



Leverett Church Clarion

Monthly Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Leverett, Massachusetts

An Open & Affirming member of the United Church of Christ

www.LeverettCongregationalChurch.org

September 2025

Lee Barstow, Pastor

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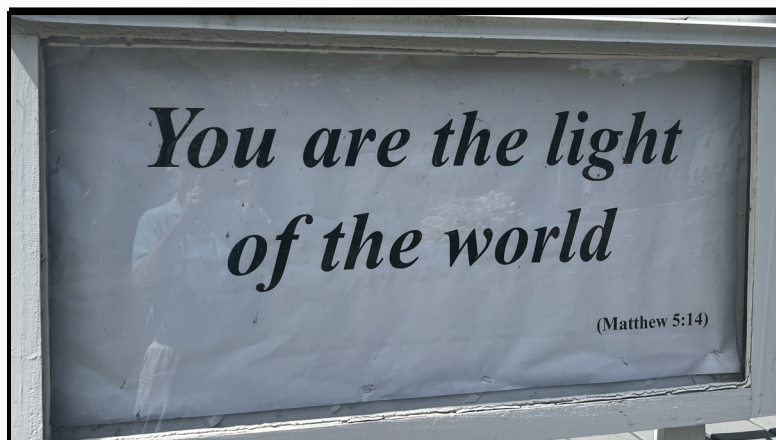
leebarstow@gmail.com

Greetings from the Church Council

Our summer break is ending, and we are looking forward to September 7 to resume Sunday worship. The Council has been busy lining up ministers to substitute for Lee during the fall. Lee will have his surgery on September 8 and will be on medical leave until January. Rather than find a single minister to serve during Lee's absence, the Council decided to have a number of ministers fill in. We will have Reverend Julie Olstead for September and October and Reverend Marguerite Sheehan for November. We're in conversations with others for December. In addition, we have Reverend Nathan Patti for two Sundays (September 7 and October 12). He is a newly ordained minister, a graduate of the Boston University School of Theology, and a chaplain in residence at the Yale New Haven Hospital. He will be conducting our first service in September. Please mark your calendars for that date.

And in other news—

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Letter from Lee

Pastor

September 2025



Dear LCC Community,

As summer ripens toward autumn, fields and gardens show the results of months of hidden work—roots drawing nourishment, stems strengthening, blossoms giving way to fruit. We walk among tomatoes swelling on the vine, cornfields heavy with grain, apples beginning to redden. We can see the inevitable goodness of the flow of life, which goes by so many names in humanity's wisdom tradition: Life as light, life as God's grace, life as love.

I was introduced recently to a wonderful essay called "Love as the Practice of Freedom" by the late bell hooks, the renowned author, teacher, and social critic. In that essay, bell describes the necessity of love in any effort to produce healing that lasts. "The civil rights movement transformed society in the United States because it was fundamentally rooted in a love ethic," she writes. *"Without love, our efforts to liberate ourselves and our world community from oppression and exploitation are doomed."*

Her words remind us that love is never passive—it is a force that heals, restores, and reshapes the world. To practice love is to join in God's work of liberation, to cultivate freedom not just for ourselves but for our neighbors near and far.

In a time when our society feels deeply wounded by division, distrust, and fear, this call is especially urgent. The healing we long for will not come from sharper arguments or deeper trenches, but from the steady, courageous practice of love. I highly recommend hooks' essay for a refreshing perspective on the social healing we all yearn for.

What does such a love ethic look like in our everyday lives? It might be supporting a mission project that reaches far beyond our own

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(Lee, Continued from page 2)

community. For some, it might be attending a protest rally. Sometimes it is as simple as checking in on someone who hasn't been able to come to church for a while, offering a ride to a neighbor who cannot get where they need to go, or bringing a meal to a family stretched thin.

No matter what, every loving action is a seed of healing. And over time, each one bears fruit: a congregation more rooted in trust, a community more spacious with joy, a society knit back together by the life force of love.

As we move toward the harvest season, may we be reminded that every seed of love we tend—however small—helps to grow goodness.

Peace and blessings,



(Council News: Continued from page 1)

1. If you pass by the church, be sure to look at the front lawn. The dead maple has been removed by the town, thanks to tree warden Matthew Boucher.
 2. We are addressing the issue of boats being stored on our lakeside lot. We've identified most of the owners and they are aware that their watercraft must be removed by September 1. The Council will check on the status of the lot at our next meeting.
 3. Plan on setting up on the church lawn Saturday, September 27 to sell/buy at our Harvest Festival. See Claudia's story, page 4.
 4. We are planning a lakeside service for September 28, weather permitting. So be sure to put that on your calendar.
- Looking forward to seeing you all on September 7.

