



The Link



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

April 2018

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,

Did you know that Easter is not just a day, but a season? Do you think that things will go back to normal on April 2? I hope they don't! The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of our faith as Christians, and the liturgical calendar sets aside fifty days for us to reflect on what it means to be a community shaped by his presence among us. If Easter invites us into the story of the good news of Christ's love, what will be our response?

If you worship at UCC Stoughton with any regularity, you know I'm passionate about gratitude. I don't think it's enough just to think about gratitude – that's too easy. I believe the benefit comes from an awareness of the ordinary ways God blesses our lives each day. It's easy to be grateful for major occasions like family celebrations, vacations, or the birth of a child or grandchild. But it's a powerful spiritual practice to notice and name our gratitude for life's quiet blessings, ones that we encounter every day but to which we are often oblivious. I have a friend who

once said during a difficult time in her life she learned to be grateful for the small things given her - a hot cup of coffee, the soft blankets on her bed, a phone call from someone who cared. These ordinary things are the stuff our lives are made of. Recently, I heard someone say, "What if, when we woke up each morning we were only given that for which we were grateful the day before?" We could ponder that question endlessly!

I am grateful for all of you at the First Congregational Church of Stoughton. I'm grateful for the ways you care for one another, for me, and for our church. I thank God for ways you show your compassion for people in need, whether it's through your work in the Community Garden, the knitting of a prayer shawl, handing out sandwiches and socks to the homeless in Cambridge, or faithfully providing casseroles for our MainSpring suppers.

The Easter season that lies ahead is a fitting time to be grateful for the lives God has given us. No one's life is without sorrow and difficulty, but we have heard the good news - Christ is risen! We now have his Spirit to empower and sustain us. Let's rejoice in the incredible love of Christ and respond gratefully during the Easter season and beyond.

Resurrection blessings to you and those you love,

Pastor Mary



Youth Group/Faith4Life

Friday, March 30

Faith4Life Youth Group (Marcia Olson)

5:00 PM (Fri) -8:00 AM (Sat)

Good Friday Service and Lock-in

Sunday, April 8

Faith4Life Church School Class (Mr. Clough)

"Tough Questions: "What does it mean to be 'born again'?"

10:00-11:30 AM

Sunday, April 29

Community Garden/Church Cleanup Day

3:30 PM

Sunday, May 6

Faith4Life Church School Class (Mr. Clough)

"Tough Questions: Is it okay to be angry at God?"

Sunday, May 6

Feet for Food

11:00-12:00

For more information, contact Marcia Olson, baglole.olson@verizon.net or [339-987-1730](tel:339-987-1730).



Lunch with the Pastor

Please join Pastor Mary in the Fireplace Room at **11:45 AM on Thursday, April 5**. Bring a brown bag lunch and she will provide beverages and dessert. This is a nice way to share what's going on in our lives. Bring a friend! All are welcome.

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Hi all, Spring is here!

For April and May, CE has a few activities planned. We will be continuing our study of the Books of the Bible in Church School.



April 1 is, of course, Easter Sunday so there will be no Church School.

April 15 will also have no Church School, due to the start of April vacation.

May 6 will be the annual **Feet For Food** walk after service to raise money for the local food pantries.

May 6 and **May 13** will be preparation for Children's Service which will be on **May 20** this year.

There may be some minor changes to the schedule, so watch your emails!

Enjoy the Spring!



Book of Life

Deaths:

A memorial service for **Nancy Ivaldi** will take place on **Saturday, April 7**. The graveside committal will be at 10:00 AM at Dry Pond Cemetery, and Pastor Mary will lead a memorial service at our church at 11:00. A luncheon will be held in Fellowship Hall after the service.

