support of the church. The work of our church can only happen because of the generous financial and volunteer support of our community. Because of you, our congregation is able to share God's love.

Although our church is in transition, it is important to remember that we are still ministering to the community. We share our building with two organizations that nurture the lives of children - Head Start and Stoughton Extended Day. We continue to serve regularly at MainSpring House, Brockton's shelter for the homeless. We have been able to resume serving those who live on the streets through our partnership with the Outdoor Church of Cambridge. In all these ways and more, we are working for the common good and are bearing witness to God's love and justice in this challenging time.

Your stewardship pledge helps us carry out this divinely inspired mission work in our community as we seek to share God's love with others in meaningful ways. My prayer is that our stewardship season will be an opportunity for each of us to sink our spiritual roots ever deeper into the unending love and limitless generosity of God.

With blessings and gratitude for each of you,

Pastor Mary



Death:

Sylvia Scott, whose memorial service was led by Pastor Mary at Blue Hill Cemetery on September 25.



This month we thank all who faithfully provided casseroles for the MainSpring dinner in October and **Anita Keenan** for coordinating this important outreach. We once again thank **Marcia Olson** for her very successful efforts in selling Attic Treasures on Facebook Marketplace. Thanks also go out to **Maurine Upton** and **Janet Clough** for their ongoing preparations for the Church Fair. We are also grateful to **John Baglole**, **Gian DiCostanzo**, and the members of the **Worship and Music Ministry Team** for leading Laity Sunday last month. We are also delighted to have our Welcome sign restored to the front lawn of the church thanks to the talents and dedication of **Ed and Gale Porter**. Once again, all who come to our church receive an extravagant welcome and know that we are an Open and Affirming community.



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



Lisa Loughlin Ordination

Our former student pastor, **Lisa Loughlin**, will be ordained at the **First Congregational Church of Winchester** on **Sunday, November 7 at 3:00 pm**. All are invited to attend this long-awaited and well-deserved celebration!



Saturday, November 13, 9 am - 3 pm

*** Attic Treasures * Jewelry Box * Book Nook * Knit Goods * Bakery and Candy Shoppe *
 Holiday Crafts *
 * Theme Basket Raffles * Kid's Toys ***

The church fair is almost upon us and we have already been hard at work making crafts and knit goods, baking, and collecting attic treasures. But now more hands are needed. Please contact one of the fair chairpersons below to cover a shift, donate an item, craft or baked good.

Set-up (Thu/Fri, Nov 11-12) – Please come by **during the day on Thursday** or between **7-9 PM** in the evening on Thursday or Friday to help organize and set up the tables.

Reminder to all bakers, candy makers, soup or chili makers, knitters, and crafters – please drop off your items to be sold at the fair by Thursday or Friday as well.

Contact **Janet Clough** or **Maurine Upton** for more information.

Cleaning, sorting, and pricing (Sun-Fri, Nov 7-12) - whatever time you can give to help us with this enormous task will be greatly appreciated. Please contact **Marcia Olson** (baglole.olson@verizon.net | 781-344-9547).

Staffing tables during the fair (Sat Nov 13) - We need some volunteers to staff tables in two hour shifts or act as floaters who can cover for many tables so people can take a quick break and shop the fair themselves. Help is also needed to greet people at the door and make sure that everyone is wearing a mask. Attic Treasures could use 2 or 3 additional people to assist customers and wrap purchases. Help is most especially needed the first few hours of the fair as well as right at the end.

Cleanup - We need to get the rooms back into shape for regular post-fair activities. Volunteers are needed to help restore order from chaos Saturday afternoon.



It takes many hands to pull off a successful fair – it takes all of us working together and giving whatever time we can when we can. Won't you join us and lend a hand? Please contact **Janet Clough** (781-344-3860 | cloughjl@gmail.com) or **Maurine Upton** (781-344-4609).



What's Happening This Month?

Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

- **Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM.** We worship together each Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. Please pay careful attention to Pastor Mary's weekly emails and other church communications for any changes in Covid-19 health and safety protocols. The Safe Opening team, after monitoring the current data on the Delta variant surge and recent CDC recommendations, has asked that all who attend indoor worship wear face masks and observe social distancing. If you do not get the weekly email, contact the church office at office@uccstoughton.org. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact **Pastor Mary** at 774-571-7307.

November Worship Schedule

All services will be held in the church sanctuary unless otherwise noted. We ask that you wear a mask and observe social distancing while in the building.

November 7: All Saints Sunday and Celebration of Communion. Pastor Mary leading worship.

November 14: Pastor Mary leading worship.

November 21: Thanksgiving/Pledge Sunday. Pastor Mary leading worship.

November 28: First Sunday of Advent and Pastor Mary's scheduled Sunday off. We encourage you to visit a neighboring church.

