



Christ Congregational Church, UCC An Open and Affirming Congregation

Creating Beloved Community

Volume 41 No 2

Be The Church

February 2021

WORSHIP AND PROGRAMS:

Worship: Remotely on our website, Facebook page, or Nearly Weekly

Sundays, 9:55AM
(Music starts at 9:50)

Regular: Remotely

Bible Study: Wednesdays,
10AM

Prayer Group: Tuesdays, 7PM

Hymn Sings: Wednesdays,
6:45PM

Fiber Fellowship:
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 5:00PM



Board Meetings: ZOOM

Christian Ed: Feb. 3, 6:30PM

Council: Feb. 18, 7PM

Deacons: Feb. 4, 7PM

Finance/Property: Feb. 11, 7PM

Media/Tech: Feb. 16, 7PM

Missions: Feb. 2, 6:30PM

Music: Feb. 14, 11:30PM

OCC: TBD

Vitality: Feb. 11, 7PM

PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Friends,

As I write this today marks 3 months since I have joined you as senior pastor of Christ Congregational Church. In that time much has happened and, at the same time, it feels as though much has stayed the same. On one hand our Community Engagement and Racial Justice task force (CERJ) have begun their work on discerning ways to pursue our strategic pathways, we have launched our first Anti-Racism Institute in partnership with the Brockton Interfaith Community, our Media Tech team has asked all of our various committees to start submitting content for our social media pages, we've begun the work of improving our technology for streaming worship by purchasing a new camera and microphones to go with it, and our confirmation class of 6 students have met in person along with youth group gathering for outdoor activities. These are just a few of the highlights of things that are happening here, and all of the activity of our church reminds me that even in the midst of COVID-19 our church is not closed.

That being said, we are still taking great precautions due to COVID-19 to keep our members safe. Our worship has been pre-recorded for the past several weeks in an effort to minimize the number of people gathered in the sanctuary at one time, all of our board and committee meetings continue to be hosted on Zoom, and small groups are connecting online in various ways. We are all craving the in person, human, connection that we could always count on the church to provide. Personally I am eagerly awaiting the day that I can gather with all of you in person, shake your hands, and feel the Spirit of God in our midst. I also trust that that day will come soon as we hear news of vaccines being developed and distributed.

As we enter into the season of Lent our worship will focus on a theme of prayer. Each Sunday will focus on a different section of the Lord's Prayer, and other online activities during the week will be designed to lead you in discovering new prayer practices you may not have encountered before in the hope that they will enrich your spiritual life. As we focus on prayer I encourage you to pray for the day we can resume activities in person, but I also encourage you to pray for all those who have lost so much during this terrible pandemic. I encourage you to pray for all that's been lost – life, livelihoods, structure, and more – and I also encourage you to pray for the new things we will discover of ourselves as we begin to regather when it is safe. Much has happened, and continues to happen, in our lives together – and much remains the same. However, no matter what season we find ourselves in one constant remains above all – God is present in our lives and God's love prevails over all else. I am thankful to be able to proclaim that promise with all of you in our Beloved Community, and I am filled with hope at all of the ways God is working in our lives together.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Jeff



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School

This past month, Sunday School at home focused on creative prayer practices. Using activities from Traci Smith's book, *Prayer For Faithful Families* – our Sunday School families have been making prayer banners and bracelets, praying with bubbles and finding new ways to connect with God. Our next set of Sunday School @ Home boxes will include coloring based Lenten devotionals from Illustrated Ministry and other fun stuff. If you would like a kit for your family, please reach out to the church office (508-586-3022).

Sunday School
@
Home!



Youth Group

Youth Group fun continues through the winter! This month we were hosted for by the Shelley-Wyss family for an outdoor meeting around their fire pit. Accompanied by Mako the dog (honorary youth group member), we played all sorts of games including Whoosh Ball, Matthew Mark Luke and John, and Grandma's Footsteps. Later in the month, when temperatures dropped too low for even this group of hardy New Englanders, we met online and had a blast playing JackBox games like Quiplash! This month, we'll be meeting twice following confirmation class on Sunday, February 14th and 28th from 1 -2:30pm. Weather and temperature permitting we'll be meeting outside at church. In case of freezing or inclement weather we'll meet online. A live game version of Among Us is in the works...stay tuned for more info!

