



The 2024

# Messenger



Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Lee, Massachusetts

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## Message from the Pastor:

Dear friends,

It is with much joy and hope that I welcome the new year, for you and for me, for my family and yours. So much possibility for healing, for renewal, for new life, for peace. May we see it together in 2024!

In this month of new beginnings, January brings us the early days of the Holy Family as the Wise Ones arrive January 7th from the East to greet and bless the young savior long foretold, reminding us that Jesus' birth came as hope for many outside of expected communities. Jesus' ministry will be launched on January 14th with his baptism by John, and we will consider for the rest of the month people who have felt called by him and how they have followed, starting with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. also on January 14, and later in the month with the first disciples. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathaniel will ask. "Come and See," Phillip will answer - and we will! (John 1:46).

As we move into this season after Christmas, may we hold close the words of Black theologian and civil rights leader Howard Thurman:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flock,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among all,  
to make music in the heart.*



(Howard Thurman, from *The Mood of Christmas*, p. 23, published by Friends United Press (c) 1985)

Happy New Year to all!

*Rev Marisa*

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*"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 ATTRIBUTED TO THE FOUNDERS

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Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig, Pastor,  
Tari Wheeler Roosa, Administrative Assistant;

Jim Morrison, Music Director  
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

### **Standout for Democracy**

In January 6, 2023 our church participated in a Standout for Democracy in the church park. The Church Council voted to participate once again in the Standout for Democracy on Saturday, January 6, 2024 from noon to one in the church park.

At 11 we will be meeting in the Community Room to make posters.

Please invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

Barbara Mahony member of Mission & Ministry and Church Council.

### **Statement from Pastor Marisa on the January 6, 2024, Standout for Democracy at our Church**

As our church prepares to join others on January 6, 2024 in a Standout for Democracy, I post these videos of the powerful "Reclaiming Jesus" letter and movement I was so honored to participate in back in May 2018, when I was in Washington, D.C. for the Festival of Homiletics. These words are just as powerful today as they were then, and sadly still needed. We must shout them from the mountaintops.

The first video is a two-minute excerpt of the candlelight walk to the White House I participated in back in May 2018 in which we brought the statement "Reclaiming Jesus" and read it at the front gate.

<https://youtu.be/SFLpSKBIJHs?si=sUVvK4Vha2eeEbq6>

The second video is the four-minute reading of the statement by the amazing progressive Christian leaders who wrote it. You CAN be a faithful Christian and believe in a country that values diversity and difference as a core strength; caring for the poor and the immigrant over border walls, servant leadership over domination, love for all over hate.

[https://youtu.be/oheb3MplSHE?si=SgKPtkMFgyFzWR\\_p](https://youtu.be/oheb3MplSHE?si=SgKPtkMFgyFzWR_p)

I will be with you in this powerful demonstration of our faith led by Barbara Mahony. Let us lift our voices together!

Rev. Marisa

### ***THANK YOU from Rev. Cara Davis***

*Dear Friends from First Congregational,*

*It is hard to find the words to adequately express my gratitude for all the gifts – the wooden church ‘cozy’ for tissue, the water bottle with the church on it and the Founders Statement (I love it!) – the card with all your well-wishes that I so cherish, and your generous gift of money to tide me over to the new year.*

*You all are too, too generous! Those months with you have been a great time getting to know you, holding you in prayer, visiting with you, caring for your spirit and your hearts. I trust our paths will continue to cross from time to time. In the meantime, know our spirit is One in Christ, no matter where we are.*

*Be well and have a very blessed Advent and Christmas.*

*With care, Cara*

## A Call for Involvement

*“The fruit of love is service, which is compassion in action.” Mother Teresa*

You will be hearing about vacancies that need to be filled in our different church committees over the next few weeks. For many, this may induce an eye roll or a deep desire to keep far, far away from those sign-up sheets. Committing to positions at church can feel like an overextension of one’s self, or a labyrinth you may never find your way out of.

Our committees have been reflecting on such hesitations over the year, and contemplating how we can make getting involved seem less ominous and stressful. We have also been working recently on how to streamline meetings, most of which only occur once every other month via Zoom. Creating a code of conduct will help keep meetings on task, respectful and mindful of other’s opinions as well as being as efficient as possible in honor of everyone’s precious time.

We also emphasize that this is your church as much as it is anyone else’s. Getting involved means you have a say in how we move forward, or how our building is updated and cared for, or how our ministry connects to our greater community. Having a seat at the table is both exciting and essential to our growth. It can and should be empowering and rewarding. So come take a seat!

*“What we need is to love without getting tired. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”  
Mother Teresa*

It is the leadership’s desire that no one ever feels burdened by their roles in the church, and that committee members have the right to limit their involvement to the hours that work for their lives. We want people to find an aspect of

church involvement that feels manageable and, most importantly, joyful to them!

