



Christ Congregational Church, UCC
 An Open and Affirming Congregation
Creating Beloved Community

Volume 41 No 7 & 8

Be The Church

July - August 2021

WORSHIP AND PROGRAMS:

Worship: Remotely and On-Site
 (with restrictions)

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

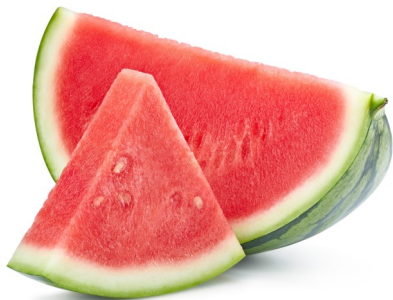
Regular: Remotely

Bible Study: Wednesdays, 10AM

Prayer Group: Tuesdays, 7PM

Fiber Fellowship: Summer Hiatus

Quilt Guild: 3rd Tuesday, 1PM



Board Meetings: ZOOM

Christian Ed: July 7, 6:30PM

Council: July 22, 7PM

Deacons: Sept. 2, 7PM

Finance/Property: TBD

Media/Tech: July 11, after worship

Missions: Aug. 3, 7:30PM

Music: July 11, after worship

Vitality: TBD

PASTOR'S PAGE

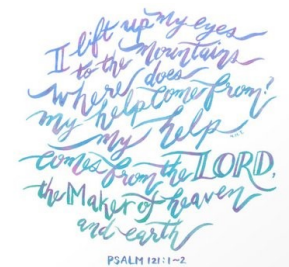
*"I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth."
 Psalm 121:1-2*

Recently I was in a clergy meeting where we were all checking in with one another and I heard a colleague say, "It's just nice to feel like we're *moving toward something* rather than simply hanging on." I really appreciated that remark, because I've felt that too. Psalm 121 is a Psalm about moving toward something, with God's help. Most people are familiar with these first two verses, but further on the Psalm says that God will not let your foot slip and won't fall asleep on the job. It concludes by saying in verse 8, "The LORD will protect you on your journeys – whether going or coming – from now until forever from now." That's an *active* God working with us through all things, keeping our hope alive.

Although we have been socially distanced for much of my time here we have been moving, and active, with God's help – and I can see hope in the mountains. Over the course of the past few months, our finance and property board have been active, with help from the ministry support task force, to consider ways for our congregation to not only increase our revenue capability (to help with our budget) but to also adhere to our mission and strategic pathways. To that end we are working on an agreement with the Brockton Interfaith Community to possibly expand their office space in our building, while they have offered to contribute to our building costs by paying rent. We have also had conversations with Gregory Rose, of Rose conservatory, to explore what might be possible in a working relationship with his organization. We have also continued to expand our in person worship and activities, including Sunday morning nursery care – and VBS will be happening in August with a big and energetic rally day set for September. We are slowly regathering, moving toward something, and it is only by God's help.

It is a blessing to be in this moment, together, as a beloved community. As we all take a deep breath this summer may we remember that God is in that deep breath, in the relaxation and joy of being around friends and loved ones again, and in all the small things we can start to enjoy again. But let us also remember that God was with us during the difficult times too – because that's the constant. The Psalmist says that he turns his eyes to the hills to find his help – eternal and never changing hills – to which the response is that God is even more constant than those. May it be so for you, and for all of God's children.

Blessings and Peace,
 Pastor Jeff



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION YOUTH NEWS

Nursery Care is Back!

We are excited to share that our Nursery room has reopened on Sunday mornings during worship! The amazing Tammy Blackler, our nursery leader has been working hard to get the spaced prepped for our littlest folks. Due to some important medical care, she'll be rejoining us on Sunday mornings starting in August. But until then, Angeliza Campbell has stepped in to be a consistent presence in the space. If you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Ann-Marie.



Playdate for Littles and Their Grown-ups

On Saturday, July 25th from 10-11am, we'll be having a playdate with our nursery and kindergarten aged kiddos at the church. While volunteers play with the kids, adults will have a chance for some separate fellowship and discussion time with one another. To sign-up, follow this link: tinyurl.com/CCcplaydate



THANK YOU TEACHERS

On Children and Youth Sunday, we usually take some time to recognize the volunteers who make our faith formation programs possible – Sunday School teachers, shepherds, youth group leaders and more. However like most things in the past 18 months, faith formation for our congregation has looked a little different. This year more than ever, the parents-grandparents-guardians-caring adults of our young folks stepped up to help continue their faith journeys. All the folks who took the kits we created and did Sunday School at Home activities with families, who made sure their youths were able to log on (and later get rides to) youth group and confirmation, who made sacred space at home during lock down, who answered or asked questions with young minds exploring their faith (all while balancing online learning, working from home or venturing out to work, and everything else that the pandemic threw at them). **THANK YOU! Thank you. Thank you.** We presented these folks with a button that had a stained-glass heart on it, a small token to share our thanks and remind you how much we love and appreciate you. If we missed you on Children and Youth Sunday, we'll be working to get these out to folks over the summer.