Confirmation

Our confirmation class has been going strong through the end of year! We've been exploring prayer and the history of Christianity. This month we'll continue on with our *Confirm Not Conform UCC* curriculum and will focus on putting our faith in action.

February Classes:

February 14th – Faith In Action: Pain To Power

February 28th – Faith In Action: How We Can Help



Lenten Devotionals Available

Looking for a creative Lenten devotional? The Board of Christian Education is excited to offer a devotional from Illustrated Ministry, themed around prayer, to anyone in the congregation who would like one. Included are weekly devotionals (including readings and discussion questions) with connected coloring and activity sheets. Perfect for anyone who likes to get creative with prayer or enjoys adult coloring books! To request a Lenten devotional, please contact the office or Pastor Ann-Marie (am.illsley@gmail.com).





Notes from Murray

As we head into the heart of winter, it is more important to take time to take care of ourselves; eating healthily, getting as good a night's sleep as possible, being physically active, taking the time to listen to a favorite song or a new song and actually listening with no distractions. It isn't easy. Meditation is important and music can help. There are many places on YouTube where you can find relaxing music to help you relax. Some recordings are just ocean sounds or rain. As we head into Lent, it is important that we find places of peace and positive thoughts. Yes, we are still in the middle of the pandemic, but the light is there at the end of the tunnel! We are getting there. Taking time to take care of ourselves will help us with these last months.

We are heading into Black History Month and music we hear in our services will reflect that. We always have a diverse group of songs in our services, but we will be highlighting more during February.

A few songs of to start listening to for February that have great messages:

[Change is Gonna Come by Sam Cooke](#)

[There is More Love Somewhere](#)

[Lift Every Voice And Sing](#)

[Sister Rosetta Tharp \(pioneer of guitar style and some say, the founder of Rock and Roll\)](#)

[Elizabeth Cotten \(another pioneer of her own style of guitar\)](#)






[Aretha Franklin - Precious Lord](#)

[Take Six Vocal Group](#)



Peace,
Murray



 <p>Happy New Year, Wishing you all a healthy and happy year. Warm Regards, Tim MacIntyre</p>	<p>To My Church, Thank you so much for the poinsettia that brought to me at Christmas time. It was a real nice surprise. Thank you also for all the Deacons who delivered these beautiful flowers. God Bless All,  Ruth Copeland</p>	 <p>1-5-21 To CCC Members & Friends: Thank you for being so thoughtful. I'm so thankful for the most lovely poinsettia delivered to my by Jan Howard at Christmas time. It meant so much to me and Jen. Also, thank you to all who brought the Christmas services to us at home. Love, Donna and Jen Hefler</p>	<p>To Jeff Illsley & The Deacons, Thank you so much for the beautiful poinsettia, especially at this very difficult time. I really appreciated it and I hope you all had good holidays. In Christian Love, Nancy Goodwin </p>	 <p>12-30-20 Thank you to the Deacon's for the time and energy, donated during this time of crisis for the church. Hopefully "2021" will bring peace to all. Sincerely, Dorothy Lufkin</p>
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ORGAN COMPLETION COMMITTEE

CHRIST CHURCH PIPE ORGAN SERIES AND THE ARTS AT CHRIST CHURCH PRESENT:



MIDDAY MUSIC FOR FEBRUARY STREAMING ONLINE STARTING ON FEBRUARY 24TH

With Alison Read, Harpist

Alison Read received her Bachelor of Music from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she studied with renowned harpist, Alice Chalifoux. She completed her Master of Music at Southern Methodist University, where she studied with Susan Pejovich.

As an orchestral harpist, she is Principal Harpist at both the Abilene Philharmonic and Abilene Opera, as well as the Las Colinas, Garland, and Arlington Symphonies .

Alison's program will include some spirituals (including some by Florence Price), French pieces, and some selections from Broadway musicals.

