

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



**CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor – The Reverend Peter Stilla

Deacons –

Lisa West

Ken Parker

Jonathan Morel

Donna Brewer-McGahie

Bob Andersen

Director of Music – Michael Stancill

Christian Ed Director – Shannon Stilla

Office 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**

**Website: [www.firstchurchhadley.org](http://www.firstchurchhadley.org)**

**[Facebook.com/FirstChurchHadley](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchHadley)**

**YouTube: <https://youtube.com/c/FirstChurchHadley>**



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# *The Rooster Crows*

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March, 2024

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Dear First Church friends,

I love the changing of the seasons, especially when they're going in the direction of greater warmth and daylight, and February transitioning into March is a good example of that. Of course, we all know that March can bring some late season blizzards and other unwelcome weather, but it is the first month of Spring after all. Warmer and brighter days are surely on the way!

The same is true for what we can expect at First Church in March, as we steadily move through the season of Lent and celebrate Easter on the very last day of the month! Easter and Spring have a lot in common, and it's great that in our Christian faith we get to celebrate both at the same time. The resurrection of Christ is the event that gave all of us eternal life, and in a way it mirrors what we see happening in nature this time of year. Trees that have been bare for months slowly begin to bud and blossom, and the life that's been dormant within them comes into glorious expression.

There will be some special events at First Church in March that I'm sure everyone will enjoy and find deeply meaningful, highlighted by added services being held during Holy Week. On the Thursday before Easter, also known as Maundy Thursday, there will be a special service to commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus before his passion, and at sunrise on Easter morning a special outdoor service will celebrate Christ's resurrection. We're looking forward to seeing all our First Church family during this holiest time of the year.

In Christ,  
Pastor Peter



## UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

### MAUNDY THURSDAY

On Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., the First Church will be holding a special service for Maundy Thursday, which honors the evening Jesus had his Last Supper with his friends and disciples. As part of the service, we are looking for people who would like to read some passages from the Bible. If you would like participate, please contact [rooster@firstchurchhadley.com](mailto:rooster@firstchurchhadley.com) and let us know. It will be a special night of worship and community with our First Church family.

Preceding the Maundy Thursday service will be a light supper of soup and bread at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to make soup or bread for the Maundy Thursday service, please speak to Lisa West.

### GOOD FRIDAY

First Church will not be holding any services on March 29<sup>th</sup> for Good Friday, but we know how solemn and sacred that day is in our Christian faith. If you would like to spend some time on Good Friday in contemplation of Christ's passion, our lectionary recommends some Biblical passages that will lead you in worship and reflection. They are Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalms 22, Hebrews 10:16-25, and from the Gospels, John 18:1-19:42. May God bless you in your reading and meditation this Good Friday.

### EASTER SUNDAY

On Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, Sunrise worship service will begin at 6:15 a.m. on the north end of the Hadley Town Common on West Street. If there is poor weather, we will meet at the church.

If you would like to host a simple coffee hour for the Easter Sunrise Service please speak to a deacon.

### IN GOD'S TIME

From the Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide, March 13, 2024

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

– Isaiah 43:18-19

One spring during my morning walks, I noticed my neighbor building a brick walkway from his porch to the street. Gradually over several weeks, I watched as he prepared the ground, poured gravel, and laid bricks. Then for some reason I could not perceive, I saw that he had ripped up half the path and piled the bricks in his yard. Eventually, the path was completed, and the mess was cleaned up. If I had not been paying attention, the finished path might have seemed to appear overnight. But I had witnessed the process; the planning, measuring waiting, ripping up, and restarting.

The construction of the neighbor's walkway illustrates that sometimes things don't happen overnight — even when God is doing something new in our lives and inviting us to grow from it. Isaiah 43:18-19 reminds me to keep my eyes open for how God is at work in my life.

Growth is a process — one step at a time. We can trust that God is always doing something new. As we become more aware of God's presence, we can watch for the new things God is doing, give thanks, and proclaim God's great work.

Tracie Heskett (Washington, USA)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONS



Preaching, anyone?

