



# The Link



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

June 2017

## 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,

Each year our church grants me two weeks to use for continuing education. I am very grateful for this valuable time because it's important for me to keep up with what's going on in the world of the larger church and also to refresh and renew my spirit. Just as with other professions, it's necessary for clergy to engage in professional and spiritual development in order to be effective church leaders.

As I write this update for our June newsletter, I've started my packing for the Festival of Homiletics, a national preaching conference, which will be held this year in San Antonio, Texas. The Festival of Homiletics takes place annually and brings together some very fine preachers and teachers. They include seminary professors, writers, and church pastors. Barbara Brown-Taylor, Nadia Bolz Weber, and Brian McLaren are a few of the speakers who will be at the Festival this year. As someone who preaches regularly it's a pleasure to have this time to be a listener, to soak up the wisdom of others, and to be renewed by inspiring worship and great

music. The Festival draws over 1500 clergy and seminarians from various denominations around the country and also offers opportunities for conversation and networking. Two of my friends from seminary will be there as well, so it will be wonderful to re-connect with them in this dynamic setting.

Opportunities to step away from our usual routines can open our eyes us to the ways God desires to renew us in the work to which God has called us. I am thankful for the generosity of our church in providing this time for my professional development and I look forward to sharing my experiences at the Festival when I return! I pray that no matter where we are in our lives and on our spiritual journeys that each of us will always be open to God's renewing Spirit.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Mary



On *Communion Sunday, June 4* Pastor Mary will remain in the sanctuary after worship to meet with you privately and pray with you. If you are in need of any kind of physical, emotional, or spiritual healing or simply need to know that God cares... please come.

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## Youth Group/Faith4Life

Here is the upcoming schedule for Faith4Life. Get these dates on your calendar now!

### Sunday, June 4

#### Children's Sunday Prep

10:00-11:15 AM

### Sunday, June 11

#### Children's Sunday – "Blessed Be"

10:00-11:00 AM

Please arrive at church no later than 9 AM so that we can practice the service in the sanctuary.

Marcia will be travelling for much of June so plans for our final Faith4Life gathering are still to be determined.

Stay tuned for more details via email and Notes & Notices.

We hope all middle and high school youth will join us for these events. Friends are always welcome!

For more information, contact Marcia

Olson, [baglolo.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglolo.olson@verizon.net) or [339-987-1730](tel:339-987-1730).



### Children's Sunday "Blessed Be" – June 11

On Sunday, June 11, the children and youth will lead the entire service so attendance at our planning sessions on Sunday, June 4 at 10 AM and on Sunday, June 11 at 9 AM is very important. Our message will focus on The Beatitudes which we have been learning about this spring. Please let us know if your child will not be able to take part in the Children's Sunday service so we can assign parts accordingly.

We hope the whole congregation will join us for this joyous celebration.

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### Feet for Food

Thank you so much for your generosity to this year's Feet for Food event. The children of our church, along with parents and teachers, raised \$1000 to help alleviate hunger in Stoughton. \$800 was given to the Stoughton Food Pantry Foundation and \$200 was given to replenish supplies for the Tuesday Café, a joint ministry between our church and the First United Methodist church.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in our children's ministry, please contact any member of the CE Ministry Team:

Shannon Baglolo [Shannon.baglolo@gmail.com](mailto:Shannon.baglolo@gmail.com)

Paula Baptista [epypaula@yahoo.com](mailto:epypaula@yahoo.com)

Sallyanne Monahan [Sal\\_kev@yahoo.com](mailto:Sal_kev@yahoo.com)

Kevin Monahan [monahanks@yahoo.com](mailto:monahanks@yahoo.com)

Marcia Olson [baglolo.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglolo.olson@verizon.net)



Thank you to all who supported our seminarian **Adam Isbitsky** and our student pastor, **Lisa Loughlin**, this year. Adam has been guided by his Local Church Discernment Team – **Joan Roan** (Chair), **Kevin Monahan**, **Susan Hill**, **Julie McGillicuddy**, and **Pastor Mary**. The Teaching Parish Committee has been supporting Lisa. Members of that group include **Joan Roan** (Chair), **John Baglolo**, **Lindsey Medeiros**, and **Lauren Armstrong**. May God bless you for participating in the formation of these two future pastors! Thanks also go out to **Lindsey Medeiros** for her energy and vision for our Community Garden, and to all who helped at the Garden Work Day on April 29. We look forward to sharing our veggies with our neighbors at the Food Pantry before too long!



Please submit any Sunday worship bulletin notices to the church office by *8:30 am on Wednesday*.

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

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#### Lunch with the Pastor

Please join Pastor Mary in the Fireplace Room at **11:45 AM on Thursday June 1**. 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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#### FAITHFUL GENTS

"Faithful Gents meets on the *last Saturday of every month*. Please join us on **June 24 at 9:00 am at Bickford's Restaurant, Oak Street, Brockton**. If you have any questions or need a ride, please contact Bob Kuver at 781-341-2751.

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The seedlings have been planted and we soon hope to see all kinds of tasty produce sprouting - squash, chard, potatoes, tomatoes, and more. Sometime in the upcoming weeks we will have a garden tour after church and you can find out how you can help the garden thrive over the summer. Stay tuned!

For more information, contact Lindsey Medeiros ([medeiros.lindsey@gmail.com](mailto:medeiros.lindsey@gmail.com)) or Christopher Nickelson-Mann.

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**Strengthen the Church Offering,  
Sunday June 4**

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Strengthen the Church (STC) is a special mission offering to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. We will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 2017



#### Book of Life

##### Birth:

**Ellie Jane Campbell**, great-granddaughter of Janet Clough and granddaughter of Russ and Stephanie Clough, was born on May 2.

