

The Spire



August 2025

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

77 Main Street

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"We are a community in Christ, called to act with love toward our neighbors."

Pastor's Message August 2025

"...Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. For by it our elders were given a good report. Through faith, we understand that the world was ordained by the Word of God, so that the things which we see are not made of things which are visible...."
Hebrews 11:1-3



The rainbow pictured appeared just a few days ago, as we travelled to visit a loved one in hospital. Remembering the symbolism of the bow from Genesis 9 (*"...the bow shall be in the cloud, so that I may see it and remember the everlasting Covenant between God and every living thing, in all flesh that is upon the Earth."*), I was reminded of God's covenant, God's care for us made visible, and the hopeful sense this was "a good sign". In short, it gave "confidence of things hoped for".

The letter to the Hebrews, parts of which we'll be hearing each Sunday in August, contains exhortations to help us, now as then, keep faith on our journey together. The power of faith, and its ability to lift us beyond our doubts and hesitations, runs as a theme through the letter. That confidence of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen were crucial to the emerging church, and remain so today. Farmers and gardeners, in songwriter Stan Rogers' words, "Put another season's promise in the ground" back in spring with the hope of the harvests we see now. Individuals look to God through prayer in both good times and bad. Churches strive to improve in the performance of our missions, with faith that God will show us the best path forward.

Here in August, in the height of summer, it's easy to find the visible evidence of God's *invisible* handiwork: flowers are in bloom, farm stands have local sweet corn, hay is ready for another cutting. For many people, it's a month for a vacation trip and seeing the beauty of other places. Again, we are viewing visible *the evidence of things not seen*. Let's imagine just how much more God has to show us! Through our faith, God's greatness may come to be visible to all. As the letter to the Hebrews encourages, *"let us run with patience the race that is set before us"*.

The next "Acoustic Worship" sing-along will be on Wednesday, August 6th. Come to enjoy a time of music in praise of God. There will be old favorites and some surprises, all easily singable. Hoping to see you then!

Peace of God be with you,
Michael Mario, Pastor

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

August 2nd – Lyle Wood
August 9th – Betsy Owen
August 11th – Roger Owen
August 15th – Frank Zezza
August 18th – Russell Abbott
August 22nd – Joseph Trombly
August 24th – Pete Andrews
August 26th – Tammy Locke
August 29th – Diana Hake-Oberg



CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES

August 17th – Lyle & Harriet Wood – 57 years
August 18th – Morris & Dianne Root – 57 years
August 18th – Jeff & Tammy Locke – 35 years



Sunday church services continue to be recorded on DVD for SAPA TV to be shown at a later date. The present channels are 160 for VTEL TV and 1077 for Xfinity Comcast and services are shown on Sunday at 10 AM and Wednesday at 4 PM. There is at least a one-week delay. Church services will continue to be live streamed on Facebook each Sunday at 9:30 and the services can be viewed anytime through the church website.

TREASURER'S REPORT (as of June 30, 2025)

YTD income	\$ 56,151.
YTD expenses	\$ 99,951.
Difference	(\$43,800.)

Total Liquid Assets \$293,437.
Restricted Funds \$158,534.
Avail. Liquid Assets \$134,903.



Mark Your Calendars!

Fall Community Lunches are returning soon—stay tuned for more details. Our first lunch of the season will be on **Tuesday, September 17th!**

Quilt Group Returns This September!

Our beloved Quilt Group will be restarting this September, and all are welcome—whether you're an experienced quilter or just curious to learn! Join us for fellowship, creativity, and the joy of working with our hands to create something meaningful. The group meets [insert day/time if known], beginning in [insert start date]. Bring your own project or simply come to enjoy the company and conversation.

Let's stitch together stories, laughter, and beautiful quilts once again!



