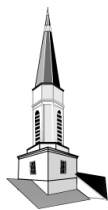


OCTOBER 2026



The Spire

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

77 Main Street

Springfield VT 05156-2999

(802) - 885-5728 fccucc@vermontel.net

www.firstchurchspringfield.org

www.facebook.com/fccuccspringfield

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

Pastor's Message October 2026

"The Lord God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey..." Deuteronomy 8: 7-8



Our lack of fig trees and pomegranates notwithstanding, I suspect that many of us can relate to the vision of a good land which God promised to Moses and his people. Substitute "apples, pumpkins, and maple syrup" for those warmer-climate fruits and it's still an enticing image. And for many folks, this is the time of year when our region is at its most beautiful. It's a reminder of the words in one of Dolly Parton's songs: "As I looked around me, the more that I did look, the more I realized that I was viewing God's coloring book."

God created this wonderful world, after all, and isn't it sweet to think that God takes pleasure and recreation ("re-creation") in bringing such a vibrant show to our eyes each autumn? God's pleasure becomes our pleasure, too, with the changing season's bright leaves, late-fall harvests, hay rides and jack-o'-lanterns.

In our lectionary readings during this season after Pentecost, Jesus often begins his parables by stating "the Kingdom of Heaven is like...", and it's enjoyable to think that it's a bit like what we see each fall. Perhaps we experience a hint of God's Kingdom in the wonders around us at this brilliant time of year.

May you also find pleasure in this bright season of our good land,
Michael Mario, Pastor

Church services continue to be live streamed on Facebook each Sunday at 10 AM 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 10 AM and Wednesday at 4 PM. There is at least a one week delay.

**JOIN US FOR OUR REGULAR 1ST
WEDNESDAY ACOUSTIC WORSHIP WITH
PASTOR MICHAEL ON OCTOBER 7TH !
COME TO SING-A-LONG AT 4 P.M.**

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

Oct. 5 Dianne Root

Oct. 14 Gay Mobus

**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OR MORE OF
MARRIAGE**

Oct. 21 Roger & Betsy Owen

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY TO
EVERYONE IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

(as of August 31, 2026)

YTD income	\$58,222.
YTD expenses	\$94,883.
Difference	(\$36,661.)

Total Liquid Assets	\$227,146
Restricted Funds	\$161,629.
Avail. Liquid Assets	\$65,517.



**CLEAN-UP DAY WILL BE OCT 24th
STARTING AT 9:00 AM**

COME JOIN IN THE FUN!

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!

**Piece Makers/Quilt, Craft and Fellowship
Group**

Our quilt group has expanded to welcome others who might want to quilt or craft and socialize.

We will meet October 1 and 15 from 9:30-3:00. You are welcome to join us and do not need to be a church member. We generally meet the first and third Thursday of each month (some exceptions). The coffee pot will be on. Bring your lunch and project. Come share some time together.

Beth Dodd, group facilitator
802-886-8290

DEACON'S FUND CHANGES

The Deacon's Fund offering taken on the first Sunday of each month will be taken quarterly instead. Leadership Council made this change to focus on four times a year to offer this opportunity to support our members and friends who need a helping hand with medical bills, prescriptions, rent, heat, insurance premiums or whatever their critical need is at the time. If you or someone you know needs a helping hand, please talk with Pastor Michael. The request is confidential.

FOOD BASKET FOR THE FAMILY CENTER

The Leadership Council has decided to stop collecting food each Sunday. It is a mission that has run its course and is no longer an effective way to support the Family Center. They will always need our monetary donations to purchase what they need. Instead of bringing food to the basket, consider adding food to the Food Pantry next to our church near the sidewalk. This was an Eagle Scout Project several years ago. The door has been removed as it was just getting broken, but the food offerings are being used by the community.

SPECIAL OFFERING- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH.

The **NEIGHBORS IN NEED** offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. In 2026, the suggested offering date is October 4, but churches collect the offering for a month or any other season throughout the year. Thank you for your support and generosity!

There is a list of suggested foods for the season on the inside of the box. Consider the season and bring dry foods rather than anything liquid that would freeze. Many people add to the box and it has become a quiet source of support who those who need it.

Thanks for your support for others!

Diane Holme, Outreach Ministry

Options for FCC as we go forward from discussion with Rev. Paul Sangree on 9/20/26

Paul suggested that we change our name to Springfield Community Church because it feels less denominational and more welcoming. A few churches in VT have done this.

Pulpit supply begins January 1st. It could be 4 pastors who take one Sunday/month.

Paul knows of a retired(?) pastor just moved to VT who may be interested in being a part time pastor for two churches. It would likely mean a change in worship times to accommodate both congregations.

Paul talked about four churches in upper VT who joined together to purchase one building where each of them could have their own space to worship and share the cost of the building maintenance.

One church sold its building and an arts and cultural center was established for the community.

The issue with a merger between two UCC churches is often about whose building is sold. It works better for all if a new neutral worship space is purchased or rented. The closest UCC church to us is probably Charlestown.

VT has a history of forming Federated Churches. Several of these are a combination of Methodist and UCC. The Methodists do not own their buildings. The denomination has a Central Conference and other bodies that govern their life. Creating a merger with our Methodist neighbors is complicated.

We could form a corporation, sell the church to them and have them manage our goal of using the building for multi purposes. We would still have a place to worship and be relieved from managing everything ourselves. We could be a part of the Board.

We have the possibility of working with Springfield on the Move for a federal grant to upgrade the building for use by the community. There are other grants available that might be considered when we have a plan as to how the building could be used. Currently we are talking about day care for children or adults, event venues, housing, a restaurant, and just meeting space.

We have an 8 member Leadership Council which meets once a month. Paul says this is a strength that many churches no longer have. We will not have a pastor in 2027 to be on the Council. We are without a Clerk for the last several months and have been unable to find anyone willing to take on this role. The majority of our Council members are in their 80's. When one is unable to continue in their role, we are unlikely to find anyone to fill that position and the work will fall on the few council members remaining. You can see that we are in a fragile position for sustainability. The costs soar to maintain our building.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
77 MAIN STREET
SPRINGFIELD, VT 05156**

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

885-5728

fccucc@vermontel.net

Website: www.firstchurchspringfield.org
www.facebook.com/fccuccspringfield

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.

