



The Link



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

January 2022

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.

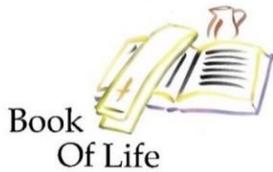
I believe that this year will see us moving closer to the future that God envisions for us. I have encouraged you over the past few months to visit local UCC churches and to share your experiences at the informal meetings we had after worship in September, October, and November, which many of you have done. I will now be working with Church Council and our denominational leaders to plan our next steps.

In this time of transition, it is vitally important that we pray for God's continued guidance and that we share our thoughts and questions with one another. Good and honest communication, while always important, is essential to the transition process. No question or concern you might have about our future is unimportant. If you would like to speak with me about this or any other matter, just call or text my cell phone (774-571-7307) and we can set up a time to talk.

I am grateful for each of you and the ways you show your love for one another, our church, and our community. May the New Year bring us the confidence to know that the God who created us and loves us is also the God who abides with us, no matter what. Thanks be to God for this good news!

With every blessing,

Pastor Mary



Deaths:

Kenneth Bradley, brother of Susan Hill and uncle of Caroline Cesario, died on December 5.

William (Scott) Neville Jr., son of Carol Neville and uncle of Lindsey Ivaldi, died on December 13.

We were also saddened to learn that former church member Robert Staples died last month.



This month we thank Church Treasurer **Russ Congdon**, who has been extra busy preparing the 2022 budget and responding to other financial needs of the church. Thanks also go out to **Joan Roan** for her creativity in updating the bulletin boards in our church lobby, **Ed and Gale Porter** for their faithful maintenance of our church grounds, **Janet Clough** and **Maurine Upton** for selling knit goods at the Weymouth Craft Fair, and **Marcia Olson** for her continued success in selling Attic Treasures on Facebook Marketplace. We also thank the **Worship and Music** ministry team for their help with the Christmas Eve service and **Janet Clough** for organizing the Christmas poinsettia dedications that made our chancel look so festive. We are also grateful to everyone who donated to our "Adopt a Family For Christmas" outreach, including the **Stoughton Police Department** and officer **Nate Derby**, who gave us gift cards from their "Fill A Cruiser" event in December. We are very blessed!

*Thank
You*

Thank You, Church Family

I would like to extend my gratitude for the gift card you gave me for Christmas. I very much appreciate your generosity and will put your gift to good use, most likely at a day spa! Thank you for thinking of me.

Love,
Pastor Mary



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

**Welcome, Elizabeth Silvia!**

We extend a hearty welcome to our new music director, **Elizabeth Silvia**! Elizabeth is a 23-year-old musician and nanny from Woonsocket, RI. As a singer, actress and rhythm guitarist, she has shared her gifts on many different stages across New England. Elizabeth grew up performing with her family band and participating in various theater productions. She is following in her parents' footsteps leading the musical elements of worship and has a passion for making music for people to enjoy! Please give Elizabeth a warm welcome!

New Year's Prayer

As the dawn breaks on a new year, let us give thanks for all we hold dear:

our health, our family and our friends.

Let us release our grudges, our anger and our pains, for these are nothing but binding chains.

Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way.

Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, color or creed.

Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts and to chant God's name each day.

Let us lead the world from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right.

Let us remember that we are all one, embracing all, discriminating against none.

May your year be filled with peace, prosperity and love.

May God's blessings shower upon you and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy and peaceful new year.

- Rev. Marcy Sheremetta



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. We ask 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.

January 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

January 2: Epiphany Sunday & Communion Sunday - Pastor Mary leading worship

January 9: Pastor Mary leading worship

January 16: Pastor Mary leading worship. Annual Budget Meeting after the service.

January 23: Pastor Mary leading worship.

January 30: Pastor Mary is on vacation. You are welcome to worship at the **First United Methodist Church on Pleasant Street at 10:00** or any of our local UCC churches.

- **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.
- **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.
- **Jan 16 (Sun) Annual Budget Meeting:** All members are encouraged to attend this very important meeting immediately following worship. The agenda is published elsewhere in this issue of The Link.
- Remember to check our [Facebook page](#) and church website (<http://www.uccstoughton.org/>).



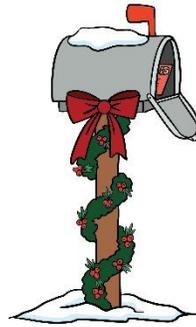
Opportunities to Serve

- **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.
- **Feb 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 | 781-244-7742). Casseroles must be delivered to the church by Sunday, February 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. We have resumed collecting non-perishable food items once a month on Communion Sunday. Items can also be left in the Giving Corner in the church lobby at any time. Donations are given to the Ilse Marks Food Pantry. Please be sure to check the expiration date!
- **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, water-resistant socks for the homeless in Harvard and Central Squares in Cambridge. We will be collecting new socks, as well as scarves, hats, and mittens for both men and women over the next two months. Please contact **Marcia Olson** (baglole.olson@verizon.net | 781-344-9547) if you have some to donate or you can drop them off in the Giving Corner in the church lobby.



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

Pam Dykeman
115 Kennedy Rd.
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



NOTICE

**Annual Budget Meeting
Sunday, January 16, 2022**

ALL MEMBERS, PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING
(A quorum of 14 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 16, 2022, at 11:00 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 2022.

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Distribution of the 2021 Annual Report
3. Distribution of the 2021 Financial Status Report
4. Consideration of the 2022 budget as presented by the Board of Trustees
5. Closing Prayer and Adjournment.

This meeting will be held in the church sanctuary and all COVID-19 face mask and social distancing safety protocols will be followed.

Copies of the proposed 2022 budget, 2021 Financial Status Report, 2021 Annual Report will be emailed to all members for review by **Wednesday, January 12, 2022**.

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 9, 2022**.