

The 2023 Messenger DECEMBER



Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Lee, Massachusetts
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Message from the Pastor



Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. ³² He

will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 2:30-33)

What a joy it is for me to be joining you as your settled pastor at the start of the church year, the Advent season! I'm excited to get to know each of you: members and friends, neighbors and colleagues, long-timers and newly-arrived, each one a gift to me. I am honored to be called by you, and to serve you in the days to come. Together we will walk down the days of the preparation and quiet grace as we tell the story of the coming of God-with-Us, Emmanuel, in these weeks of December, and greet the Christ yet again, born in us on Christmas Day.

As we hang the wreaths and Christmas lights, I'll be walking among you and getting oriented to this wonderful church. AND I need your help! Please wear a name tag every Sunday for awhile . . . I want to know you each by name! Also, I'll be trying out some office hours in December that may shift as we see what works going forward. For this first month together, look for me with a schedule like this:

Rev. Marisa's trial schedule:

Sundays – at the Church 9:30am – 12:30pm and afternoons as needed

Mondays & Wednesdays – office hours at the Church 9:30am-4:30pm and evenings as needed

Tuesdays & Thursdays – working from home on liturgies, sermons, admin things

And available for zoom or phone contact by appointment!

Fridays & Saturdays – my days off *

*I am always available for meetings and community events as needed, and in case of emergency – though please allow me time to get back to you if possible.

New email and phone number at the church are in progress for me - coming soon!

May all we do this Advent season be kissed by the light of the Holy,

Pastor Marisa ("Mareesa")

You have to smile when you say my name!

Advent Readings: We will continue our tradition of Advent readings and meditations again this year. Past Advent readings were a huge success. Readings will be sent out with a reflection each weekday via email. Please let Tari in the office know if you are not receiving the daily emails. Hard copies are also available upon request. Each recipient is invited to take a few minutes to pause and reflect on the immeasurable grace and love of God and on the scripture passage.

"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. Marisa Brown Ludwig, Pastor; Jim Morrison, Music Director;
Tari Wheeler Roosa, Administrative Assistant; Jason Matthews, Sexton

First Congregational Church of Lee, United Church of Christ, 25 Park Place, PO Box 395, Lee, MA 01238
413.243.1033 | uccleechurch@gmail.com | www.ucc-lee.org

A Financial Update From the Treasurer

Our Estimates of Giving were turned in last Sunday. If you have not submitted your pledge card yet, please send it in, as this information is a critical component in developing the 2024 budget for our Church. Likewise, our 2023 expenses are ongoing. Please keep up with your 2023 pledge if you are able to do so. I thank everyone for your continued support and wish you all a happy, healthy, holiday season.

Jane Gleason

Below is our income and expenditures through November 15, 2023

Financial Recap through November 15, 2023		
	Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD
Income		
Pledges & Donations	\$114,315.00	\$123,299.00
Fundraisers	\$5,871.00	\$10,549.00
Rental Income	\$15,825.00	\$16,500.00
Missions & Misc.	\$2,433.00	\$1,826.00
Memorial Donations	\$3,037.00	\$913.00
Investment Transfer	15,000.00	\$18,337.00
Total Income	\$156,481.00	\$171,424.00
Expenses		
Payroll & Benefits	\$81,077.00	\$127,666.00
Facility & Finance	\$29,556.00	\$38,940.00
Mission & Ministry	\$15,016.00	\$18,590.00
Total Expenses	\$125,649.00	\$185,196.00



Christmas Family: This year, our church will sponsor a Christmas Family which includes a single mom and four children. We hope to purchase mattresses for three of the children plus gifts and gas and pharmacy gift cards. Donations can be given to Sarah DeSignor, placed in the offering plate, or brought to the office. For checks, please mark "Christmas Family" in the memo. Any help is appreciated!

From Your Moderator

As we close the year and give thanks, and think about Christmas gifts for our loved ones, I ask that we remember our **church staff**. They provide us support throughout the year and work tirelessly all year to make our ministry possible. If you can, please make a monetary gift contribution that we will present to them on December 24th. Gifts can be sent to the church, dropped by the office or deposited in the collection plate in the back of the church. Please list "staff gift" in the memo for any checks written.

