

The 2023 **Messenger**



Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Lee, Massachusetts

Pastor's Piece:

A new year has begun with wishes for a Happy New Year and for 'good health and prosperity'. I was thinking about this often-stated wish for oneself and others—good health!

And many of us are grateful for the good health that we enjoy.

Today I want to lift up the 'good health' of this congregation of God's people.

The evidences of the health of the Lee Congregational Church are many:

Worship attendance in December was very strong and even on Blue Christmas, Christmas Day and New Year's Day there were more people than were expected! And there were many visitors who joined us for these worship events, because they felt drawn to what we are experiencing! There are a good number of people who watch the broadcast of worship—adding to our outreach with God's love.

Participation in the adult study groups over the past year have included more than two dozen individuals ---that is a large percentage of the average Sunday worship attendance. And an expression of deep interest in personal spiritual growth.

Pledges for the operating budget for 2023 are significantly increased for the second year in a row. And your generosity indicates very solid support for the church, its programs and outreach!

Our church has over and over demonstrated its call to make a difference for people in need. We can celebrate the compassionate heart we have as demonstrated by the money raised for our "Christmas families" and the incredible out pouring of the food offering at Thanksgiving and the support we show week after week in donations to the food bank. And now we offer space in our building and volunteer person power, to support Multi-cultural Bridge efforts to regularly help over 100 families.

These are incredible diagnostics pointing to the health of this congregation! And the competent lay leadership of our church is further demonstrating their strength and health as my tenure as Transitional Pastor begins to wind down.

We are looking forward to a very prosperous and healthy new year! THANKS be to God!



"It is the aim of this church to present a religion as considerate of persons as the teachings of Jesus; as devoted to justice as the Old Testament prophets; as responsive to Truth as science; as beautiful as art; as intimate as the home and as indispensable as the air we breathe."

STATEMENT BY THE FOUNDERS



Rev. Dr. Jay Terbush, Transitional Pastor; Tari Wheeler Roosa, Administrative Assistant;

Attention Committee Chairs and Officers:

Thank you to all our officers and ministry volunteers for this past year. Please note that yearend reports are due into the church office no later than Monday, January 16. Please summarize your accomplishments, and/or what you had hoped to do but couldn't get done, for the annual report. It doesn't need to be long, but in reality, it is perhaps the only place that our ongoing history is recorded.



Sunday, January 29 will be the date of our church's Annual Meeting. We will start with a potluck luncheon following the church service and then hear reports, move on a budget and elect officers. Please join us for this experience of shared ministry.

Call to Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lee SUNDAY, January 29, 2023

Potluck following Sunday morning service in the community room

- 1. To adopt the budget
- 2. To receive reports
- 3. To approve a slate of officers for 2023

Dated this 3rd day of January 2023

Melissa Myers, Church Clerk First Congregational Church of Lee United Church of Christ, 25 Park Place, Lee, Massachusetts

Summer Camp Opportunities at Silver Lake



Camp Conference Center, UCC, in Sharon, CT. Please see Tari in the church office if you are interested in more information about Christian summer camps.

2023 Opportunities to serve the church

Please contact Tari in the office or a team leader if you would like to help in any of these roles.



Lee Congregational UCC 2023 Leadership Opportunities

Offices:

Moderator Assistant Moderator Treasurer Assistant Treasurer Collector Assistant Collector

Clerk Chairs of M&M and F&F

Volunteers for the following teams:

Mission & Ministry

Facility & Finance

Personnel, Pastoral Relations and

Diaconate

Delegates for Berkshire Association, **SNEUCC** and Berkshire Interfaith **Organizing**

Additional Helpers are needed for: Greeter, Faith Friend, Coffee Hour, Sunday Reader, Food Pantry, Work Team Projects, Archives & History, Church Clock Winder, Office, and Publicity, among others.



Holiday **Fundraiser** Wrap ups Sound of the Seasons concert raised \$1,634.00.

