



**First Congregational
Church of Reading**

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Dear friend of First Congregational Church of Reading,

The term “Halo Effect” in the non-profit sector describes the economic and social impact of an institution on its local community. If we were to begin to measure the Halo Effect of First Congregational Church, where would we begin?

- 255 years ago, when the members of our community petitioned the colony for a third parish, and in doing so, established our town?
- In the 19th Century, when the women of our church founded one of the earliest abolitionist groups in the country?
- In the 20th century, with one of the first kindergartens in Reading, and how the members of this church provided equitable housing for the elderly and disabled when they built Peter Sanborn Place?

Or would we start the Halo “clock” so-to-speak just in the 20th century? In which case, we’d include how our church has been the home to:

- 45 years of music, theatre, and arts lessons with Creative Arts
- Countless annual art shows for the community, and monthly artist demonstrations with the Reading Art Association
- Over 1500 rehearsals and performances with the Reading Community Concert Band and the Middlesex Concert Band, which build community through music
- Ballerinas who grow up to perform for the New York City Ballet after first learning in our halls as an annex to Northeast School of Ballet
- Over 50 years of weekly AA meetings, and other self-help groups
- MLK Jr Days of Service, bringing our community together to help each other
- Countless funds and items collected for local food pantries, school kits, meals for the homeless, toys for children, linens for Emmaus emergency shelter, refugee re-housing efforts, and dozens of other outreach partners both at home and abroad
- Celebrations of Hanukkah for our Jewish neighbors, and providing a place for our new Muslim neighbors for Friday prayers as recently as this summer

All this is in addition to our vibrant Sunday worship and life of faith as a church. It’s because of our faith that, since its foundation, our church has dedicated efforts to support this community. Our **Building for Now and the Future Capital Campaign** seeks to build on that firm foundation, and to steward and improve this building for our community for the years to come. We are dedicated to preserving and maintaining a safe and welcoming space for the entire community.

I hope that you will join me in making a gift to our Capital Campaign to help fund this future. I know the gift I make today will sustain a roof over the heads of generations of ballerinas, trumpet players, pianists, and painters who will find sanctuary in the center of our community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Emelia Attridge

Settled Minister, First Congregational Church of Reading United Church of Christ