

WEST STOCKBRIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

45 MAIN STREET, WEST STOCKBRIDGE, MA 01266

Open and Affirming

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

From the desk of Pastor Belle Fox-Martin

A Few Thoughts From Pastor Belle...

Welcome to February, the shortest month, the month that houses Valentine's Day, the month that gets us looking towards spring, the month of our Stewardship drive, the month we hope the virus numbers go down so that we can resume worshipping in our church, the month the Pastoral Search Committee will forge on with the church profile, the month when several of you are busy putting together the annual report... Phew, that's rather a lot for a month that has only 28 days! There is a lot going on but, then again, there is always a lot going on. I suppose our days are like February's weather - one day being blasted by snow and another day feeling that tiny hint of warmth in the sunshine... one day we feel overwhelmed by life and another day we feel totally in tune with everyone we encounter. One day we can't find God anywhere and another day we find him/her in every breath we take. And here's thing, what is held in all of these juxtapositions are blessings, all of those God given gifts for us to embrace/learn from/appreciate /hold up to the light... So, Welcome February and peace be with you.

There Is Joy In Giving

Maya Angelou, who is a wonderful author and poet, said: "When we cast our bread upon the waters we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our actions, as we who are downstream from another will profit from the grantor's gift."

We have benefited from those "upstream" - those who have come before us in the church whose contributions to the life of this church have endowed us for the ministry that we do.

The question that we need to ask ourselves is are we considering those who are “downstream” from us – in the coming year and in the years to come? Will we be creating a firm foundation for our continued mission and ministry?

Jesus summed up his ministry when he said: “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” In stewardship we are asked to put our pledges into the river to lift up and support our church down stream/in the coming fiscal year.

You will soon be receiving a stewardship pledge card in the mail. May I suggest that before you fill it out that you pause and ask God for guidance. What will you put in the river to be carried down stream? What bread will you cast upon the waters to sustain our church and grow its ministries?

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

4th Skip Johnson (remembered)
 6th Jan Leuchtenberger (remembered)
 11th Mary Zimmerman (remembered)
 11th Michael Harrigan
 13th Caitlin Graham
 17th Leo Fiorini (remembered)
 18th Marshall Ash
 20th Joanne Wodecki
 26th Pastor Patty Fox
 29th Maggie Farrell

Anniversaries

24th Skip & Pat Johnson

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 1st: 11am, Prayer Group at the West Stockbridge Town Hall

February 6th: 10am, Virtual Communion Sunday

February 15th: 11am, Prayer Group at the West Stockbridge Town Hall

February 20th: Newsletter submissions for March newsletter are due

February 27th: 11:15am, Church Council Meeting following worship service

**West Stockbridge Congregational Church
Corned Beef & Cabbage Take-Out Dinner**

45 Main Street, West Stockbridge

Thursday March 17, 2022 4pm to 6pm

\$14 per person

Includes slow-cooked corned beef, potatoes, carrots, wedge of cabbage, spicy mustard or horseradish sauce, and Irish soda muffin.

Call 413-454-0054 to reserve your dinner.

Deadline Sunday, March 13th

We accept cash, check, credit cards and Venmo!

Blessing

by Danna Faulds

*May grace abound
and ecstasy too. In the
fray of everyday life,
may you embody
your true nature.*

*May you breathe in
love and breathe out
love until love is your
only reality, even in
the midst of challenge.*

*May you not deny
difficulties or the
shadow side of life,
but find divine Presence
inside even the hardest
times. May miracles
come your way often -
and especially today.
Amen*

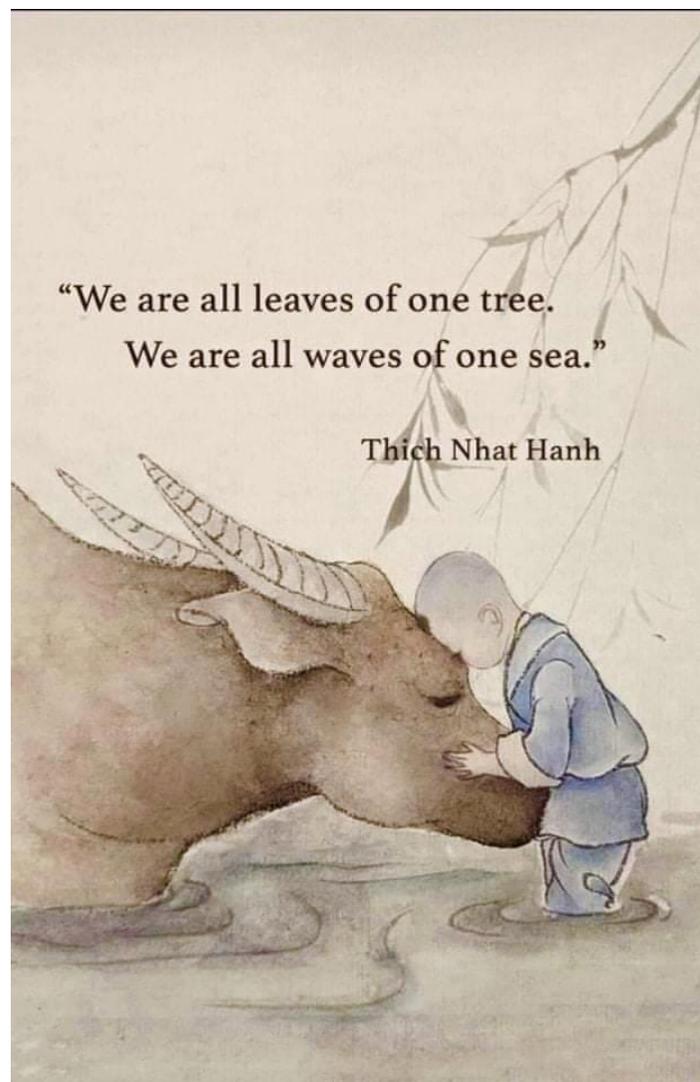
The church council has declared February as "Stewardship Month". We have been focused on other matters in the past few months, but now is the time to look forward -- finding a new pastor and financial matters. A preliminary 2022 budget has been prepared, and it reveals that costs will rise significantly this year. Most of you will soon be receiving a pledge form in the mail with a more detailed letter and return envelope. It is important that you return them as soon as possible so that we can plan for the year. I know we can depend on you financially and labor-wise.

Blessings for the New Year,
Janine Reid, Treasurer

Do you volunteer locally on your own time?

It has come to our attention that a number of our church members spend some time volunteering in the local community. As such, we thought it would be a fun challenge to document our hours and report them monthly, with a goal of our members spending 1000 total hours doing volunteer work in 2022! Together, we can make this a year of helping those around us!

Simply email Cait at wscongregationalchurch@gmail.com any time you have volunteer hours to report, and they'll be added to the total!





The West Stockbridge Congregational Church, UCC is collecting new and clean, gently used blankets for Western Mass Labor Action

Blankets can be dropped off in the blue bin beside the front door to the church, at 45 Main Street in West Stockbridge

All blanket donations are due by Sunday, February 20th.

Questions? Email Cait at wscongregationalchurch@gmail.com