##### Baptism:

**Alexander Marc Perry** was baptized by his grandmother, Pastor Mary, on May 7.

##### Deaths:

**Susan Sprissler**, whose funeral service was led by Pastor Mary at Farley Funeral Home on April 21.

**Bob Connor**, who died on May 2. A celebration of his life will take place at a later date.

**Margaret Kalweit**, whose funeral service was led by Pastor Mary at Farley Funeral Home on May 14.

##### Wedding:

**Molly McIntyre and Brian Libby** were married by Pastor Mary on May 26 in Beverly MA.



### CHURCH CALENDAR MEETING

Time to fill in the calendar for our 2017-2018 program year. A representative from all small groups, boards, and committees are asked to attend a short meeting on **Tuesday, June 27 at 4:00 PM** to get all known meetings and planned events on the church calendar. A copy of the church calendar will be put in all the office mailboxes. If a representative of your group cannot attend the meeting, please submit your dates to Marcia Olson by Sunday, June 25 by putting it in the Church Council mailbox or emailing [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net).



### Financial Viability Working Group

If you read the report of Church Council in the Annual Report, you saw that we have transitioned the Crossroads team to a **Financial Viability Working Group**, recognizing that the need to address our worrisome financial outlook is of critical importance. While many wonderful things resulted from the Crossroads journey we have taken together these past few years that have renewed our spirits and outreach to the community, we are still faced with making a bold decision about becoming financially stable.

And if you look through the pages of the annual report, you will see troublesome signs that we need to be about the business of making that bold decision without delay.

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Our active membership is just under 100. Our pledges for 2016, although slightly higher than the previous year, still cover less than 50% of our operating costs leaving us with a \$50K deficit that we can only close by taking money from our investment funds. The balance of those investment funds as of the end of April was \$240K – giving us less than 5 years to make some hard choices.

This working group, comprised of **John Baglole, Russ Clough, Adam Isbitsky, Laura Kittery, Ed McGillicuddy, Marcia Olson, Rev. Mary Perry, Ed Porter, and Lori Saville**, has begun to address this issue in a proactive way. Starting in September, perhaps sooner, we plan to continue the conversation with our whole church community to hear your concerns and your ideas about the all the options we have before us – from increasing our pledges enough so we can remain here, to finding new tenants, selling our buildable lots, finding a new church home that better suits our current size and mission, to closing and merging with another church. Let me state very clearly that **NO DECISION** has been made – it is one we must make together. So as the Financial Viability working group gathers data to inform our decision-making, we will be sharing that data with you during a series of shared conversations during coffee hour during upcoming program year. We need to know your concerns, your prayers, your ideas so that we can **discern together, decide together**, how and where God is calling us to be church and what bold decision needs to be made to make sure we remain a robust and vibrant congregation.



Due to strict privacy laws, hospitals are not allowed to inform the Church Office if you are admitted for treatment. Please call us if you are ill so that we may contact you and pray for you.

Rev. Mary makes pastoral calls at homes and hospitals by need and request so please contact her or the Church Office and she would be happy to visit you.

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### **NEEDY PERSONS' FUND**

Every Communion Sunday, we invite you to make a special donation to the church's Needy Persons' Fund, through which we are able to offer assistance to individuals in need. Please put your donation in the white offering envelopes found in the pews, which unless marked otherwise, will be placed in the Needy Persons' Fund.

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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### **FRIENDLY SERVICE**

The Friendly service group will meet on Tuesday, **June 20** to complete the work on four different quilts. We will be tying these quilts—a sit-down job—so come if you are available to help us. If we finish that work, we can design new quilts. So if you have an artistic eye, you would be of great help to our designing the face of the quilts. We plan to be at the church from 9 am to 2 pm, so bring your lunch and we will have beverages and dessert ready for you.

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In the event of a loved one's passing, please consider having memorial gifts directed to the church. Donations may be made to the Memorial Fund or the general operating budget. These contributions will help us live out our mandate to bring Christ's love to the world. Thank you!

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### **Growing in Faith**

If you have questions about our church, ministries, programs or activities; if you would like more information about our denomination, the United Church of Christ, or you have questions about God... Jesus... faith... or life that you've always wanted to ask ... please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Mary — she would be happy to make a time to sit down with you. You can also call her at 781-344-2395 or email her at [revmary@uccstoughton.org](mailto:revmary@uccstoughton.org)

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### **Women's Fellowship**

Our ladies enjoyed a Hawaiian styled evening of dinner and entertainment put together by Flo Ledin and Bonnie Bittner. They were assisted by Susan Hill, Carole Stepanek, and Carol Neville. The wide variety of food was delicious, the decorations and atmosphere festive, and the Hula lessons hilarious to watch.

Following our meal a business meeting and devotions were held. The following people were elected to positions for the 2017-18 year: President, Gail Randlov; Vice President, Maurine Upton; Secretary, Peggy Webster; and Treasurer, Bonnie Bittner. Meeting of old and new officers will be held on **June 12** to plan activities for the upcoming year. Discussion will be held on possible changes to our bylaws and setting of dates for proposed summer activities.

Please remember that this group is open to ALL of the women of our church family. We strongly encourage you to join in the fellowship and outreach that we try to encourage. Look for our meeting announcements in the Link and in Notes and Notices. We also are interested in your ideas of how we can enrich our group's impact on our church family and our community.



**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

*Jean Hamilton*  
 4 Capen St. Apt. 203  
 Stoughton MA 02072

*Nancy Ivaldi*  
 The Arbors at Taunton  
 763 County Street, Apt. 224  
 Taunton, MA 02780  
 (508) 824-4800

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

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

*David Niven*  
 Elm 103, Brookdale  
 97 Warren Ave  
 Plymouth, MA 02360

*Delda White*  
 The Arbors  
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