Scholarships

June 20th was Baccalaureate Sunday, when we celebrate our recent graduates and award scholarships to members of our community who are pursuing higher education. Here are this year's awardees:

Angeliza Campbell was awarded the Lendh Family Scholarship and will be starting her undergraduate studies at Regis College.

Angela Colby was awarded the Arthur and Priscilla Illsley Jr. Scholarship and will be continuing her undergraduate studies at Stonehill College.

Jayce Exell was awarded the Urban Family

Memorial Scholarship and will be continuing his undergraduate studies at the University of Rhode Island.

Jessica Gross was awarded the En Ami Scholarship and will be starting her undergraduate

studies at Keene State College. **Audrey Jones** was awarded the T. Scott Mather Scholarship and will be continuing her undergraduate studies at Bryant University.

Jilliann Larson was awarded the Noah Goodale Scholarship and will be continuing her graduate studies at Stonehill College. **Abigail Murphy** was awarded the Lendh Family Scholarship and will be continuing her undergraduate studies at Bridgewater State University.

Serenity Young-Ferguson was awarded the William J. MacMullen Jr. Scholarship and will be beginning her undergraduate studies at Williams College in the fall. Congratulations to all of our 2021 Scholarship Recipients and many thanks to our 2021 Scholarship Committee – Janet Eckstrom, Sharron MacMullen, Abby Morales and Loren Stott.





Join Us! Rally Day

Planning for Rally Day and our fall, welcome back to Sunday school and other fun faith formation programs is underway! Currently, Rally Day is set for Sunday, September 12th and after church will include the Walk, Roll and Rally Fundraiser to support camperships! Stay tuned for more information through the summer!



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA



WALK, ROLL and RALLY

When: September 12, 2021

Where: Christ Congregational Church

Time: Start time 11:15

Come have fun with us! Whether you are 2 or 92! There will be music! Decorate your wheels! Walk! Roller-skate, scoot, skateboard, and roller blade around the church to help us raise money for camperships!

(Don't forget to sign up for youth programs and church school too!)

Sponsorships forms will be available for our WALK and ROLLERS for laps completed!

For more information contact: Troy & Tracey Hixon or Cathy Campbell

Vacation Bible School – Save the Date!

The Board of Christian Education is excited to announce that Vacation Bible School is back for summer 2021! We'll be trying out a slightly different model this year. VBS will be an in-person, intergenerational experience for folks of all ages, held in the evenings. There will be three evenings of stories, art, games and more, followed by a community celebration on the fourth night. It will be a great opportunity to enjoy fun, faith and fellowship with your friends here at church! We hope you'll consider joining us! If you're interested in participating or volunteering to help make it happen, please speak with Pastor Ann-Marie or Michelle Young-Ferguson. Stay tuned for more info!





Notes from Murray

Music and its healing power. I recently visited my dad who is not doing well. My dad suffered a cognitive loss about two and a half years ago and has been steadily declining since. He has been in a hospital bed at his home for the last three months. It is expected that he won't leave the bed under his own power again. It is heartbreaking.

As most of you know, my mom passed away in December. I was fortunate to see her in her final days and spend meaningful time with her soon before. Both of my parents were musicians in their own rights. My mom had the real talent, but my dad was no slouch and was an experienced choral director and a fine high baritone voice. I sang duets with both of my parents while in high school and college and would give my right arm if I could locate any of those old recordings. My extended family were musical, as well. Notably, my paternal grandmother was a singer and played piano and guitar. She taught many children in their Phoenix neighborhood their first music lessons. One particular young person she influenced went on to become one of the most successful

song writers of the 60's, 70's and 80's. His name was Bobby Harshman, but he is known as [Bobby Hart](#). In his memoir, *Psychedelic Bubble Gum*, he says of my grandma, "...Leota [Kidd] could well have been another Tammy Wynette or Loretta Lynn. She had that kind of sincere, pure, soulful Oklahoma voice that cut through the evening air and made you feel the truth in every emotion she sang."

While visiting my dad last week, I got to hear Grandma's old guitar again; a Gibson L-3 (around 1925) that was refurbished about 15 years ago. My son, Eddie, played it a bit and was impressed with its craftsmanship. As he played it, I was taken back to times when my grandma played and sang to me. In her older years, she still sang with the same conviction and sincerity (and intonation!).