Thank you and have a great Christmas Season.

Cristina Markham

DECEMBER EVENTS at a GLANCE

Order your Advent Poinsettias early! See form on p. 4.

Friday December 1st at 6pm Town Tree Lighting in the Church Park with caroling and refreshments

Saturday December 2nd from 10am -3pm Holiday Fair

Sunday December 3rd Worship with Communion
1pm BIO Training Session, Pittsfield MA

Friday December 8th at 6pm Peace Lighting Ceremony with Cub Scout Pack 45

Friday and Saturday December 15 & 16th
"Sounds of the Season" A Christmas Concert
Lee Bell Choir begins at 6:20pm
Christmas Angel Chorus at 7pm
Admission is FREE (donations accepted)
Visit from Santa

Refreshments following the concert

Thursday December 21st 6:30 pm
Blue Christmas/ the Longest Night Service
Worship affirming that joy and hope come in the midst of our sadness, loss, change.

Sunday December 24th 10:30am Worship Service
6pm: Family friendly worship for Christmas Eve
Lessons, carols, candle lighting, Silent Night, Christmas message

Sunday December 31st New Year's Eve Celebration at the home of Brian and Danna Snow



Our annual **Holiday Fair** is Saturday *December 2nd* from 10am – 3pm. Your help is very much needed in all areas. Please call and offer your help, your suggestions and of course, your hand-made contributions and food. Call Jane Gleason at 413-269-4094 or Carol Blakeslee at 413-281-3680. For help with **Santa's**

Christmas Craft Fair

Attic or the **Nearly New Shop**, contact Ellen Krupka at 413-243-2831. OR come be a part of the event. You may find a special gift for a loved one. Thank you to all who worked tirelessly to make this such a grand event. Many “elves” are needed to make this a success, including setting up the week prior, especially on Friday, December 1st.

Raffle – Be sure to purchase your raffle tickets and take a chance on winning some lovely gifts.

- A painted glass Cake/Punch Bowl painted by Sheila Maroni
- An Afghan knitted by Judy Morehouse
- A beautiful landscape oil painting by Gloria Malcolm Arnold
- A quilted pillow and throw by Karen Morehouse

How to Organize a Successful Campaign A BIO Invitation

BIO is offering a training session for all those who are interested in how we work and might consider working with us. Last March (2023) BIO had an important meeting at which we counted all the votes from all our member groups about which Campaigns you wanted BIO to work on in the future. Your concerns were in the areas of 1) the lack of housing in the Berkshires and 2) the availability of public transportation on a timely, reliable basis. Well that future is now and we have been working on these two Campaigns for the past six months.

Have you ever wondered how we make your priorities a reality? Now is your chance to find out; to live into the reality of BIO's work. With that goal in mind we will be sponsoring a Training Session entitled **How to Organize a Successful Campaign**. It will be held on December 3, 2023 from 1-5pm at the U.U.Church in Pittsfield, 175 Wendell Ave.

All are welcome for part of or all of our presentation. Our Lee church was a founding member of BIO and

we are committed to a full explanation about how we achieve our/your goals. Your participation with us would also be welcome. If you are interested in attending please RSVP: email sean@biorganizing.org with “training” in the subject line or sign up at <http://bit.ly/biotraining123>

“Peace Light” Ceremony: Every year, Scouts travel to Bethlehem, to the Grotto of the Nativity, to light a lantern from the Grotto flame. This “Peace Light” is spread throughout the world. Lee will host its own ceremony and ecumenical service on Friday, December 8, at 6 pm. All are welcome to participate. Also, you may bring your own lantern to carry your own flame home.



