



The Spire

February 2024

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church of Hanover, United Church of Christ

Rev. Peter Johnston
Senior Pastor

Chad Weirick
Minister of Music

Elsa Marshall
Minister of Faith Formation

Kim Engle
Field Ed. Student 2023-2024

Kristyn Falcione
Youth Director

Susan Vetterlein
Office Administrator

Karen Tripp
Sexton

Jim Millins
Facilities Steward

Valerie Fink
Bookkeeper

OUR VISION STATEMENT

We strive to be a church that welcomes all and empowers all in Christ to share their God-given talents.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of inclusive love that has no walls or barriers, where all who enter are loved, respected, and accepted for who they are, reaching beyond social class, gender, race and sexual orientation, welcoming all into our circle of love. We are a community of growth and transformation that is not content with the status quo but a community filled with the love and compassion of Christ, and an overwhelming desire to share that love. We are a community committed to not only praying together, on Sunday mornings, but putting our faith into action daily.

Paddling Like Ducks on a Pond

Dear Friends,

Last year, we celebrated Advent and the birth of our savior, Jesus. We lit candles, staged our first brown bag Christmas pageant, sang Christmas carols and celebrated Christmas Eve with our traditional candlelight service.



During this time, another story took place right here at the church. Like ducks serenely gliding across a pond, a group of people was hard at work. Calm on the top, with feet paddling furiously underneath.

Our finance board, led by Deb Springhetti, with tremendous assistance by our now past-moderator Jim Hoyes, conducted an audit, and has begun implementing the suggestions made by our auditor, Alison Hughan. During this time, we welcomed the church bookkeeper, Valerie Fink.

Also running in the background was the production of the annual report for 2023, which was collected and laid out by Deb Zawalich, and the nomination of officers, boards and committees of the church.

I am grateful to everyone who engaged in this work on behalf of the church. I look forward to working with our officers, boards, and committees as we glide along into 2024.

With blessings in the new year,

Rev. Peter Johnston,
Senior Pastor

Note: Because of the Ash Wednesday Service, there will not be a Minister's Tea in February. Join us next month, on Wednesday, March 13 at 3:00 p.m. in the vestry.



Expense Reimbursements

All expenses submitted for reimbursement require an itemized receipt (i.e., not a summary receipt with a total amount and not a non-itemized printout from a seller such as Amazon Prime).

Staff should submit expenses for reimbursement monthly starting in January 2024. Board members, committees members, or church members with an out-of-pocket expense requiring reimbursement should submit the receipt promptly (meaning in the month it was incurred, if possible). Examples of this could be books for Bible Study, a CE curriculum material expense, mileage for a Youth event, or a food purchase receipt related to an approved church event.

Once properly submitted, our bookkeeper will strive to release an expense reimbursement check within 1-2 weeks.

Moving ahead in 2024, we will strive to improve the quality and frequency of financial reporting, and manage cash accounts on a more timely basis. Timely and accurate expense reporting helps us achieve that goal.

Thank you.



First Congregational Church of Hanover has lots of opportunities to participate in the various ministries of the church:

Lay Reader: Share God's Word

Greeter: Welcome and provide bulletin

Coffee Hour Host: Make the coffee and provide a snack. Get a friend to help set up and clean up!

Flowers: Remember and honor someone by underwriting the chancel flowers

Please let us know how you would like to help by filling out a SERVE card, found in the pews, or adding your name to the lists found at coffee hour.



Sharing Stories

Do you have a short story of an event in your life when you felt there was something larger than yourself at work? Personal stories of this nature can have a powerful affect on a community of faith.

The Diaconate would like you to share your personal story to the congregation as part of the worship service.

If you would like to share your story, contact Hal Thomas at halhanover@msn.com or 781-826-7952.



Dedication of the Don White Livestream Studio Sunday, February 11, 2024

For many years, Don White was the church's tech person. Throughout the pandemic, Don faithfully recorded our church services and made them available online to the congregation at a time when we weren't.

Don passed into rest suddenly in September of 2021, after battling Parkinson's and Myasthenia Gravis for 2 years.

Since then, through the generosity of the White family, a new, state-of-the-art broadcast studio has been installed.

Please join us on Sunday, February 11, 2023 at 9:30 a.m., as we dedicate the studio to the glory of God, and in loving memory of Don White, a true servant of the church. Eric Elley, the Tech Deacon for the Southern New England Conference of the UCC, will be our guest preacher.



Lasagna Fundraiser

Brought to you by The Faith Filled Kitchen

Order a tray of cheesy deliciousness for you or someone you love. The cost is \$30.

Here's how it works:

ORDER: Sunday 1/28 & Sunday 2/4

PICK-UP: Saturday 2/10 between 3:00 - 4:00

Superbowl Sunday 2/11 after church

Take a break or make someone's day...leave the work to us. Simply heat & serve.

If you'd like to help out, contact Adrienne Rafferty (adrraf@verizon.net) to prepare the lasagnas on Saturday, February 10 in the morning at Riley Hall.



We Support the Hanover Food Pantry

The Hanover Food Pantry is low on the following items. You may leave your donations in the church coatroom or just inside the back door of Riley Hall (Thrift Shop entrance).