The link to the program will be sent via Constant Contact and also posted on our Facebook page "Christ Church Pipe Organ Series." To be added to the Constant Contact list, please email to organ@brocktonucc.org.

SAVE THE DATE:

MARCH 21 2021

BACH BIRTHDAY

BASH

Free

Streamed online



**Featuring Nicole Keller,
Guest Organist
and
the Voyager Guitar Duo**

PROJECT PIPES: CZELUSNIAK & DUGAL

- The installation of the Choir Division has begun!
- Organ builders arrived on January 11 and moved the windchest into the front door of the church



- On January 14, Keith Allen, Matt Howard and Pastor Jeff helped lift the windchest up to the scaffolding so it could be hoisted into its space behind the façade



- Interior of Choir Division windchest, on top of windbox



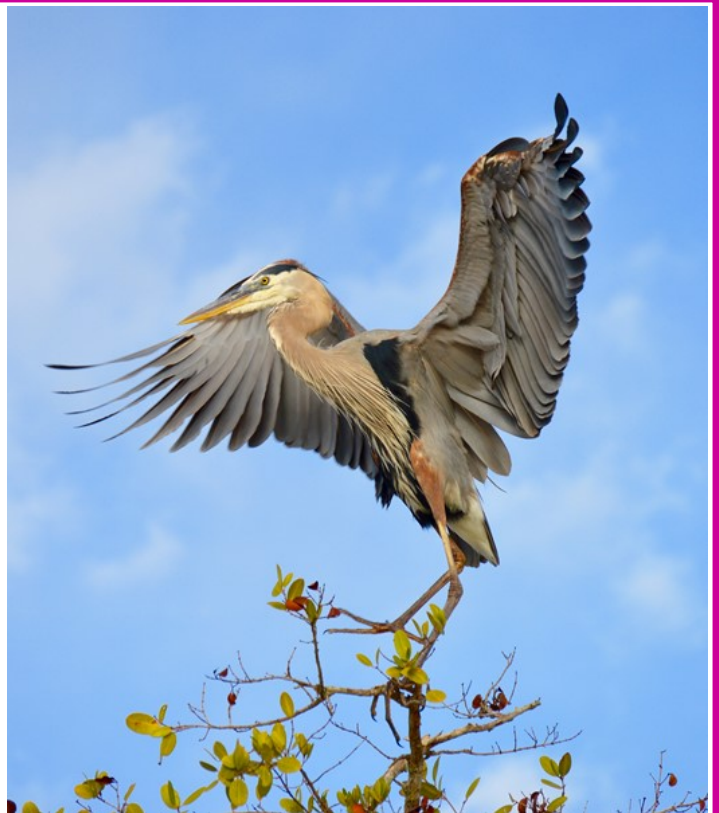
**This Great Blue Heron:
A Metaphor for Our Church!**

(Family Joke: In our home, whenever one of us declares that something is a metaphor, the other asks quizzically, “What’s a metaphor!?” And the response always is, “Anything you want it to be for!”)

On the inlet side of Bunche Beach in Fort Myers, this Great Blue Heron had just come through a dark, early morning storm! She then flew to the tippy top of a beachside tree and was continuously shifting her weight on her branchlike legs and ruffling her feathers, trying to find her balance and dry herself. She was resting and re-energizing, waiting to take flight...

And so it is with our Beloved Community of Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. We have come through a dark and swirling storm of COVID-19 in 2020! We are perched mentally, perhaps precariously, shifting, waiting, drying our tears, re-energizing, testing our balance points, preparing for the winds of Spirit so we can take full flight into 2021 - once again, into our mission and ministry of Jesus!

2021 cannot come soon enough!



So... what can we do now to support and strengthen this long awaited and hoped for, re-energized, Breath-of-God Flight?

Please continue to support this Beloved Community with gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure!

Please fulfill pledged offerings for 2020, if you are able.

Please return 2021 Pledge Forms. If you need a Pledge Form, visit “Download Your Stewardship Packet Here” or call the church office at 508 586-3022.

Please make any extra offerings and gifts as the winds of Spirit move you!