The Holiday Fair raised over \$5,000. Raffle winners are:

Oil Painting by Gloria Arnold: Carol Blakeslee Tapestry donated by Christine Zelehoski: Leda Buller Lap Quilt made by Carol Blakeslee: Betsy Matarazzo Knitted Blanket by Judy Morehouse: Maddie Tremblay

Congratulations everyone!

New Year's Greetings from Mission & Ministry

December was a very busy month for M&M with the successful fair, the wonderful "Sounds of the Season" concert, the tree lighting ceremony, our Christmas family, and special services for the longest night ("Blue Christmas"), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Thank you to all those who worked so hard for these events and we are thankful for all who came to participate. We are truly blessed! I hope we can look forward to welcoming some new faces to our meetings in the new year; our next meeting will be on January 6th at 9:30 in the community room. All are welcome!

Christmas Family Update:

Our congregation sponsored two families this year: one was a family of three referred to us by the local elementary school and the other, a family who didn't know that we were thinking of them. For the second year in a row, Denise Harwood and Jess Drenga were helpful and generous, shopping with the discerning and imaginative eyes of elves.

As I tracked the numbers and wish lists, I saw that I had spreadsheets dating back to 2004. That may be the year that I took over the Christmas families from Bob & Lisa Macintosh. Some years, it has been a daunting task with boxes filling my dining room, like the year we sponsored the single dad with six kids. Sometimes, it's been two or three smaller families. A common thread with our families is they often led "normal" lives but were sidelined by a death, an illness, the loss of a job, the dissolution of a marriage. These families often don't know where to turn so a school counselor turns to us. We have a reputation for being helpers.

When I saw all those spreadsheets, I thought of all the families we've helped and prayed for. In our initial conversations, I always ask what their needs are. "What keeps you up at night?" It's often a bill or that the kids will have nothing under the tree. Last year, a family was behind on their mortgage, so this generous congregation helped them catch up.

Sometimes in the grocery store, I see these families and we give each other a familiar nod. Sometimes, I receive an update. I'm thrilled when people have made it through tough times, that they've gotten a job, a house, that they've been promoted to manager, that the kids are now in high school, that

the child who lost a parent has happily blended with another family.

You were exceedingly generous this year and we were able to provide Family #1 with gift cards before Christmas so that they could shop for warm coats and boots. Another delivery of toys and a \$250 grocery gift card was made two days before Christmas. Their note will warm your heart:

Dear Friends,
I do not have words to express my gratitude to all
you wonderful people for your unexampled

generosity to this family, our family.

Your church is the beating heart of our town, and your kindness has touched so many hearts in this town. You don't care what denomination people are, you just care about following Christ's example: No matter who you are, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

You have made our Christmas such a joyful one. You have taken the stress out of our holiday, GOD BLESS YOU!

Love,

A Lee Family

Family #2 didn't know that we were looking out for them but a congregant made me aware of their plight. So we supplied them with grocery and Amazon gift cards on Christmas Eve. I'm hoping that they ate well and that they took a night off from what keeps them up at night.

And, I hope that you can sleep well knowing that you made a difference in the lives of local families. Thank you.

Sarah Gregory DelSignor



Margaret and Dave Markham want to thank everyone who has contributed to the food pantry either by working on a team or by contributing food, laundry and personal items or both. We want you to

know that your contributions are greatly appreciated by those who use the food pantry to help support their families. People are so grateful and give heartfelt thanks to those bringing the food and grocery items to their cars. The food pantry still has tremendous needs. We can always use nonperishable food items but also needed are personal hygiene items, laundry and dish soap, paper towels, and toilet paper. It seems that with prices being so high there are more people using the resources of the food pantry. Thank you for your past generosity. Let's keep those shelves stocked. With your help we can.

