

# The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

Summer 2017

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# summer

## First ChurchNEWS

### Statement of Purpose

We gather as a  
faith community to  
love and magnify God.  
Guided by the Holy Spirit,  
we will love our neighbors as  
ourselves, advocating for  
peace and justice.  
We will go out and  
share our faith in Christ,  
inviting others to join us.  
We will be nurturers  
of the spirit and  
teachers of the Word.  
We will welcome and  
provide sanctuary to all.

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### **Welcome!**

At FCCR, you will find joyful hearts, open minds and a caring community. If you are a long-time church member, seeking a new spiritual community, or brand new to the very idea of "church"...if you are young or have young children or are mature beyond your years...if you are single, married, partnered, divorced, widowed, or in transition...no matter who you are, at FCCR, you are welcome to join us in celebrating God's love, sharing warm welcome, and offering sanctuary for all.

### **June 2017 Annual Meeting: Decisions and Actions**

A huge thank you to those who stayed after church in June for the FCCR Annual meeting, reviewing the program year passed, and plans for the future. Our largest problem seems to be money. Giving has fallen off and our fixed expenses are not inclined to diminish. While these facts tend to produce a great deal of angst among us, they also provide impetus for action.

Church life for FCCR, not unlike many others, is not as it once was. There are incredible competing demands, both for our/families' time as well as treasure. But—with God there is always a but!—we and the community were recently reminded in significant ways, what it means to be a caring church presence in community. By now you have read of the many ways in which this church and its people, along with many members and businesses in the community, rallied to be present for, and helpful to, residents of the Schoolhouse Condominiums following the fire there. That is who we are: a caring presence, a loving people, an integral part of this community. We will continue to seek ways to live out this call. And...see Rev. Lisa's reflection with GOOD NEWS on page 2!

At the annual meeting, an amendment was passed to "Accept this year's budget for 2017-2018 as presented with the contingency that we form a committee to seriously look at staffing for the next year's budget and that by Feb 15<sup>th</sup> of 2018, we have a recommendation for next year's staffing." This motion evolved from the fact that FCCR is incredibly dependent on the endowment to support the operating budget – and the staff is the majority of the budget. (If you have not picked up your copy, the annual report, financial report, and the building report from Chris Doktor which was available to us that morning, are on the table across from Rev. Lisa's office. Please take what you need.) To [cont'd pg. 3]

### **Growing in Faith, Going Out to Serve**

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 UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
Have you seen the new logo?

## Pastor's Ponderings

Dear Friends,

It is always a great treat to be able to write a summer newsletter article that contains BIG and GOOD news! This is one of those treats!

I'm delighted to join with our Learning Ministry in announcing that FCCR will welcome a new Director of Children & Family Ministries for the 2017-19 program year! Hyunwoo Koo graduated from Boston University School of Theology with a Masters of Divinity in 2014 and from Harvard in 2016 with a Masters of Theological Studies in Comparative Religions. This fall, he will return to BU to begin doctoral work in practical theology. During the past year, Hyunwoo served the United Church of Walpole, UCC as their Director of Christian Education. They have recommended him to us with great enthusiasm. During his time in Walpole, Hyunwoo came to love the United Church of Christ for our progressive theology and our open and affirming and inclusive attitudes. He intends to pursue ordination in the UCC and hopes to eventually serve a church as a Pastor and Scholar.

Hyunwoo lives with his wife and 6 year old son in Belmont. He will begin serving with FCCR in mid-August. His schedule is yet to be established, but he will be with us 18-20 hours per week, including Sunday mornings. Please join the Learning Ministry in welcoming Hyunwoo, and enjoy his personal introduction which follows.

Many Blessings!

Lisa

### ***...put your hands, big and small, together now, and pray***

*As we go to press the folks charged with making sure that having Hyunwoo with us will jeopardize neither his standing as a foreign student, nor ours as a church, are finding mixed messages from various authorities. We pray that the outcome will be positive for all involved. Until we have a final reading, this is the good news we have been hoping for...*



I am more than honored and excited to join this beloved community of the First Congregational Church of Reading UCC! Since I first emailed Pastor Lisa several weeks ago, I have met about a half dozen people at FCCR and realized ALL of them are kind, warm, passionate, creative, and energetic. This makes me impatient to wait a couple more weeks to meet all the other friends in Reading who must be amazing.

