



# The Link



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

**January 2019**

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***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.*

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Dear Friends,

A book I'm reading, *Canoeing the Mountains*, is giving me a lot to think about. The author, Tod Bolsinger, compares the challenges facing Christian leaders today to those of 19th century explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Although they were expecting to find a waterway to the Pacific Ocean as they headed west, Lewis and Clark instead found themselves staring at the Rocky Mountains. It was not what they expected!

We at UCC Stoughton may have that same reaction to the challenges that we, along with many other churches, are now facing as we strive to remain viable and relevant. A generation ago, we did not expect the day would come when churches of all denominations would be dealing with dwindling membership, financial struggles, and image problems.

The premise of *Canoeing the Mountains* is that churches today are in uncharted territory and our congregations are filled with people who were once blessed by practices that used to work. According to Bolsinger, we tend to default to old ways that we expect will continue to be effective only to be disappointed and frustrated when they are not.

The answer, Bolsinger writes, is not to try harder but, instead, to start a new adventure.

Whether you realize it or not, that's what our church is doing. My decreased ministry hours mean that we will have to be creative with Sunday worship once a month. Rather than thinking, "Mary won't be here on Sunday? That's not what I was expecting!" you are being invited to see these Sundays as opportunities to take part in something new as we seek to serve Christ in practical ways.

Whether the Sunday I am off gives you the opportunity to sew quilts for families at Evelyn House, make sandwiches for the homeless in Harvard Square, or fill tote bags for victims of human trafficking, you will be participating in a new adventure at UCC Stoughton! This is an exciting time for our church. We may find that some of our efforts work better than others but we will always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we work together to become stronger followers of Christ and to bring his great love into the world. Thank you for being part of our future.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Mary

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### Book of Life

Death:

Arthur Otto, whose graveside service was led by Pastor Mary at Knollwood Memorial Park on December 18.

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Thanks go out to Music Director **Christopher Nickelson-Mann**, the **Chancel Choir**, and the **Grace Notes Handbell Choir** for the many hours they put in to make our Christmas Eve candlelight service so special. Thank you to the **Caring Committee** for sending Christmas cards to our homebound members and to **Janet Clough** for organizing the Christmas poinsettia donations. We also extend our gratitude to our office assistant, **Ellen Cooley**, for the extra help she gave us during the holiday season. We are very blessed!

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

### Human Trafficking Awareness Day

**January 11** is Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the United States – a day to bring awareness to the world-wide crisis also known as modern day slavery. The 29th General Synod officially [recognized the date and called on UCC congregations to be part of the education and advocacy efforts associated with Human Trafficking Awareness Day.](#)

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery, and it's happening right here in the United States. Also known as "trafficking in persons," it is the use of force, coercion, fraud or abduction to exploit the person for profit. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to labor and/or sexual exploitation, which may take many forms including debt bondage, commercial sexual abuse of children, prostitution, pornography, bride trafficking, child soldiering, domestic servitude and forced labor. Human trafficking is currently the third largest criminal industry in the world today, after arms and drug dealing. It is also the fastest growing. If you are new to the issue of human trafficking, you can find out more at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>.

If you need help or have a tip, call the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888**. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) is a national, toll-free hotline available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. The NHTRC is not a law enforcement or immigration authority and is operated by a nongovernmental organization funded by the Federal government. In an emergency, call 911.

Our church will be trying to raise awareness about human trafficking at a Bags of Hope event on Sunday, March 24. Look for details elsewhere in this issue.



## Parking

### With the Winter Weather Approaching Please Be Considerate Where You Park

Due to the limited number of spaces in our parking lot, we have signs that say, *"Reserved for Those Requiring Proximity Parking,"* and ask that you leave these for individuals who can only walk short distances. We ask all people who are physically able to consider parking in one of the spots in front of the park on Pierce Street. This frees up spots in the lot for those who really need to park closer to the entrance. Also, we ask you to remember not to park in any spot that has a "No Parking" sign, or in the Fire Lanes. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Come Fill Bags with Hope!



Help spread hope into the lives of women affected by human trafficking, addiction & homelessness.

**WHAT:** Bags are filled with items that let women affected by trafficking know that there is a better way, they are treasured & there is help. Filled bags are distributed to women who are living on the streets of Boston. A survivor of human trafficking from the Bags of Hope ministry will also be speaking about her own painful experience.

