



# The 2024 Messenger



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

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## Pastor's Page

This year February holds many gifts for us as a winter season well underway. It is Black History Month, and I encourage you to give attention and participation to events that will be happening all over, lifting up Black Americans who've achieved amazing discoveries, inventions, awards and often invisible acts of courage. Broaden your experience of poetry, music and theater by Black artists; seek out and patronize black-owned businesses; read stories of black and brown scientists, farmers, artists, actors, veterans, doctors, entrepreneurs and everyday people contributing to the wonderful life of our country!

February 11<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Meeting Sunday – a time for taking stock of our mission and ministry life here at Lee Congregational Church. We'll have a pot luck lunch and then turn to our business review. Come and see what we have done, and are planning yet to do! Maybe you have new ideas to bring new life to 2024 here – we'd love to hear from you! We will highlight one of our community sponsorships in our worship on February 11<sup>th</sup> by celebrating Scout Sunday with Boy and Cub Scout Troops of Lee joining us in all aspects of worship.

February also brings us into the holy season of Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday on February 14<sup>th</sup> (can you believe that?) I'm offering something new: Ashes to Go for lunchtime drivers in our town as they come through the parking lot of the Green – an

opportunity to be cared for in the midst of their hectic day with a sacred moment, a humble entry into this precious life. That night we'll have a 6:30pm Ash Wednesday service of contemplative beauty, a time for considering what acts of prayer and reflection we may need to come closer to our God.

Ash Wednesday will also debut a six-week series of afternoon (3:00pm) and evening (7:00pm) gatherings for a Lenten Devotional Study "Witness at the Cross" by renowned New Testament and Jewish Studies scholar Amy-Jill Levine. You can get the book in the church office! See more information about this study elsewhere in Messenger!

However you are spending your February, I invite you to take advantage of snowy landscapes and starry nights to enter this Lenten time of self-examination, simplicity and contemplation to deepen your relationship with the Holy. I look forward to walking this wintry pathway with you!

*Blessings*

*Pastor Marisa*

### Some Resources for Understanding the Israel-Palestine War From Pastor Marisa

**First:** I'll be taking a web-based certification course throughout the month of February. It's called "**Peacebuilding Amid Polarization: A Leader's Toolkit for Constructive Engagement on the Israeli-Palestinian Crisis**" sponsored by Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, Sharing Sacred Spaces and Religions for Peace USA. It'll meet weekly on Thursdays by zoom, with a distinguished faculty, engaging us on topics like detoxifying the discourse, deep listening, pathways

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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 BY THE FOUNDERS

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Reverend Marisa Brown Ludwig, Pastor; Jim Morrison, Music Director  
Tari Wheeler Roosa, Administrative Assistant; Glenn Withers, Sexton

First Congregational Church of Lee, United Church of Christ, 25 Park Place, PO Box 395, Lee, MA 01238  
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for collective healing, walking through grief, developing psycho-spiritual competencies and a multi-narrative perspective, imagining transformation. I hope to share learnings with you on this deeply crucial issue of our time later this spring after I complete the course.

For more information or to register yourself, check it out here:

<https://www.sharingsacredspaces.org/events-1/peacebuilding-amid-polarization-a-leaders-toolkit-for-constructive-engagement-on-the-israeli-palestinian-crisis>

### **Second: ROOTS livestream program on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 2pm**

There is an opportunity in February & March to hear locally an amazing program called ROOTS, a peacemaking team who pair Israeli and Palestinian speakers educating about the history of the disputed lands as understood by their people and what it means to work now toward peace between them. I have attended one of their programs in the past, and they are deeply authentic, mutually respectful and compelling. They are touring the North East in early March but also can be heard livestream at an event hosted by Auburn Theological Seminary on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 2:00-3:30pm with tickets for purchase at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-with-roots-peacemakers-in-a-time-of-war-registration-780990342137>.

### **Weekly Lenten Book Study offered Wednesdays in Lent!**

#### **“Witness at the Cross” by Amy-Jill Levine**

WHAT: A study that walks us through the events of the crucifixion of Jesus from the perspectives of different groups who were there, inviting a deep dive for us today into what we think happened in Holy Week then, and what it means for us now!

WHEN: 3:00pm for daytime program – in-person only  
7:00pm for evening program – in-person and on zoom

WHERE: Sessions held in the Parlor at Lee UCC  
And in the evening on Zoom as well

DATES: Wednesdays February 14, 21, 28,  
March 6, 13 and 20

This study will combine use of a book called “Witness at the Cross” and video-recorded lectures each week by renowned scholar Amy-Jill Levine, as well as scripture, discussion and prayer. You can come to all sessions, or any individual one that works for your schedule.