From the Music Director:

First of all, a very sincere thank you for the generous Christmas gift. Much more than the actual money is the feeling that you appreciate the work that I do with a lot of help from my friends. Also, thank you to everyone who made the Holiday Fair such a great success, and my sincere appreciation to everyone that was involved with the refreshments after the concerts. And staying on the subject of appreciation, my most sincere thank you for everyone that braved the weather on Friday December 16th and Saturday December 17th. Deciding whether or not to cancel a concert date that I personally have put well over 300 hours into is never an easy decision. But I spoke with God, and asked for guidance, and He assured me that He would be there with us. But He didn't want to sing. We agreed that I would take care of the music and He would take care of the weather. I did, He did, and it all worked out. It was like He put a little bubble over Lee. All around us there was snow and ice. We only had half of the people that we expected on Friday, but the 140 people that were there had a great time. And many came back Saturday. Most importantly, everyone stayed safe. This year's concerts have only been over for 2 weeks, but already my singers are sending me suggestions for next year. They can't wait to give up all that time again next year to do something good for the community. I know that I am a very emotional person. But when I tried to tell people Saturday night that you have no idea how grateful I am to have had the privilege to work with these people for 25 years, I was being completely sincere, and that always makes me emotional. On the other hand, at least once a year, I sort of scold the entire group to remind them of why we are doing this. It is never about who is singing a certain song, and NEVER about me. We are the Christmas Angels Chorus, one chorus, one family. It is about my musical family joining me in doing what we can do to bring Christmas joy to the community. Just look at the eyes on the kids in the audience when Santa arrives. And there is not a face in the crowd that is not smiling along with them.

When I am promoting our concerts to my friends and people I meet on the street, I ask them to come and

see what it is that we do. And I tell them that it is not your "normal" church Christmas concert. I know other churches do beautiful concerts with great singers and great organists performing amazing music. However, I was that little boy year after year at church concerts and midnight masses that my dad was always the soloist. And truthfully, I had to really work at staying awake. But I was 7 or 8. However, if Santa had popped in and I heard "Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer", I would have perked right up. There is a place for both styles. I do what I do and I pray that you all like it. These concerts are fundraisers that I do for this church - my church. Every cent donated from our audience goes to the church. The church makes some money, the Community leaves smiling, my best friends in the world get to sing and laugh together, and at the end of the day, God knows that we have done a good thing - together - as family. And I guess that is what church should be. Family. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the great job that Olivia and Katrina did with "O Holy Night". I believed in them and assigned that song without even a rehearsal. I am the first to admit that not all of my decisions are right, but that one was. It introduced two young people to our audience, and I wish I had more young people like them. They and people like them are the future. Thank you ladies. I want to close with kudos to the Lee Bell Choir for their part in the concerts. This talented group of people, under the direction of Judy Olds, have improved so much over the past two years. Sometimes, new attendees have never heard a bell choir. They may like it, love it, or not so much. That is the same with my concert. Friday night the first couple came in at 4:50 in the afternoon. I greeted them and told them they were early but certainly welcome to stay. They said they drove down from North Adams and wanted to be on time. Thirty minutes later at 5:20, another couple came in and I again welcomed them and said they were pretty early. Then they told me they were from New Jersey and happened upon our concert last year and marked their calendars to come back again this year. After spending some time with them, I told them that after sound check the Bell Choir would perform for a while and the concert would start on time at 7pm. They said that was great and they were looking forward to another great concert. Soon Maria and I will begin working on Christmas

Concert 2023. Hopefully, by April we will have somewhat of a plan, and spend the next few months developing the program.

Thank you all for your support.

Happy New Year,

Jim Morrison www.ucc-lee.org **From the Treasurer:** Below is our income and expenditures through December 30, 2022

Financial Recap through December 30, 2022						
	Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD				
Income						
Pledges &	\$122,029.00	\$125,264.00				
Donations						
Fundraisers	\$11,444.00	\$12,350.00				
Rental Income	\$17,961.00	\$13,600.00				
*Missions &	\$14,304.00	\$1,000.00				
Misc.						
Memorial	\$15,343.00	\$1,000.00				
Donations						
Investment	\$8,000.00	\$35,000.00				
Transfer						
ERC Program	\$22,849.00	\$0.00				
Total Income	\$211.930.00	\$188,214.00				
Expenses						
Payroll &	\$148,274.00	\$154,163.00				
Benefits						
Facility &	\$39,756.00	\$37,257.00				
Finance						
Mission &	\$15,922.00	\$11,913,00				
Ministry						
Total Expenses	\$203,952.00	\$203,333.00				

^{*} Memorial Donations of \$15,343.00.00 are reserved for specific projects

Yet to be determined. ERC Funds received are being used in lieu of transfers from our investment account.

