

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

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

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



The Rooster Crows

December, 2024



Dear First Church Family,

Well, here we are in the month of December and the season of Advent, when First Church of Hadley celebrates the joy, hope, peace, and love that the birth of the baby Jesus brings. It is a sacred season that will be filled with activities our entire First Church family will enjoy.



This year the first day of Advent falls on the first day of the month, and our annual Christmas Pageant is being held that day. It's a wonderful reenactment of the Christmas story, in which we follow Joseph and Mary as they make their way to the manger where the Christ child came into the world. The pageant comes complete with farm animals, wise men, an infant in the role of Jesus, and it never fails to fill our hearts with joy to start the holiday season.

The following Sundays of Advent will be equally meaningful, as we will continue to light the candles on the Advent wreath each week in anticipation of our biggest service of the year on Christmas Eve. It is a truly spectacular event you don't want to miss, so make sure to mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 24th, for a service you'll never forget. Merry Christmas!

In Christ,
Pastor Peter

2024 CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP



Please plan to join us at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24, as we welcome Emmanuel - Christ with us with our traditional Christmas Eve Service of Scripture, Music and Candle Lighting. Please invite family and friends to join us!

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday morning worship begins at 10 a.m.

Sunday, December 1 – Christmas Pageant - Outdoors - First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 8 – Communion – Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 15 – Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 22 – Christmas Sunday – Poinsettias – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Tuesday, December 24 – 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service of Carols and Candles

Sunday, December 29 – Potluck Breakfast followed by the Annual Christmas Carol Sing in the dining room

Lisa West, Chair 413-695-4943

Bob Andersen 413-687-3121

Donna Brewer 413-364-6463

Jonathan Morel 413-549-3958

Ken Parker 413-549-3530



MUSIC NOTES



The singers and ringers at First Congregation Church Hadley are hard at work preparing for the wonderful Christmas season ahead! Join us on December 22 for Christmas Sunday, and again on December 24 for Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve will also have an extended Prelude, so come early for lovely Christmas organ and piano music. If you'd like to join the choir for Christmas Eve, we have four practices upcoming: December 5, 12, and 19 at 6:30 in the Choir practice room, and finally right after church December 22. Prior to the 22nd we'll have some Advent tunes (see how many times you hear a "bit" of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel hidden in a piece).

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Mike Stancill, Music Director



CHRISTIAN ED NEWS

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!!!



Wow ~ Well here we are in December and once again I find myself wondering how the heck this holiday season has arrived so quickly. I am consciously choosing a new experience this year and I am inviting you to join me in truly focusing on “the reason for the season” ... not presents, but presence!

We feast ourselves on Thanksgiving, as if in symbolic preparation for all the rushing, preparing and what can even be considered anxiety-producing next few weeks, almost like God’s creatures who rush around gathering their feast in preparation for their upcoming hibernation...but, for us, it doesn’t have to be this way! Let’s instead consciously look forward to the upcoming Advent weeks and really take to heart what the true meaning and focus should be ~ **HOPE, PEACE, JOY & LOVE!**

Many Christmases (more like most years), I have found myself out shopping for the perfect gifts or wanting the decorations to be uniquely and precisely displayed...I’ve even been known to move the ornaments on the tree to a more suitable tree limb, just so it “looks” better! Although the displays may have looked beautiful and the presents perfectly wrapped in coordinating paper it came with a sense of sadness. Truthfully, wouldn’t we all rather be in the kitchen baking cookies from scratch while sharing memories, listening to Christmas music, sitting around together laughing about silly mistakes we have made and maybe even doing a craft project together. These are the **Peaceful, Joyful & Loving** moments I will be focusing on this season and my **Hope** is that you will also embrace this experience over the next few weeks.

We have an amazing birth we are preparing for and may we all excitedly and joyfully remember that **JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!!!**

Wishing you all a wonderful December overflowing with God’s presence!
Shannon

2 Corinthians 9:15

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"



MISSION NEWS



The 'Blessing Bags' were well received by Community Connections in Amherst and were shared with Craig's Doors (homeless shelter) in Amherst. Thank you to all who helped with creating the meal for Cathedral in the Night! Extra special thank you to Mara Breen who buys all the ingredients and guides us in the kitchen to create the meal!

We will be giving gifts to the children at Jesse's House again! The wish lists from the children will be available December 1st after the pageant! Wrapped gifts will be collected December 15th.

Donations of non-perishable food items are always welcome for the food pantry.

Mission Committee



The Adult Holiday Gathering will be held on Friday, December 27th, at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a dessert item to share and a gift of less than \$15 if you wish to participate in the Yankee Swap. We plan to relax and have fun!



December

1	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	WORSHIP & OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
2	Monday	7 p.m.	Girl Scout Leader Meeting
3	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING GROUP
4	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
5	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR REHEARSAL CHOIR REHEARSAL
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.	WORSHIP SERVICE & CHRISTIAN ED
10	Tuesday	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	Hampshire Assoc. Clergy Luncheon HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
11	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
12	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR REHEARSAL CHOIR REHEARSAL
15	Sunday	10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	WORSHIP SERVICE & CHRISTIAN ED QUARTERLY MEETING
17	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
18	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
19	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR REHEARSAL CHOIR REHEARSAL
22	Sunday	10:00 a.m. 11:15 a.m.	CHRISTMAS SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE & CHRISTIAN ED CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR REHEARSAL
24	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE
27	Friday	7:00 p.m.	ADULT HOLIDAY GATHERING
29	Sunday	9:30 a.m.	POTLUCK BREAKFAST & CAROL SING

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