

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 – Rick Ward
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

May, 2022



WELCOME TO GREEN AND HOPEFUL MAY

As you read this, you are probably turning your calendar to a new month: May. May 1st marks another of those cross-quarter days in our calendar. It lies more or less halfway between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. The early peoples of northwest Europe celebrated this particular cross-quarter day as Beltane or Beltaine; and echoes of its customs have lingered into at least the mid-20th century. I vaguely remember that my parents or perhaps my grandparents would tell me stories of how on May 1 or May Day they would gather wildflowers and put a “May Basket” of them on someone’s doorstep.

In the ancient agricultural calendar, Beltane or May Day represented the peak of spring and the onset of early summer. Summer’s warmth was in full swing. Spring flowers were in bloom. The grass was freshening and flocks or herds could be moved to summer pastures. Beltane reminds us that, on the cusp of May, we are witnessing the natural world burst into its full beauty and astonish us with all the shades of green that we had forgotten even existed after a long winter of brown grass and leafless trees or shrubs.

As 20th-century American poet Sara Teasdale wrote: “The spring is fresh and fearless / And every leaf is new, / The world is brimmed with moonlight, / The lilac brimmed with dew ...” Medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer thought that heaven would be an eternal May: “Though many may be gone into the blissful place / Of hearts, healed and deadly, wounds cured; / Though many be gone into the well of grace, / There green and lusty May shall ever endure.” And as the Bible’s *Song of Solomon* (2:11-12) announces: “for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.”

It’s also hard not to associate May Day with the universal distress cry: “May Day. May Day.” This call of assistance was actually developed by pilots in the early 20th century and has nothing to do with the calendar’s May Day. It probably comes from the French *m’aidez*, which means “Help me!”

I don’t know about you, but I am ready for May. It has been a long and difficult winter and many of us have felt like crying out to God, “May Day! May Day!” as we longed for better days and divine help in managing whatever challenges we’ve been facing.

I am ready to be astonished by May's flowers and blooming shrubs after a long, cold winter filled with worries and fears. Maybe you are too? The world around us is bursting with beauty. This new month offers us countless signs of joy and hope as we welcome its profusion of flowers and are wrapped in its warm sunshine. Now that winter is passing and the flowers are appearing on the earth, let "green and lusty May" be for us a sign of divine grace and a taste of heaven.

Pastor Thomas

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



On May 1 we will welcome our four newest members to the First Congregational Church of Hadley: Dominic Aloisi, Andrew Ciaglo, Trevor Ciaglo, and Nolan Styspeck! A special Confirmation Sunday is planned for these four to affirm their baptism. A special thank you to Reverend Thomas for working with these four young men over the past few weeks to make this special occasion possible.

We are looking forward to our other special Sundays coming up including Children's Sunday and Baccalaureate Sunday in June. We will continue to offer CE Breakout lessons in person and online through June. We will then take the summer to regroup before launching again in the fall! Please join us in-person or virtually!

Interested in helping out with Christian Education? Please contact Diana West.

CHOIR NOTES



Do you remember being corrected at school if you said: "Teacher, can I..."
"No, it's 'MAY I'... Yes, you MAY..."

Since this month is May, I will be listening...

If you ask: Toni, can I sing with the choir? My answer: Yes, you MAY sing with the choir! We rehearse on Thursday night from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. Come, sing with us!

If you say: I work on Thursday nights. Can I just come on Sunday morning?
My answer: Yes, you MAY come on Sunday morning! We gather before church, around 9:00 a.m. to go through the songs. We would love to have you join us!



You MAY discover that singing with a group has many benefits. You MAY find that you enjoy the challenge of learning a new song. You MAY be surprised that you look forward to going to choir!

May is here! Yes, you MAY ... "Break forth into joyous song and sing praises!" Psalm 96

See you soon! Toni



CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

Church Council Meeting Notes for April 2022

The members of Church Council gathered in person in Fellowship Hall on the evening of April 13, 2022.

The first item of business was Stan Brown's announcement that Dave Adams had agreed to serve on the Board of Finance. Adam Woodrow, as moderator, made the appointment official.

A discussion of planning an all-church picnic was tabled until the May meeting as representative of the Christian Education Board were attending another meeting at the same time.

