



# The Link



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

March 2023

## 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 Church Family,

May the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

As you know, I will be retiring on March 1, so in my final pastor's letter to you I would like to express once again how very grateful I am for the years we have spent together in service to God at the First Congregational Church of Stoughton.

People have asked about my plans for the future. I will not be serving another church as a settled pastor, although I hope to be able to provide occasional pulpit supply to cover clergy vacations and sabbaticals. Initially, I plan to spend some time at home, resting, reading, and exercising. I'll be visiting my parents as often as I can, and I'll also be cleaning out a few closets! After that, who knows? I hope to be open to whatever plans God has for me.

We will be having a formal Service of Celebration and Release in Stoughton on Sunday, March 5 at 3:00 pm to mark my retirement. There is more information about that service in this issue of the Link, and I hope you can attend.

During the past ten years as your pastor, I have been blessed beyond measure by your support, your kindness, and your prayers as we worked together to bring the love of Christ into the world. Thank you for helping me to grow as a pastor and for trusting me with your stories, your sorrows, and your joys. What an amazing gift it has been to be a part of a faith community that exemplifies what it means to love like Jesus does.

Thank you for being an incredibly valuable part of my life and for allowing me to be part of yours. I will always be grateful that God brought us together.

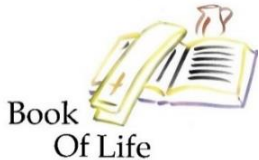
With much love,

Pastor Mary



**Ash Wednesday Service – February 22, 7:00 PM** The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. We are blessed to be able to gather as a woven community at **Christ Congregational Church, 1350 Pleasant St., Brockton** to observe the beginning of this spiritual journey of introspection, reflection, and renewal with a service of prayer and repentance. Please join us.

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Deaths:

Judith Giannangelo, whose memorial service was led by Pastor Mary at our church on February 15.

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This month we thank our **Church Council** and **Board of Trustees** for their faithfulness in attending to the details of this time of transition. Thanks also go out to **Kay Giroux** for the hospitality she extended on our church's behalf to the members of the Giannangelo family the day of Judy's memorial service. We are grateful to **Janet Clough** for organizing the inventory of our church building and **all who have helped her**. We are very blessed!

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

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A Special Congregational Meeting called by Church Council was held on Sunday, January 22, 2023. At that meeting, the church members voted unanimously to (1) approve the dissolution of the Church corporation and disposition of assets in a dissolution proceeding in accordance with Massachusetts law; and (2) approve the sale of the Church building on terms as presented in a January 21, 2023, Purchase and Sales agreement. Members who were unable to attend the meeting and would like more information about the meeting may contact church moderator Marcia Olson at 781-344-9547 | [baglole.olson@verizon.net](mailto:baglole.olson@verizon.net).



## What's Happening This Month?

### Faith & Fellowship Opportunities

**Sunday Worship:** We will be gathering for worship at **Christ Congregational Church, 1350 Pleasant St., Brockton** every Sunday in March. The service begins at **9:55 AM** (music starts at 9:50 AM). Pastor Jeff Kardisco will be leading worship. Please stay for a time of fellowship after the service. All parking is in the rear of the building and is handicapped accessible. You can find information about the Sunday morning worship service, including an order of worship and links to access the service online on the Christ Congregational website (<https://brocktonucc.org/>). There is also an option to call in and hear the service over the phone. To do so, call the number given and enter the meeting id, followed by the # sign when asked. +1 929-205-6099 US; Meeting ID: 896 5156 4024.

- **Sunday, March 5:** A “**Service of Celebration and Release**” to mark Pastor Mary’s retirement will be held at **First Congregational Church of Stoughton** at **3:00 PM** followed by a reception. The worship service will also be live streamed over Zoom. Be sure to check Pastor Mary’s weekly Constant Contact for the link to join the service remotely. Details can be found elsewhere in The Link.
- **Sunday, April 16 (tentative):** Save the date for a “**Service of Gratitude and Blessing for the Completion of a Church Ministry**” to commemorate the ending our shared ministry at **First Congregational Church of Stoughton** at **3:00 PM**. More details will be in the April Link.

**Church Council/Trustees** will next meet on **Monday, February 27 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom. These meetings are open to everyone. 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.



### Opportunities to

- **April 19 (Wed) Mainspring House:** This is the 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](mailto:keenans21@gmail.com) | 781-244-7742). Casseroles must be delivered to the church by **Sunday, April 16** and stored in the downstairs freezer. Contact Anita if you need a foil baking pan and recipe, or to drop off your casserole.
- **Food Pantry:** We collect non-perishable food items for the Ilse Marks Food Pantry. If you are in the church building, items can be left in the Giving Corner in the church lobby at any time. You may also drop off items directly at the food pantry at 116 Seaver Street in Stoughton on Tuesday mornings between 8:00 – 10:00 AM. Please be sure to check the expiration date!

