



# The Link



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

**May 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,

Easter blessings to you and those you love! I pray that the joy we experienced on Easter Sunday as we celebrated Christ's Resurrection will remain with us in the weeks and months to come.

When the pandemic turned our world upside down last year I was reading a book called "The Next Right Thing: A Simple, Soulful Practice for Making Life Decisions" by Emily P. Freeman. I found the book, which was written for anyone who is facing any kind of decision, to be both insightful and practical. A person of faith, the author offers various ways to connect to what scripture calls the "still small voice of God" in order to help the reader discern their next "right step."

As our church moves forward in discerning our next "right step" it is important that we tune in to the voice of God so that we can get a sense of the direction in which the Holy Spirit is leading us. Aligning ourselves with God's desires for us, which is also called spiritual discernment, means having the confidence that God is an active presence in our lives and cares about the outcome of our decision making and the future of our church.

Spiritual discernment requires patience. It's hard to do things according to God's timetable and in God's way, and it's counterintuitive to the messages of our culture that favor instant problem solving, decisive action, and quick fixes. In the life of faith, things work a little differently - the Holy Spirit can't be rushed! We can do our part in this process by being intentional about inviting the Spirit into our conversations, our decision making, and in our listening to one another (and quite possibly by doing more listening than talking!)

God loves us and cares about our church. So let's be prayerful and attentive to the ways God might be speaking to us now so that we can take the next right step together in faithfulness to the God who is always offering us hope and resurrection

With every blessing,

Pastor Mary



Thank you to all who helped make our Easter service so wonderful - **Janet Clough, Susan Hill, and Kay Giroux** for setting up the lilies and tulips, **John Baglole** for arranging the worship space, **Gian DiCostanzo** for his beautiful music, **Ed Porter** for touching up the safe distance markings on the church driveway, **Leanne Kerman** and **Julie McGillicuddy** for checking people in, and **Russ Clough** for his help with the recording. We are grateful to **Laura Kittery**, co-chair of the Board of Trustees, for all the work she has done with our departing tenant. We also thank all who faithfully provided casseroles for the MainSpring dinner in April 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. Marcia has been assisted by **Stephanie Clough**, and has raised over \$1700 for our church. We are very blessed!

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State-of-the-Church  
**REPORT**

### Annual Program Meeting Postponed

Church Council unanimously voted to postpone the May Annual Program meeting at their April 12 meeting. A new date has not yet been set.

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).

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



### May Worship Services

We plan to hold worship services outside at the church (weather permitting) on **May 2, 9, and 16**. Pastor Mary's scheduled Sunday off is May 23, Pentecost Sunday, so she will pre-record worship and the service will be held on Zoom. She will be on vacation May 30 and will provide links to the online services of other churches that day.

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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

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### Church Communication

The pandemic has made it a challenge to keep everyone up to date on what's happening at our church. Each month in the Link we provide as much information as we have at the time of publication, but sometimes circumstances change. We encourage you to check **Pastor Mary's Friday emails** (which are also posted on our **Facebook page**) for updates, especially regarding Sunday worship. Although we may plan for an outdoor service, New England weather is often unpredictable and may necessitate meeting on Zoom. If that is the case, in addition to Pastor Mary's emails, a message will be left on the **church telephone** (781-344-2371) on Friday morning.



**Sunday, May 2**

After worship on Sunday, May 2, all who are able, please lend a hand for 30-60 minutes to help spruce up the church grounds by picking up trash, sticks and taking down the fencing around the community garden. It should not take long. Many hands make light work!



## ATTIC TREASURES CHURCH YARD SALE

SATURDAY, MAY 22 | 9AM – 2 PM | RAIN OR SHINE

We are throwing open our Attic Treasures closet on **Saturday, May 22** where you can find great bargains on all kinds of items from housewares and home décor, gardening supplies, games, puzzles, toys, books, DVDs, small furniture, office supplies and lots more! You never know what treasures you might discover.

The yard sale will be held rain or shine from **9 AM to 2 PM** in our large fellowship hall and lobby. All COVID-19 public health protocols will be observed. Face masks and social distancing will be required. Current capacity limits will also be enforced so there may be a small wait time during busy periods (usually right at opening time).

Helpers are needed for set up on Saturday, May 15. Meet at the church at 9 AM. If you can help the day of the sale on May 22 or with pricing and organizing during the week, please contact **Marcia Olson** | 781-344-9547 | [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net)



A bottle and can drive will also be held during the yard sale, so bring yours along!



We are still offering selected Attic Treasures for sale on [Facebook Marketplace](https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/109554902404443/) so you can still shop for just that right gift, find that hidden gem, or snag a bargain. It's easy!

- 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 the sale items, scroll down to **Seller Information** and click on **Marcia Olson** to bring up my Commerce Profile. Scroll down to see all the treasures currently for sale that day. See one you like, just send me a Message.

Be sure to check back frequently. Many bargains are snatched up quickly. Items are also posted to several local area yard sale on Facebook as well.

If you have any items to donate, let Marcia know. Please keep those donations coming!



### **PROJECT 275 Financial Viability All Church Meeting – Sunday May 16**

Before the pandemic our church family held a series of Project 275 conversations to assess the seriousness of our church's financial situation and dwindling attendance and resources. This past year, when much church activity has been suspended due to COVID-19 safety concerns, and with the departure of a tenant, the situation has not improved. The time has now come for us to make some difficult decisions about the future of our beloved church and to prayerfully discern what God is yearning for our faith community to become.

The Financial Viability team has spent the last few months evaluating all of our options and will present them, along with its recommendation, to the congregation for consideration on **Sunday, May 16** immediately following worship. We hope to have these materials available for members to review in advance of the meeting either by email or post. As long as we can safely do so, the meeting will be held inside the church. We must follow capacity guidelines for indoor gatherings so please contact Pastor Mary or the church office if you will be attending in person. Face masks and social distancing will be required.

This is an important meeting and we encourage all members to attend. Our best decisions are made when we make them together in prayer.



### What's Happening This Month?

### Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

- **Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM.** We worship together each Sunday morning at 10:00 AM, outside in the church parking lot if the weather is sunny and warm enough or online if it is not. Face masks and socially distancing will be required for all who attend outdoor 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 about this service or our plans to reopen the church building, please contact **Pastor Mary** at 774-571-7307. Be sure to join us for a few minutes of fellowship immediately following the service.
- **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>.
- **May 16 (Sun) Project 275 Financial Viability All 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

- **May 2 (Sun) Church Yard Cleanup:** All those who are able, stick around for 30-60 minutes after worship and help with a quick sprucing up of the church grounds.
- **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** ([keeanans21@gmail.com](mailto:keeanans21@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. 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 donate online at (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/food-pantry-foundation-of-stoughton-incYou>) or by sending a check 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.

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



*Dates To Remember*

May 2nd



Church yard cleanup

May 16th



Church Meeting

May 22nd



Yard Sale

May 23rd



Pentecost Sunday

May 31st



Memorial Day 31<sup>st</sup>