

FEDERATED COMMUNITY CHURCH
590 Main St.
PO Box 246
Hampden, MA 01036

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Federated Community Church
590 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

E-mail: hampdenfederated@gmail.com
www.hampdenfederatedchurch.org
Tel. (413) 566-3711 Fax (413) 566-5324

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From the Pastor's Desk

But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12: 24b-27

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Jesus answered him, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the greatest and most important commandment.³⁹ The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' Matthew 22: 36-39

Greetings of Grace and Peace,

During the summer services, I included updated information regarding a vote taken by the New England United Methodist Conference this past June. It calls all the UM Churches in New England to commit to ***Liberation, Freedom, and Full Inclusion***. (See full New England Declaration June 2022) Some folks in our congregation are questioning why we are talking about this issue of inclusivity as we are not United Methodist. The inclusion of all people is a Christian issue, it is a social and moral issue that affects all of us! FCC is a church united in worship and governing. We are formed as people from United Church of Christ denomination (UCC), the United Methodist denomination (UMC), and

Community folks; all committed to following the ways of Jesus where Love of God and Love of Neighbor are the greatest commandments. Mainline Christians, historically, have been crusaders working towards justice for all. In my opinion, along with many others, I believe we have become complacent. We must confess that we have lost our way of being a voice for the least, lost, and marginalized. We have not stood with our brothers and sisters for racial justice, with those who are disabled, Asians, LGBTQI, and more.

The Conference of the UCC has urged churches to work towards inclusivity for the past 40- 50 years. The UMC is behind many mainline denominations in addressing this issue. At FCC, little conversation and work has been done to address this issue. As UMC members, we need to address the volatile issue because it is literally dividing our church. Members need to have a conversation to see how they will move forward and on which side. We are inviting the UCC and Community members to join in the conversation to know how we move forward as a congregation. It is an important moral and social issue in our times.

How the members of the UMC decide, will affect the larger FCC community. If they decide to leave the UMC church, the entire FCC worshipping community will be impacted. You will lose the support of members for worship, in studies, praying, service, and tithing. When one suffers, all suffer.

If the UMC decides to move towards full inclusion and reconciling ways, that will impact the use of the church building. Since the church building is shared by two denominations and community members, we need to all be of the same accord.

Please join us for a potluck luncheon on October 2nd, following worship. Your voice, thoughts, presence are needed. We are one in Christ and one in the FCC community.

In Christ's Light and Love,

Pastor Pat

From the Deacons' Bench

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens...Ecclesiastes 3:1

I'm looking out my bay window and I'm giving thanks for this warm, sunny late September day, and the still-green leaves tossing in the breeze. At the same time, I see the orange-yellow fringes of the maples across the road, and I'm grateful for that beauty, too. My heart is divided. I embrace the coming of Autumn, the crisp, earthy air soon to be scented by dying leaves and faint wood smoke; the cool nights - so good for sleeping, burrowed into soft blankets. But there is a melancholy, too, for the inevitable change that is coming: loss of warm breezes and soft nights, and for the unstoppable onset of deep cold, harsh weather painting bleak landscapes of umber and charcoal gray, and black.

I've just learned that our dear brother Hayden has passed on and, in this moment, I want him back. I want all of our brothers and sisters back: Hayden, Joyce, Pat & Don, Janet, Frank, Phil, Dennis, Alice, Hank, Dave and Jeanne, Elva and Willie, Betty and York, Norm, Mattie, Chris, Olive, Joan, Dalton and Polly, Carl, Bill, Muir, Ellen, Michelle, Ralph and Gen, Nancy, June, Gerard, Helen, Ed, Kathy, Rachel, Marian, Gordon and Jackie, another Marian, George and Judy...so many, and so many more.

In this moment, I want them back and I want church to be "the way it was".

But I know nothing is, or can be, the way it was. Life doesn't work that way, that "season" is gone.

This moment will pass, and I'll again accept that the pattern of Creation is cyclical; portions of Creation, even mountains and seas, come into being, decline, and sometimes disappear, to allow a new season of life to develop and thrive.

Because a church is ultimately a community of human beings, churches too follow this natural pattern of birth, growth, and decline. As human beings we can't stop our own progressions from decline to death, but as part of a church community, we can

intervene to move the life of the church from decline to renewal. It's in our nature to miss what is gone, but even though an old season has passed, God and the need to do God's work, still call us to come together to worship, pray, fellowship, and serve- building a foundation for a new season of our faith life together, a season that will bring, with God's blessing, warmth and new beauty again.

