

The 2024 Messenger



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



A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

In May we especially bless those who bring the presence of mothering to our lives:

Proverbs 31:31 *Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

Isaiah 66:13 *As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you.*

My friends and family at Lee Church! I greet you with joy at the ever-blossoming spring that is all around us, the warmer days, the scent of flowers, the gold of forsythia . . . such a reminder that nature reflects to us always the hope that the sun will rise again after night, that spring blooms again after winter, that even when life may seem sparse and harsh, the earth keeps turning and a new day comes. This is our faith, and it is written on all the cosmos.

We have so much happening in our community and our church in May and June – I want to touch on some of them and highlight them to us all:

May 12 – Mother’s Day/Feast of the Ascension/ Church World Service Blanket Sunday and The Bell Choir! The Bell Choir joins us for a special Sunday to honor all people who have been mothers to us or are mothering people now with blessing and beautiful music on the theme of LOVE.

May 19 – Pentecost – we welcome the fire of the Holy Spirit as the disciples did, and so we invite you to wear red (or orange or yellow) flame colors to help make this feast special!

May 26 – Memorial Day Weekend – we will answer the call from President Harry S. Truman and the Congress in 1950 for all U.S. citizens to mark Memorial Day as a “day of prayer for permanent peace” and to honor all who have lost their lives while serving in the United States military.

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-2889-prayer-for-peace-memorial-day#:~:text=Now%2C%20Therefore%2C%20I%20Harry,of%20prayer%20for%20permanent%20peace.>

I also want to urge you to **save the dates** in June for at least two special events:

Saturday, June 8 11am-4pm Berkshire PRIDE will celebrate with a march in Pittsfield from Eagle Street to the Common Park in Pittsfield, and Berkshire UCC churches are planning to march together. More info to come on that! Please consider if you will walk with me, or join me in the park after to celebrate our LGBTQ+ family and friends!

Tuesday, June 11 – 7:30-9pm a joint Shavu’ot-Pentecost Celebration with Temple Anshe Amunim & Lee Congregational Church at the Temple in Pittsfield. Rabbi Scott Saulson and I are planning a program together on the eve of the Jewish Festival of Pentecost, which is related to the Christian festival. We will both offer brief teaching about this festival in our two traditions with light refreshments offered and a chance to celebrate our traditions together. Please see the flyer!

May this month of spring bring hope to all of us, wherever we find ourselves in our lives. May all those who are mothers to us be blessed!

Pastor Marisa

“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



Rev. 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
413.243.1033 | uccleechurch@gmail.com | www.ucc-lee.org

Mission & Ministry

BERKSHIRE INTERFAITH ORGANIZING NEWS

There are two teams on BIO, the Transportation Team, that I am on, and the Housing Team. The Housing Team is dealing with landlords around the county that plan to raise monthly payments by large amounts. There is one complex in Pittsfield that hopes to raise its rent by 230%.

BIO may be joining some kind of visible opposition to this maneuver. There is a rent control committee for Pittsfield that is also dealing with these issues and they may need our support. The specifics follow below, but I should also say that the meeting to discuss these issues was on April 3rd, when the storm came upon us and knocked out Spectrum! So the meetings have been rescheduled.

Two mobile home parks are facing proposed rent increases that range from 29% to 230% more than current rates. In Pittsfield, Lake Onota Village residents are fighting a 29% rent increase proposed by landowners M.H. Communities LTD. In West Stockbridge, Thomas F. Lennon of Lennon Capital Group is proposing a 230% rent increase at the Residences on Mill Pond. Without diving into the details, I cannot overemphasize how important it is to preserve affordable regional options for housing, such as these mobile home parks. There are human beings whose lives may be seriously disrupted if these increases pass at the level the owners are proposing.

Luckily, tenants have a defense mechanism in both municipalities. Both Pittsfield and West Stockbridge have Mobile Home Park Rent Control Boards which must approve/disapprove any changes in rent - and both boards are meeting publicly this week to continue deliberating.