Please mail in a check: 1350 Pleasant St, Brockton MA 02301

Please use the Donate/Donate Now button at brocktonucc.org

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

Praise and thanks to God!

With great love and hope, Your Stewardship Committee

Hello Church Members,

The Mission Committee wishes to thank everyone that helped with the hats, gloves and scarfs during the fall, by making a difference to others that are in need of these items. We are looking forward to the 2021 year with some new donations to help others, some might be different than who we are giving to now. We want to share the wealth so to speak and thank EVERYONE for their continued support to the Mission Committee's work during such trying times for the world.



George Manoogian
The Mister Nice Guy

And

The Missions Committee





STEWARDSHIP SNIPPETS

(Not Snippy! Just Zippy!)

Unfolding Grace, Abundant Hope - A BOLD “Thanks” Giving

- * An appreciative and loving Stewardship Thank You to all in this Beloved Community of Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, for faithful, supportive, and bold participation during this Pandemic 2020-2021 Stewardship Pledge Experience! What challenges we all have faced in 2020! What creativity and adaptability we have exhibited in the face of these COVID-19 challenges!
- * Here’s the Stewardship Pledge Update as we prepare to WELCOME the New Year! These are Matt Howard’s observations based on data supplied by Jen Brosky:
 - + Currently, we have received 60 pledges representing 79 people.
 - + 80% of the pledges received have been maintained or increased over last year!
 - + Of the increased pledges, the average increase is 15%!
 - + 33 pledges (based on last year’s list) are pending. We realize that some of these pledgers might need reminders, and some may not be able to pledge, yet, because of unsure economic times. We remember that we are Community, and we hold each other up during hard times! We are all in this together!
 - + Matt, Chair of Stewardship, says that all in all, in a pandemic, we are thrilled with the data, thus far. We do have follow-up to do, but we are making strong progress!
- * If you need a Pledge Form so that you may complete your Pledge for 2021, please visit “Download Your Stewardship Packet Here!” or call the church office at 508 586-3022.
- * Please return your 2021 Pledge Forms by dropping them by the church office during open hours (if permitted) or by mailing them to the church.
- * New Year’s Blessings to all as we enter 2021! Thanks be to God for loving, nurturing, guiding, and persistently motivating us! We know we are not alone but together in Beloved Community! Truly, Jesus lives and works among us and through us!
- * God tells us - “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 desert!” (Isaiah 43)



Praise and Thanks to God! Your Stewardship Committee



Dear Members and Friends of Christ UCC

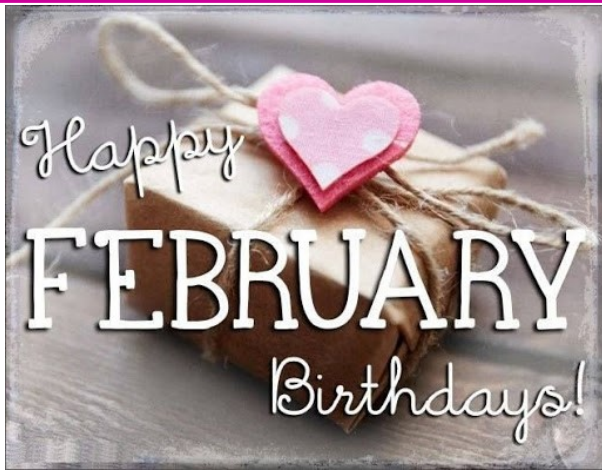
Thank you for all who remembered Geneva Prince in your hearts and minds on the occasion of her 100th birthday, January 19th. To quote portions of a post brother Steve made on Facebook a couple months ago:

Geneva has not been aware of anything for much of her 6 years plus at Life Care, and we have been hoping for a merciful passing. However, we now hope she will make it to 100. Though modest I think she would be impressed if she knew she had reached that unbelievable milestone.

She made it, and we had a zoom session with her. Whether or not any music we played or stories we told got through, it was a blessing for her family. Beyond her family, First Parish/Christ Church was the focal point of Geneva's whole life. The dear friends she made there growing up and throughout her adult life and well into her 90's enriched her life and kept her active in body and spirit, especially as she observed and was involved in the lives of so many members as children, parents and grandparents.