Submitted by Ralph Tiner
on behalf of the Church Council

Missions Report for September 2025

Community Harvest Festival Fund Raiser for the Community Network for Children (CNC) — Saturday, September 27

A Fall Festival to benefit the Community Network for Children will be held on September 27 (rain or shine), 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., on the church lawns and Edna Emerson field. A charge of \$10 per 12' x 12' space will be donated to the CNC. **ALL other profits by sellers are theirs alone.**



All from our local communities are invited to sell their wares: Tag Sales, Bake Sales, Crafts. Individuals will be responsible for their own setup, selling, and cleanup. Let your friends and neighbors know.

Our church will host raffles and sell baked goods with the profits going to the CNC. We will be calling for volunteers to help out with selling and for our church community's high quality raffle items; baked goods, preserves, and confections; and farmers market type produce.

To reserve your space, contact Claudia Gere, Claudia@ClaudiaGere.com, 413-359-0003, with any questions or to volunteer to help.

CNC Closet Open House — Saturday, October 4

The Community Network for Children Closet Open House, Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Parents meet to swap or just shop for gently used children's clothing (typically newborn to elementary age). FREE: No requirement to bring anything. To be held at the Dixon House.

CNC Closet Schedule

CNC Children's Closet schedule for the coming Thursdays, from 8:00am - Noon and by appointment if unable to make this time:

- September 11, 20, 25 OPEN
- October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 OPEN

The Franklin Hampshire area **Diaper Bank** continues to supply us with disposable diapers we can offer to families for free. We are located at the Dixon House, 4 Montague Road, Leverett. Call/Text or email Gillian Budine, CNC Program Coordinator (978) 935-4909 or cnccoord@erving.com.

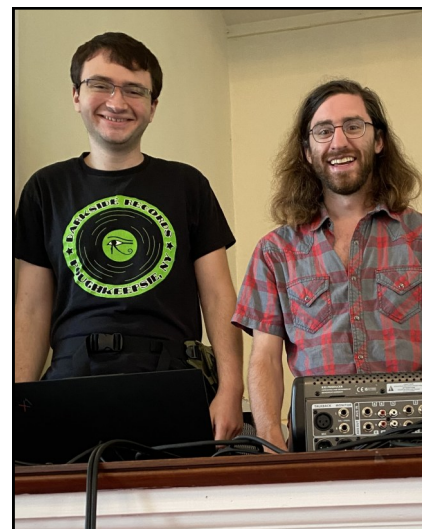


Franklin County CROP Hunger Walk — Sunday, October 5

This year's Franklin County CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, October 5 at 2:00 PM, hosted by the Trinitarian Congregational Church of Northfield. Registration begins at 1 p.m.

The CROP Hunger Walk raises fund for the Church World Service

(Missions Continued on page 5)



REHEARSAL— *Rain threatened so we didn't worship lakeside July 27 after all. Front-step rehearsal took place anyway. We will try lakeside again on September 28, weather permitting*

On the front steps: Susan Altabet, Stephen Dydo, Zane Provost, Nick Grabbe

In the Zoom booth above: Spencer Cliche, Zane Provost. Spencer has now moved on to NY City.

Photos: Judy Ricker

(Missions Continued from page 4)

whose teams work locally to provide support where it is most needed. They are now struggling to meet refugees' medical, food, shelter, and education needs in refugee camps in Thailand and other countries.

The walk will also raise money to support those struggling in our area as well, with 25 percent of funds we raise reserved for Franklin County.

Details for the walk

Sunday, October 5, 2025

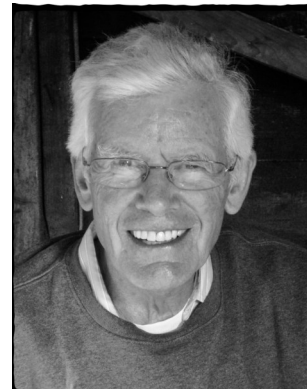
Registration opens 1 pm, walk begins at 2 pm