- **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 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.
- **Nov 14 (Sun) New Directions Conversation:** Join us for an informal conversation immediately following worship about the exploratory process on our church's future. We want to hear your ideas, concerns and insights. We make our best decisions when we do it together in prayer and truthful, loving conversation.
- Remember to check our [Facebook page](#) and church website (<http://www.uccstoughton.org/>).



Opportunities to Serve

- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Look for upcoming church communications for when we can again meet in person but until then we encourage you all to continue to knit prayer shawls for those who need to feel God's loving care wrapped around them. You can also work on knit goods for the church fair.
- **Dec 15 (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 | 781-244-7742). Casseroles must be delivered to the church by **Sunday, December 12** 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.
- **Jan 29 (Sat) Outdoor Church of Cambridge:** We will be serving at the Outdoor Church on Saturday afternoon, January 29 and would love your help to either make sandwiches that morning or travel into Cambridge to distribute them. We also welcome donations of new socks, which are much needed by those who live on the streets. Please let Pastor Mary know if you're interested in helping with this important outreach.



Opportunities to

- **Nov 21(Sun): It's Pledge Sunday.** Please consider prayerfully what your annual pledge will be to support the life and ministries of UCC Stoughton and mail your pledge to the church office.
- **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-inc>) 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.

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- **Mitten Tree:** Area neighbors will have a warmer winter when we fill the branches of our church Mitten Tree with hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves. Purchase one of these items at our church fair on November 13 and add them to our mitten tree in the church lobby.

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:

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

Amanda Cushing
Willimansett Center East
Room 308A
11 St. Anthony Street
Chicopee, MA 01013

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

Judy Giannangelo
Care One at Randolph
49 Thomas Patten Dr
Randolph, MA 02368

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



Money Follows Values

by **Rev. Mary W. Nelson** (Adapted by Marcia Olson)

We put our money behind the things we value. We don't say that enough, and I don't understand why. We put our money behind the things we value. And what we value more, we're willing to spend more to support. This is why my pledge to my local church is my largest financial gift. For my household budget, I have selected four organizations that are important to me, to whom I make a significant and intentional gift each year:

- *First Congregational Church of Stoughton*
- *Local food pantries and shelters*
- *Prison Book Program*
- *Public television and radio*

Other groups get a smaller, unplanned gift—a friend running a 5k for charity, a kiddo selling something for their scout troop or school event, or the theatre companies whose performances I attend.

UCC Stoughton is the recipient of my largest financial gift because it's the most important. I know that my pledge is likely to be more impactful to my church and the community we serve than the smaller gifts I give to other organizations with larger budgets. I also know that a significant financial gift to my local church will impact other settings of the United Church of Christ when the church passes on my generosity (pooled with others' contributions) to the Conference and National settings of the UCC. I value the work of my local church and the work of the wider church as well. Even more reason to give them more.

CONSIDER YOUR PLEDGE AS A PERCENT OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME.

Annual Income	Monthly Income	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%
16,000	1,333	27	40	53	67	133
20,000	1,667	33	50	67	83	167
25,000	2,083	42	62	83	104	208
30,000	2,500	50	75	100	125	250
35,000	2,917	58	88	117	146	292
40,000	3,333	67	100	133	167	333
45,000	3,750	75	113	150	188	375
50,000	4,167	83	125	167	208	417
60,000	5,000	100	150	200	250	500
75,000	6,250	125	188	250	313	625
100,000	8,333	167	250	333	417	833
125,000	10,417	208	313	417	521	1042

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity. Giving even 1% more of annual income to charity would be transformative for our congregation and other organizations doing good in our community.



Prayer for Thanksgiving Day

On this day, O God, we give thanks
in all kinds of communities, or even in solitude.
Our desire in this moment is to come before you
with our prayers of thanksgiving.
For some of us the words we offer
will flow easily from our lips.
For others trying to name our blessing may prove difficult.
Thanksgiving 2021 may be very different from previous years:
a smaller table at which to sit,
new persons sitting with us,
or a dear one absent,
worries crowding out our sense of blessing.
These realities may reshape our prayers from years past.
To seek joy may lead through heartbreak.
Whatever our reality, O God,
We ask that you help us focus
not so much on material things
(whether their abundance or scarcity)
but rather on how we are living our lives.
Help us recognize
all the ways you are present in our live this year.
Help us gather the strength we need for today
and for all of our tomorrows.
Grant us the satisfaction of intimacy with Jesus,
your great gift to us, through whom you offer
Living Water, Bread of Life,
more than we can ask or imagine.
Help us to extend our prayers of thanksgiving to you
into tomorrow with joyful spirits.
We are loved and blessed and thankful. **Amen.**

Prayer for Thanksgiving Day was written by Henrietta Stith Andrews, a retired UCC Pastor who served as Associate Conference Minister in Michigan. Rev. Andrews is a certified Spiritual Director and presently residing in Powderfield, GA.