



MAY 2026 THE SPIRE

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

77 Main Street

Springfield VT 05156-2999

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www.facebook.com/fccuccspringfield/

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

Pastor's Message May 2026

*"So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn;
And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth." Hosea 6:3*



"Like the spring rain watering the earth." So wrote the prophet Hosea as metaphor in reference to God. Just as our spring flowers need the rain to nourish them that they may bloom with vibrant colour, so do our souls require God's "spring rains".

Jesus' ministry planted seeds which continued to grow in the post-Easter world. Luke's follow-up to his gospel, Acts of the Apostles, will be a scriptural focus in the lectionary for May. That seems appropriate for the season – the apostles nurtured Jesus' fledgling church with love, care, and devotion. They grew a garden of souls, baptized with the waters of the Holy Spirit, warmed by the rays of Jesus' love.

As we see the world around us bursting in verdant shades, we can remember the world two millennia ago beginning to change as people responded to Jesus' message as passed along by Peter, John, Paul, and their companions. What a marvelous garden the

Lord can grow! What a privilege to be in that garden, whether we're acting as flowers or gardeners (I believe that we are both, at varying times). Just like a garden, our church will continue to change and develop in surprising ways. Exciting uses for our building, new faces to greet, new neighbours with whom to share God's love, are all part of a continuing evolution.

Sharing God's Word with others can be like bringing a fresh spring rain to a dry and thirsty landscape – as the apostles proved, we just might provide the nourishment that a dormant garden needs to spring back to vibrant life! We've had April showers – let's enjoy the warmth of springtime and cherish the May flowers, literal and metaphorical, all around us.

May the blessings of God be with you,

Michael Mario, Pastor



CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

- May 2 *Janice Stearns*
- May 2 *Jeff Locke*
- May 3 *Morris Root*
- May 4 *Butch Stearns*
- May 8 *Barbara Lacey*
- May 9 *Lois Bean*
- May 14 *John Hughes*
- May 15 *Carol Bacon*
- May 17 *Beth Dodd*
- May 24 *Harriet Wood*
- May 31 *Scott Mobus*



CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES

- May 6 *Jocelyn & Frank Zezza*
- May 21 *Joe & Judy Trombly*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY TO EVERYONE IN THE MONTH OF MAY.

**TREASURER'S REPORT
(as of March 31, 2026)**

YTD income	\$ 22,078.
YTD expenses	\$ 39,019.
Difference	\$-16,941.

Total Liquid Assets	\$232,501.
Restricted Funds	\$161,259.
Avail. Liquid Assets	\$ 71,242.

Church services will continue to be live streamed on Facebook each Sunday at 10:00 and the services can be viewed anytime through the church website.

Sunday church services are also 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 10AM and Wednesday at 4PM. There is at least a one-week delay.



**Spring Clean-up with the Boy Scouts
Saturday, April 25th 9:00AM – 12:00PM**

MEMORIAL AND MOTHER'S DAY
A Celebration of Life for Andrew Mario, son of Pastor Michael and Heidi Mario will be held on May 9th at the Guilford Community Church at 2 PM. All are invited!

Pastor Michael will not be preaching the following day on **Sunday, May 10th**, and we have been invited to join Rev. Karen Oehl's congregation at the United Methodist Church for their Mother's Day Service at **9:30 AM.**

STATUS OF PASTORAL SEARCH

The Pastoral Search Committee was formed following a Special Congregational meeting in the Fall of 2025. This Special meeting was called following Pastor Michael's announcement that he would like to retire as soon as a suitable replacement could be found.

The committee began its work by dusting off the Church profile which was prepared a little less than six years ago. The committee met biweekly over several months to review, edit and revise several rewrites to the profile and call for a part time pastor. Once the Committee approved the draft, it was submitted to the Leadership Council for review and comment. The comments from the Council were incorporated into the profile. The profile was submitted to the Vermont Conference in late March. Conference staff had several worthwhile suggestions which were included in the final profile which was posted in early April. No responses have been received to date.

DEACON'S FUND

We sent a check for \$1000 to the Clergy Fund of the Springfield Family Center for those in need of help. The Deacon's Fund has had only one or two requests over the last year. The monthly offering contributed by members and friends of our church had increased to \$2500 over the last few years. The Church Council decided to share some of the "generosity" with our community. The Fund remains available to church members and friends of the church who need help with medical bills, prescriptions, heat, or whatever need is a hardship and a worry. Talk with Pastor Michael if there is a way this fund can make a difference in your life.



STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING – PENTACOST SUNDAY, MAY 24TH

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY!**

\$101. was collected and sent to the Vermont UCC Conference for the **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering** to be shared nationwide for those in need.

Diane Holme, Outreach Ministry

UPDATE ON THE USE OF OUR CHURCH SPACE

Many of you attended a congregational meeting on 11/9 when Mike Schmitt talked with us about using our church space as rental space for community use. He told us that the Springfield Historical Society and Stellafane were looking to relocate their museum closer to downtown.

The church council followed up with the possibility of housing a joint museum with the Historical Society and Stellafane. We invited the Historical Society Board and a representative from Stellafane to tour our building and see our space available for possible consideration. After much deliberation, the Historical Society decided not to make any move to downtown at this time. They will concentrate their energy in increasing their volunteer pool so that the museum could be staffed and be able to increase the hours they were open to the public. Their current location is next to Cota and Cota by Rt 103 and 106.

Pete Andrews has been talking with a pastor of a Congregational Church in Claremont who received a large grant to repurpose their church which also sits in the center of town. He has also talked with Vanessa at Springfield on the Move about the grant possibility for our church and our interest in repurposing some of the empty space and turning it into rental space. She had several people who wanted to rent downtown space.

Vanessa was very encouraging about the possibilities we might have to repurpose some of our space.

Currently the ideas floating out there are: Use of our kitchen for meal preparation and sales, a pop up tent on in the green space once a week for food sales, a culinary school, music academy, removal of pews to make the sanctuary a multipurpose room, small business rental of rooms, rooms for art classes with The Vault and ideas that have not been realized.

When we have more information, we will call another Congregational meeting to share what we know and have a conversation about possibilities and how they might look and feel.

Information about the Claremont grant, The Well Collaborative NH, is attached.

LAWRENCE BAPTISM

Join us on Sunday, May 24th, when Pierce Bowen, son of Alex Lawrence and great-grandson of Leland and Ruth Lawrence, will be baptized during the regular 10 AM service.

First Congregational UCC's Calendar

May 2026

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	6 4:00p-5:00p ACOUSTIC WORSHIP - SONGS AND SCRIPTURE! 6:00p FOSTL Ann.Mtg. 7:00p Gypsy Reel Concert - Sanctuary	7 9:30a-10:30a Wilderness Bible study- Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us. 9:30a-3:00p Quilt Group	8 2:00p - Andrew Mario Service at Guilford Community Church	9
10 10:00a-11:00a Join us at the United Methodist Church for their Mother's Day Service with Rev. Karen Oehl at 9:30 AM.	11	12	13 4:00p-5:30p Leadership Council	14 9:30a-10:30a 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	20	21 9:30a-10:30a Wilderness Bible study- Zoom Please let Pastor Michael know of your interest in joining us. 9:30a-3:00p Quilt Group	22	23
24 10:00a-11:00a Church service followed by Coffee Hour Lawrence Baptism	25	26	27	28 9:30a-10:30a 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						

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Michael Mario, Pastor
Todd Murray, Sexton
885-5728

Church Office Hours
Tues. & Wed.
9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
Pastor's Hours
Wed.
9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.