Some years ago, after I returned to the valley after what I refer to as my exile in Hartford (so far south that I was afraid of developing a Dixie accent), I was asked to do a stewardship Sunday presentation. Not knowing what else to say, I agreed, even though I had no idea what to say come the day. I spent the next two weeks talking to myself about the First Church of Hadley while working, and discovered that I could indeed think of something to say and the saying in front of the church was actually rather fun. Since then I have had a couple other times when an idea that was rolling around in my mind developed into a sermon. It was rather a surprise to me that I had something to say that was worth sharing with a congregation! Who would have thought it?

The First Church of Hadley is a congregational church, which means we are not as chained to the “rules” as in some denominations. We can all participate in how the church is run, and also in what we as a congregation feel is important or worth sharing about what it is to be Christian. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to give Pastor Peter a break from sermon writing and slip in one of my own before disappearing into the craft show circuit for another year, and this should not be seen as something only deacons get to do. I was able to deliver that sermon because I had an idea rattling about in my mind that I wanted to share, and that is all that mattered. Other members of the congregation may also have thoughts they would like to share as a sermon, and the deacons and Pastor Peter want to encourage any of you who have an idea you would like to present as a sermon to do so. We are, after all, a congregational church, and all our thoughts are welcome. So, if you would like to present a sermon, speak with Pastor Peter and set a date!

Jonathan Morel, For the Deacons

*Lisa West, Chair 413-695-4943*

*Donna Brewer 413-364-6463*

*Bob Andersen 413-687-3121*

*Jonathan Morel 413-549-3958*

*Ken Parker 413-549-3530*

## MUSIC NOTES



I have enjoyed sharing Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier preludes and fugues with you during prelude time. Bach is my favorite organ music composer, and it's been delightful bringing those pieces to life on First Church's wonderful organ! I am working on two special extended Bach works for Easter Sunday. I hope they will be a blessing to you.

Join us this month as we celebrate the momentous events leading to the Resurrection! The Choir and Handbell Choir will be sharing inspiring music every Sunday and at our special Maundy Thursday service. We would love to have you join us! Choir practice is Thursday evenings at 7:00; Handbell Choir practice is Tuesday evenings at 6:00.

In Christ,  
Mike Stancill

## CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



Happy March!

February was focused on love, spreading it, searching for it in all circumstances and finding it where we can!

We began the discussion of Lent and will continue this theme through March in preparation of Easter. Let's all find a way to spread the joy of Jesus by doing an extra act of kindness, love or offering help to others, just as Jesus would have done.

A special thank you to everyone for your support during the February 11th "Time for all God's Children" presentation skit and also to Tessa who taught "God is Love" to the congregation in sign language.

We had a great time watching and cheering the UMass vs. BC hockey game on February 16<sup>th</sup>, and for those that were not able to make it, we will hopefully be planning another fun outing soon...especially now that we are heading into Spring!  
(I would love to hear some suggestions!)

Blessings,  
Shannon



## MISSION NEWS



We continue to highlight giving to the food pantry thru March! As we contemplate our next mission projects, please continue to do random acts of kindness to others. Please let the mission committee know if there are activities you think would be good to pursue as a church community.

We received a letter from Adonayit Tibebe (our ChildFund recipient). Birth date is June 20, 2006.

Dear First Church of Hadley,

How are you? The family and I are so fine. We hope this letter will find you in good health.

Thank you for the \$20 you sent to me as a Christmas gift. We are happy about it. I spent the money to buy a traditional dress. We celebrated Christmas on January 6, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

I have been attending college education in data base administration, so I am attentively taking courses. The tuition is covered to me by the organization.

Until the next letter, goodbye!  
May God bless you all!  
Adonayit

# MARCH

1	Friday	4:00 p.m.	Take & Eat Prep
2	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Take & Eat
3	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
5	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING GROUP
6	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
7	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
10	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
12	Tuesday	12:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Hampshire Assoc. Clergy Luncheon Meeting HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
13	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
14	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
17	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
19	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
20	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
21	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
24	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
26	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
27	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
28	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal LIGHT SUPPER IN DINING HALL MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
31	Sunday	6:15 a.m. 10:00 a.m.	EASTER SUNDAY SUNRISE SERVICE EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED

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