I am particularly thrilled to serve the children and families of FCCR with the great Learning Ministry team. I strongly believe that children and families are not only the future for their communities but also one of the most important pillars of the current church body. Thus, the educational programs and activities for them cannot be over-emphasized. Based on this belief, I dream of a family-centered ministry that benefits and nurtures the

whole congregation. Fortunately, I have learned that the members of the Learning Ministry share the same belief and that at FCCR you all are even in the stage of actualizing the dream we share. I hope my educational and cultural background and experiences can nourish and support the wonderful programs for children and families at FCCR.

I am fresh and flexible. I am open to all and seek to be accessible. Most of all, I cannot wait to make friends with all of you at FCCR who are spiritually young and called as a "child" of God.

Faithfully, Hyunwoo Koo

(Continued from page 1) that end a team was formed to study each one of our staff positions, the need for, possible cost savings that might result from either reduction or elimination, as well as church family members' response to any reductions or cuts. Plans for the team's work have been formulated.

A number of actions are on-going as a result of our reading of the building report. It is clear we are not in a position to implement many of the changes suggested, but there are things we can do—and we are. Guerilla gardeners have been busy planting freebie annuals at the Chapel entry way. Weeds are being yanked up. Shrubs are being trimmed back. The privet hedge by the Chapel entry has been cleaned out, and thought is being given to further actions next spring. The tree outside of the office is un-well, and will likely be taken down in the fall. Inside work is under-way as well. We picked up an extra wheel chair after the fire so now have three: they are located at the Chapel, the rear of the sanctuary, and the Pilgrim Hall closet. Bulletin boards and content are being evaluated. Conversations are continuing about altering the “vibe” of the interior Chapel entry way. The Conference Room contents have been re-organized. The A/V closet in room 17 will soon be re-organized so as to allow for storage as needed. Cabinets in the kitchen are being reevaluated for ease of use for coffee hour and sharing with CAK. The property folks are at work considering a change in flooring outside of the Chapel.

As you can see, a lot is happening. Your prayers in these efforts are welcome, as well as your help as you are able. (See below.) WE are the church!

## The 2017 FAIRE!

### The Actions Continue...

#### Can you help with decluttering?

Specific tasks can be identified and you can take your pick! Please contact Joan Kingston, jrjak68@hotmail.com.



#### Communal weeding makes for good times!

Mark your calendar now for Sat. August 19th and/or 26th. We want to weed (and maybe add some plants to) the hill in front of the church on Woburn Street. This is a big job as the weed roots are deep...just like our faith. Bring along a trowel and/or a shovel. We are scheduling work from 8:30—11:30 am each day. Questions? Contact Gay Williams, ggwill@aol.com



The 2017 Faire is underway! There was a lively planning meeting this Spring with a healthy exchange of ideas. Keep your eyes open for another meeting this Summer.

There is so much that is great about the Faire, but let us take a few minutes to point out some changes for this year. First, the dates for this year's faire are Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 5-8pm, and Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> 10am-2pm. Note the earlier end time for Friday night.

In an effort to maximize foot traffic, it has been suggested that we move the Silent Auction to share space with dining tables in Dining and Guild Hall. In addition, the Midway could be moved to Guild Hall. This would free up the Chapel for use by the White Elephant, plus the Library, Atrium and Conference Room.

There is a strong desire to have a Used Sports Equipment area, concentrating on selling used items at good prices to families. If you have can help with this, please let us know!

One thing that never changes is the need for volunteers. Make sure your calendar is clear so that YOU can participate in this annual fellowship event. Attend the meetings, share your ideas and energy, sort White Elephant, bake for the Bake Table, help staff an area during the Faire. The possibilities are endless. Contact Betsy at [betsyschneider7@gmail.com](mailto:betsyschneider7@gmail.com) or any Faire Chair.

## Summer Worship at FCCR UCC

### July 23 – Summer Sunday in the Chapel

Preacher & Prayers: Rev. Richard Nystrom

Music: Linda & Keith Pedersen with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### July 30 – “Let’s Talk” and Hymn Sing Sunday in the Chapel

Conversation Facilitator & Prayers: Rev. Lisa

Music: Trumpets Craig Vickery & Deidre Ryan with Jill on piano

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### August 6 – Summer Sunday with Communion in the Chapel

Preacher & Prayers: Rev. Lisa

Music: The Pedersen Family with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### August 13 – Summer Sunday in the Chapel

Preacher & Prayers: Renee Manning

Music: Jane McCord & her Dad with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### August 20 – Summer Sunday in Chapel – DIY Style