Laura O'Shaughnessy



FELLOWSHIP & GAME NIGHT

Saturday, May 4 at 5 pm

Please join us for pizza

and beverage. 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!!

LABYRINTH EVENT

Rev. Jill Graham and Sheffield Congregational Church has invited us to help lead a World Labyrinth Hour of Prayer for Peace!

Saturday May 4 at 12:45pm

At Sheffield Congregational Church
125 Main Street
Sheffield, MA

We are joining labyrinth walkers around the world for "Walk as One at 1" so there will be a wave of peace walks throughout the time zones of the world!

Join Pastor Marisa there to pray with our feet as we walk the labyrinth together!

Light snacks will be provided. Dress for the weather!



BLANKET SUNDAY –for Church World Service <https://cwsblankets.org/> is on Mother's Day, May 12th.

A \$10 gift enables CWS to send a blanket in times of disaster in the US and around the world. Please make checks payable to the church with 'Blanket Sunday' in the memo line.



Volunteers Needed



COFFEE HOUR – Are you interested in helping? Coffee, tea and paper products are supplied.

We ask volunteers to provide two food items. If you are new at this, feel free to team up with another member. The sign-up sheet is in the hallway by the church office or feel free to speak to Wanda Klahn.

Bell Choir Performs at May 12 Service

If you attend the Sunday morning service, either in-person or virtually, you will be treated to the Lee Bell Choir playing music throughout much of the service. The choir, directed by Judy Olds, has been working hard to provide you with a special addition to the service.



HOLIDAY FAIR CRAFT GROUP

Are you looking for a social outlet? Come join the craft group as they work on items for the December Holiday Fair. No talent needed, just a willingness to help. They meet in the community room every other Thursday at 12pm. The next group meets on Thurs, May 9.

PENTECOST SUNDAY Sunday, May 19

Marking the birth of Christianity and celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus

Wear Red!
Red balloons everywhere!



Connecting Conversations Dinner Saturday, July 13, 2024

Our next Connecting Conversations Dinner will be on Saturday, July 13, 2024.

The dinners usually start at 6pm, but each host can determine the time to begin.

If you are interested in hosting a dinner, please contact Barbara Mahony at 413-464-8308 or at dbmahony@yahoo.com. Hosting means having availability for 6 to 8 dinner guests. (This number includes the host.) Usually there are 4 guests and 1 to 2 hosts or 6 guests and 1 to 2 hosts.

If you want to attend a dinner, please also contact Barbara Mahony at 413-464-8308 or at dbmahony@yahoo.com.

For those of you who have never attended a dinner, the host provides the main entrée and the other participants bring a salad, a vegetable, appetizer, or dessert. The host determines what each participant is to bring.

Looking forward to reconnecting with those who have participated in the dinners in the past, but also looking forward to connecting with those who will be participating for the first time.



This is the final call for donations to Heifer International. All donations will be doubled by a generous donor through Heifer by the end of May. You will hear more about your contributions and purchases in an upcoming Messenger.



Silver Lake Conference Center has openings for summer camp. Information is available in the office.



From the Music Director

First of all, I want to thank the church for my annual salary increase. It is always appreciated.

Spring is finally here and that means summer is just around the corner. The Berkshires is a great place to live, especially in the summertime. Recently I had the opportunity to go to a wonderful Eagles Band and MMRHS combined concert. As are most of the Eagles Band concerts, it was a free event. This concert was extra special because it gave the band kids from Monument Mountain the opportunity to play alongside some very talented musicians. When I played in the MMRHS band a very long time ago, I did not have the opportunity to do anything like that around here. But what I did get to do was to play all 4 years in "all-state" band. It was there that I had the opportunity to play with some very talented kids. Even though we were all the same age, I was able to learn things that I did not know about playing the baritone, and that playing 2nd baritone was equally important as 1st baritone. So, when I see our high school kids sitting next to Tari Roosa in the flute section, I know how exciting that feels. Speaking of Tari, there are three members of our choir that play in the Eagles Band. Tari and Ruth Melbourne play flute, Judy Olds plays French horn and Tim Franchere plays percussion, everything from timpani and cymbals to triangle and wood blocks. Their Christmas program is also very festive and almost always ends with Leroy Anderson's Sleigh Ride. So, when you see an Eagles Band concert advertised, check your schedule and if you are free, try to attend. I think you will be glad you did! Happy Mother's Day! *Jim Morrison*

Other Notes of Interest

Thank you, Josie, for your help in the office.