Pastor Hawkins shared in his report to Council that he continues to provide pastoral care to members, attend meetings as needed, lead a Lenten bible study and prepare worship services for the busy Lenten/Easter season. He has met with Gordon Pullan in North Hadley and expects the usual summer worship schedule of sharing worship in July and August will take place.

A discussion of the "Called to Care" training program for interested members will be discussed at the May council meeting.

Bob Anderson from the Board of Deacons reported that after the March 20th special congregational meeting where Rev. Hawkins was unanimously voted to serve a two-year designated term ministry with our church, a satisfactory contract was worked out by a team consisting of former search committee members and Stan Brown from Finance.

The combined attendance (in person+zoom+youtube views) is averaging 66 people per week over the last six weeks.

The Board of Christian Education is focusing on providing wonderful weekly break out lessons for our youth as they navigate a challenging time for the Baxter/Dragon family. Confirmation Sunday is planned for May 1, Children's Sunday and Baccalaureate Sunday in June.

The Board of Finance reports that things are going well.

Kurt Betchick reported from the Board of Properties that they were ready to present our request for CPA money at Town Meeting on May 5. All members are encouraged to attend and vote on this important request. The repairs to the steeple are necessary and urgent. Painting in the front entry, stairway and narthex area will begin soon.

Our meeting was adjourned in a timely fashion by 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Ward, clerk

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONS



When our family first began attending this church almost 20 years ago, one of the key reasons why we continued to attend services and subsequently became members was the culture of caring that imbued this church and its congregation. We felt welcomed into this church family and we witnessed, during the service and fellowship time, a genuine sense of kindness and concern amongst the congregation. We still witness that thoughtful and warmhearted kindness at church but also see it over a broader canvas in the form of visits, phone calls and cards to those in need, rides to church, scheduled or impromptu coffee or lunch gatherings and even movie matinee get togethers. In a more structured format, that “gift of giving” is demonstrated in the Take and Eat program, the Heifer Project, Relay for Life, Cathedral in the Light/Night, clothing and food drives as well as other outreach projects.

Over the next few months, we, as a congregation, will be developing a “Call to Care” program with Rev. Thomas to create a care and support team focused on assisting the minister with what has traditionally been known as pastoral care. As noted in our stated Congregational Goals, we will be “assisting the pastor with congregational visits and helping members who are dealing with serious illness and loss” as well as “facilitating spiritual support and resources for members and their families who are in need.”

Rev. Thomas is well suited to guide us in the process and teach us additional strategies needed to effectively offer support. This would likely take the form of training classes for those who may be interested in being a part of this important team. For many of our members who are already involved in the many daily and weekly forms of caring and compassion occurring regularly this would offer additional skills and resources for you to do what you already do!

As our congregation has made the decision of transitioning to a part time minister, this form of service will become increasingly necessary and vital in maintaining the spiritual life of our congregation.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering being a part of this valuable “Call to Care” resource for our church family.

Bob Andersen, For the Deacons

MISSION NEWS



Thanks to all who donated food items to the Hadley Food Pantry and the generous financial donation to support the people of Ukraine. The total donation was \$2168. A special thanks to the Christian Education Committee that organized it all.

For May we would ask for food donations to the food pantry as there have been more people using it of late. Items most needed are coffee, juices, cooking oil, crackers, granola bars, toilet paper, personal items(shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, etc.



1	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	CONFIRMATION SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN ED
3	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL BOARD OF PROPERTIES MEETING PRAYER SHAWL MEETING
4	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
5	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Town Meeting - Vote on CPA Funds
6	Friday	4:00 p.m.	Take and Eat Preparation
7	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Take and Eat
8	Sunday	10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN ED Farewell Reception for Bruce & Jacki Brewer at North Hadley Congregational Church
9	Monday	7:00 p.m.	Hope Grange Meeting
10	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
11	Wednesday	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
12	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
15	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN ED
17	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
18	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
19	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
22	Sunday	10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN ED Hampshire Association Annual Meeting Girl Scout Troop 12652 Meeting
24	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
25	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
26	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
29	Sunday	5:45 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN ED
31	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL DEACONS MEETING

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