Online Donations

As we start a new year, I want to remind everyone that we have the option for you to make your donations online. Just select the Donate button on our website or go to https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YR7C. Donations can be made via ACH transfer or with a debit or credit card. The ACH has a fee of 1% of the donation and debit/credit card fee is 2.9% of the donation. Thank you to everyone who is opting to pay these fees. If you are able to do so, it helps offset the Church's cost for this program. Jane Gleason, Treasurer

Berkshire Interfaith Organizing News:

In October 2022, BIO found its new Director/Lead Organizer in Rev. Lauren Cannon. Lauren is a dynamic woman with years of experience in UCC ministry and organizing to make systemic change a reality.

On Thursday, **January 12th**, BIO will be holding its Members Assembly (also known as an Annual Convention) via Zoom.

On **January 15th** our Director/Lead Organizer Rev. Lauren Cannon will be preaching at our Sunday morning service. After church she will join us for coffee and conversation in the Community Room where she will be able to get to know our members. All are welcome to ask their questions about an organization we have supported since its founding in 2014.

The difference in these two gatherings is that the Members Assembly Gathering will give people a hands- on chance to see what BIO does and how it does it. We have spent the last several months reorganizing BIO as we begin to rebuild in the post-Covid era. The meeting on January 15th will be more of a "meet and greet" experience. You are welcome to attend one or both of these events.

If you are interested or even a bit curious about how BIO functions and you are not online, please let me know. I am quite willing to be at the UCC with my computer. You can also access this Zoom session via a phone code. For those attending on January 12 and have a computer or phone access the Zoom code will be available shortly. We hesitated to post this code on our BIO webpage online for reasons of safety. Tari will have the code and so will I.

Many thanks, Laura O'Shaughnessy

From Mission & Ministry: Why should we be concerned about "Christian Nationalism"? Don't we want everyone to know the

Contributed by Dorothy Phillips

love of God and Jesus Christ?

Freedom of Religion is a constitutionally protected right provided in the religion clauses of the First Amendment. It protects adherents of all faith traditions. Christian Nationalism contends that America has been and should always be distinctively "Christian" from top to bottom – in its self-identity, interpretations of its own history, sacred symbols, cherished values, and public policies. But the "Christian" in Christian nationalism is more about identity than religion. "Nationalism" is an extreme form of patriotism that includes assumptions of superiority and has little or no room for dissent or disagreement. It carries with it strongly held ideas about white supremacy, limiting immigration, authoritarianism, supporting the status of men over women, and glorification of the military, many of which were on vivid display at the January 6, 2021 Insurrection.

According to multiple academic studies using large, nationally representative surveys, Americans who embrace Christian nationalism are more likely to:

- Approve of authoritarian tactics like demanding people show respect for national symbols and traditions
- Fear and distrust religious minorities, including Muslims, Atheists, and Jewish people
- Condone police violence toward Black Americans and distrust accounts of racial inequality in the criminal justice system
- Believe racial inequality is due to the personal shortcomings of minority groups
- Report being "very uncomfortable" with both interracial marriage and transracial adoption
- Hold anti-immigrant views
- Fear refugees
- Oppose scientists and science education in schools
- Believe that men are better suited for all leadership roles while women are better suited to care for children and the home.

