

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



CHURCH STAFF

Minister – The Reverend Thomas Hawkins
Organist & Choir Director – Toni S. Wilcox
Deacon of the Month – Bob Andersen
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.

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



The Rooster Crows

November, 2022



“The root of joy is gratefulness ... It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.” Those words by David Steindel-Rast, a contemporary spiritual writer and Benedictine monk, remind us of the importance of gratitude and thanksgiving in our lives – a theme that looms large as Thanksgiving Day approaches.

As a young man David Steindel-Rast immigrated from Germany to the United States seeking wealth and riches. America, he imagined, was the land of endless bounty, of shopping malls and houses piled high with wealth. What Steindel-Rast found instead of wealth as a business executive was joy and gratitude as a Benedictine monk. As he once observed about his changing expectations from life, “what we really want is joy. We don’t want things.”

The practice of gratitude begins with surprise – the sight of an unexpected rainbow at the end of a storm, the delight at a flavorful meal we didn’t expect to share with someone, a narrow escape from a dreaded diagnosis. And such surprises open the door to joy, which moves us to gratitude and thankfulness.

When Thanksgiving Day arrives, someone will ask many of us the question, “What are you thankful for?” Looking at our world, our lives, or relationships, we may have difficulty responding with anything meaningful. Yet even amid a personal crisis we can be thankful for the support of friends or the opportunity this crisis has given us to identify more clearly what or who is really most important to us. In the midst of our current climate crisis, we can be surprised by and grateful for those scientists, activists, and everyday people working to make a transition that saves countless species and the quality of human life. Appreciating our strengths and assets in a challenging time can make us grateful for the people and experiences that have encouraged us and gifted us with these strengths. “Count your blessings and you will find them to be countless, even in the midst of adversity and tragic circumstances” someone once said to me.

November and the weeks approaching Thanksgiving are a good opportunity to allow ourselves to be surprised by the joy that leads to gratitude. No matter how challenging our daily lives may be, may we find opportunities to count our blessings and find them to be countless.

*"The LORD is my strength and my shield;
in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;
my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him."
(Psalm 28:7)*

Pastor Thomas



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONS



On October 16, Pastor Thomas talked about prayer and how sometimes we don't have the words to pray. The beauty of prayer is that it's not just about talking to God and bringing our troubles to him, it's also about listening to God. It's about being open for healing and to the peace that surpasses all understanding that Paul talk about in Philippians 4:6.

“Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation with prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

In today's Deacon's message, I'm not going to talk for a change! I'm going to ask you to quiet your heart, and let God talk to you. And here's a beautiful song you might want to find on YouTube – The lyrics are pretty, but listening to the beauty of the song might help you make a transition to quieting your heart and mind, and just listen...

"I'm Listening"

Chris McClarney (feat. Hollyn)

When You speak, confusion fades
Just a word and suddenly I'm not afraid
'Cause You speak and freedom reigns
There is hope in every single word You say

I don't wanna miss one word You speak
'Cause everything You say is life to me
I don't wanna miss one word You speak
Quiet my heart, I'm listening

When sorrows roar and troubles rage
You whisper peace when I don't have the words to say
I won't lose hope when storms won't break
You keep Your word, oh and Your promises will keep me safe

I don't wanna miss one word You speak
'Cause everything You say is life to me
I don't wanna miss one word You speak
So quiet my heart, I'm listening

Your ways are higher
You know just what I need
I trust You, Jesus
You see what I cannot see

I don't wanna miss one word You speak
'Cause everything You say is life to me
I don't wanna miss one word You speak
So quiet my heart, I'm listening

Donna Brewer-McGahie, for the Deacons

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



Christmas Pageant - Sunday, December 11, at 10:00 a.m.

Come one, come all to join us for our annual Christmas Pageant! We will once again be coming to you live from the front steps of the church on Sunday, December 11, at 10:00 a.m. Want to participate? All ages are welcome! All animals are welcome! Please reach out to Diana West to learn more and put your hat in the ring!

Substitute CE Director

The Board of Christian Education is looking for a Substitute Christian Education Director! This is a 2+ hour a week position at \$30 per hour. Interested? Know someone who might be? [Click here for the full job description.](#)



We are also always looking for help on Sunday mornings! Think you could take on one Sunday? We'll have the supplies and lesson all ready for you! Please reach out to Diana West if you are interested.

MISSION NEWS



Thank you to all who brought items for the food pantry in October! There are little cards in the foyer that tell which items are most needed and when you go shopping, maybe you could pick up one or more items to donate throughout the year. The pantry has more attendees of late and several have young children so try to think of them when donating. Dave Storey and Judy Stone are both volunteering each month and will be taking items to the pantry twice a month.

Our next mission project will be gift giving for the children at Jesse's House in Amherst! We will get a wish list from them by the first of December and let you know what is needed. This has been a continued heart-warming annual event for us.

Thank you again for your generosity!
Mission Committee

MUSIC NOTES



The choir will be singing anthems of praise and thanksgiving during the month of November. Each song is a prayer, lifted up through music and voices, to show our thanks for God's many blessings.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your loved ones! Toni





1	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING GROUP
2	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
3	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
4	Friday	4:00 p.m.	Take and Eat Preparation
5	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Take and Eat
6	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
8	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
9	Wednesday	5:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Men's Club Set up Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
10	Thursday	5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Men's Club CHOIR REHEARSAL
13	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
14	Monday	5:00 p.m.	Hope Grange Meeting
15	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	PASTRIES WITH THE PASTOR HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
16	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
17	Thursday	7:00 p.m.	CHOIR REHEARSAL
20	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
22	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	PASTRIES WITH THE PASTOR HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
23	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
27	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE
29	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	PASTRIES WITH THE PASTOR HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL DEACONS MEETING
30	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting

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