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 24, 2019 | 6:00-8:00 pm

**WHERE:** First Congregational Church | 76 Pierce Street, Stoughton

**HOW:** Donations to fill the bags will be accepted through Sunday, March 17 in the Giving Corner in the church lobby.

Cash donations are also welcome

(please contact Marcia Olson | 781-344-9547 | [baglolo.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglolo.olson@verizon.net))

### Items needed are:

Toothpaste \* Toothbrushes \* hair brushes, elastics and hair clips \* 12 oz. bottles of shampoo and conditioner  
\* trail mix (snack packs) \* women's socks \* lip balm \* deodorant \* small packages of wipes \* feminine  
products \* nail polish \* winter hats, scarves and gloves \* \$5 Dunkin Donut gift cards \* Notes of  
encouragement \*

**All items must be new, full-size and individually packaged**



Throughout our fall stewardship campaign we asked the question, “What Shall We Bring?” Several of our members gave witness to the powerful impact our church’s mission has had on their lives. Many more of you participated in our Project 275 congregational conversations on our church’s financial viability and future. In our proposed 2019 budget, we challenged you to pledge **\$105,000**. As of December 16, 2018, our Offerings Clerk reported that 39 church households have pledged **\$85,566** representing an almost 20% decrease over 2018 pledges and covering almost 45% of our operating budget. These figures are clearly concerning. We are grateful for the faithfulness of this church community but we also recognize we have significant challenges ahead. If you have yet to make your 2019 pledge, please mail it to the church office, or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. Extra pledge cards and envelopes can be found on the table at the rear of the sanctuary. Even if you donate online, we need to know your pledge amount in order to present an accurate 2019 budget at the Annual Budget Meeting on January 20.



### MLK Day of Service - Monday, January 21, 2019

The Stoughton Clergy Association and the Stoughton Diversity and Inclusion Organization are partnering again this year to host the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service. We will gather on January 21 at 10:00 AM at Trinity Episcopal Church, 414 Sumner Street to honor the legacy of Dr. King through a keynote address by Rev. Sarah Napoline, music, and a presentation by student essay contest participants on the topic, "What is Your Life's Blueprint?" After the program there will be opportunities for community service.

In addition to the Stoughton Clergy Association and the Stoughton Diversity and Inclusion Organization, MLK Day of Service sponsors include the Blue Hills branch of the NAACP, Stoughton Youth Commission, Old Colony YMCA, and the Stoughton Public Schools.



### What's Happening This Month?

### Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

- January 3 (Thu): Please join Pastor Mary in the Fireplace Room at 11:45am for **Lunch with the Pastor**. 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.
- January 6 (Sun): Church school classes - **Faith4Life class** for middle school students and led by Mr. Russ Clough will meet in the Fireplace Room just after communion. **Confirmation class** will meet with Pastor Mary after worship in the downstairs classroom.
- January 26 (Sat): "**The Breakfast Club**," a group of faithful ladies and gents, meets on the last Saturday of every month at 9am at the IHOP at Westgate Mall in Brockton. All are welcome. If you have any questions or need a ride, contact Bob Kuver at 781-341-2751.



### Opportunities to Serve

- January 21 (Mon): **Friendly Service** meets from 10am to 2pm to work on community and worldwide service projects such as quilts for local homeless shelters, school kits for Church World Service, and mending kits for Seafarer's Friend. You can even bring projects to work on at home if you are unable to make our monthly gathering. Many hands make light work. Please contact Janet Clough at 781-344-3860 for more information.
- February 20 (Wed): **Mainspring House**: Every other month UCC Stoughton provides dinner for Brockton's homeless shelter. There are lots of ways to help. We need 2-3 volunteers to serve dinner from 3:30-6pm – it's a great way for a family or group of friends to serve together. Make a casserole – it can be made ahead, frozen and dropped off to the church the Sunday before it's our night to serve, or make a monetary donation to defray the cost of salad and dessert. We are so grateful to all who faithfully volunteer to make meals or serve every time we ask – living out Jesus' most basic tenet – “whatsoever you do for the least of these you do unto me.” Please sign up after coffee hour on Sunday or contact Charlene Smith ([CJTS107@comcast.net](mailto:CJTS107@comcast.net) | 781-254-5910).
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry**: Our group meets every Wednesday at 10am to knit prayer shawls for those who need to feel God's loving care wrapped around them. We also work on knit goods for the church fair. Please join us.
- **Coffee Hour Hosts**: We all enjoy visiting with friends over a snack and a cup of coffee after worship. Please consider taking a turn hosting a coffee hour and sign up on the volunteer board to cover a Sunday.