Worship In Service Attendance (Facebook):

- March 28 Maundy Thursday – 34 (74)
- March 31 Easter Sunrise – 12
- March 31 Easter (10:30) – 77 (160)
- April 7 – 54 (131)
- April 14 – 55 (106)
- April 21 – 49 (126)

Treasurer's Report: Jane Gleason

Below is our income and expenditures through April 15, 2024

Financial Recap through April 15, 2024		
	Actual YTD	Budgeted YTD
Income		
Pledges & Donations	\$33,813.00	\$43,128.00
Fundraisers	\$12.00	\$4,416.00
Rental Income	\$3,346.00	\$5,444.00
Missions & Misc.	\$3,111.00	\$664.00
Memorial Donations	\$920.00	\$332.00
Investment Transfer	\$0.00	\$9,332.00
Prior Year Carry Forward	\$24,000.00	\$8,000.00
Total Income	\$65,202.00	\$71,316.00
Expenses		
Payroll & Benefits	\$50,097.00	\$56,168.00
Facility & Finance	\$10,388.00	\$13,416.00
Mission & Ministry	\$2,734.00	\$6,076.00
Total Expenses	\$63,219.00	\$75,660.00

COMING IN JUNE

Radical Amazement: the key to appreciating our place in the universe

Observe Shavu'ot/Pentecost with Temple Anshe Amunim & FCC Lee

Tues, June 11 7:30-9:00pm
26 Broad Street, Pittsfield

An evening for sharing the meaning of revelation in our traditions with text study, conversation and fellowship.

Festival refreshments provided.
Rabbi Dr. Scott B Sulson & Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig, MSW MDiv

Registration: FCC Lee 413-243-1033 or templeoffice@ansheamunim.org 413-442-5910

High School and College

Graduations are just around the corner. Do you have a family member who is graduating? Names will be listed in the June Messenger. Please include student name, school graduating from, what they plan to do upon graduation and their relationship to you.



Save the Date – Saturday, June 15th Church Supper Fundraiser

This year's second Church Supper Fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, June 15th. The menu is pulled pork with homemade BBQ sauce, coleslaw, toasted rolls and fruit pie. Cristina Markham will



have a list of food items needed to prepare the meal as well as teams needed for cooking, set up, serving and clean-up. Your donations and

participation will help make this event a success.

Tickets are: Adults -\$15.00, Children (ages 5-11) - \$7.00, Under 5 – Free.

CONVERSATION ON THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN WITH DR. AMY-JILL LEVINE

DATE
Sunday, June 9th

TIME
3:00PM

LOCATION
First Congregational Church
355 Main St., Oxford, MA

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION:
508-987-2281
firstchurchoxford@gmail.com



Come and hear the Parable of the Good Samaritan as you have not heard it before from one of the wisest biblical minds of our time. Professor, Author, and New Testament Scholar Dr. Amy-Jill Levine will be offering insights on one of the most beloved stories in the Bible. A time of lecture will be followed with an open Q & A.

The event is open to all.
Light refreshments will be served.

Sponsored by:
First Congregational Church of Brimfield, UCC
First Congregational Church of Oxford, UCC
First St. Congregational Church, UCC

Artwork by Watts, George Frederick, 1817-1904
Public Domain

Many of you participated in the Lenten Book Study "Witness at the Cross" by Amy-Jill Levine. You may be interested to attend an event in Central Mass, south of Worcester, where Amy-Jill will be doing an evening program:

"A Conversation with Dr. Amy-Jill Levine on the Parable of the Good Samaritan" on Sunday, June 9th at 3pm at First Congregational Church of Oxford, MA



First Congregational Church of Lee Prayer Ministry

Bible verse of the month: "Therefor I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." 2 Timothy 2 verse 10.

