

First Congregational Church, U.C.C.
102 Middle Street
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035-9429



CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – The Reverend Thomas Hawkins
Organist & Choir Director – Toni S. Wilcox
Christian Education Director – Jean Baxter
Deacon of the Month
 June 5 Donna Brewer-McGahie
 June 12 Lisa West
 June 19 Bob Andersen
 June 26 Ken Parker
Church Administrator – Cathy Samson
Custodian – Bryan Harper

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday Morning – 10:00 a.m.
Worship services & past events can be
accessed on Facebook and YouTube.

CHRISTIAN ED

Sunday Morning – 10:00 a.m.
In-person and via Email and Facebook.

Telephone: 413-584-4117
Facebook.com/FirstChurchHadley
Website: www.firstchurchhadley.org
YouTube: <https://youtube.com/c/FirstChurchHadley>



The Rooster Crows

June, 2022



Growing up in the Midwest, I associate late spring with warm winds blowing up from the Gulf of Mexico that then crash into a wall of cold air blowing down from Canada. When these two weather systems encounter one another, they produce strong thunderstorms, destructive winds, and unpredictable tornadoes. High winds and tornadoes swept through the upper Midwest a few days ago and caused extensive property destruction as well as deaths and injuries.

Many farms, including my grandparents' home, had storm cellars. Their storm cellar was a bricked-up room that was half buried in the earth and covered with a thick layer of sod. It had a wooden door that you could pull shut behind you when you needed to take shelter in case of a tornado or severe thunderstorm alert. In other words, it was a man-made cave. In a curious way, it resembled those hobbit homes in *Lord of the Rings*. Only unlike a hobbit hole, our storm cellar was anything but cozy and comfortable. It smelled musty. The floor and walls were damp. Without windows, it was always dark. When it wasn't used as a shelter from strong storms, it was a root cellar for potatoes, parsnips, and other root crops, all of which meant it smelt faintly of spoiled or rotting root vegetables. Furthermore, because so many of my relatives smoked, I would sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke whenever we retreated into it when a severe storm approached. It was, as a matter of fact, a rather unpleasant place to take refuge despite offering safety from severe storms and tornadoes.

Sometimes, when it seemed as if the crashing thunder and the crack of lightning were ending, we would open the door to see what was happening outside and to determine if it were safe to step back into the everyday world of our farm. Often, as we cracked open the door, a furious blast of air would sweep into the cellar and clear away the smoke and stale air. The crisp freshness of post-storm air lured us back out into a world of blue skies and green fields.

When I think of Pentecost, I think of that storm cellar at my grandparents' farm. The disciples were huddled in an upper room behind closed doors. Although they felt safe in that shuttered upper room from the strong winds of persecution that were swirling through Jerusalem's streets, it might also have been more than a little stuffy and stale in there. According to Luke, a rush of wind then came sweeping into where they were gathered.

Some days it can feel like a severe storm front is approaching. The skies are clotted with clouds the color of a bad bruise; and strong winds are blowing the furniture off the patio or deck. The tornadoes whirling around us right now have names like Uvalde, Texas; Ukraine; a COVID pandemic that just won't quit; or a megadrought across the southwestern US. We also know about

other kinds of high-velocity winds that can rip through our lives: An unexpected illness, the death of a loved one, grief that never seems to lift, spiraling costs that leave us wondering how to make ends meet. It's tempting in these moments to seek a shelter from the storm. Even if the only shelter we can find is a damp, musty, uncomfortable one like my grandparents' underground storm shelter.

I think Pentecost comes each year to remind us that we do indeed live in a fearsome, storm-tossed world where our natural inclination is to search for some safe place to hunker down until the storm passes, no matter how damp, dark, and uncomfortable it may be. Yet, Pentecost affirms, sooner or later, it's not the storm winds that come and blow open the door. It's the winds of the Spirit that are unexpectedly sweeping through our lives, inviting us to breathe the deep down freshness of life and carrying us to new places and possibilities.

Sometimes the church can also feel like my grandparents' storm cellar, a place to seek for safety in a world buffeted by strong winds. It might be poorly lit and maybe a little musty; but at least we are, we imagine, safe from what threatens us. It's always tempting to stay there even when the storm is passed and the blue skies are heavy with possibilities. Yet, when we least expect it, the Spirit blows open the doors behind which we are huddled, bringing wind and flame.

As James Manley's Pentecost hymn *Spirit* sings:

"You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes . . . with bold new decisions your people arise. . . Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free. Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea."

Pastor Thomas

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



Christian
Education

Mark your calendars!

June 5 - Children's Sunday

June 12 - Baccalaureate Sunday

Please join us for these two special Sundays as we honor our kids and our graduates!

Christian Education Breakout

Thank you to everyone who has been participating and enjoying our CE Breakouts each week! We will be wrapping up Breakouts May 29 and taking a break in June, July, and August. BUT, don't forget special Sundays in August such as outdoor worship and the Blessing of the Animals. And, SAVE THE DATE for Homecoming Sunday on September 11!



CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

Church Council Meeting Notes for May 2022.

This month the Council met via Zoom as Adam Woodrow was needed at work that evening.

The new business involved a discussion of the status of the quilt hanging in the hallway outside the Pastor's office. The subject was tabled until a later time.

There will not be an All-Church picnic this year, but an Ice Cream Social is planned on the front lawn following Children's Sunday on June 5th. Baccalaureate Sunday is scheduled for June 12.

We will be following our traditional summer worship schedule – joining North Hadley services in July and inviting North Hadley to join our worship in August. The outdoor worship at the Parkers will take place August 21st.