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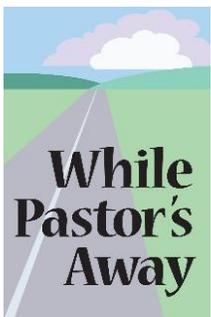


Meet for Breakfast

Faithful Gents---and Ladies

On the last Saturday of each month, a group of the men from our church gather at Bickford's for breakfast at 9 AM to share events in our lives and those in our church family. It has become a custom for women of the church and other friends to join the breakfast group at a neighboring table. So, if you and your partner would like to go out for breakfast on a Saturday morning, please join us. If you are single (men or women) —come and join us! Get to know other members of our church family in a different setting. All are welcome. Our next breakfast will be on Saturday, **April 28 at 9 am**. We are usually in the smaller room at the back of the restaurant.

Bickford's Restaurant, Oak Street, Brockton. If you have any questions or need a ride, please contact Bob Kuver at 781-341-2751.



While the Pastor's Away

Pastor Mary will be on vacation **April 10-14**. If you have any pastoral needs during this time please contact **Bonnie Bittner** at 781-344-9255.

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Thank you to **Laura Kittery** for her ongoing work as our Church Clerk. Unless you're a member of Church Council, you may not even be aware of the Clerk's duties. Laura is tasked with maintaining our electronic database and church membership lists, including records of deaths, baptisms, and new members. She is also responsible for taking the minutes at congregational meetings.

Thanks also go out to **Missy Mahoney** for her seemingly endless work keeping our church walkways plowed and safe during recent snowstorms, and to **Marcia Olson** and **Sally Monahan** for coordinating the Pancake Breakfast. Thank you to **Ed Porter** for all he did in the aftermath of our three-day power outage last month. Thank you to **Lisa Loughlin** for facilitating our visit to the Outdoor Church in Cambridge and for her leadership of the Lenten prayer study. We are very blessed!



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

Calling all Annual Reports!

Annual Reports for all boards, committees and ministry teams are **due in the Church Office by May 1** to allow time for copies to be made in time for the Annual Program meeting.

Please email your reports to office@uccstoughton.org and to Marcia Olson at baglole.olson@verizon.net.

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Please submit any Sunday worship bulletin notices to the church office by **8:30 am on Tuesday**. Articles for the May *LINK* will be due by **April 17**. Contact the church office with any changes or additions to the church calendar.



It's that time again to start thinking about our community garden. Please get these dates on your calendar.

- **Sunday, April 8 – garden planning meeting after worship during coffee hour**
- **Sunday, April 22 – workshop at Packard Manse at 4 pm to start a bunch of seeds for later transplantation**
- **Sunday, April 29 – Community Garden Work Day, 3:30 pm**

For more information, contact Lindsey Medeiros (medeiros.lindsey@gmail.com)



On **Thursday, April 26** we will be touring the Equal Exchange facility in West Bridgewater. Please mark the date on your calendar now. Then in May, we will have our annual banquet—be thinking of what type of an affair this should be. Remember, all ladies of our church family are part of Women's Fellowship. Plan to join us for any or all our gatherings.

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The Link is now digital. If you are not currently receiving our emails, you may subscribe 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. Now would be a good time to make sure we have your current email address on file. And give us the name and email addresses of any of your family members that want to get *The Link* as well. We would love to reach out to our college students.

Computers and smartphones not in your comfort zone? If a printed copy is still your preference, please let the church office know and we will gladly mail you a copy of *The Link*. A donation of \$10 to defray the cost of postage would be greatly appreciated. Some print copies will also be available in the literature rack in the church lobby. *The Link* is also posted on our website at www.uccstoughton.org.



Notes of THANKS

Dear Beloved Church Family,
Thank you so much for all your cards, prayers, and kindnesses on the recent passing of my Dad, **David Niven**. Thanks also to the Caring Committee who faithfully remembered him with cards on holidays and other special celebrations.
Dad suffered for years with Alzheimer's, which robbed him of his quick mind and winning personality, so his death, while sad, was a relief, and he is now delighting a new audience with his quick wit.
My heartfelt thanks again.
Love,
Jean Lenk



A Year of Dialogue and Discernment

The fifth in our series of conversations in Project 275 will be held on **Sunday, April 22**. We will start in the sanctuary at the end of worship and we will then move to the church hall for coffee and a 30-40 minute facilitated discussion led by Laura Kittery and Lori Saville. The topic for discussion is **“Do We Go?”**

Please put the dates of future conversations on your calendar and try to take part in as many discussions as possible.