GETTING YOUR BOOK: You can get your book your own way at a bookstore or online or pick up a copy in the church office for a donation up to \$20.



**Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>** is the date of our church’s Annual Meeting. We will start with a potluck luncheon following the church service and then hear reports, adopt 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, February 11, 2024**

*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 2024

*Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024*

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

## Calendar of Events

**Scout Sunday** is also on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. The local scout troop and pack will participate in our time of worship. All are welcome to support and honor their character-building ministry with youth! Please welcome our youth on this day.



ASH WEDNESDAY

### Ash Wednesday – February 14, 2024

#### **12-1pm in Church Park driveway – Ashes to Go!**

Pastor Marisa will give out ashes for anyone who wants to drive through the church parking lot/park from 12-1pm on Ash Wednesday. Sandwich boards will promote the offer, and by the Pastor's Parking spot she'll actually meet drivers and their passengers at their windows to share ashes and words of blessing.

#### **3:00pm in the Parlor – First Afternoon of Lenten**

**Study:** "Witness at the Cross" In-person only

#### **6:30pm – in the Sanctuary - Ash Wednesday Service**

We'll offer a contemplative Ash Wednesday service to open the Lenten season with reflection, hymns, time for considering actions or sacrifices we might make for the season to bring us closer to God. Join us for this simple worship!

#### **7:00pm in the Parlor – First Night of Lenten Study:**

"Witness at the Cross." In-person and on zoom (see page 2 for more information!)

## MARCH EVENTS



### **CABIN FEVER POTLUCK AND GAME NIGHT**

**Saturday, March 2 at 5 pm**

Are you ready to get out of the house? Please join us for a meal of soup and bread with gluten-free and vegetarian options. You are invited to bring your favorite dessert to share (potluck) with others. Following the meal, we will break into groups to play games. You are invited to bring your favorite game to share or join in with another group. **INVITE YOUR FRIENDS. THE MORE, THE MERRIER!!**



Tired of the winter doldrums?? Are you ready for some uplifting activity??? The Lee Bell Choir will be playing a "Cabin Fever" Concert followed by a corned beef and cabbage supper (there will be another entree if you do not like that). This will be held on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Lee Congregational Church. The concert will start at 4pm and the dinner at 5:15pm. The concert is free while the dinner will be done as a fundraiser for the bell choir. People can come to either or both. Tickets for the dinner will be adults \$15, seniors \$10, children 5-12 \$5 and children under 5 free. The tickets can be purchased either before the event or that night. Joe Sorrentino will be our chef. Are you asking what we are raising funds for? We purchased a 3-octave hand chime set last year to enhance the bells. These funds will finish payment of the hand chimes and help finance a cabinet for the bell foam. So come and enjoy. Any questions, please ask Judy Olds or Tari Roosa.



## **HOLY WEEK 2024**

**March 24, Palm Sunday**

**10:30am Worship –**

Join us for a parade of palms and celebratory singing to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem, along with a baptism for one of our families! We will then shift to a more contemplative second half, pointing at the tests and trials of Holy Week that lead us to the Last Supper and the Cross.

**March 28, Maundy Thursday**

**7:00pm Service of Shadow & Light**

The Deacons lead us in sharing a re-enactment of the Passover night when Jesus sat with his friends and instituted the Sacrament of Communion, followed by a Tenebrae service of scripture and candlelight to walk us through the events of that night that led to Jesus' arrest and trial.

**March 29, Good Friday Vigil**

**12-3pm in the Sanctuary**

Join Pastor Marisa for a time of sitting with Jesus at the cross – with devotions, scripture, song and poetry at every quarter hour, and silence in between for sacred reading or meditation.

**March 31, Easter Sunday**

**6:00am Easter Sunrise Service in the Church Park –**

We will follow the disciples going to the tomb on Easter morning in sorrow, finding it empty and encountering the risen Christ! A simple service of monologues, scripture and music out in the park as the sun rises!

**10:30am Easter Sunday Service in the Sanctuary –**

We celebrate with hymns of joy and sacred text telling of Jesus' triumph over death and sorrow, arising and equipping those who follow with the good news of the Gospel: He is risen! He is risen, indeed!



Heifer Collection runs during Lent culminating on Easter, March 31. Collection boxes will be available in church starting February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Heifer International is a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, values-based holistic community development.