### Opportunities to

- **Bags of Hope Advent Project**: On Sunday, March 24 the confirmation class will be sponsoring a **Bags of Hope** event to highlight the problem of human trafficking, addiction and homelessness and to help spread hope into the lives of women and girls affected by this scourge. You can continue to fill your Bags of Hope tote bags throughout January and February. We are asking that each household fill the bag with one item a day that are most needed by these women who are living on the streets of Boston. This will go a long way toward kickstarting our collection drive in advance of the March 24 event. See more details elsewhere in this issue.
- **Food Pantry**: Each month on Communion Sunday we collect non-perishable food items to share with our neighbors who are facing challenging circumstances and food insecurity at the Ilse Marks Food Pantry. As we come to the Lord's Table, let us share our blessings with others.

- **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 box at the bottom of the stairs just before the church office. Monetary donations are always gratefully accepted and the money collected is used for various church ministries and operational needs. Contact Maurine Upton for more information.
  - **Needy Persons Fund:** Every Communion Sunday we invite you to make a special donation to this 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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We are delighted to announce that our 2018 Church Fair raised **\$13,185**. A million thanks to all who knitted, baked, crafted, cooked, moved tables, carried boxes, set-up tables, organized, decorated, advertised, priced, publicized, kept track of our proceeds, donated silent auction and Attic Treasures items, attended outside craft fairs, and shopped! We simply could not have done it without all of you!

We are tentatively planning a spring yard sale in **April** so please continue to bring in any Attic Treasure items after the holidays. We are also planning a Savers FUNDrive and will be collecting gently-used clothing, bedding/towels, and accessories (such as shoes, belts and purses). For more information, please contact Marcia Olson, [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net) or 781-344-9547.

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### How to Find Out if Church is Cancelled

Once in a very great while, inclement weather or other circumstances may force us to cancel church activities. Safety and common sense should guide your decision about coming to church during inclement weather. If we make the decision to cancel church, we will announce it in the following ways:

- 1) *Church Office phone message:* call 781-344-2371 and listen to the recorded message;
- 2) *Facebook/Church website:* check out the church's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalchurchofStoughton](https://www.facebook.com/firstcongregationalchurchofStoughton); OR go to our church website, [www.uccstoughton.org](http://www.uccstoughton.org).
- 3) *Email:* we will send out a Constant Contact email to everyone on our mailing list.



# NOTICE

**Annual Budget Meeting  
Sunday, January 20, 2019**

**ALL MEMBERS, PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING**

In keeping with the requirements in the Church by-laws, a congregation-wide meeting will be held on Sunday January 20, 2019 after worship.

The focus of the meeting will be a review of the church's financial position and consideration of the proposed budget for 2019.

## Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Consideration of change in ministry hours for Rev. Mary Perry to three-quarter time
3. Consideration of continuing the use of the Prayground space in the sanctuary
4. Consideration of revising the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees with recommendations to be presented at the May 19, 2019 Annual Program meeting
5. 2018 Financial Status Report
6. Consideration of the 2019 budget as presented by the Board of Trustees
7. Closing Prayer

Copies of the Proposed 2019 budget and 2018 Financial Status Report will be available for review at church by Sunday, January 13.