A Note of Thanks from Heidi Mario

Earlier this spring, our congregation sent a gift certificate to Heidi Mario for Walker Farm's Nursery, in appreciation of her many contributions to the life of our church. Though she is not able to attend in person, Heidi continues to join us faithfully each Sunday via livestream. She sent the following heartfelt note of thanks:

Dear FCC Friends,

Thank you so very much for your kind card and the Walker's gift! It means a great deal to me that you are thinking of me. I only wish I were able to contribute more—it truly brings me joy to do the little that I can. I hope Michael has told you how much I enjoy it.

Your new garden space looks just glorious, and I hope to see it "in person" before too long.

Again, many thanks—and thank you for your continued support and love for Michael.

*Blessings,
Heidi*

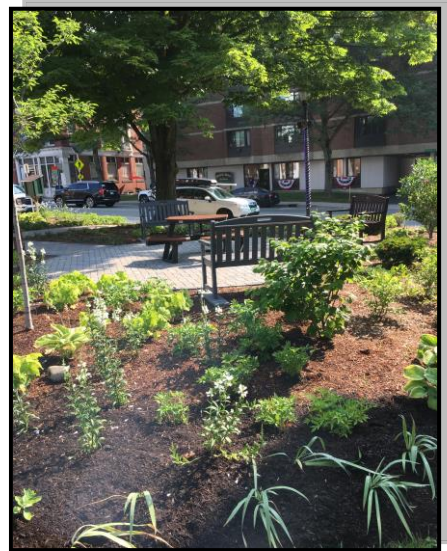
Our Green Space Is Open to All!

The final touches are complete—new plants and shrubs now surround the bright circle of green grass in our Green Space. A recent visitor, sitting at the picnic table among the flowers, described it as “like getting a hug.”

Already, the space is being put to good use: members of the congregation have enjoyed coffee and conversation there, others have found moments of peaceful reflection, and Claremont Savings Bank recently held an outdoor event in the space—helping us truly live into our vision of creating a welcoming, shared place for the wider community. *(See photos included!)*

Let's continue finding ways to use this special spot on Sunday mornings! Bring your coffee and cookie outside after worship, or come a few minutes early to sit on the benches placed in memory of loved ones. Whether you're meeting a friend downtown, heading to the Library, or stopping by a Main Street business, the Green Space is a perfect place to pause.

Created *by* our community *for* our community, this space is open to all—and we're excited to see how it continues to grow with love, laughter, and shared moments



First Congregational UCC's Calendar

August 2025

V-Vestry, FR-Fellowship Room, KD-Kindergarten, 10,11,12 Classrooms 2nd floor

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour	4	5 7:00p-8:00p Wilderness Bible Study	6 5:00p-6:00p ACOUSTICAL WORSHIP SERVICE - SONGS AND SCRIPTURE!	7 10:00a-11:00a Wilderness Bible study-Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us.	8	9
10 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour	11	12 7:00p-8:00p Wilderness Bible Study	13 4:00p-5:30p Leadership Council	14 10:00a-11:00a Wilderness Bible study-Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us.	15	16
17 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour	18	19 7:00p-8:00p Wilderness Bible Study	20	21 10:00a-11:00a Wilderness Bible study-Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us.	22	23
24 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour	25	26 7:00p-8:00p Wilderness Bible Study	27	28 10:00a-11:00a Wilderness Bible study-Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us.	29	30
31 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour						

Celebrate Homecoming Sunday – September 7

As summer winds down and we look ahead to a new season of worship, learning, and fellowship, we invite everyone to join us for **Homecoming Sunday** on **September 7**. This annual tradition is a special opportunity to reconnect as a church family, welcome new faces, and share in joyful community.

Following worship, we'll gather for a **Homecoming Brunch**, held **outside on the Green Space if weather permits**. It's a casual, festive way to kick off the fall together. **Hot dogs will be provided as the main dish**, and we invite you to **bring a favorite dish to share**—something you love or something that reminds you of home.

Whether you've been away for the summer or have been here all along, we hope you'll join us for this special day of celebration and togetherness.

More details will be available in the September Spire, so stay tuned!

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Michael Mario, Pastor
Michelle Hamlin, Adm. Assistant
885-5728
Todd Murray, Sexton
885-5728

Church Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Pastor's Hours
Wed. & Thurs.
9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.