Your sister in Christ,

Linda Hornig

Fall

Fall is here, the leaves are changing colors
The apples are ready to pick. And oh, how sweet they are.
They remind me of your Love. Sometimes I get caught up in this world and neglect you, my dear Savior. Help me to be fertile soil and produce a great harvest of good works for you. I praise you and thank you for this beautiful season

By Marilyn Connor





October Birthdays

Birthday Greetings to the following members of our church who celebrate birthdays in October.



Robert Patterson	10/01
Barbara Dunwoody	10/03
Jacene Germain	10/05
Joseph Eagan	10/05
Jennifer Jernigan	10/05
Carmel Grant	10/04
Madison Cadieux	10/08
Ellie Soucy	10/14
Cameron Walulak	10/14
Joyce Brooks	10/14
Laurie Schoolcraft	10/17
Casey DeGray	10/20
Rebecca DeSanti	10/20
Rebekah Doyle	10/23
Justin Jernigan	10/24
Bruce Westcott	10/29
Beatrice Officer	10/30
Gillian Smith	10/30
Olivia McKeone	10/31



Wedding Anniversaries

John & Beatrice Moriarty	10/01
Allen & Laurie Schoolcraft	10/04
Paul & Elizabeth Cilley	10/09
Nancy & Richard Nelson	10/09
Robert & Ellie Green	10/13
Robert & Cheryl Patterson	10/14
Bruce & Jeanne Westcott	10/15
Michael & Karen Kielb	10/18
Joshua & Sarah Blain	10/24
Erik & Dawn McKeone	10/27



Prayer Corner



Bob & Ellie Green
McKeone Family
Watson Family
Shirley
Rita Spencer
Evie Meacham
Gail Banning
Linda & Winnie
Jeffrey
Josh G & Family
MaryLou Black
Tony Rogers
Fran Brown
Lois Pixley
Rollyn Hatch
Elaine Selfridge
Ellie Soucy
Kimberly Ayers

Melinda
Yvette
Ann
Sherry & Family
Beverly
Denise & family
Naomi
Kelly
Libby
Barbara
Phyllis
Charlie
Stephanie & Zachary
Marion
Boris
Jim
Doreen
Adam

For those starting school or going away to college this fall
For victims & families of mass shootings
For the people of Ukraine
For those battling cancer
For those who are shut-ins and those that are isolated
For those that grieve the loss of loved ones
For those who do not have access to COVID vaccines
For first responders & health care workers
For those impacted by weather disasters
For the people Afghanistan
For the people of Haiti
For the changing climate
For our country
For all world leaders
For those traveling
For shut-ins and those who are isolated
For the homeless
For Asian & Black people & all who are persecuted for simply being
how God created them

Sympathy to.....

*Family & friends of **Donald Ryan**, who passed away on September 10th. Condolences can be sent to Nancy at 101 Baldwin Drive in Hampden, MA 01036*



*Family & Friends of **Hayden Tibbetts**, who passed away on September 26th.*

October Deacon of the Month is Penny Dibble.

World Communion will be celebrated in worship on October 2nd.

Women's Retreat



Thank you to **Kim Cummins** for hosting the Women's Retreat at her home last month. Nine women attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was a day of learning, sunshine, beauty, deepening friendships, and good food. Thank you Kim for welcoming us to your beautiful home and yard.

Game Night October 8th

Saturday, October 8th at 6:00 PM



All Ages are invited- the more; the merrier!

Come alone or bring a friend.

Bring a snack to share.

Bring your own game or play one of the many brought in.

These game nights have been a lot of fun to gather with folks we might not have an opportunity to talk with otherwise. As you play, conversation builds among folks.

We hope you will join in!

Movie Night

Friday, October 21st at 6:00 PM

“Jonah”



The movie is captured by Sight & Sound Auditorium (renamed to Living Waters Theatre).

They do an extraordinary job in making Biblical stories come to life: scenery makes it very realistic. Come and enjoy the story of Jonah and see how they portray him in the belly of the whale. Snacks are provided.

PumpkinFest on Church Lawn

(indoors if raining)

Saturday, October 22nd 3:00 -6:00 PM

Event is free of charge.

Come and carve a pumpkin, enjoy a snack, make a craft, listen to a Halloween story, make a new friend, and more. No charge for event.

Please bring a canned good to be donated to Indian Orchard Survival Center or a coat or jacket for the Springfield Rescue Mission.



Kids Ministry Corner

As the new *Children/Youth Faith Formation (CYFF)* Coordinator/Lead Teacher, I am grateful for the loving work Laura Lillibridge did with the children over the last year. It's clear that they have formed bonds with one another and come to their faith formation time on Sunday morning with open minds and hearts. Most gratifying is the trust they have that they will be welcomed and cared for by their teachers, and the other adults around them in their church home.