Thank you for the love, support and generosity of spirit you have shared with Geneva and God Bless you all!

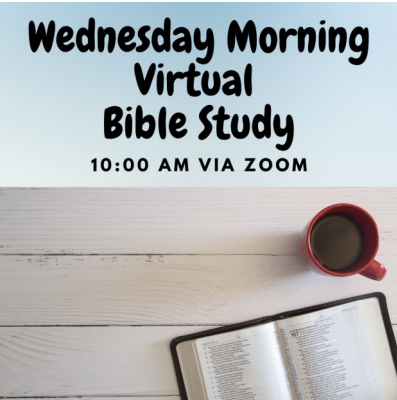
Geneva's children, Diane, Steve and Jane and their families



Wishing all the best on your Birthdays

Mary Woodman, Sarah Sinesi, Samantha Sinesi, Janice Urban, Tracey Hixon, Sheila Klecha, Martha Binda, Sandra Marvill, Ella Alden, Lucille Berg, Joyce Carroll, Aubrey Macfarlane, Ken Maloof, Barry Shelley, Frank Matthews, Mackenzie Copley, Liz Garner, Dot Quimby, Alexander Cords, Ronan Cords, Priscilla Bailey, Pat Illsley, Luane Rich, Adam Mitchell

(listed in order of day of month from 1 to 28)



Join us for Wednesday morning Bible Study group. Regulars and newcomers alike are welcome to drop in and check out this adult faith formation opportunity. The group discusses the lectionary scripture readings each week. Hope to see you there!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84061103224>

Meeting ID: 840 6110 3224

+1 929 205 6099 Password: bible or (423861 if calling by phone)



We pray for the families of Diana Morton-Dolan (friend of Barbara Moody), Richard Bowman (husband of Deborah Bowman), Russ Gillpatrick and Carol Ranney (sister of Fred Hayes) may they rest in peace.

*"Be Still
And
Know that I am God"*
Psalm 46:10



Weekly Silent Prayer Group on Zoom

Tuesdays from 7 PM to 8 PM

I would like to invite you to join me every Tuesday in January to learn about and experience silent prayer time. Please email me at deb@act-cpa.com or text me at 508-410-3476 to get the zoom link emailed to you.

Peace, Deb Bowman

ZOOM Fiber Fellowship & Crafts



Meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesday

From 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Come Knit, Crochet, Needlepoint, crafts, etc.



Or just come for the fellowship!!
(call or email office for zoom link)

The Bible Study would like to thank Sylvia and Dale for their surprise visit when they zoomed into our Christmas Brunch with lovely music on Christmas Day. It lifted our spirits and made us smile. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

Blessings and Peace

The Bible Study

Bible Study



Ash Wednesday

Our Ash Wednesday service this year will be held online with communion on February 17th at 7:00 PM.

SAVE THE DATES! YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THESE! SAVE THE DATES!

(Virtual) BREAKFAST & BELIEFS



Adult Education Lenten Series 2021
**Weekly Programs, Alternating
Saturday & Sunday mornings,
February 21st – March 27th**

Our tradition continues even if we can't enjoy a sit-down breakfast together in-person this year. Please join us as we create space to explore various topics that have been emerging in our community.

This year we'll experiment by alternating between Saturdays and Sundays week to week and by trying a new format on the Saturdays. On the three Sundays we'll gather via Zoom soon after our worship service and begin as we have in the past. That is, to kick-off the program, two or three church members invited in advance will each share prepared five-to-seven-minute reflections on the week's topic. In our Saturday format, Pastor Jeff will begin by laying the groundwork for deeper conversations on that week's topic. In both formats, we'll spend the majority of each session encouraging both individual sharing and collective learning about what we believe and value, and how our faith matters in how we live and act in this world. We hope that such a process will nourish our spiritual health as individuals, enrich our sense of community in all its diversity, and deepen our corporate expression of faith and discipleship.