Rev. Hawkins reported that he felt really good about the service of confirmation that welcomed four young men into membership. He had a great time getting to know all the families he met during the time of preparation. He has been providing a lot of pastoral care to many who are ill in our congregation. He is preparing materials to present a training time for the Called to Care program with the Board of Deacons.

Lila West reported from the Board of Christian Education that \$2,100 was collected during the special offering for Ukrainian aid. The money was sent to a local church to help with shipping costs for relief supplies. Keep the members of the CE Board in your prayers as they redistribute the duties of the CE Director. Keep the Dragon/Baxter family in your prayers as well.

Stan Brown reported that the church finances are in good shape.

Kurt Betchick reported from the Board of Properties that now that the town has approved our request for CPA funds to pay for the steeple repair, the contractor has been contacted. They expect to begin work by June and work most of the summer. The indoor painting project is going well.

Judy Stone reported from the Board of Missions that the appeal this month is donations for the Hadley Food Pantry shelves. Our church will be attending and cooking for Cathedral in the Night in August.

The next council meeting will take place on June 8, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ward, clerk

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONS



Wouldn't it be nice if the projects that come up in our lives would come at us one at a time? We'd get one project, work on it, finish it up and move onto the next one. As we know, for the most part, life is not like that. Back when I was in college, I had a Graphic Design professor that would assign us three or four projects at a time. Most of them due around the same time. As you can guess this was met with a lot of grumbling. We wanted to approach our work in a linear fashion but our professor structured the class this way on purpose because he pointed out that when you're a Graphic Designer in the real world for an ad agency or print shop you have to be working on multiple projects at once.

We're approaching a time here at First Church Hadley where we will be working on multiple things at once. We've constructed and adopted a Communication Covenant, but now with Pastor Thomas's guidance we will be learning practical ways of putting it into practice. As Bob mentioned in May's Deacons Note we will be developing in the coming months a "Called to Care" program, again with Pastor Thomas, to create teams that help with pastoral care. Continuing to be educated and applying the knowledge on how to grow as an Open and Affirming community. Christian Education is working on Children's Sunday, June 5, and Baccalaureate Sunday, June 12, and will be gearing up for an exciting Fall. Properties has a full plate with the all the painting work that is getting done and the straightening of the steeple due to be done in June.

With so many loose ends it's easy to get overwhelmed by it all, but I'm excited with all these projects as I know many of you are. It shows how we're learning and growing as a community, and we are blessed to have you all as a part of this journey.

The Sunday that I'm writing this, Pastor Thomas' sermon was titled, "Down a long and winding road" and he talked about travelling down paths. He referenced a bunch of scriptures in the back of the Bulletin and one stood out to me as something that applies to our current journey as we go forward.

This is what the Lord says:

"Stand at the crossroads and look;

Ask for the ancient paths,

Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,

And you will find rest for your souls..."



Jeremiah 6:16

Rick Ward, *for the Deacons*

MISSIONS NEWS



As we are winding down and getting ready for summer break, let us remember those who are hungry and have few resources. The food pantry at Most Holy Redeemer continues to serve thru the summer and relies on our help to provide food and personal items. There is a bin at each entrance of the church to collect these items, and we thank you for your generosity.

Looking ahead to August, we will be providing a meal for Cathedral in the Night on Sunday, August 28th, and more news of what is needed will be given at a later date.

Thanks again,
Mission Committee

BOARD OF PROPERTIES



Currently, we are having some interior wall repair and painting done by Robert Blair, a painter from Athol. He has completed work in the front entry foyer, stairway, and narthex, and as of this writing is working on the face of the balcony in the sanctuary where the old paint has been peeling. We hope to have him do some more work in the dining room and in the sanctuary but this will require the congregation to approve funding. We think that the work is long overdue.

At the Hadley Town Meeting in early May, CPA funds in the amount of \$100,000 were approved for steeple repairs by a majority of voters. We committed the church to provide \$10,000 towards repairs, as this was strongly recommended by the CPA Committee. The repairs will be done by Robert Morgan & Co. of Errol, New Hampshire, and we expect the work to commence in June or July.

CHOIR NOTES

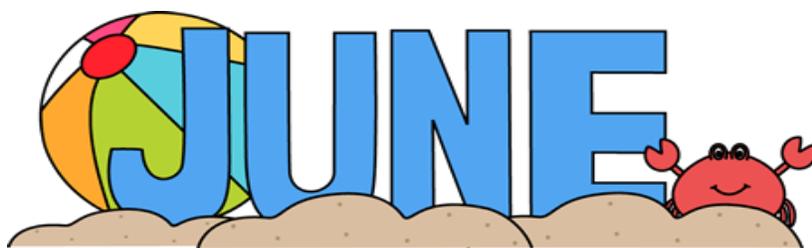


Summer is nearly here! Gardeners are planting seeds and tending new shoots. Teachers are sending students off for their summer vacations. Graduates are celebrating their accomplishments and looking forward to the next chapter in their life's journey.

The songs and hymns we sing at church plant seeds of faith and uplift those around us. We teach about our faith by the poetry used in the responses and choruses. We celebrate our faith with ringing bells and voices raised in song.

Happy June! Come ring and sing with us. Or listen, tap your toes, snap your fingers, clap your hands, feel the rhythm and the faith.

See you on Sunday! Toni



1	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
2	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
3	Friday	4:00 p.m.	Take and Eat Preparation
4	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Take and Eat
5	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	CHILDREN'S SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
7	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL BOARD OF PROPERTIES MEETING
8	Wednesday	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
9	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
12	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	BACCALAUREATE SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
13	Monday	7:00 p.m.	Hope Grange Meeting
14	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
15	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
16	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
19	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
21	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
22	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
23	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
26	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
28	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL DEACONS MEETING
29	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
30	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL

Events listed in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS are church-related events.