It's been a blessing to hear them share how they perceive the faith concepts we are currently exploring through the "Seeking God Together" curriculum: Creation, who God and Jesus are, the Bible and Scripture, prayer, and "disciple". They are learning that each of them is a child of God, and what that means. We are now exploring all aspects of prayer and praying, and will begin with the template Jesus gave us in The Lord's Prayer. Their own prayers are simple but often profound. And their questions and comments sure keep the teachers on their toes!



We ask you to keep the spiritual growth of the children and their families, and the outreach of this ministry in your prayers, "*for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*" Matthew 19:14.

Linda Hornig

p.s. We'd love to have more children share in the program: if you know anyone with children in their lives, (parents, grandparents, others) invite them to come one Sunday morning, and let them know about the Pumpkin Fest coming up on Oct. 22- it's always a great time!

Missions

We are switching things up this year! We will be collecting for the Community Survival Center this month for the Thanksgiving Holiday meals. It makes more sense to collect for them this month and then they will have food available for the month of November! They are in need of the following items:

Any size of Turkey or Roasting Chickens, gravy mixes/jars, canned yams, green beans, instant potatoes, stuffing, dessert mixes, any canned/box food to make/prepare a holiday dinner!

Cash will also be accepted to be given to the Survival Center to also buy what they may be short on. I will be writing out receipts for any cash donation to keep track of for the church, let me know if you would like a copy.



In November we will be collecting Christmas gifts for the Nursing Home residents at Vantage, here in town, for those that do not have families. More information to come!

Have a Blessed Month!
Joyce and the Mission Team

New Opportunity to Learn & Grow

During my time of rest and renewal this summer, I (Pastor Pat) read a wonderful book, “*Wild Mercy*” by Mirabai Starr. It is about *Living the Fierce and Tender Wisdom of the Woman Mystics*. A mystic is one who knows God and sees God moving in their daily lives and follows the guidance even when beyond their full intellectual understanding. Of course, God is always love so what is followed is positioned against love as being truth. In “*Wild Mercy*,” Mibabai teaches about women mystics through the ages as well as relating to current female mystics. She includes feminine mystics beyond Christianity, so the book is all who strive to know

God. Each chapter offers a spiritual practice to use to draw nearer to the Divine.

I hope you will join me in this adventure. Beginning on Monday, October 3rd, 6:00 – 8:00 pm., we will meet twice a month. Since we will be reading together, one can simply listen or share a book to read, but it is highly recommended to purchase your own book. It is a treasure.

I hope you will join me in this adventure and not let me go alone. Feel free to invite friends, neighbors, relatives, and even enemies. You might just save someone's life.

Bible Study Wednesday Mornings

10:00 AM Gathering, Coffee, & Chat

10:30 AM Study Begins

We are studying “*Signs and Wonders*” by Amy-Jill Levine. She explores selected miracles of Jesus in historical and theological context.

For each miracle, she discusses not only how past witnesses would have understood the events, but also how today's readers can draw meaning from Jesus's words and actions.



This is a six-week study. Join for one week or for them all.

I (Pastor Pat) have been in Bible studies in a variety of places and settings. This group is one of the most open and inviting groups I have been among. Whether you know much about the Bible or very little, you would be welcomed and supported with no judgement. You are encouraged to come among other seekers: learn, laugh, and grow. Levine has a great sense of humor and a wealth of knowledge as scholar and teacher. She currently is a Professor at Hartford Seminary and Professor Emerita at Vanderbilt University.

If Wednesday mornings do not work for you, please let the office or Pastor Pat if know you would attend an evening session. If I have three folks agreeing on attending on a certain night, I will offer this in the evening.

The Great Resignation Hits Churches...And This Pastor is Hopeful!

If you've been reading the news, you've probably heard the term "The Great Resignation." It refers to a societal phenomenon in which we've seen significant swaths of the workforce resign from their employment in the last two years. Factors include wage stagnation, workplace dissatisfaction, and both safety and fatigue regarding COVID-19. Churches experience a Great Volunteer Resignation as well.

Susan Beaumont, who writes and coaches particularly around the intersection of organizational health and spiritual vitality, describes the situation she's seeing in many congregations this way:

We don't know whether the absence of volunteers is due to temporary post-pandemic fatigue, ongoing fear of the pandemic, or a seismic cultural shift.