As one-year ends and a new begins, we hope you consider a seat on a committee, a leadership role, or simply to share with us how many hours a month you can dedicate to volunteering! Whether it’s 1 hour or 10, we have a place for you! Many hands will make light work and bring us even closer together as a family of God.

Cristina Markham, Moderator

### 2024 Opportunities to serve the church

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



### Lee Congregational UCC 2024 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.

**Attention Committee Chairs and Officers:**

Thank you to all our officers and ministry volunteers for this past year. Please note that year-end reports are due into the church office no later than Monday, January 21. 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.

**SAVE THE DATE**



**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday, February 11** 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. We will also be voting to accept some policies that were rewritten over the past year: Harassment Policy and Building Usage/Signage Policy.

Two informational sessions will be offered prior to the annual meeting to help answer any questions on the budget and the two policies. These will be:

- 1) In person Sunday, January 28 at 11:45am
- 2) Via Zoom Wednesday, Jan 31 at 7pm

Please join us in our shared ministry of this church.

**Summer Camp** Opportunities at Silver Lake



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



**Birth Announcements**

Congratulations on the birth of Cecilia James Hack born Dec 9<sup>th</sup>. She is the granddaughter of Tari & Peter Roosa and the Great-Granddaughter of Charles Wheeler & Suzanne Young



**Holiday Fundraiser Wrap ups**

Sound of the Seasons concert raised just shy of \$2,500.00 for church and

community needs with between 350 – 375 attendees each night.

The Holiday Fair raised \$4,980.

Congratulations to all our Raffle winners:  
 Ellen Krupka - Painting by Gloria Malcolm Arnold  
 Christine Zelehoski - Afghan by Judy Morehouse  
 Susan Stone - Quilted Pillow and Throw  
 Phyllis Schneyer (Prayer Shawl Ministry member) - Punch Bowl/Cake Stand

**Congratulations everyone!**

**From the Treasurer:**

Below is our anticipated income and expenditures through December 31, 2023

<b>Financial Recap through December 31, 2023</b>		
	<b>Actual YTD</b>	<b>Budgeted YTD</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Pledges & Donations	\$127,106.00	\$134,500.00
Fundraisers	\$13,171.00	\$11,500.00
Rental Income	\$17,597.00	\$18,000.00
Missions & Misc.	\$3,438.00	\$2,000.00
Memorial Donations	\$4,537.00	\$1,000.00
Investment Transfer	15,000.00	\$20,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$180,849.00</b>	<b>\$187,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Payroll & Benefits	\$102,863.00	\$139,259.00
Facility & Finance	\$35,028.00	\$42,456.00
Mission & Ministry	\$23,110.00	\$20,285.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$161,001.00</b>	<b>\$202,000.00</b>

## **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



Well the days are getting longer. That is always good news! And I want to say a very sincere "thank you" to the church for the thoughtful Christmas bonus. It is always appreciated.

The season of Advent this year was extra special for me. Although we had some technical issues the week of rehearsals leading up to the concerts, in the end the concerts were wonderful. It will be a challenge for me to come up with a better program next year for the Christmas Angels Chorus, but then again, I say that every year and we always seem to do just that. The bells also did their best program to date, and we received the most in donations since before the pandemic. And of course, without you, there would be no Christmas Concerts.

Our Christmas Eve service had some hiccups that were caused by a number of different issues that night. But I am sure we learned from them and will do our best to do better in the future. Besides the technical issues we were having, one of the things that I was thinking about on Christmas Eve was all of the new people and new faces that I met when I first came here 13 years ago. These were people I really didn't know and it took me a while to understand their passion for this church. We had no pipe organ, and some people wanted this magnificent instrument to be torn out and discarded. All we had was the piano and 1 microphone on the podium. But I had a different

vision for this church. And within 3 years we had a completely refurbished pipe organ to complement the piano, thanks to the great work of many of our congregation. When I mention that I really didn't know many people at the time, I understood that their vision was to have a pipe organ in this church, and they supported their hopes with very generous donations. People like Bob and Dolores Birch who had the dream to hear the Pipe Organ one more time, which they did just before they died. Friends like Al Trivers, Stan and Marilyn Rossier, Mrs. Carrington, and Joan Zukowski plus many others that I cannot think of right now. Joan was actually very instrumental in my being hired here. All of these people believed that this church could survive and were willing to bet on it with their donations. I am so grateful for their belief that God would make it all happen. Which HE did.

Now we have a 24-channel soundboard. We run a minimum of 16 microphones for every service, and we run 23 channels for the Christmas Concerts. I know that all of these great people that had the vision for this church, but are no longer with us, can look down upon us and say, "Well done Lee Church".