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, please notify the church office. Names remain on the prayer list for two months unless otherwise advised.

WE PRAY FOR

(updated 4.25.24)

Our Friends and Neighbors

- Colleen Adams (mother-in-law of Bryan 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)
- Karen Auge (friend of Gail and Jim Morrison)
- Jen Benoit (friend of Jill & Dave Topham)
- Pat Bracco (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
- Brandon, Brohwyn, Brohden (brother, niece, and nephew of Olivia Kuhn)
- Carol Bugley (daughter of Robert Bugley)
- Robert Bugley (friend of church)
- Elizabeth Carman (cousin of Sandra Cozzaglio)
- Jill Cozzaglio (daughter of Sandra Cozzaglio)
- 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)
- John (friend of Maddy Tremblay)
- 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 Drenga)
- Betty Massidda (friend of Ruth Melbourne)
- Melissa Matarazzo (daughter-in-law of Betsy and Bob Matarazzo)
- 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)
- Elaine Scott (member of church)
- Suzanne Sheaffer (cousin of Dave and Margaret Markham)
- Brody Tackus (grandson of Isabel Fassell)

- Lainey Thomas (great niece of Ellen Krupka)
- Brian Tillotson (brother of Larry Tillotson and friend of church)
- Eileen Torraca (friend of Laura O'Shaughnessy)
- John Tucker (brother of Susan Tucker)
- Susan Tucker (member of church)
- Jane Maroni Williams (relative of Sheila Maroni)

Sympathy

- Extended to the family of Donna Carnavale
- Extended to the family of Emilia J. Bassett Francesso
- Extended to the family of Dick Lindsay

Our Friends and Members at Care Facilities:


Barbara MacNayr and Hank Wingate (Landing at Laurel Lake),
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 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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 6:45am AA/LIL 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	29	30 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 6:00pm Walking Our Talk Women's Circles	1	2 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	3	4 8:00am AA SOS 12:45pm Labyrinth Event at Sheffield UCC 5:00pm Fellowship & Game Night
5 6:45am AA/LIL 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service & Communion 11:30am Coffee Hour 3:00pm Pittsfield UCC Pastoral Installation 6:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	6 10:00am M&M meeting 3:00pm Founders Day Meeting	7 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 6:00pm Walking Our Talk Women's Circles	8	9 Ascension Day 12:00pm Craft Group 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 6:00pm BIO meeting 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	10	11 8:00am AA SOS 1:00pm Memorial Service and Reception
12 6:45am AA/LIL 9:15am Choir Rehearsal & Handbells 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	13	14 3:00pm Bible Study at Story's 6:00pm Walking Our Talk Women's Circles	15 7:00pm Facility & Finance Meeting	16 11:00am Prayer Ministry 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	17	18 8:00am AA SOS
19 6:45am AA/LIL 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Pentecost Sunday Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	20	21 12:01pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00pm Walking Our Talk Women's Circles	22	23 12:00pm Craft Group 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	24	25 8:00am AA SOS 9:30am Food Pantry
26 6:45am AA/LIL 9:15am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Coffee Hour	27 Messenger articles due into office	28	29	30 5:00pm Trombone Ensemble 7:30pm AA Lee Park Place	31	1 8:00am AA SOS

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

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, August 10th
CRAFT FAIR & FESTIVAL IN THE PARK!**



Mark your calendars and spread the word.
10am – 4pm
We have already filled our quota of 40 vendors, 9 of which are new vendors. The church hosts a couple of booths and can use your help.

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures has provided over \$7000 in support of the Lee Farmers Market. That money has gone to provide healthy food to the food insecure in our community and in turn supported our local farmers. Thank you, BAV!!
Kathy DeVarenes, Executive Director
PO Box 345, Lee MA 01238, 413.243.1705
Director@leechamber.org, www.leechamber.org

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

Rev. Marisa Office Hours:
generally Sunday through Thursday:
Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays in Lee,
Tuesdays and Thursdays working from home,
and can meet you in person, by phone or by zoom!