Both she and my father suffered or suffer from a brain disease in their old age. Realizing this sort of thing can be hereditary, I am aware of the possibility of this situation in my own future. I am convinced that their condition was staved off because of their involvement in music. Even as they started to decline, music still ran strongly through their lives. On a recent zoom call, my brother and I sang a few songs to Dad and he sang along, even though he could not hold a conversation. He still knew Amazing Grace (all of the verses!) and a few other old hymns. While visiting him last week, he wasn't able to sing with me when I sang some songs to him. This broke my heart, but I am healed by the memory of making music with him and others in my family; the recollections I have of generations singing, playing together. I remember singing in the church choir with my Uncle Marshal, a stalwart bass. He was the first to encourage me to sight read other parts besides the melody. My cousin, Denny, taught me (for far too short a period) piano. My maternal grandfather sang in the choir well into his 80's and I sang alongside him. My mom learned piano from my great aunt, Melita. She, Melita, taught almost all of my older cousins and aunts and uncles. My father, his sister (my aunt Chris) and I sang trios at church on many occasions. My brother and I sing in his church or my church whenever we are in the same city. I am so fortunate to be able to see my own sons making music and it only compliments their other interests. Making music with my wife and kids is a joy that will not be surpassed.

I can choose to worry about the possibility of a brain development or health situation or I can try to make the most of my time, remembering the amazing times of music making and other special events until I can no longer do so. Also, I am aware that I have much more music to make before that might happen. I know that if that time comes, those who are aware of the decline will be comforted by the music in their hearts and memory whether it be of their own family or friends or their favorite artists. God gave us music and music heals.

Have a great summer!

Murray Kidd



MISSION PROJECT



We're on a mission...please join us!

With your input, the missions board has decided to put together a month of WELCOMEBACKpacks for Concord Prison Outreach (CPO), a non-profit in Concord, MA. Each month, CPO distributes thirty backpacks filled with hygiene, safety and educational resources to individuals leaving prison to make their first weeks of transition a bit easier.

If you'd like to donate to our project, pick up an "assignment card" at our display in the church's upstairs narthex (each card lists a quantity and type of item to contribute) or contact Brenda Wyss at bwyss@wheatonma.edu. Items must be dropped off at the church by August 1st (we'll have drop off boxes in the narthex and outside the downstairs door).



Thanks To You!

May 27, 2021

To Christ Church Staff:

I was truly touched by being honored as the "Light of the World" member this year. The unique lamp will have a special place in my little "office".

Thanks and Peace,
Donna Costa

INFORMATION SESSIONS ABOUT ANN-MARIE'S ORDINATION PROCESS

In May of 2021 the Pilgrim Association Committee on Ministry approved an alternative path to ordination for Pastor Ann-Marie Illsley, our associate pastor. The Pilgrim Association told us that they would approve Pastor Ann-Marie for ordination in her current position with our church, but only after we had undergone a congregational process that ended with a congregational vote on whether or not to officially call Pastor Ann-Marie as our part time associate pastor. If the vote were to be affirmative - which according to our by-laws requires a 2/3 vote of those gathered - they would approve her to be ordained and we would begin plans with the association to hold an ordination service. If the vote were to result in our not calling Ann-Marie she would still be allowed to stay in her position, but she would not be ordained until she receives a call from another congregation.

The Board of Christian Education voted unanimously at their June meeting to ask council to proceed toward such a congregational vote, and in turn council unanimously agreed to bring the question of Pastor Ann-Marie's call to a congregational vote. The date for this congregational meeting to discuss and vote on Pastor Ann-Marie's call is not yet set, because we wanted to allow time for a process of conversation and information sharing to take place among our Beloved Community.

To that end, we'd like to let everyone know of a series of information sessions we've planned that will include our moderator (Sue Koza), the chair of our Christian Education Board (Michelle Young-Ferguson), Pastor Jeff, and Ann-Marie. Please make note of the dates below and please plan to attend as many of these sessions as you'd like. No signup will be required. The meetings will be held in person, but we will also have a Zoom option for those who wish to participate virtually.



The dates for the information sessions are:

- July 11th @ 11:30 AM
- July 14th @ 7:00 PM
- July 15th @ 1:00 PM
- July 18th @ 1:00 PM
- July 19th @ 1:00 PM
- July 21st @ 7:00 PM





Hi There!

Welcome to Summer!!

Your Stewardship team is working on our plans for the Fall pledge drive for 2022. While we finalize our theme, I wanted to touch base on our pledges for 2021, and your privacy. Our pledges are tracked by the pledge form that you submit to the office. In years past, you may have mailed your form in, or left your pledge envelope in the offering plate during our service.