But our work is not done. Even more specifically, MY work is not done. We now have the equipment, the knowledge, and the tools to make our services the best around. But we admit we have some problems that need to be addressed. The good news is that we have the experience, knowledge and understanding to fix what is broken. And the nucleus of this fix I hope will be Pastor Marisa. I have never been fortunate to have a Pastor with the knowledge and skills that Pastor Marisa has. I hope that she will serve as our leader and bring our in-house and on-line services to be the best that they can be.

So again, I completely own the fact that our music on Christmas Eve was not as good as it should have been, but at the end of the day, I think we had a beautiful Christmas and Advent season. Thank you for understanding, and I remain confident that we have one of the best music programs in Berkshire County. And with Pastor Marisa, it can only get better! Happy New Year!

***Jim Morrison***



## Our church people in the news.

**Phineus Bailey:** Lenox Memorial Middle and High School revs up its robotics program, as middle school team returns. (The Berkshire Eagle, December 27, 2023)

### Lenox robotics team takes first place and wins Design Award

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/central\\_berkshires/funding-support-from-general-dynamics-and-the-us-navy-enables-lmmhs-to-reactivate-its-robotics-activities/article\\_fdb3fd8e-a0f4-11ee-961a-a35df11874ab.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/central_berkshires/funding-support-from-general-dynamics-and-the-us-navy-enables-lmmhs-to-reactivate-its-robotics-activities/article_fdb3fd8e-a0f4-11ee-961a-a35df11874ab.html)



Members of the Lenox Memorial Middle and High School's Middle School Robotics Club include, from bottom left, G. G., **Phineus Bailey**, faculty adviser Amanda Terzigni, M. J, S. M, and J. Q.  
PHOTO PROVIDED BY LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Heather Archibald:** The Berkshire County Historical Society elected new board members and officers for 2024 recently at its annual meeting. The new directors include **Heather Archibald...** Archibald is assistant treasurer at the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank. A lifelong resident of the Berkshires, she has been a member of the BCHS Education Committee for several years. Archibald holds a bachelor's degree from The College of New Rochelle; an MBA from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; and is a graduate of the New England School of Financial Studies.

(The Berkshire Eagle, December 30, 2023)

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Lee, Massachusetts, United Church of Christ – JAN 2024



“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, Tari, Jason & Rev. Marisa*

### DINE TO DONATE:

Lee Locker Room, 232 Main St., Lee, MA

Monday, January 8

Take-out or dine-in.

Call ahead to reserve a table: 413-243-2662

10% of all sales will go to the Knight of Columbus Berkshire Hills Council 314. KofC is a charitable organization that raises funds and supports many local causes including the Lee Food Pantry, the Baby Bottle and Diaper Drives, and high school scholarships.

‘Tis the Season....

### **Weather related church service cancellations:**

If for some reason the church executive team deems the weather unfit for the Sunday morning service, you will be notified by email as soon as a decision is made - most likely by 8am. There will also be a voice message on the church telephone (413) 243-1033 as well as a message on our Facebook page.

[www.ucc-lee.org](http://www.ucc-lee.org)



# 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

(updated 12.21.23)

### 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)
- 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)
- Marilyn Fennelly (member of church)
- 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)
- 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)
- Peter Ludwig (husband of Rev Marisa Brown Ludwig)
- 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)

The **Prayer Ministry** meets the **3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

- 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)
- 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 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) Marisa Brown Ludwig 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](http://www.ucc-lee.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>31</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry  3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 8:00am AA SOS 11am Poster making  12:00pm Standout for Democracy
<b>7</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service & Communion 11:30am Coffee Hour	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8:00am AA SOS
<b>14</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	<b>15</b> 10am Mission & Ministry Meeting	<b>16</b> 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>17</b> 7:00pm Facility & Finance Meeting	<b>18</b> 11:00am Prayer Ministry 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 8:00am AA SOS
<b>21</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	<b>22</b> Annual Reports are due into the church office	<b>23</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 8:00am AA SOS 9:30am Food Pantry 5pm Junior League Bowlers Banquet
<b>28</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 11:45am Information Session	<b>29</b> Messenger articles due into office	<b>30</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>31</b> 7:00pm Information Session	<b>1</b> 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:00am AA SOS

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

## Worship In Person Attendance [Facebook]:

Dec 3 – 73 [99]      Dec 10 – 59 [136]      Dec 17 – 60 [104]      Dec 21 – 25 (Blue Christmas Service)  
Dec 24 AM – 59 [136]      Dec 24 PM – 91 [109]      Dec 31 – 46 [171]

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

## SAVE THE DATES!

Mark your calendars for some upcoming events here at Lee UCC

Sunday, January 28 in person at 11:45am - Information Session on annual budget and revised policies

Wednesday, January 31 via ZOOM at 7pm - Information Session on annual budget and revised policies

## Sunday, February 11 at 11:30am Annual Church Meeting and Potluck Luncheon

Now that we have a newly installed carpet in the Sanctuary

PLEASE, NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE SANCTUARY – THANK YOU