The early days of the pandemic provided a natural pause in many volunteer relationships. When the buildings closed and programs went on hiatus, we relied on staff to innovate a narrower portfolio of offerings. It was safer to keep the number of people in the building to a minimum. Congregants were overwhelmed with the demands of work, school, and family—all restricted to the home. Churches grew accustomed to working with fewer volunteers. Now we want our volunteers back, but they are slow to respond.

At this stage of the pandemic, people are carefully assessing how they will invest their time and talent. Job transitions in the workforce are at an all-time high as people reevaluate how they will spend their days. It makes sense that people are extending the same scrutiny to their volunteer lives.

I observe this at my congregation too. As we work to resume, reinvigorate, and revitalize ministries that have been dormant amidst the pandemic, many of our former volunteers are either not returning or taking this opportunity to retire - and reasonably so.

Take Ed Tucker; he "retired" after 35 years teaching Faith Formation this last spring. No one begrudged Ed his retirement, and yet he is one of the faces of the Great Congregational Resignation. The depth, breadth, and length of his volunteer service stands out, but this wouldn't be a Great Resignation if he were alone. Folks have, reasonably, stepped back from ushering, reading, hosting coffee hour, gardening. And, while many of my colleagues are pessimistic about this phenomenon, I'm not.

A church consultant that I worked with years ago whose name I've forgotten had a theory that vital churches needed to continually be creating new opportunities and ministries because it's hard for people to

insert themselves into already existing groups. His idea was that it's hard to navigate the already existing interpersonal dynamics and unwritten rules of existing programs and offerings, and so he was a big advocate for creating new opportunities, so that folks would see that there was room for them around the circle. I see this dynamic in the music ministry of my congregation. Without our experience of the pandemic and the resulting need to put the chancel choir on hiatus, several of our cantors would not have had the opportunity to share their gifts. Our online services gave these folks a different opportunity to serve the congregation in a way that worked for them, a way that was different from the tried and true "way we've always done it."


Don't get me wrong, one of my ministerial fears is having NO ONE to teach Faith Formation or lead Youth Group. My initial reflex to the news of very active volunteers moving and others stepping back from roles is absolute dread. But recently, I've become more philosophical about it. Maybe it's age or parenting or pandemic wisdom, but more and more, I find myself looking at resignations as opportunities for the church. Maybe, instead of framing this as a Great Resignation, we need to look at it as a Great Reimagining, a Great Reshuffling, a Great Transformation. While we're deeply grateful for the time and energy and gifts people have given to the church and its ministries in their current shape, the Great Resignation can be an opportunity to update both what we do and how we do it.

Susan Beaumont, the coach and writer I quoted earlier, has a few suggestions about re-engaging volunteers, including streamlining roles, promoting flexibility (i.e. the time / way things happen), moving toward episodic micro-volunteering, and helping people pursue their passions. I think all of these suggestions have possibility, and I also think that the Great Resignation gives us some space. How do you make space for new volunteers in your congregation? For some people, that space is made by knowing that there's room for them to offer their gifts. In some instances, that space will be made by reimagining and reshaping how we share the Gospel.

How do you help people know they can share their gifts?

I know my congregation needs people. Not just to fill someone else's shoes. It would be almost impossible to do that. We need them to be part of a next chapter of our congregation's magnificent story, a story of thousands upon thousands of people over the years who have striven to live our church covenant in which we promise to "do the will of God and to make the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations."

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels Union Congregational UCC, Green Bay, WI

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:00 AM Worship Potluck & Conversation	3 10:30 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Wild Mercy Study	4 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir	5 10:30 AM Bible Study	6	7 7:30 PM AA	8 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 6:00 PM Game Night
9 10:00 AM Worship	10 10:30 AM Line Dancing	11 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Finance	12 10:30 AM Bible Study	13	14 7:30 PM AA	15
16 10:00 AM Worship	17 10:30 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Wild Mercy Study	18 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM BOD	19 10:30 AM Bible Study 12:30 PM WWW*	20	21 7:30 PM AA 6:00 PM Movie Night	22 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast 3:00 PM Pumpkinfest
23 10:00 AM Worship	24 10:30 AM Line Dancing	25 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir	26 10:30 AM Bible Study	27	28 7:30 PM AA	29
30 10:00 AM Worship	31 10:30 AM Line Dancing					*WWW= Wonderful Wednesday Worship /Lunch



Pumpkin Fest

Saturday, October 22nd

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

A time of FREE family fun!

**Crafts, games, pumpkin carving, snacks, cider donuts, mulled
cider & more!**

**Donations accepted to support Indian Orchard's Community
Survival Center & Springfield Rescue Mission.**

ALL ARE WELCOME!

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