June 3: Do We Merge?
June 24: Wrap Up Session

We need your voice. Child care will be available. We invite you to be in contact with us throughout the year. Here is how you can keep the conversation going:

- Send an email to future@uccstoughton.org
- Contact Pastor Mary or any member of the Financial Viability Working Group

Let's pray. Let's talk. And let's move forward in faith to face the future to which God is calling us.



The Link “Feet for Food” Sunday, May 6, 2018



Support the children and youth of the **First Congregational Church of Stoughton** as we walk in our 14th Annual “Feet for Food” aimed at easing hunger right here in Stoughton. Our kids will be circling the Halloran Park walking track right after worship at **11 AM** to see how many laps we can do in 30 minutes.

The children’s energy, enthusiasm (and feet!) and your pledges can help us reach our goal! You can donate one lump sum or pledge a certain amount per lap. All money raised will be donated to the **Food Pantry Foundation of Stoughton** which supports both food pantries in town as well as the **Tuesday Morning Café**, a shared ministry of our church and the United Methodist church. Don’t forget a non-perishable food item to donate as well.

Please make checks payable to the “First Congregational Church of Stoughton” with “Feet for Food/Stoughton Food Pantry” in the memo line and hand it in the day of the walk, or mail it to the First Congregational Church, 76 Pierce Street, Stoughton, MA 02072. If you have any questions please contact Marcia Olson at 781-344-9547, or baglole.olson@verizon.net

“When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat,”

Matthew 25.35a



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S CELEBRATION X

Forty plus years ago the women of the New England states who were members of UCC churches began planning a weekend meeting for all of the women of this area. The idea was to let the women in on what was happening in their denomination, to give the women an opportunity to reflect on their faith, to experience worship in a variety of ways, to learn what they could from each other and to make friends with other women of faith. The first Celebration, as it was called, was a huge success and has continued every four years.

This year Celebration X will take place in Portland, Maine from **April 6-8**. The theme for this celebration is based on Luke 14:17b - "A Seat At The Table: Come for all things are now ready". The three days of the Celebration are filled with workshops, a vendors' area, entertainment, free time to explore Portland, music and worship. For full information as to what you could experience there go to www.uccwomenscelebration.org If you register before February 15 the fee is only \$125. for the three days. You may also choose to attend only on Saturday and that fee is \$100. Travel to Portland can be done with car pooling or by train. It would be wonderful to have a car full of our ladies attend. Check out that web site!

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Are you looking for a way to serve but don't have a lot of time? Willing to tackle a short-term job to help further our church's ministries but don't want to join a board or committee? Well, look no further! Thanks to the Taylor family, we have a newly designed "Volunteer" board.

It's simple! Individuals and groups post a job with which they could use some help. You check the board in the lobby on Sunday morning, pick the job that is just right for your skills and time commitment and contact the individual listed for more details.

"I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. The something I ought to do, I can do. And by the grace of God, I will."

~ Edward Everett Hale



Friendly Service

Friendly Service will hopefully be ready during April vacation week to fill the school bags with the materials all of you have donated. We will meet on **Tuesday, April 17** and any other day that week if needed. Many hands make light work! If the kids are home and "bored" during school vacation, we have plenty of jobs for them! Thank you for considering giving us some time and effort.