[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

### **From the Music Director**

Well, to say this has been a "whirlwind" 2 months here at the Lee Congregational Church would be an understatement. I have to admit that my the past 55 years, with many, many Pastoral changes, this one "takes the cake"! (Never really knew what that expression means? There was no cake?) However, thanks to our amazing new Pastor and your dedicated staff and support groups within this church, it has been basically "seamless".

I think it is safe to say that the pandemic of 2020 has caused us more problems than we thought possible. But we have met our obligations to the best of our knowledge, with some hiccups along the way, which was expected. I have learned a lot in this short period especially regarding the rules of copyright. But I still have much more to learn. We also are working on making our on-line services as good as they can be. Again, it has been a learning process. Our struggle remains getting the best sound in the sanctuary without compromising the sound on the video stream. And vice-versa. I can tell you that we have not had great success thus far, but we do have a plan moving forward that will require the help from a few people outside this congregation. It would be very easy to say that we should just go back to doing what we did best before Covid, but that would be short-sighted and

## Facility & Finance

not be in the best interest of this church in the years to come. I do not know what the future holds, but I do know that it will definitely be dependent on computers and our ability to utilize them. I truly do not believe that anyone reading this newsletter over the age of 60 even begins to understand how "artificial intelligence" will change the way everything is done by our grandchildren. Think about the fact that the Wrights Brothers' first powered airplane flew at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on **December 17, 1903**, making a **12-second flight, traveling 36 meters (120 ft)**, with Orville piloting. Apollo 11 (**July 16–24, 1969**) was the American spaceflight that **first landed** humans on the *Moon*, with Commander Neil Armstrong and *Lunar* Module Pilot Buzz Aldrin. It only took **66 years** to go from a 12-second flight to landing on the moon and getting back safely. Artificial Intelligence is not new, and will not be going away, but it will change everything, including how we do church. Just a week ago, I had the privilege of participating in a funeral service honoring my friend David Stone, along with some other very talented musicians. But the climax of the service was listening to the song David composed on his computer which was later turned into a MIDI file and stored on our revamped pipe organ. The song is called "Proclaim" and it is amazing. But this was not possible 20 years ago. Everything changes over time.

When I came to this church a mere 13 years ago, I never thought for a minute that during my time here we would be dealing with the issues of today. But we are, and I will do my very best to help bring the music program in this church into 2024. It won't be easy, and it won't be without some costs, but it will be done. And I truly believe that we have the right leader at the right time to make sure that happens.

Happy Valentine's Day everyone!! *Jim Morrison*

### Sexton Changes

The F&F committee wants to let everyone know that our current Sexton, Jason Matthews, has notified us that he can no longer serve in that position. Jason has been balancing a demanding full-time job, that has him traveling extensively, along with his sexton duties. He feels that at this time he can no longer provide the level of service that the church requires. I think I can speak for all of us when I say, "Thank you, Jason." We appreciate all that he did for us, jumping into the job when we had a significant need. It's a diverse position that included lawn mowing, snow shoveling and interior cleaning. It is difficult to find someone that can do all of that while holding down another job that has gotten more demanding.

As far as a replacement for Jason, the F&F committee has reached out to Glenn Withers, our previous Sexton. Garth and I met with him and have reached an agreement for him to come back to do the interior cleaning of the church. He was able to start work on Monday, January 29th. So that's great news. As far as the outside snow shoveling is concerned, we have reached an agreement with Gary O'Brien Property Services, who does our driveway plowing, to clear all the walkways, steps and handicap ramp. However, keep in mind that the walkway clearing will be done after the snow event stops, and they are done with all of their plowing commitments.

Dave Markham, F&F Chair

### Prayer Ministry List Update

Our church prayer ministry is very important to us and we feel it is a very important service of this church. We try to keep the list as accurate as possible. If you know of someone who has recovered and no longer needs our prayers, please let us or the office know. This will allow us to focus our energies on those who still need continued prayers. Barbara Mahony & Judy Morehouse

## Food Pantry Needs

The shelves were pretty bare this week. Besides canned, jarred and boxed goods we also need:

Laundry soap	Dish soap
Body wash	Cleaning supplies
Bleach	Hand soap
Condiments	Coffee
Mouthwash	Shaving cream
Women's sanitary pads	



Dear First Congregational Church,

I can't even begin to thank you enough for the compassion and generosity shown to my

family this Christmas. The presents on Christmas morning brought such joy to my kids, and to me.

And the gift of beds is something that has truly changed my kids' lives. They had been complaining of aches and pains and numb limbs upon waking since we moved here. They can now rest deeply and comfortably, which is a gift that I could have *never* made happen.

So, again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You are truly amazing people.