"We need to be aware of two things regarding those who espouse this Christian Nationalist ideology," said the Rev. John Dorhauer, President of the UCC. "First, they want nothing less than total control of the United States and its government. They want the Bible to be the template for all laws written. They want only those who espouse a very narrow view of a very conservative theology to be in power. Second, they are far more effective at undertaking this than we assume.

"I seek to engage progressive Christianity in a deep conversation about just what is needed to send these bigots and homophobes and misogynists back under the rocks out from which they crawled when the 45th president took office and brought their brand of Christian nationalism back to the center and put them back in power," continued Rev. Dorhauer. "The complacency and the decorum characteristic of white Christian liberalism is not going to bring back the justice we seek, nor mitigate the damage being done by those whose brand of Christianity calls them to engage in holy war. Don't be silent about this."

I have borrowed and quoted liberally from the following sources:

https://www.ucc.org/christian-nationalism-anoxymoron-is-nonetheless-powerful-panelists-warn/ Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States, by Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry (Oxford University Press, 2020)





od's people First Congregational Church of Lee Prayer Ministry

Bible verse of the month: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: verse 14.

WE PRAY FOR

Our Friends and Members

Colleen Adams (mother-in-law of Brian Matarazzo)

Rev. Dawn Adams (friend of Cherryl Beeman)

Joan Bertelli (friend of Sandra Cozzaglio)

Becky Bliven (friend of Carol Blakeslee)

Pat Bracco (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)

Carol Bugley (daughter of Robert Bugley)

Jill Cozzaglio (daughter of Sandra Cozzaglio)

Jonathon Cozzaglio (grandson of Sandra Cozzaglio)

Margie Farnham (sister of Judy Morehouse and

Marilyn Fennelly)

Isabel Fassell (member of church)

Janice Fassell (daughter of Isabel Fassell)

Mary Franchere (relative of Ruth Melbourne)

DeeDee Fraser (member of church)

Ray Gangloff (friend of church)

Christine Hamilton (friend of Barbara Mahony)

James Harwood (brother-in-law of Denise Harwood)

Johnny Harwood (family member of Denise Harwood)

Adele and Barry Hawley (friends of Jean Spalinger)

Loralei (friend of Judy Morehouse)

Yannette and Thomas Lucas (friends of church)

Chris Ludwig (mother of Jessica Drenga)

Betty Massidda (friend of Ruth Melbourne)

Betsy Matarazzo (member of church)

Judy McNutt (member of church)

Allison Miller (friend of Paul and Joyce Monachina)

Joyce and Paul Monachina (members of church)

Judith Monachina (daughter of Paul and Joyce Monachina)

Paul Monachina, Jr. (son of Paul and Joyce Monachina)

Terri Moore (friend of church)

Missy Mosca (friend of Paul and Joyce Monachina)

Rochelle O'Gorman (friend of Monda Driscoll,

Melissa and Karl Myers)

David Ohman (son of Conrad and Margaret Ohman)

Suzanne Sheaffer (cousin of Dave and Margaret

Markham)

David Stone (member of church)

Brody Tackus (grandson of Isabel Fassell)

The **Prayer Ministry** meets the 3rd **Thursday** of each month at 11:00 am in the Parlor to pray for each person whose name appears below. **Everyone is invited to participate in this Prayer Ministry**. *If you have names for the prayer list, place it in the offering plate or give to the church office*. Names remain on the list for two months unless otherwise advised.

(updated 12.15.22)

Jessica Terbush (daughter of Jay Terbush)
Lainey Thomas (great niece of Ellen Krupka)
Donna Toomey (friend of Peg Biron)
Eileen Torraca (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
Nancy Tucker (member of church)
Susan Tucker (member of church)
Trevor Tucker (grandson of Nancy Tucker)
Claire Way (Paul and Joyce Monachina's
daughter-in-law's mother)
Stephanie Wilcox (friend of Jim Morrison)
Jane Maroni Williams (relative of Sheila Maroni)
Debby Wright (friend of Wanda Klahn)

Sympathy

Extended to the family of Louise Staples Extended to the family of Geraldine Terbush

Our Friends and Members at Care Facilities: Barbara MacNayr, and Hank Wingate (Landing at Laurel Lake), Marie Brazee (Springside)

Our Church: My prayer and yearning for this church is _____ (please fill in the blank) Jay Terbush and family, our staff, our congregation, ministries, Council, children around the world supported by our church.