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- **Bottles and Cans:** Please donate your clean, redeemable bottles and cans from your holiday events and parties. If possible, drop them off at Maurine Upton's home. If not, they can be left in the drop-off container at the bottom of the stairs just before the church office. Contact **Maurine Upton** for more information. We are grateful to Maurine for her faithful support of various church ministries and operational needs.



**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA

### Christ Congregational Church Happenings

**Lenten Dinners:** The Ministries Support Task Force will be preparing take home meals for the six Fridays during Lent. There are different options every week such as Chicken Divan; Veggie or Meat Chili; Chowder or Soup; Chicken, Broccoli & Ziti (or rice); Shepherd's Pie, and always Mac & Cheese. Volunteers are also wanted to choose a week to make or provide a dessert item. Dinners will start on **Friday, February 24 through March 31** and must be ordered in advance. Watch your midweek Nearly Weekly emails in the upcoming weeks for ordering information.

**Breakfast and Beliefs:** For the season of Lent the Vitality board will be partnering with Barry Shelley and Pastor Jeff to offer 3 Breakfast and Beliefs events. These events follow a simple format where 2-3 speakers prepare remarks for about 5-6 minutes on a topic for discussion, then once all of the speakers have shared the floor is open for everyone gathered to join in a dialogue on the subject matter (all with very light moderation by our leaders). A light breakfast will also be served. Please save the following dates if you want to join us for any (or all) of the offerings. The dates and topics are:

- **March 4th** – Parenting Complexity: Raising Neuro-diverse and Medically Complex Children
- **March 18th** – Becoming Caretakers: Supporting Those Who Once Supported Us
- **April 1st** – Living with Mental Health Challenges: Navigating Invisible Storms

Each week we will open conversation around life experiences that are often unique (and sometimes isolating) in the hopes of allowing space for our Beloved Community to process together. Those who share will have lived these unique experiences and will highlight unique challenges they wish others knew about – but at the same time each presenter will also share “the God moments” of their experience. The dialogue that follows will allow space for questions, clarification, and (most importantly) and chance for all of us to empathize with one another.

Be on the lookout in the mid-week Nearly Weekly throughout February for more details on speakers, finalized meeting time, and more. In the meantime please contact Pastor Jeff ([pastor@brocktonucc.org](mailto:pastor@brocktonucc.org)), Barry Shelley ([barrygshelley@gmail.com](mailto:barrygshelley@gmail.com)), or Michelle Young-Ferguson ([michellebrian@comcast.net](mailto:michellebrian@comcast.net)) with more questions.

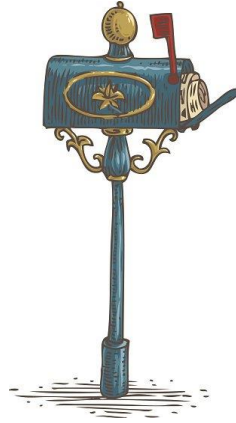
**Music Divina** with Anton Faynberg: On the **first and third Friday** of every month at **6:00 PM** Anton Faynberg will fill our sanctuary with sacred sound and music to help bring God's word to life. Deriving the name from the practice *Lectio Divina* (or divine reading) - where practitioners read, or listen to, scripture in different voices and different tempos - Anton has created an experience that is an hour of continuous sound and music accompanied by scripture readings, meant to bring God's word to life. Held in the sanctuary at Christ Congregational Church, come for a meditative musical service that further reflects upon our readings and themes from the previous Sunday. For more information, please contact the church office at 508-586-3022 or [office@brocktonucc.org](mailto:office@brocktonucc.org).

Want to find out more about all that is happening at Christ Congregational Church in the upcoming months? Contact the church office at 508-586-3022 or [office@brocktonucc.org](mailto:office@brocktonucc.org) to sign up for the church newsletters, **The Courier** and **Nearly Weekly**. Get on the church email list by signing up on the church [website](#).



Please join us on **Sunday, March 5** at **3:00 PM** for a “**Service of Celebration and Release**” as we joyfully celebrate Pastor’s Mary’s ministry and retirement. The service will be held at **First Congregational Church of Stoughton** and will be followed by a light buffet reception in the church hall. The worship service will also be live streamed over Zoom.

Over the past decade, Pastor Mary has walked with us, prayed, and worshipped with us, shared our joys and sorrows, loved us, and provided compassionate leadership through some of our most challenging times as a congregation while always assuring us of God’s love and grace. Come and give thanks for her ministry and wish her a healthy and fulfilling retirement.



**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 121  
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

*Betty Lambert*

West Acres Rehab and Nursing Center  
Room 311B  
804 Pleasant Street  
Brockton, MA  
02301

*Ruth Scrivens*

Copley At Stoughton  
380 Sumner St  
Stoughton, MA 02072

# ATTIC TREASURES

## INDOOR YARD SALE

# Saturday, March 25

9 AM – 2 PM



First Congregational Church  
76 Pierce Street, Stoughton  
Rain or shine | Wheelchair accessible