The schedule of dates and topics follows. Further details about each week's program will appear in Nearly Weekly emails. Meanwhile, save those dates! If you have questions, please contact Pastor Jeff Kardisco or Moderator Barry Shelley.

Sunday, February 21, 11:00-12:30: *Signs of hope*

Saturday, February 27, 9:00-10:30: *How and why we worship*

Sunday, March 7, 11:00-12:30: *Transgender identities & experiences*

Saturday, March 13, 9:00-10:30: *Images of God: How we imagine & talk about God*

Sunday, March 21, 11:00-12:30: *Prayer & spiritual practices: How we experience & interact with God*

Saturday, March 27, 9:00-10:30: *Exploring the contours of church & state*

Phase 2 CCC Financial Support for Ministries Task Force

As we formulate preparations for emerging from these Covid times, financial support of our missions and ministries is essential. There were many intriguing suggestions and opportunities discussed, which need further exploration. We are assembling a task force to pursue the ideas for financial support and fundraising that were put forth by the Financial Planning Task Force. Please contact the church office, or email me at sjkoza84@gmail.com to join this group. This is important work that will allow us to support our strategic pathways and sustain our missions, moving forward. Please consider joining, and help keep our church community strong and vital.

Prayerfully submitted-

Sue Koza, Vice-Moderator



Deacons Committee

The Board of Deacons wanted to catch up with everyone and let you know what we have been up to. We miss seeing you all but even though we are not able to meet in person, the Board of Deacons continues to be hard at work. We started the holiday season with Mum deliveries to many of our Church



Elders. Then to keep up with our tradition, we decorated the Church Sanctuary for Advent with Angels, Wreaths, Christmas Trees, and more importantly the Creche so that all of you could enjoy it during the online worship services. Finally, just before Christmas the Deacons were back out delivering poinsettias to our Church Elders. Even with social distancing and masks, it was wonderful seeing so many faces.



We hope that 2021 will bring us all back together in person and we will once again be able to greet you as you come in the Sanctuary. Until then, stay safe and if you need anything from your Board of Deacons, including prayer requests....please feel free to reach out to us at deacons@brocktonucc.org. Also, please check your nearly weekly for information on Ash Wednesday.

-The Board of Deacons



COMMON THREADS
QUILT GUILD

This is a lap quilts for the guild. These are just the tops to be completed.



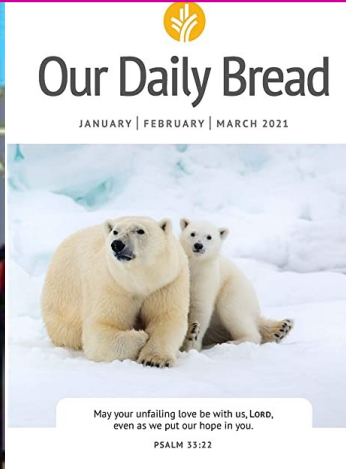
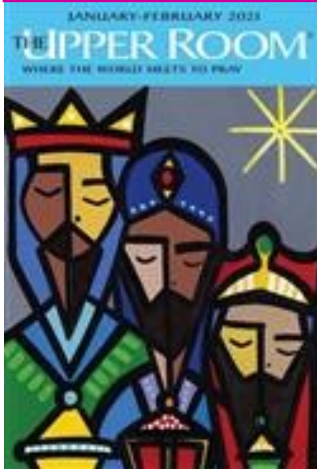
This quilt is made by Kristine Blanchard for her son Michael.



Here is a quilt Janet Eckstrom just finished, made from reproduction fabric from the 1930's.



If you are interested in receiving The Upper Room and/or Our Daily Bread, please call the office and we will mail it to you.



CONTACT US

CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

1350 Pleasant Street
Brockton, MA 02301-2840

Tel: 508-586-3022

Fax: 508-583-7156

Web: brocktonucc.org

Email: office@brocktonucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday thru Thursday:

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship Time: 9:55 a.m.

CREATING BELOVED COMMUNITY

Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey,



Christ Congregational Church, UCC

1350 Pleasant St.

Brockton, MA 02301-2840