Our Local Community: For those who are in need of employment, food, shelter, financial assistance, friendship.

Our Country: For our citizens and our elected officials to have the courage to carry out the message of the gospel of Jesus to trust in God's love to overcome all fears and hatreds; to bring justice to refugees, undocumented immigrants, unaccompanied minors, veterans, the unemployed, and all persons in need.

All Those Who Serve & Protect: Military, police, fire fighters, EMS, and their families.

Our World: For the victims and their families of Covid-19 pandemic, victims of persecution based on sexual orientation and identity, people displaced by ethnic violence, all who are suffering the results of catastrophic climate change, and all those whose lives are affected by war.

JANUARY

The First Congregational Church of Lee, 413-243-1033, on the web: www.ucc-lee.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 6:45am AA/IDHAC	2 Messenger articles due into	3 12:01pm Prayer Shawl	4 5:30pm Community	5 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	6 9:30am M&M	7 8:00am AA SOS
9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service & Communion 11:30am Coffee Hour	office 7:00pm AL-Anon via: berkshirealanon.org	Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	Dinner	·	meeting 12pm Christian Nationalism Rally in Park	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	1:30pm Funeral 7:00pm AL-Anon via: berkshirealanon.org	3:00pm Bible Study at Story's		5:30pm Trombone Ensemble Rehearsal 6pm BIO Annual Meeting via Zoom 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	9:00am BRIDGE food distribution 11:00am Pilgrim's Way	8:00am AA SOS
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service with Rev Lauren Cannon 11:30am Coffee Hour	Annual Reports due into the church office 7:00pm AL-Anon via: berkshirealanon.org	12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	5:30pm Community Dinner 7:00pm Facility & Finance Meeting	11:00am Prayer Ministry 5:30pm Trombone Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place		8:00am AA SOS
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	Messenger articles due into office 7:00pm AL-Anon via: berkshirealanon.org	3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	4:00pm Living With Loss	5:30pm Trombone Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	9:00am BRIDGE food distribution 11:00am Pilgrim's Way	8:00am AA SOS 9:30am Food Pantry
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service with Rev O'Gawa 11:30am Annual	7:00pm AL-Anon via: berkshirealanon.org	3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	4:00pm Living With Loss 5:30pm Community Dinner	5:30pm Trombone Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	9:30am M&M meeting 11:00am Pilgrim's Way	8:00am AA SOS 10:00am Women's Book Group 6:00pm Cub Scout Pack Meeting
Church Meeting						

If you have a meeting/event to schedule, or would like to rent space, contact the church office.



"Thank You" to all who donated to the staff gifts. Your generosity and outpouring are greatly appreciated. We truly enjoy working here at the church and interacting with everyone. *Jim Morrison*, *Tari Roosa*

Iason Matthews

Thanks from the staff!

Worship In Person Attendance [Facebook]:

Dec 4 - 58 [80] Dec 11 - 47 [95] Dec 18 - 68 [87] Dec 21 - 28 [75] (Blue Christmas Service

Dec 24 – 76 [103] (Christmas Eve Service) Dec 25 – 38 [131] Jan 1 – 49 [109]

Jay Terbush,

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 12:30pm

SAVE THE DATES! UPCOMING EVENTS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH

Mark your calendars for some upcoming events here at Lee UCC

Saturday, February 4, 10am Women's Book Group; A WALK ON THE BEACH by Joan Anderson. Check back for specific location

Saturday, February 25 at 5pm CABIN FEVER POTLUCK AND GAME NIGHT

Saturday, March 25 CABIN FEVER HANDBELL CONCERT (free) and FUNDRAISER DINNER. More info to follow