CANDY HOUSE BUILDING PARTY

When: Sunday December 10th after church in the Community Room

What to Bring:

- 1) A ½ gallon juice carton cut in half with the bottom fitted into the top to make a house.
- 2) Candy house frosting (recipe provided below)
- 3) Two of the Suggestions for Items to Share (below)

CANDY HOUSE FROSTING RECIPE

- 3 large egg whites at room temperature
- 1 lb. confectioner's sugar
- ½ tsp. cream of tartar

DIRECTIONS:

- Beat 3 egg whites
- Gradually add sugar and cream of tartar
- Beat until stiff
- Place in zip lock bag to bring to church

SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS TO SHARE:

- Sweet tarts
- Nonpareils
- Shredded wheat squares for roof
- Spearmint leaf gumdrops
- Stick pretzels for roof
- Other ideas you have
 - Gumdrops
 - Fruit loops
 - Chocolate chips
 - Green and red peppermint drops

Sounds of the Season Concert: Friday, December 15 and Saturday, December 16 at 7:00 PM. Jim Morrison directs the Christmas Angels Chorus with special prelude music by the Lee Bell Choir starting at 6:20 PM. Enjoy a visit from Santa and enthusiastic music here at the church. This is a free event and open to everyone.



“Blue Christmas” Service Thurs., Dec 21 at 6:30pm
 When there is so much emphasis on family, joy and togetherness at Christmas, the holidays can be difficult times for many who have suffered losses or who are separated from family and friends. This year, we will be holding a "Blue Christmas" service on **Thursday, December 21 at 6:30pm** to offer comfort, solace, and a safe place to express feelings of loss and sadness that are often hidden during the holiday hustle and bustle. With this service, we are acknowledging and including those who often feel left out, while still celebrating the birth of Christ whose love and compassion can sustain us during dark times. All are welcome.



Christmas Eve Services: Sun, Dec 24

Christmas Eve Morning 10:30am –
 Fourth Sunday of Advent

We hear the story of the Angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will bear a son, the One the world has been waiting for, “For nothing is impossible with God”! (Luke 1:37)

Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols 6:00pm -
 Join us in the evening as we tell the story of Jesus’ birth with a joyous service of scripture, message and carol-singing, culminating in the singing of Silent Night in the dark by the light of our safe candles.

New Year’s Eve Open House:

The Snow family invites you to their annual open house on Sunday, December 31, at 7 pm, 185 Summer Street, Lee. Lots of good food, good friends and good times!



Please RSVP 243-1734 or djeansnow@roadrunner.com



Christmas Flowers Poinsettias

To *adorn the altar on Sunday, December 25, orders are due by the 17th.*

Questions - contact Judy Morehouse.

Given by _____

Phone _____

List in bulletin as (please circle):

In Memory of / In Honor of

Indicate the number you are ordering:

 6 1/2 Poinsettia x \$ 15.00 = \$ _____

[Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church of Lee with “Christmas Flowers” in the memo]

Please take flowers home following the church service.



Stockbridge Festival Chorus presents:

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS by Benjamin Britten and other CAROLS OF THE SEASON on Sat, Dec 9 at 3pm. First Congregational Church, 4 Main St, STOCKBRIDGE; Suggested donations: \$20 adult, \$10 local community choirs, children under 18, free.

Eagles Band Holiday Concert: Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 PM at the First United Methodist Church, 55 Fenn St, Pittsfield. Members from our church include Ruth Melbourne, Tim Franchere, Judy Olds and Tari Roosa. Admission is FREE, but donations are gladly accepted. Bake sale and bonus gift options will also be available.



Opportunities for Personal Participation in 2024 including Officers & Committees

It's that time again. All of our elected positions are voted at the annual meeting in January. A sign-up form will be available. How might you serve in ministry and mission in the coming year?

OUR OFFICERS are:

- Moderator and Asst. Moderator,
- Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer, Clerk,
- Collector and Asst. Collector, Delegates (3).

Committees include:

- FACILITY & FINANCE – Archives & History, Property, Insurance, Investments, Budget
- MISSION & MINISTRY – Connecting Conversations, The Learning Tree, Life in the Spirit 24/7, and Mission in Action
- PASTOR-RELATIONS, PERSONNEL, AND DIACONATE

In addition, you can sign up to participate as:

- Readers, Greeters, Coffee Hour Hosts, Office Helpers and so much more.
- Take a moment for prayer and reflection.
- Feel free to contact any of our current leaders or the church office with questions.



Congratulations on the baptism of Charlotte Marie Gaherty. Parents are Corey & Jordan (Miller) Gaherty, grandparents are Jerry & Elaine Miller; great-grandparents are Ray & Judy Morehouse. God Parents are Samantha Sorrentino and Sean McLaughlin.