Cranberry juice	Pickles	Diced tomatoes
White rice	Tea bags	
Rice pilaf	Ketchup	Canned fruit
Crackers/snacks	Mustard	K-cup coffee
	Beef and	Pancake mix
Salad dressing	Chicken broth	



Blanket the World in Love ♥

In February you can purchase a blanket for just \$10 in support of Church World Service Blanket ministry. These blankets can be used to provide warmth, shelter (tent), carrying items, etc. for our neighbors in need who may have experienced homelessness or a natural disaster. Blankets can be purchased beginning February 4th in the Church vestry. In exchange for your donation you will receive a Valentine's Day card.

Teaching Parish



This January, Kim Engle, our student minister, began her second semester among us. In that time, she has capably preached, led worship, visited, and been a wonderful presence to those of us in Hanover.

In February, she will present her ordination paper to the Committee on Ministry. This is one of a few very important last steps on her path to ordination. Following that, we expect that she will present her paper to ministers and lay people from the Pilgrim Association. At that time, participants can ask any questions about Kim's theology and her preparedness for ordained ministry. And finally, if she passes this examination, she will be ordainable pending call, allowing her to interview with churches seeking a minister. FINALLY, Kim will be ordained into the Christian ministry, by the grace of God, by the Pilgrim Association.

We give thanks to God for sending Kim to us, and we look forward to walking with her on the path to ordained ministry. We will let you know about her progress, and we continually pray for her.

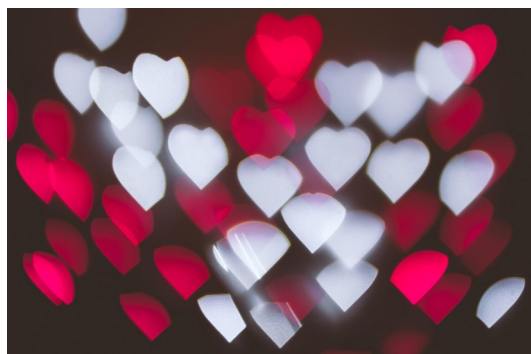
Valentine's with the Moonlighters Women's Group



The Moonlighter's February meeting will be at Riley Hall on Wednesday, February 21 at 7:00 pm. This will be a craft night.

Remember that Moonlighters will prepare the MainSpring meal on Sunday, February 4.

Youth Group News



Join in the Valentine's Day Social

Sunday, February 11th, 2024
6:00-7:30pm

- We will be discussing how love is a part of our faith.
- There will be a couple of crafts as well as games.
- Light refreshments will be provided!

All Middle School and High School Students are welcome to join at any time! You are also more than welcome to bring a friend! Please reach out to Kristyn Falcione (Youth Director) if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Her email address is kfalcione57@gmail.com.

Ash Wednesday Service and Soup Supper



The Lenten season starts on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We will begin our observance with a soup supper in the vestry at 6 pm. This will be followed by a service of confession and the imposition of ashes.

If you can contribute soup or bread, please contact Linda Gildardi at garygilardi@icloud.com.



A Message from the Moderator:

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 28th, the new slate of board and committee members was approved as noted in the 2024 Nominating Report.

Boards and committees should then plan to meet in February to complete the following, at a minimum:

- Elect a new chair or co-chairs
 - Review the Bylaw pertaining to that board or committee
 - Identify any cross-committee liaison appointments and select someone to fill that role
 - Share the approved 2024 budget
 - Set 2024 objectives
 - Set the meeting calendar for 2024
- We would like to have an updated roster of board, committee and liaison roles heading into the 1st Quarter 2024 Church Cabinet Meeting



Faith Formation

As we have waded through January and we settle into February I think of how January is always a recovery month from Advent and Christmas for me. In January the beginning of the year is when beginnings and endings overlap. Most beginnings have an intimate relationship to endings. Acceptance marks the closing of a cycle. The end is the point of arrival. Our winter will melt into spring. Spring embraces beginnings of new life and celebrations like Easter. Spring then waves her light green scarf in a sweet farewell as summer saunters, then swaggers in. Summer's abundance of gardens and blooms along with annual vacations leads into Autumn. The fall season shakes hands with summer, bows then turns with its basket of harvest into the shortening days and the rhythm of the seasons returns us to winter which will usher in another new year. The arrival of a new year comes with expectations like the birth of a new baby. We trust that something made mostly of goodness and possibility is always born anew at midnight on January 1. We are pilgrims in the new year.