You may also request a copy via email by contacting the church office at [office@ucc.stoughton.org](mailto:office@ucc.stoughton.org)



**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

*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

*Walter Bamberg*  
 2330 Central St.  
 Stoughton, MA 02072

*Amanda Cushing*  
 103 Benson Road  
 Stoughton MA 02072

*Fred Dimond*  
 382 Prospect St.  
 Stoughton, MA 02072

*Clifford and Amy Fowler*  
 The Arbors  
 2121 Central Street  
 Room 219  
 Stoughton, MA 02072

*Maizie John*  
 Bridges by Epoch  
 140 University Ave.  
 Westwood, MA 02090

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

*Rev. Jean Lenk*  
 229 Old Plymouth Road  
 Sagamore Beach, MA. 02562

*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

*Ruth Scrivens*  
 18 Daly Dr.  
 Stoughton, MA 02072

*James Williamson*  
 Hellenic Nursing and Rehab Center  
 601 Sherman Street  
 Canton, MA 02021

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>30</b>  <b>10:00 AM</b> Worship  <b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour  <b>1:00 PM</b> BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm  <b>3:00 PM</b> BRC-FH/Kitchen</p>	<p><b>31</b>                      NEW YEARS EVE  <b>7:00 PM</b> Rel Addiction</p>	<p><b>1</b>                      NEW YEARS DAY  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>8:30 AM</b> N&amp;N Deadline</p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl  <b>11:45 AM</b> Missions/Outreach  <b>7:00 PM</b> Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:30 AM</b> Caring Committee  <b>11:45 AM</b> Lunch with the Pastor  <b>7:00 PM</b> AA  <b>8:00 PM</b> BRC</p>	<p><b>4</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>9:30 AM</b> 12 Step Group  <b>4:30 PM</b> Girl Scout Troop 81007</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> Boston Renewal Church  <b>11:00 AM</b> AA</p>
<p><b>6</b>                      COMMUNION  <b>10:00 AM</b> Faith4Life Class  <b>10:00 AM</b> Worship  <b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour  <b>11:00 AM</b> Healing Prayers  <b>1:00 PM</b> BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm  <b>3:00 PM</b> BRC-FH/Kitchen</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>7:00 PM</b> Rel Addiction</p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>8:30 AM</b> N&amp;N Deadline  <b>6:30 PM</b> Cub Scouts</p>	<p><b>9</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl</p>	<p><b>10</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>7:00 PM</b> AA  <b>8:00 PM</b> BRC</p>	<p><b>11</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>9:30 AM</b> 12 Step Group</p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>11:00 AM</b> AA</p>
<p><b>13</b>  <b>10:00 AM</b> Worship  <b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour  <b>11:30 AM</b> Worship &amp; Music  <b>1:00 PM</b> BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm  <b>3:00 PM</b> BRC-FH/Kitchen</p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>7:00 PM</b> Rel Addiction</p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>8:30 AM</b> N&amp;N Deadline</p>	<p><b>16</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl  <b>7:00 PM</b> Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>17</b>                      LINK Deadline  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>7:00 PM</b> AA  <b>8:00 PM</b> BRC</p>	<p><b>18</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>9:30 AM</b> 12 Step Group</p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>11:00 AM</b> AA</p>
<p><b>20</b>                      CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  <b>10:00 AM</b> Worship  <b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour  <b>11:15 AM</b> Annual Budget Meeting  <b>1:00 PM</b> BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm  <b>3:00 PM</b> BRC-FH/Kitchen</p>	<p><b>21</b>  <b>10:00 AM</b> Friendly Service  <b>7:00 PM</b> Rel Addiction</p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>8:30 AM</b> N&amp;N Deadline  <b>6:30 PM</b> Cub Scouts</p>	<p><b>23</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl</p>	<p><b>24</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>7:00 PM</b> AA  <b>8:00 PM</b> BRC</p>	<p><b>25</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>9:30 AM</b> 12 Step Group</p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>9:00 AM</b> Breakfast Club - (Pancake House)  <b>11:00 AM</b> AA</p>
<p><b>27</b>  <b>10:00 AM</b> Worship  <b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour  <b>1:00 PM</b> BRC-Sanctuary/2ClassRm  <b>3:00 PM</b> BRC-FH/Kitchen</p>	<p><b>28</b>  <b>7:00 PM</b> Rel Addiction</p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>8:30 AM</b> N&amp;N Deadline</p>	<p><b>30</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl</p>	<p><b>31</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>7:00 PM</b> AA  <b>8:00 PM</b> BRC</p>	<p><b>1</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> BRC-FR  <b>9:30 AM</b> 12 Step Group  <b>4:30 PM</b> Girl Scout Troop 81007</p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>6:00 AM</b> Boston Renewal Church  <b>11:00 AM</b> AA</p>