Welcome to Our Family

Mission & Ministry

Open and Affirming 10th Anniversary Follow-up: After church today [Sunday, November 12] people were commenting that having the women from Berkshire Pride participate in our worship service as part of our ten-year celebration of being an Open and Affirming Church was such a positive experience. Thanks to Cara, Jim, and the choir for creating such an atmosphere of welcoming to all. Comments were also positive about the question period during the potluck luncheon.

I am so grateful to all of you who helped make this such a successful celebration. This could not have happened without your presence at the service and the luncheon. Thanks to those who brought food, those who helped set up, and those who helped with clean-up after the potluck.

Shalom and love,
Barbara Mahony



Congratulations on the birth of Theodore Martin on Nov 8. He is the great-grandson of Charles Wheeler & Suzanne Young

Needed: Sunday morning drivers

We have several people who are not able to drive but would love to attend our Sunday morning services. Most people live in Lee, but we have some from the surrounding area. Please speak to Tari in the church office if you might be interested in helping someone out. The more, the merrier!





From the
MUSIC DIRECTOR

What a busy time the last quarter of this year has been at this church. It is amazing all of the things that have been accomplished in a very short period of time. There is an old expression that goes, "It takes an army". That has been true at this church. Beginning with the most important, getting a new "Settled Pastor". I am grateful to Cara for stepping in and leading us in service for the past 8 months. I enjoyed working with her, and I certainly look forward to working with Pastor Marisa. And the beautification of our sanctuary with brand new carpeting thanks to the generosity of the Zukowski & Carrington family and others. All of the volunteers that helped to clean up the outside by raking, digging, trimming, etc. Then we have coming up the Holiday Fair and of course the Christmas Concerts. This church is a busy place every day of the week. Tari is always busy taking care of the day to day church business, and Bob does the candles, Jane is working on the books, Betsy and Dave T. working on the collection, the prayer shawl ladies, the craft fair ladies, the talented men like John, Nate, Garth, Dave M. and Tim M. who hammer, cut, move, assemble, dis-assemble, reassemble, everything that needs to be done, much of which is not even seen by the congregation, and all of the others that quietly go about doing what they do for the church. Thank you everyone.

On Monday, my friends and I began to install all of the new wireless microphones which will eliminate the need for mic cables to be stretched across the altar and the need for them to be taped down to the carpet. I called on my friends to come help me with that installation and if all goes well, we should be able to use them by the first Sunday in December. At least that is the plan. Please keep me in your prayers that it all goes well. As I said, it really does take an army.

Finally, please do come to our Christmas and Bell Choir concerts and bring your friends and family. It has been a slow process trying to get ready with everyone's schedule and sickness. But they are a dedicated group and will put on a good show. One of my members is Bob Bottume. Last year he brought a rose for all of the singers to wear in the show and he plans to do that again this year. He is a very important member of the Christmas Angels Chorus and is also the owner of Dr. Lahey's Garden Center on Dalton-Division Road at the end of Williams Street. So if you are in need of a Christmas tree, wreath or plant, please consider checking his business out. This is his busiest time of the year but he finds time to make our concerts better with his voice.

Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas!

Jim Morrison



First Congregational Church of Lee Prayer Ministry

Bible verse of the month: "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25: verse 23.

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.** Please take this prayer sheet home with you and remember those listed in your personal devotions. *If you have names for the prayer list, complete the request form and place in offering plate or submit to the church office. Names remain on the prayer list for two months unless otherwise advised.*