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

Jennifer Alholm
156 Dean Street
South Easton, MA 02375

Mary Alholm
2049 Dorchester Ave., Rm 222-1
Boston, MA 02124
(617) 698-6008

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

Amanda Cushing
103 Benson Road
Stoughton MA 02072

Clifford and Amy Fowler
30 Belcher Street
Stoughton, MA 02072
(781) 344-9573

Betty Lambert
19 Rose Street Unit #4
Stoughton, MA
(781) 436-3416

Rev. Jean Lenk
63B Stafford St.
Plymouth, MA 02360

Dorothy Dawe
The Arbors
2121 Central Street
Apt 112
Stoughton, MA 02072
(781) 344-8367

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 COMMUNION Easter Sunday NO CHURCH SCHOOL 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Hour 1:00 PM BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm 3:00 PM BRC-FH/Kitchen	2 7:00 PM Rel Addiction	3 6:00 AM BRC-FR 8:30 AM N&N Deadline 7:00 PM Church Council	4 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl 11:45 AM Missions/Outreach 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	5 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:30 AM Caring Committee 11:45 AM Lunch with the Pastor 7:00 PM AA 8:00 PM BRC	6 6:00 AM BRC-FR 9:30 AM 12 Step Group 5:00 PM Girl Scouts	7 6:00 AM Boston Renewal Church 9:00 AM Red Hat Society 11:00 AM AA 11:00 AM Nancy Ivaldi Memorial Service
8 10:00 AM Faith4Life Class 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Hour 11:00 AM Garden Planning 1:00 PM BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm 3:00 PM BRC-FH/Kitchen 4:00 PM Green Earth Garden School	9 7:00 PM Rel Addiction	10 Pastor Mary vacation 6:00 AM BRC-FR 8:30 AM N&N Deadline 6:30 PM Cub Scouts	11 Pastor Mary vacation 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl	12 Pastor Mary vacation 6:00 AM BRC-FR 7:00 PM AA 8:00 PM BRC	13 Pastor Mary vacation 6:00 AM BRC-FR 9:30 AM 12 Step Group	14 Pastor Mary vacation 11:00 AM AA
15 NO CHURCH SCHOOL 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Hour 11:30 AM Trustees 1:00 PM BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm 3:00 PM BRC-FH/Kitchen 3:00 PM Special Needs Bible Club	16 PATRIOTS' DAY 7:00 PM Rel Addiction	17 LINK Deadline 6:00 AM BRC-FR 8:30 AM N&N Deadline 9:00 AM Friendly Service	18 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	19 6:00 AM BRC-FR 7:00 PM AA 8:00 PM BRC	20 6:00 AM BRC-FR 9:30 AM 12 Step Group	21 11:00 AM AA
22 EARTH DAY 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Hour 11:00 AM Project 275 Meeting 1:00 PM BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm 3:00 PM BRC-FH/Kitchen 4:00 PM Garden Seed Starters (Packard Manse)	23 3:00 PM Women's Fellowship 7:00 PM Rel Addiction	24 6:00 AM BRC-FR 8:30 AM N&N Deadline 6:30 PM Cub Scouts	25 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl	26 6:00 AM BRC-FR 7:00 PM AA 7:00 PM CE Meeting 8:00 PM BRC	27 6:00 AM BRC-FR 9:30 AM 12 Step Group	28 9:00 AM Faithful Gents-(Bickfords) 11:00 AM AA
29 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Coffee Hour 1:00 PM BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm 3:00 PM BRC-FH/Kitchen 3:30 PM COMMUNITY GARDEN DAY	30 7:00 PM Rel Addiction	1 6:00 AM BRC-FR 8:30 AM N&N Deadline	2 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl 11:45 AM Missions/Outreach 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	3 6:00 AM BRC-FR 10:30 AM Caring Committee 11:45 AM Lunch with the Pastor 7:00 PM AA 8:00 PM BRC	4 6:00 AM BRC-FR 9:30 AM 12 Step Group 5:00 PM Girl Scouts	5 6:00 AM Boston Renewal Church 9:00 AM Red Hat Society 11:00 AM AA

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76 Pierce Street, Stoughton, MA 02072
Tel: 781-344-2371
e-mail: office@uccstoughton.org
www.uccstoughton.org
Rev. Mary L. Perry, Pastor
Pastor's Study: 781-344-2395

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED