

# First Church News



## October 2021 Newsletter

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## From the Minister's Desk

On our “Homecoming Sunday” I mentioned in my sermon an idea from a book I was reading on grief. The book is called *A Time To Grieve: Meditations for Healing After the Death of a Loved One*. I recommend this book to anyone in whatever season of grief they are in. Each page offers a statement or thought (this one I mentioned in church says “I want things to return to normal, to be as they were before”) followed by a quote and brief reflection. When I read the above statement, I thought “how fitting” for the kind of grief and loss we are all experiencing with the pandemic. We wish things were back-to-normal, but we also ask the question “what is normal, anyway?”



The quote the author chose to accompany this statement comes from an ancient thinker, Herakleitos: “One cannot step twice into the same river, for the water which you first stepped has flowed on.” The author continues this idea by saying “Our lives are fluid. Relationships are fluid. Everything about us is in constant motion. That is the nature of life ... The life that is remaining is in motion, having been transformed by our loss.”

We still feel many kinds of grief and loss from the pandemic (hoping to worship as we once did or have coffee hour like we used to) and simultaneously, we’ve discovered new joys and nuances to our “changed” lives (those who can join us for worship online from far away, creativity and

flexibility in an adapted Faire).

What else will we learn when we look forward instead of backwards, when the craving for “normal” can take a backseat and we let our identity as an ever-evolving, always-in-motion, still-speaking church take the driver’s seat?

*Rev. Emelia*

## October News

### October Sunday Worship

**October 3rd at 10AM**- World Communion Sunday and Baptism of Neive Connelly ; All Church meeting

**October 10th at 10AM** - “What is church?” continues with Mark 10:17-31 “The first will be last and the last will be first”; Blessing of the Animals at 1PM

**October 17th at 10AM** - Guest Preacher Sunday

**October 24th at 10AM** - The Handbell Ensemble plays

**October 31st at 10AM** - a special “Halloween” inspired worship service

**Everyone is welcome even if you cannot attend in person - each week Worship will continue to be shared on Facebook and Zoom.**

Can’t make it? Worship will be live streamed and posted online by 12 PM on Sundays!

[Click here to watch past Worship Services](#)

### October Programming

#### All Church Meeting: October 3rd

Sunday October 3, 2021 - After worship, we will hold a congregational meeting (don’t worry, it should be brief!) The congregation will nominate and vote with approval on a “Discernment Team” to do the discernment on behalf of the congregation about next steps as our Designated Term comes to an end in 2022. This is a term not only for our pastor, but also for us as a church. This team should ask thoughtful and prayerful questions about where God is calling our church to go in the next 5-10 years. Who are we? What do we need in a pastor during these years? This group will have guiding questions for prayer, meetings, and conversation.

They may select one of the following as a path forward (this is where Designated Term is different from other types of pastor searches):

- offer Rev. Emelia Attridge a settled call to serve the church as pastor and teacher (meaning no term limits);
- decide that we should extend the Designated Term to complete the goals that were established for the first 3 years -- term may be extended for whatever period of time it takes to accomplish any goals necessary (in which case, the team will recommend that the church extend the call agreement and term with Rev. Emelia Attridge to a specified date);

- having assessed the church's needs, the team may decide that it is time we search for a new minister (perhaps with specific skills, experience, etc.) and recommend the church begin a search process for a new settled minister.

When that team has reached a Spirit-led consensus, it will request Coordinating Ministry to establish a second congregational meeting. At such meeting, the church will listen to the recommendation of the Search Team and vote upon next steps.

Prayerfully submitted on behalf of Coordinating Ministry,  
Barbara Philbrick, Moderator  
Rev. Emelia Attridge, Designated Term Minister

Click the button below to view the warrant for the meeting. Contact the church office at [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org) with any questions.

[Click Here to View the Warrant](#)

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## Olde Redding Express 2021



This past Saturday was a joyful day at FCCR. Volunteers arrived early to set up booths on the lawn. Signs were erected for each activity. The kitchen wizards were busy packing up the food they had prepared the day before. Bakers dropped off their treats at the Bake Table. Jewelry twinkled in the (hallelujah!) sunlight. Beautiful note cards and mums were displayed for sale. The Silent Auction had a sampling of items to pique people's interest. And our newest booth, Puzzles, was piled high with donations of jigsaw puzzles. And then the best thing happened: People started arriving! A steady stream of old and new friends browsed and shopped at the booths, and picked up their food and goodies orders. It felt almost like a "real" Faire!

There will be a meeting soon to discuss what we have learned from the last two Express/Faires and what future Faires might look like. Financial reporting will be available on the 2021 Faire once all expenses have been tallied, but preliminary reports look promising. Thank you to everyone for supporting the Faire and our church community!

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## Blessing of the Animals: October 10th



# Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, Oct. 10  
1 PM on the Church Lawn



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## How Can I Keep from Singing?: Hymn Study



**New monthly series begins October 17th!  
11:15AM-12PM in the Sanctuary or on Zoom.**

Each month, beginning on October 17 at 11:15am different church members will lead a meditation session using favorite hymns! We'll gather for about 45 minutes and look in depth at the theology and spirituality present in some of our favorite hymns. For this first session, our Minister of Music, Rev. Chad Kidd will also include a little teaching about the mechanics of hymns and their tunes and why singing is so important to Protestant faithful life and worship! Join us in person in the Sanctuary OR online via zoom.

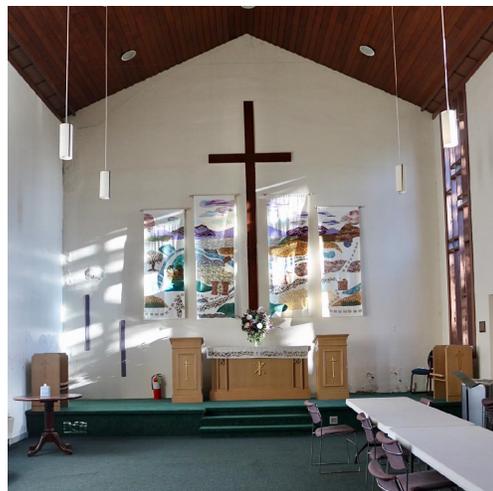
All are welcome.

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## Exploring Spiritual Practices: October 28th at 7PM

During the next few months, FCCR will offer a series of workshops for adults interested in exploring spiritual practices that can support their own faith formation. Each workshop will focus on a different practice, then move to trying it out and reflecting on the experience. Hopefully, you'll add at least one new practice that speaks to you.

At the first workshop, we'll explore ways to read, understand, and apply Bible passages. Reading scripture is foundational to faith, but it can be challenging! Cathy Zeek will share some strategies that others have used and adapted, and that can add depth to your own scripture reading. Because this will be an interactive workshop, we will meet in person at FCCR, with masks in place. If you need to join by Zoom, let the office know so we can look into logistics.



**Join us on October 28, from 7:00-8:00PM.** The specific room will depend on how many people plan to attend, so please RSVP to [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org).

Blood Drive: October 8th from 2PM - 7PM



## Reading Community Blood Drive

Sponsored by  
First Congregational  
Church

# Friday, Oct. 8

2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Go to [www.redcross.org/give-blood](http://www.redcross.org/give-blood) to sign up for an appointment or call 1 (800) 733-2767.

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## Women 'n' Stitches Quilting Restarting!

Any sewists interested in creating simple quilts for the elderly or babies are invited to contact Joann Sanford (or the office). Meeting days and times will be determined by interest. All tools and materials are provided and we meet in the FCCR Conference Room.



## Calling All Fiber Artists!



The Yarning to Care Ministry (YtC) is starting in-person get togethers again. **Starting October 25, 2021, we will again meet every 4th Monday of the month from 7-8:30PM in the Parlor.** All knitters, crocheters, weavers or any other fiber crafters are welcome to join in the camaraderie of this group while creating handmade items. We'll even teach you!

YtC creates prayer shawls for those ill or in bereavement in our community. We also make baby blankets for the families who baptize their children at FCCR. Other projects include Heifer Marketplace, lap blankets, and hats and scarves for City Mission. Any questions, contact Joann Sanford (or the office)

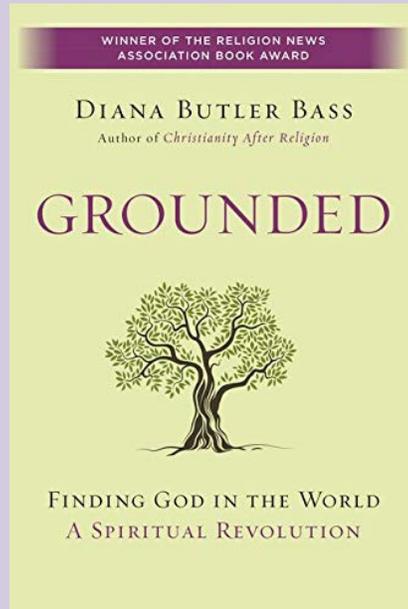
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## What's Book Group Reading?

The Book Group meets the first **Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM** .

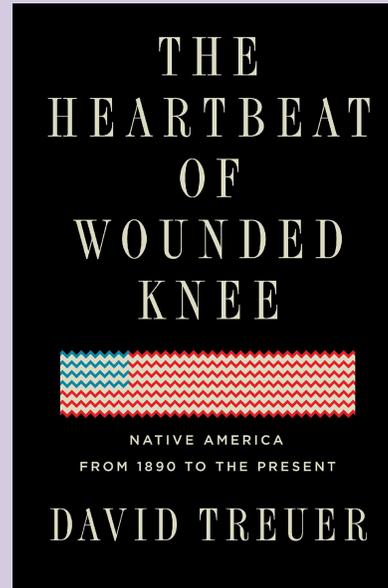
**Tuesday, October 5th**

*Grounded: Finding God in the World: A Spiritual Revolution* by Diana Butler Bass



**Tuesday, November 2nd**

*The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to Present* by David Treuer



## Trunk or Treat!

No tricks here! “Trunk or Treat” is a type of trick-or-treat event but instead of going house-to-house, people open up the trunks of their cars transforming the back of the car with candy and festive decorations. We’re taking on this idea with a twist to offer something *sweet* for all ages (yes, adults too!) on **Sunday, October 31, at 2PM**. Each trunk will feature a different mission partner of the church (Reading Food Pantry, Emmaus, etc) with information about each organization. Each trunk will have something *sweet* to take and an opportunity to *give something sweet* too! (Example, the Reading Food Pantry trunk will accept canned goods for the pantry). Come to learn more about our mission partners and have some spirited fun, too! But here’s where we need your help:

If you’re interested in “hosting” a trunk (as an individual, family, or church group) email Rev. Emelia at [emelia.attridge@churchofreading.org](mailto:emelia.attridge@churchofreading.org) by Sunday October 10. Stay tuned to E-New for more details!

## Sunday School & Youth Programming



## Sunday School meets this Sunday!

There is a space on the registration form to give permission for video and images to be taken of your child for Facebook, website, and other church promotional materials. If you do not want video or images of your child to be shared, please fill...



[Read more](#)  
[myemail.constantcontact.com](mailto:myemail.constantcontact.com)

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## Volunteer to Participate in Church!

### Donating Altar Flowers

Would you like to donate an Altar Flower arrangement in celebration or in honor of a loved one, event, anniversary, or just to beautify our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings? Email [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org) or click the button below to arrange which Sunday you'd like to contribute towards.

Click Here to Schedule a  
Sunday

### Flower Delivery

We're also looking for volunteers to deliver flowers on Sundays to someone who could use some cheer. Sign up on the whiteboard outside Rev. Emelia's office or email [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org).

### Coffee Hour Hosts

Seeking volunteers to help set up and organize Coffee Hour. If you're baking treats, we ask that they be individually packaged (or bring single-serve pre-packaged snacks). Anything that isn't used up can be stored for the next week as well. Water bottles or other single-serve drinks are helpful too. Volunteers may need to check the supply in the kitchenette to see what is available. Sign up on the whiteboard outside Rev. Emelia's office or email [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org).

Click here for Coffee Hour or Greeter Sign  
Ups

### Digital Usher

We're also looking for "Digital Ushers" who can help out with Zoom (and Zoom Coffee Hour). If you're someone who worships at home, consider volunteering for a few Sundays!

### Bells, Choir, Musicians

Interested in playing the bells, joining the choir, or playing an instrument during worship? Email Rev. Chad Kidd or contact the office.

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## Office Volunteers Needed

If you have an hour or two to help in the church office, please let us know. A one time or regular gig would be greatly appreciated. Duties would include folding bulletins, filing, and greeting visitors. Call or email the office to volunteer, **781-954-0205** or [office@churchofreading.org](mailto:office@churchofreading.org).

Admin Team (Linda Ananian, Christine Georgilas, Joann Sanford)

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## Fall Clean Up Day: November 20th, 9AM-12PM

Gather with FCCR November 20th from 9AM to 12PM to help clean up



the church!

Between putting away air conditioners, raking leaves, and more - there will be tasks for all ages and abilities. Your help is greatly appreciated.



## Covid-19 Team Update

As transmission rates rise in our area, we are following the recommendation of the CDC and other leaders. The COVID team has, and continues, to follow guidance as well as thoughtful dialogue about what is best for our community and how we model safe decision-making as a church. Here are some updates moving forward this fall:

### **Masks will be worn indoors regardless of vaccination status.**

This is what the CDC recommends in areas of substantial or high transmission rates. Currently, we are

in a “high” zone.

### **Virtual worship: We will always offer a virtual component to worship including Zoom and Facebook Live.**

As our technology improves, we may see improvements and changes as well. In the meantime, you always have the option to worship at home.

### **In-person worship: Please bring your own mask (or a mask will be provided to you) when you attend worship indoors beginning September 19, 2021.**

We will be offering a diverse worship movement, or sign language when invited). We hope to allow singing for the closing hymn each week before we leave the space (unless transmission rate rises to “high” status). We hope for a decrease in case numbers and spread.

### **Coffee Hour:**

Zoom coffee hour will continue online for those gathered on Zoom. In-person, as long as the weather cooperates, you are welcome to participate as much as you feel comfortable and enjoy refreshments and conversation outdoors. Once a month, we try to offer an indoor social hour without food, so that we can have activities (such as our card ministry or another project) while still wearing a mask indoors. When it rains or becomes too cold for us to offer Coffee Hour outside, we will offer treats to-go.

As always, the COVID team is grateful for your continued support as we aim to thoughtfully consider the safety of our whole community. We also hope that vaccinations will increase, cases will go down, and that we will be able to still be together as a church while keeping one another safe.

Prayerfully submitted,  
The COVID Team

Rev. Emelia Attridge, Barbara Philbrick, Betsy Schneider, Mark Johnson, and Anastasia Kidd

## Collector's Notes

Contacting the Collector

Do you have a question about your pledge or donation? You can now contact FCCR's collector, Christine Georgilas, at her new email: [collector@churchofreading.org](mailto:collector@churchofreading.org).



## Looking for the Collector's Mailbox?

Dropping off a check to the Church Office? The new collector's box can be found to the right of the mailboxes on the counter.

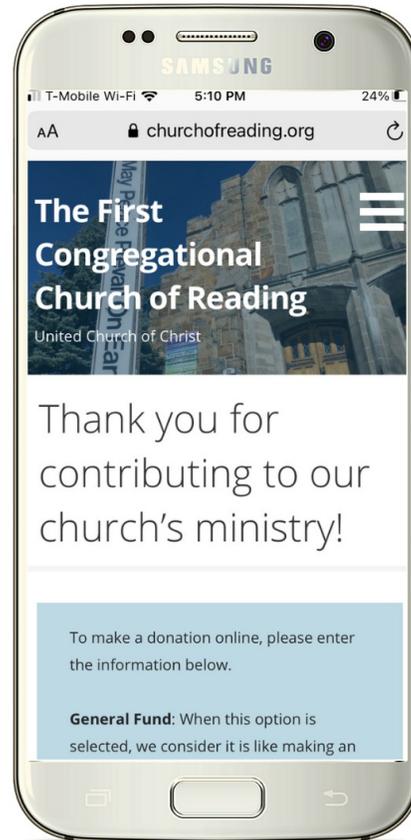
## Passing the Offering Plate: Online!

Give a gift online either as a debit/credit transaction or bank transfer on our online giving page on the church website at: [www.churchofreading.org/donate](http://www.churchofreading.org/donate).

These gifts will count as "Plate Offerings" which means that 85% of any gift made in this method goes to the general fund of the church and 15% goes towards benevolence. Don't worry: you can still send a check if that's preferred.

You can now **give** to the offering plate **via text message!** Send a text message to 781-355-1110, and enter the amount you'd like to give:

Example: Text "\$25" or "give \$25" to 781-355-1110



Click to make an offering online

## Community News

### Reading POWIR seeks support for Afghan Refugees

Reading POWIR (People Organized to Welcome Immigrants and Refugees -- <http://readingpowr.weebly.com/>) -- is quietly gearing up to help welcome and support some of the estimated 900-1,000 Afghans expected to be resettled in Massachusetts in coming weeks. These are people who were evacuated from their Taliban-controlled homeland this past August including many interpreters and their families who had supported our troops and feared reprisal by the Taliban. Because of the speed of the evacuation, the Afghan refugees are coming in through the Humanitarian Parole program, not the more lengthy Special Immigrant Visa program, which would have made them eligible for public benefits like food stamps. They are likely to be family groups, only some of whom will have any knowledge of English. The families may have nothing but the clothes on their backs and will need housing, financial support, and a variety of other services until they are able to secure jobs and begin to support themselves.

The refugees are currently housed on 8 military bases in the U.S., being processed and receiving medical care (including Covid vaccinations) in order to be released to a number of different resettlement agencies. It is not known exactly when the refugees will be released, but it could be at almost any time. Reading POWIR is currently in search of:

**FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS** to cover, rent, food and medical care for an extended period of time. If a family is not ultimately resettled in Reading, all funds will be used to support them in some other community. Contributions can be made on our GoFundMe page (<https://gofund.me/ab2a9361>), or by check, payable to “Church of the Good Shepherd” with “Afghan Refugees” on the memo line, and sent to Reading POWIR, P.O. Box 225, Reading, MA 01867. Or contribute directly at <https://www.goodshepherdreading.org> A “Donate” link allows you to specify “Afghan Refugees”.

**HOUSING** – a 2 or 3-bedroom apartment costing \$1600-\$2,000/month, which could be in any city or town north of Boston, such as Reading, Stoneham, East Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, etc. We have a lead on a low-cost option for the first six months but will certainly need another place in the spring of 2022.

**To learn more, please consider attending the weekly organizational meetings on Thursdays from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Community Center behind St. Agnes Church on Woburn Street in Reading, and ‘like’ or join our Facebook Page.** Reading POWIR is a non-denominational group of individuals and representatives from area churches who came together under the aegis of Catholic Charities (itself a certified non-profit resettlement agency) in 2017 to welcome a group of Ethiopian refugees, who now live independently in various parts of the country. This new need is a compelling one, and we welcome aid and contributions from all interested people.

## Gratitude Corner

Thank you so much for both hosting and performing, or recruiting performers, for this year's PorchFest. It was a great weekend, and we couldn't have done it without you.

We've gotten great feedback from spectators..

We hope you'll consider joining us again next year.

For now, again thanks for everything.

Alan, Ace & and Amanda  
The PorchFest Committee



Jiri sends us greetings from the Czech Republic:

I will not be able to join today's service but already sent few prayers to Reading community from a nice church on my road. Its Basilica Minor in Hejnice. A beautiful Franciscan monastery in Czech (see pictures).



## Deacon Meeting

We met at Meg's home and had dinner first. Thanks Meg!

We spent most of the time reviewing the 2021/2022 worship planning calendars.

Emelia proposed a couple new ideas not on the calendars - hymn history, and a simple worship service every month that's not on a Sunday morning.

Worship ideas discussed:

- Blessing of the animals
- Sustainability update
- Jan/Feb - stewardship
- Brunch church - possibly late spring 2022
- Nov 7 - baptism - possibly add a "river" theme
- Oct 31 - pumpkins/jack o lanterns?

Emelia provided a quick tech update - FCCR purchased a new PC that should make remote worship easier. Also, she indicated we will probably need to get other folks involved with tech to help out Paul/Gibson/Kelley.

We came up with candidates to ask about joining deacons and will be reaching out.



## Mission Ministry

### CWS School Kit Thank You!

You'll recall we shipped off over thirty school kits to Church World Service in late August. Recently we got a thank you postcard. It reads as follows:

*You provided CWS Kits and because of you - more families found real comfort during heartbreaking situations. In the wake of a disaster, your gift showed others they were not*

*alone...your love is making the hard times easier.*

The card notes that the photo is from North Carolina where hurricane impacted children received school kits thanks to donors like FCCR.

## Sustainability Team

Sustainability Meetings have been happening throughout the summer, including the "executive" team, made up of the "original" sustainability team members, who help to provide communication and steer the other groups. The Arts Team has created a survey to be shared with arts and community groups to receive feedback on groups' needs to help inform what kind of renovations will be useful. The Building Team has been meeting to assess, vision, and discuss the types of work that need to be done in the building (including projects that Property is working on, as well as dreaming up possibilities as well as assessing issues, for example, accessibility). The group has also identified some projects that might be worth pursuing with a volunteer "work group" prior to a major renovation. The last group, a Capital Team, still needs more members to join. A major project will include learning about different types and styles of capital campaigns. The groups will all come together for a joint meeting on Sunday, October 31 after church.

## Congregational Care Ministry

During the last year, Gay Williams helped take on Card Ministry so it could still continue when we weren't meeting in person. We're glad to share that it returns in-person on the third Sunday of the month during coffee hour. Take a minute to write a card after church, or if you can't stick around, you can take an addressed & stamped envelope with a card to-go so you can write something and put it in the mail that week.

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## Property Committee

Property Team met in August to discuss projects for the year. The new boiler has been installed, and two big projects discussed included a new bulkhead and replacing a severely damaged window (above the pastor's office flat roof in the stairwell adjacent to the office facing Woburn Street). Plans were made to be in contact with contractors to get more information on windows as well as the masonry to address moisture issues (especially the wall in the sanctuary where we see the plaster damage).

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## Dates to Remember for October

<b>Sunday October 3rd</b> 8:30AM Choir Rehearsal 10AM Sunday Worship 11AM All Church Meeting	<b>Sunday October 10th</b> 8:30AM Choir Rehearsal 10AM Sunday Worship 1PM Blessing of the Animals	<b>Sunday October 24th</b> 8:30AM Choir Rehearsal 10AM Sunday Worship 1PM UUCR & FCCR Multifaith Youth Group
<b>Monday October 4th</b> 7PM Coordinating	<b>Wednesday October 13th</b> 6PM Care Ministry 7PM Hand-bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>Monday October 25th</b> 6:30PM Yarning to Care
<b>Tuesday October 5th</b> 7:30PM Book Group	<b>Sunday October 17th</b> 8:30AM Choir Rehearsal 10AM Sunday Worship 11AM Card Ministry 11:15AM Hymn Study	<b>Wednesday October 27th</b> 7PM Hand-bell Choir Rehearsal
<b>Wednesday October 6th</b> 7PM Hand-bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>Monday October 18th</b> 6:45PM Deacons Meeting 7PM Finance Team	<b>Thursday October 28th</b> 7PM Exploring Spiritual Practice
<b>Friday October 8th</b> 2PM-7PM Blood Drive	<b>Wednesday October 20th</b> 7PM Hand-bell Choir Rehearsal	<b>Sunday October 31st</b> 8:30AM Choir Rehearsal 10AM Sunday Worship 12PM Sustainability Progress Meeting 2PM Trunk or Treat

## November Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit articles is [October 22nd](#) to the office.

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**First Congregational Church of Reading, UCC**  
[Our Website](#)

