

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

March, 2025



Dear First Church Family,

Boy, what a February that was! Not one, but two Saturday snowstorms caused us to miss two Sunday services. Oh, well. God wants us to be safe and smart, so canceling worship on those two occasions was the right thing to do, but we're going to do our best to make up for it with a very active month of March, which fortunately has five Sundays this year!

The weather people say that Spring starts on March 1 every year, so it's appropriate that the season of Lent begins right away this month, with Ash Wednesday falling on March 5. Spring and Lent work so well together. The increasing daylight leads to the spring equinox, the point at which we have 12 hours between sunrise and sunset. And Lent invites us to see the light of God growing in our hearts, as we move towards the revelation of the divine light of Easter.

So, as March arrives with the promise of lighter and warmer days ahead, let us reflect that light and warmth in our own lives this month. Spread the brightness and cheer! Live from the glow in your heart, and feel the light and love reflected back to you from everyone you meet.

In Christ,
Pastor Peter

PASTOR'S CHAT

Our Pastor's Chat this month will be on **Tuesday, March 18, at 7:00 p.m.** Our theme for this month's chat is personal spirituality. How can we take some of what has been discussed in recent sermons and apply it to create a rich and rewarding spiritual practice? But of course, come and talk about anything pertaining to the First Congregational Church of Hadley that's on your mind. Pastor Peter looks forward to seeing you!

A PRAYER FROM THE DEACONS

Every Saturday in synagogues around the world, Jews recite “A prayer for Our Nation.” While the words of this prayer may seem contemporary, the origins of this prayer go back over 2500 years.

“Our God and God of our ancestors: We ask Your blessings for our country for its government, for its leaders and advisers, and for all who exercise just and rightful authority. Teach them insights from Your Torah that they may administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom may forever abide in our midst.*

Creator of all flesh, bless all the inhabitants of our country with Your spirit. May citizens of all races and creeds forge a common bond in true harmony, to banish hatred and bigotry and to safeguard the ideals and free institutions that are the pride and glory of our country.

May this land, under Your providence be an influence for good throughout the world, uniting all people in peace and freedom — helping them to fulfill the vision of Your prophet Isaiah: “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they experience war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4). Amen.

CHRISTIAN ED NEWS



Well, Well, Well... Is there anyone that will ever doubt Punxsutawny Phil again, because it sure won't be me!

February proved to be a month of true winter weather and kept us from congregating together for two of our weekly services, and then I was unable to be there for an additional week. These absences however only proved to emphasize how great we are when we come together and how much our presence means to others!

We participated in our 2nd annual UMass hockey outing and enjoyed a fun night out, although we missed the ones that couldn't join us because of the slushy, wintry, icy mix! Hopefully next year bad boy Phil won't see his shadow and there won't be anything that keeps us apart!

I had planned February as a month to focus on love, which is one of the most important things in our life, right! **God's love, family love, loving ourselves, showing love and spreading that love daily**, therefore we will not just skip over these but continue to thread this through our March lessons of “leaving the yuck behind us and focusing on the good ahead of us.”

We are so happy to have most of our congregants back, recovered and healthy and us returning to our normal weekly schedule.

Welcome March, bring on all the greatness we all deserve!

Warm Blessings,
Shannon

MISSION NEWS



Yay!! Spring is near! After a cold and snowy February, I am looking forward to some warmer weather! Please continue to bring donations for the Hadley Food Pantry. Welcome back to pantry volunteer, Dave Storey! If anyone else would like to volunteer, please see Judy Stone for more information! The Food Pantry is open from 12-1 p.m. every Sunday at the Most Holy Redeemer Parish Center.

There will be more opportunities for mission work in the next week or so as the committee gets together for a planning session. If anyone has a good idea let one of the members know!

Judy Stone Mara Breen Cindy McQueston Barbara Andersen Judy Parker

MODERATOR/CLERK REPORT

Thank you to all who attended our Annual Meeting. We now have some new members for our Boards and Committees. Mara Breen has agreed to be a Deacon, Jeremy Thayer has joined the Flower Committee, Judy Parker has moved from the Fellowship Committee to the Missions Committee and Joyce Putnam has joined the Fellowship Committee. A new Signage Task Group was created with volunteers Lisa West, Bryan Harper, and Cindy McQueston. We also agreed to update the church directory. There was significant discussion about the work to be done on the steeple. If you are a Hadley voter, please plan to attend Town Meeting on May 1, 2024, for the vote on funding of the necessary repairs. Tom Giles deservedly received the Golden Oakley Award. Special thanks go to all our members who go above and beyond for our church and community.

An item for new business was brought to the meeting by Reverend Peter Stilla. He is encouraging members and friends of the congregation to learn more about Christians Against Christian Nationalism for further conversation. If you're looking for a starting point, we found the following sites helpful:

ChristiansAgainstChristianNationalism.org contains a wealth of information. The FAQs are particularly helpful (<https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/faqs>) as is the overview page (<https://christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/learn-more>)

PBS distills the information into a 7-minute, easily digestible video.

(<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-is-christian-nationalism-and-why-it-raises-concerns-about-threats-to-democracy>)

Finally, the UCC is taking a strong stance and is a helpful resource. (<https://www.ucc.org/speaking-up-against-white-christian-nationalism-and-why-it-raises-concerns-about-threats-to-democracy>)

Stay tuned for more conversation around this topic.

Our next Quarterly Meeting will take place around the end of May.

Happy Spring,
Shari and Lila

SAVE THE DATE!

Hadley's Town Meeting is **May 1** - please come and support the vote for CPA funding for our steeple renovations.

MARCH

1	Saturday	8:00 a.m.	Take & Eat
2	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
4	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
5	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
6	Thursday	4:30 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal
8	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Hadley Historical Commission Event
9	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
11	Tuesday	12:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Hampshire Assoc. Clergy Luncheon Meeting HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
12	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
13	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
16	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
18	Tuesday	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL PASTOR'S CHAT
19	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
20	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
23	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED
25	Tuesday	6:00 p.m.	HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSAL
26	Wednesday	6:30 p.m.	Hadley Women's Group AA Meeting
27	Thursday	4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Fiddle Orchestra Rehearsal CHOIR REHEARSAL
30	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	SUNDAY WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED

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