Preacher & Prayers: Rev. Lisa

Music: Jennifer Souza with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### August 27 – Summer Sunday in Chapel – DIY Style

Preacher & Prayers: Rev. Lisa

Music: Meg Bond with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer

### September 3 – Summer Sunday with Communion in the Chapel

Preacher & Prayers: Rev. Lisa

Music: Larry Piper with Jill Lauterwasser

Punch & Fellowship in the Foyer



### Upcoming Worship Dates of Interest:

Sunday, September 10 – Welcoming One and All on Reading Street Fair Day

Sunday, Sept. 17 – Welcoming Sunday in the Sanctuary with Church School, Nursery and Full Programming

Sunday, Sept. 24 – Worship on the Olde Reading Faire Weekend

**Pledge envelopes are available on the table across from Rev. Lisa's office. If you have not yet picked yours up, please do.**

**THE FAIRE IS COMING!  
FRI, SEPTEMBER 22 AND  
SAT, SEPTEMBER 23RD.  
WHAT WILL YOU DO TO  
SUPPORT IT?**

## Mission Thank You



Thanks to all who helped the Mission Ministry support the Emmaus Inc. Cycle for Shelter on July 23. We were able to make a \$100 donation to a rider in the cycling challenge, our own Steve Viegas. In addition, we took the fixings for a picnic supper up to the Emmaus family shelter that day. (The regular staff was busy off-site helping with the ride.) We provided a ham, potato salad, coleslaw, watermelon, drinks, and baked goodies. Special thanks to all who contributed the goodies, including Joan Kingston, Shirley Osborne, and Margot Habel.

## UCC Mission Ministry...Did you know?

- As Hurricane Matthew raked Florida's Daytona Beach area last October, it threw trees onto houses and even rolled the roofs off many mobile homes. Many people have been living under plastic tarps since then, unable to afford repairs. Three dozen homes are ready or nearly ready for volunteer work teams.
- UCC Disaster Ministries has partnered with VIND (Volusia Interfaiths/Agencies Networking in Disasters) to assist Daytona Beach area households damaged by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 to repair/rebuild homes, e.g. roofing, gutting interiors, replacing insulation, siding, drywall repair and painting, flooring and other interior work as needed.
- UCC Disaster Ministries has partnered with the Fuller Center For Housing in Louisiana to help residents return home following historic and catastrophic flooding in August of 2016. Thousands of residents still live in temporary housing struggling to rebuild their lives.

*And that's just some of what's happening here. Your gifts to mission support these projects as well as others, both in the US and beyond.*

*Some people would rather debate doctrine or beliefs or tradition or interpretation than actually do what Jesus said. It's not rocket science. Just go do it. Practice loving a difficult person or try forgiving someone. Give away some money. Tell someone thank you. Encourage a friend. Bless an enemy. Say, "I'm sorry." Worship God. You already know more than you need to know.*

John Ortberg

Dear FCCR friends,

Thank you so much for thinking of me during my recent hospital stay. Thanks to Lisa for the lovely visit and thanks to Gay for the pretty flowers. I hope Larry will get me out of the house and back to church soon!

Fondly, Hazel Piper

Reverend Stedman,

Just a note to say thank you to you and your members for all the hospitality and kindness that you gave to the residents of the Old Reading Schoolhouse in our time of need. Very comforting when we needed it the most. A true sense of community.

With kind regards,  
Paul Pustorino

Thank you....

I want to thank you for all the prayers and support you sent to my dear friend Ken Logan and myself over the past year. It meant so much to both of us.

Sincerely, Carol Barnes



## Flowers for June and July

June 4 - Flowers given in loving memory of my husband Arthur Knapp and our parents, Arthur and Eva Knapp and James & Grace Carter given by Lorna Knapp

June 11 - Flowers given in loving memory of our mother Dorothy given by Robert, Karen, and Stephen Dodge

June 18 - Flowers given in loving memory of my father John Ballentine, and in celebration of all fathers given by Deidre Ryan

June 25 - In Thanksgiving for friends and anniversaries given by Joan and Joe Kingston

July 9 - Flowers given in loving memory of Edward Gazarian and Harriet Edwards given by Mrs. Gazarian and family

July 16 - Flowers given in loving memory of my husband Jim Russell given by Marilyn Russell

July 24 - Flowers given in loving memory of Virginia Vickery given by Craig and Linda Vickery as well as in loving memory of our parents and grandparents by the Maitland and Schneider families

July 30 - Flowers given in loving memory of Tom Ofenstein given by Sharon Ofenstein