This past year, it was not quite so simple. With no in person service, pledges had to be mailed back. Any total pledge amounts that I have referenced in the past 8 months are based upon returned pledge forms. If you have been pledging regularly to the Church, but did not submit a pledge form, your pledge is not counted in our total, (although it certainly counts!!) Hopefully we will be able to track our pledges in the fall a little better with our in-person worships.

Regarding privacy; your Church pledge is your business, and nobody else's. When you send in a pledge form or put your pledge envelope in the offering plate, it is only seen by our bookkeeper Jen, who inputs it into the Church record for accounting purposes. We as a committee do not know any amounts of any individual pledges that are submitted (we do not want to know. It is not our business to know). During pledge season, Jen (our bookkeeper) sends me, as Chair of Stewardship, a cumulative amount of where we stand in our pledge drive, and how many pledges have been received. This may seem like a superfluous explanation of what happens, but we think it is important for you to know that your financial privacy is as important to your Stewardship team as it is to you. If you ever have any questions, you can always reach out to us.

Enjoy the season!

Thanks as always,

Matt Howard, Jillian Larson, Kate Howard



The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." **Mark 4:26-29**

Ministries Support Task Force

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

JULY 17th Yard Sale- Rent a space or a table- \$15 for CCC / \$25 for outside vendors. Bring your items to sell. We will also have an area of donated items to be sold by church volunteers, to make room for more treasures as we get closer to the Fair. Please call the office for a space or table rental for the yard sale. Office (508)586-3022

Tentative Fair date November 6th.

We continue exploring multiple revenue generating ideas and hope to make our beautiful facility a "destination". The possibilities are inspiring!





Wishing all the best on your Birthdays

July:

Reagan Lacourse, Sam Fisher, Christopher Colby, Kevin Weatherbee, Cecilia Creedon, Donna Costa, Donna Hefler, Tom Sampson, Alexander Owens, Deana Colby, Dawn Shippee, Abby Morales, Penny Ackley, Abigail Murphy, Leo Larson, Holly Matisis, Nicholas Colby, Cody Cappiello, Chris Madden, Abby Quimby, Zachary Alden, Emily Swisher-Rosa, Brenda Wyss, Alan Bradford, Mike Camara, Jenn Alden, Audrey Simmons, Andrew Howard, Max Flanagan, Brad Mitchell

August:

Mark Deyoe, Kate Howard, Stephen Bennett, Jillian Haskell, Betsey Serjak, Arlene Gerrior, David Stuart, Ariella Bastia, Candy Savage, Lisa Sparling, Eddie Poole, John Hagberg, Anna Camara, Rich Brosky, Jenn Brosky, Karin Davis, Caple Rich, Ann Clark, Karl Koza, Jayden Quintero

(listed in order of day of month from 1 to 31)

"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 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



COMMON THREADS

QUILT GUILD

The June meeting of the Common Threads Quilt Guild was held with no masks, lots of quilts and hugs all around. Next meeting will be "Christmas in July" as I have donated Christmas fabric for you to add to your personal stash. Meeting date is Tuesday, July 20, from 1 -3pm in Fellowship Hall. If you have questions or need a ride call Nelda @ 508-238-6004 or Janet @ 508-583-0505.

A Note From The Moderator

I begin my term of Moderator enthusiastic at our return to in person Worship and gatherings at the church. While caution and safe protocols are still necessary, knowing we are emerging from the worst of the pandemic is a hopeful sign. We are a vibrant community of faith. Let us continue our congregation's mission with joy, and may all we do reflect our faith in God and in the strengths of our identity as a Beloved Community.

Core Values (definitive aspects of our identity)

- Open & Affirming – Our deep-seated commitment to welcome and affirm ALL persons of every gender, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. In addition, we extend an inclusive welcome to people of any race, age, marital standing, physical or mental ability, economic status, and nationality.
- Exceptional and Inclusive Music
- A Call to love – Beloved Community - Completely intertwined with everything we do.

Strategic Pathways (areas of growth)

- Community Engagement - Focus energy on increasing our profile in the community, has ability to be impactful in the future.
- Racial Diversity & Justice - Our church sits at the outskirts of a very diverse community. There is an intentional desire to increase our diversity but we need direction.

Prayerfully submitted- Sue Koza, Moderator



Wednesday Morning Virtual Bible Study

10:00 AM VIA ZOOM

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)



CONTACT US

CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

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Brockton, MA 02301-2840

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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.

**WELCOME
BACK TO
CHURCH**



Christ Congregational Church, UCC

1350 Pleasant St.

Brockton, MA 02301-2840