- Christmas Family 2023

From Sarah DelSignor:

Thank you to all who contributed to this year's family, a single mom and four kids. They were a joy to work with and we were able to help them with their biggest request: mattresses, plus bedding, a special gift for each child, clothing, gift cards for gas and pharmacy needs, and the payment in full of a big bill. It feels good to help a local family in need and to lighten the load of their worries. Together, we can accomplish great things and make a big difference in the lives of a local family.

## January 6 Standout for Democracy

Thanks to the seventeen members of our church community who in the freezing cold weather participated in this event in the park. There were a few more participants this year than last year. Of course, the honking of horns to support the cause was appreciated.

Barbara Mahony

## Standout at Lee Gets UCC National Attention!!!

National UCC press staff picked up our involvement in the Jan 6 standouts - and gave us a pretty central visual presence. They loved our photos! Barbara thank you for leading us in such an important justice witness!

Here's the link for you all to

see: <https://www.ucc.org/reclaiming-christianity-massachusetts-churches-take-stand-against-christian-nationalism/>



Please wish John and Gloria Arnold a Happy 58<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>.



# First Congregational Church of Lee Prayer Ministry

*Bible verse of the month:* "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith." Romans 1 verse 17.

## WE PRAY FOR

(updated 1.17.24)

### Our Friends and Neighbors

- Colleen Adams (mother-in-law of Brian Matarazzo)
- Rev. Dawn Adams (friend of Cherryl 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)
- Karen DiNicola (friend of Margaret Markham)
- 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)
- Susan Harding (friend of Danna Snow)
- James Harwood (brother-in-law of Denise Harwood)
- John (friend of Maddy Tremblay)
- 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)
- Chris Ludwig (mother of Jessica Drega)
- Peter Ludwig (husband of Rev. 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)
- 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)
- Suzanne Sheaffer (cousin of Dave and Margaret

### Markham)

- Jean Spalinger (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 & friend of church)
- Donna Toomey (friend of Peg Biron)
- Eileen Torraca (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
- John Tucker (brother of Susan Tucker)
- Susan Tucker (member of church)
- Trevor Tucker (grandson of Nancy Tucker)
- Jane Maroni Williams (relative of Sheila Maroni)

### Sympathy

Extended to the family of Diana Brown (Rev. Marisa's mother)

Extended to the family of David Stone

### 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.



PLEASE PRAY FOR: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# FEBRUARY

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>28</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 11:45am Information Session 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>29</b> Messenger articles due into office	<b>30</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 7:00pm Sec's Conference Planning meeting	<b>31</b> 7:00pm Information Session	<b>1</b> 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:00am AA SOS
<b>4</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service & Communion 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 10:00am M&M meeting	<b>6</b> 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>7</b> 	<b>8</b> 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 8:00am AA SOS 5:30pm Family Skate Night
<b>11</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Annual Church Meeting 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>12</b> 	<b>13</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>14</b> ASH WEDNESDAY 12:00pm Ashes to Go 3:00pm Lenten Book Study 6:30pm Ash Wed Service 7:00pm Lenten Book Study	<b>15</b> 11:00am Prayer Ministry 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 8:00am AA SOS
<b>18</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>21</b> 3:00pm Lenten Book Study 7:00pm Lenten Book Study	<b>22</b> 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:00pm Council Meeting 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 8:00am AA SOS 9:30am Food Pantry
<b>25</b> 6:45am AA/IDHAC 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>26</b> Messenger articles due into office	<b>27</b> 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's	<b>28</b> 3:00pm Lenten Book Study 7:00pm Lenten Book Study	<b>29</b> 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 8:00am AA SOS 5:00pm Family Fun Game Night and Dessert Potluck

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

## Donate online!!!

[First Congregational Church of Lee, MA \(ucc-lee.org\)](http://www.ucc-lee.org) click on the Donate button at the right

<https://www.facebook.com/Lee-Congregational-Church-UCC-1933569256904620>

Look for the Vanco Online message

It is quick and easy to use - pledge, donation, and many more options for mission contributions!

### Worship Attendance in person and virtual attendees (Facebook viewings):

Jan. 7 – no in person due to snow (132); Jan. 14 – 58 (155); Jan. 21 – 56 (155); Jan 28 – 37 (151)

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

**Daily Lectionary Readings:** [www.sneucc.org/lectionary](http://www.sneucc.org/lectionary)

Sat, March 9 All are invited to attend the Southern New England Conference UCC Super Saturday coming up on March 9, 2024!

Feed your spirit and your heart with exciting workshops, faith formation experiences and rousing worship with people from all over RI, CT and MA churches of the

UCC! <https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/17461243>