WE PRAY FOR

Our Friends and Members

- Colleen Adams (mother-in-law of Brian Matarazzo)
- Rev. Dawn Adams (friend of Cheryl Beeman)
- Alice 14 years old (relative of Joyce and Paul Monachina)
- Gloria and John Arnold (members of church)
- Jen Benoit (friend of Jill & Dave Topham)
- Gil Biron (husband of Peg Biron)
- Pat Bracco (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
- Carol Bugley (daughter of Robert Bugley)
- Robert Bugley (friend of church)
- Elizabeth Carman (cousin of Sandra Cozzaglio)
- Donna Carnavale (friend of Sandra Cozzaglio and Barbara Mahony)
- Jill Cozzaglio (daughter of Sandra Cozzaglio)
- Dottie D'Elia (member of church)
- 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)
- Ray Gangloff (friend of church)
- Julie Gian (friend of Jim Morrison)
- James Harwood (brother-in-law of Denise Harwood)
- Johnny Harwood (family member of Denise Harwood)
- Bob Keeler (friend of Barbara Mahony)
- Carol Kerwin (sister of Margaret Markham)
- Alex Kight (friend of Melissa Myers)
- Michael Koperek (friend of Jill and Dave Topham)
- Andrea Lalor Kosowsky (friend of Sandra Cozzaglio)
- Eddie LaDouceur (grandfather of Sarah Hoecker)
- Raven Livingston (friend of Amanda Schenker)
- Lexi Lloyd (member of church)
- Yannette and Thomas Lucas (friends of church)
- Chris Ludwig (mother of Jessica Drenga)
- Betty Massidda (friend of Ruth Melbourne)
- Judy McNutt (member of church)
- Joyce and Paul Monachina (members of church)
- Terri Moore (friend of church)
- Katherine Muchergee (daughter of Joyce and Paul Monachina)
- Rochelle O'Gorman (friend of Monda Driscoll, Melissa and Karl Myers)
- David Ohman (son of Conrad and Margaret Ohman)
- Judy Quakenbush (cousin of Ellen Krupka)
- Amanda Schenker (member of church)
- Suzanne Sheaffer (cousin of Dave and Margaret Markham)
- Jean Spalinger (member of church)
- David Stone (member of church)
- Brody Tackus (grandson of Isabel Fassell)
- Jessica Terbush (daughter of Jay Terbush)

(updated 11.16.23)

- Lainey Thomas (great niece of Ellen Krupka)
- Brian Tillotson (brother of Larry Tillotson and friend of church)
- Donna Toomey (friend of Peg Biron)
- Eileen Torraca (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
- Susan Tucker (member of church)
- Trevor Tucker (grandson of Nancy Tucker)
- Jane Maroni Williams (relative of Sheila Maroni)

Sympathy

- Extended to the family of Julia Bellefontaine
- Extended to the family of Peter Eichstedt
- Extended to the family of Stanley Kleiner
- Extended to the family of Paul Lusignan
- Extended to the family of Debby Wright

Our Friends and Members at Care Facilities: Gil Biron, Barbara MacNayr, and Hank Wingate (Landing at Laurel Lake), Nancy Tucker (Harbor House, Hingham, MA)


Our Church: My prayer and yearning for this church is _____ (please fill in the blank) Cara Davis 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.



Requested by: _____



Requester's telephone: _____

Reason for request (will not be printed on Prayer concerns)

Place request in offering plate or submit to the church office

DECEMBER

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				30 Holiday Fair setup 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	1 Holiday Fair setup 6:00pm Town Tree Lighting	2 Holiday Fair 10am - 3pm 
3 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service & Communion 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Hand Bell Rehearsal	4	5 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	6 7:00pm F&F Budget Meeting	7 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	8 9:30am M&M meeting 6:00pm Peace Lighting Ceremony/ Cub Scout Pack Meeting	9 8:00am AA SOS 12:30pm Baby Shower
10 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour & Gingerbread House Making 11:30am Diaconate Meeting 6:00pm Hand Bell Rehearsal	11	12 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	13	14 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	15 Sound of the Seasons Concert 6:20pm Bells 7pm Choir & Band	16 8:00am AA SOS Sound of the Seasons Concert 6:20pm Bells 7pm Choir & Band
17 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	18	19 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	20 7:00pm Council Meeting	21 11:00am Prayer Ministry 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 6:30pm Blue Christmas Service 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	22 	23 8:00am AA SOS 9:30am Food Pantry
24 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Messenger articles due into office	26	27	28 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	29	30 8:00am AA SOS

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

Office Hours: Mon - Fri 8:30am - 12:30pm

Worship Attendance: In church (Facebook viewings)

Oct 29 – 49 (157); Nov 5 – 73 (109); Nov 12 – 63 (114); Nov 19 – 65 (98); Nov 26 – 95 (N/A)

Upcoming 2023 Events

Annual Church Meeting: The annual meeting will soon be here. Stay tuned for the end of January.

Please have committee reports into the church office by January 8th.