For now, while we live wrapped in the cold and often snowy prayer shawl of February, may you find something bright and beautiful to frame the unfolding days. May you find quiet time, which is the natural rhythm of the season. May you dream of seed catalogs, which truly are the most wonderful metaphor I can think of for unabashed hope and longing. May we all listen in the silence to what is calling most powerfully to our spirits, minds and hearts as we open ourselves to the Lenten journey that will begin on Feb. 14th this year. May our spiritual practices during this time be rich and intentional. I love this quote which Hans Kung wrote decades ago but remains true: that "being a Christian is a particularly good thing." The Christian faith doesn't emerge overnight any more than a deep friendship does. The countless hymns, prayers, bible stories and passages, worship and the ongoing experiences of one's faith community becomes substance of the heart. It's vast and it's rich. Peter Marty says, "Faith is a deeply ingrained condition formed through steady habits, disciplined practices and reliable instincts that take shape over long stretches of

time. It's a way of life that acquires layers and contours incrementally, developing ever so gradually and often imperceptibly." This is how faith formation occurs. One of the great gifts of being a Christian is that our faith provides us a life that holds and sustains us through all kinds of seasons and circumstances.

This Lent I am going to practice "everyday spirituality." I am going to practice seeing God in whatever ordinary thing I am doing, whether it is washing dishes, going for a walk, or talking with a friend. I will also tend to my spiritual life by asking myself simple questions, like: Am I kind? Am I honest? Am I grateful for small things as well as big ones? Do I keep my promises? Do I do things for others as well as for myself? Do I forgive myself and others for all the faults and failures that come with being human? When I live in this simple way, I will beyond any doubt feel that God is present always and everywhere and that is something to treasure.

I offer you this prayer to use as part of your daily Lenten spiritual practices and prayers from the great church father Augustine of Hippo:

"Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy.

Guard me, O Holy Spirit, that I myself may always be holy.

Amen."

May your Lent be rich and full. May you see our loving God in everything you do and everyone you encounter.

Shalom with love always,

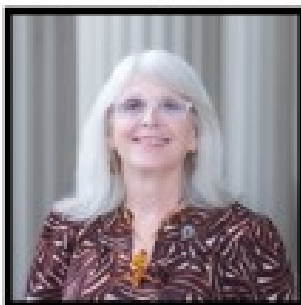
Elsa Marshall
Minister of Faith Formation

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish 6:00pm AA	2 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish	3 8:30am - 9:30am Tai Chi @ Classroom
4 Communion Sunday 9:30am Worship and Church School 10:30am Coffee Hour	5	6 1:00pm Girl Scouts 4:00pm SSCC 6:00pm Tai Chi 7:00pm Tigers	7 4:30pm - 6:00pm Brownies 7:30pm BigBook AA	8 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish 6:00pm AA	9 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish	10 8:30am - 9:30am Tai Chi @ Classroom 9:30am - 1:00pm Lasagna Prep @ Kitchen 1:00pm - 4:00pm Pack 37
11 9:30am Worship and Church School 10:30am Coffee Hour	12	13 4:00pm SSCC 6:00pm Tai Chi	14 Ash 6:00pm - 7:00pm Soup Supper @ Vestry 6:30pm Trustees 7:30pm BigBook AA	15 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish 4:30pm - 6:00pm Brownie 6:00pm AA	16 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish	17 8:30am - 9:30am Tai Chi @ Classroom
18 9:30am Worship and Church School 10:30am Coffee Hour	19 President's Day	20 4:00pm SSCC 6:00pm Tai Chi	21 7:00pm Finance 7:00pm Moonlighters 7:30pm BigBook AA	22 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish 6:00pm AA	23 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish	24 8:30am - 9:30am Tai Chi @ Classroom 2:00pm - 4:30pm Scouts-Bears
25 9:30am Worship and Church School 10:30am Coffee Hour	26	27 4:00pm SSCC 6:00pm Tai Chi	28 7:30pm BigBook AA	29 8:00am - 1:00pm CakeWish 6:00pm AA		

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization Housing Justice Campaign

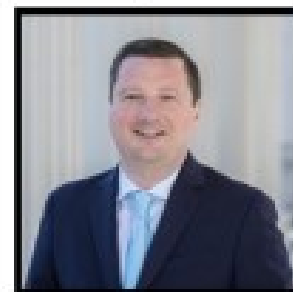
In-District Meeting February 8 | 6:30-8p



Senator Susan L. Moran
Plymouth + Barnstable Counties



Invited Representatives
Josh Cutler
David DeCoste
Patrick Kearney
Joan Meschino



Senator Patrick O'Connor
First Plymouth +
Norfolk Counties

**Please join GBIO for an In-District Meeting
with our state legislators.**

Thursday | Feb. 8 | 6:30-8:00pm

**Hosted by: UCC Norwell
460 Main Street | Route 123 | Norwell, MA**



Scan to REGISTER or visit
bit.ly/gbioidmoconnormoran

In-District Meetings bring constituents together to secure urgent commitments to housing justice, including:

- Repairing our State Owned Public Housing
- Securing more funding for housing creation using Transfer Fees
- Guaranteeing Access to Quality Housing for Returning Citizens

Pizza + Refreshments served prior to the meeting at 6:00pm. All are welcome.

For more information contact Susan Domey-Allen at sdomeyallen@gmail.com or Meg Clapp at margaretclapp0702@gmail.com.



The Spire

First Congregational Church of Hanover
United Church of Christ
17 Silver St., Suite 201
Hanover, MA 02339



The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 14. Join us for our Soup Supper in the Vestry at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship in the Sanctuary, with the imposition of ashes. See page 5.