Trinitarian Congregational Church of Northfield

147 Main St, Northfield, MA 01360

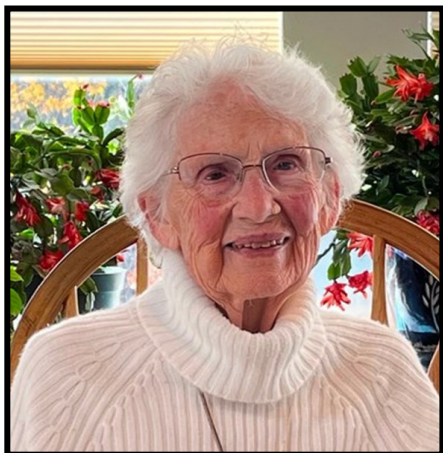
You can also put checks in the church collection plate made out to CWS/CROP or hand your donations to your mission committee members (Claudia Gere and Tracey Field)

Roy Kimmel — Church neighbor Roy Kimmel died August 1. He and his wife Cynthia Thomas Kimmel have lived just downhill from the church in a house many remember as one of the church's many earlier parish houses. He was born in 1936 in Baltimore, then lived many places throughout Europe including after World War II as the son of a diplomat. He had a keen interest in transportation, serving on Leverett's one-person transportation committee until he fired himself. He got into it locally, driving a PVT bus full time for a while. His book, "In Transit," based on his teenage bus travels, is available at the Leverett Library.



He leaves his wife Cynthia, daughter Jennifer and son Ian, and numerous members of his extended family.

Betty Wilson — Betty Wilson died July 6, 2025. Many helped her celebrate her 99th birthday in December 2024. Betty and her husband Rev. Fred Wilson retired to Leverett in 1989, coming here from New Jersey, then becoming active in our church in 1994 with Fred as our pastor. Much earlier years were spent as Presbyterian missionaries in Iran. Betty and Fred were married in western Pennsylvania, home territory for both of them. Betty was a graduate of Maryville College, with a degree in religious education which led later to related employment and activities. Leverett put them closer to family who had earlier settled in this area. Betty



sang in choirs everywhere, including in our Leverett church and the Leverett Community Chorus. Singing, yes, though we also welcomed another signature skill — her peanut brittle was a regular sell-out at our annual church holiday fair.

She is survived by her children Marg Kruse (Jack); Rus Wilson (Pat); and Becky Torres (Art) and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.



Sunday, September 28 – Rain or Shine ANOTHER TRY

Lakeside service -- 11 a.m.

Readings and music, lakeside. Say yes if you're asked to read. Or offer to read a favorite piece. Our lakeside service and picnic are always a favorite gathering, maybe this time with more favorable weather? The service will include poems and other readings as in the past, and will likely feature our own church-steps singers. See photo on page 5.

Bring a favorite lawn chair and a warm sweater. (It's likely to be cool.) Park near the Dixon House and walk down Putney Road to the open gate on the left. Shuttle available for the unsteady. *(In case of rain, we picnic in the town hall.)*

Potluck picnic – following worship

Church brings – Chef, who serves up BBQ burgers, dogs plus fixings. Also supplied: beverages, chips

You bring – Your favorite side or dessert. Salad? Veggie dish? Brownies or cookies? Bring a serving implement, if needed for your dish.

“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do (like picnics), do all to the glory of God”

(1 Corinthians 10:31).

Found online under “church picnics” and in Corinthians



Barbara Tiner decobwebs the church façade before an important event

Photo: Judy Ricker



Prayer notes

Bill Anderson, *friend of Lee Barstow*

*The family and friends of **Bob Baldocchi**, who died in October, including his brother-in-law John Kealy and sisters-in-law Mary Kealy and Sally Kealy*



Lee Barstow

Andrew Botieri, *friend of Claudia Gere*

Bill Brower, *Judy Ricker's brother-in-law*

Chris Chicoine, *brother-in-law of Lee's friend Kaleigh Won*

Joan E., *friend of Mary Hankinson*

*The family and loved ones of **Bernard Field**, a Field cousin*

Alice Field

John Field

Ben Forbes, *friend of John Root*

*The family and loved ones of **Mary Franks**, friend of the congregation, who died in January*

*The family and loved ones of **Bradley Gage***

Barbara Goodhind

*The family and loved ones of **Frankie Hankinson** who died October 7*

Mary Hankinson *now living with family in Vermont*

Joshua Kalev, *husband of Betty Wilson's granddaughter Selilah Kalev*

Stasi Kanyuck, *daughter of Marg and Jack Kruse, granddaughter of Betty Wilson*

Karen, *Mary Kealy's godchild*

*The family and loved ones of **Michael Katz** who died in the Fall of 2024*

Stephen Kealy, *brother of Mary Kealy and John Kealy*

*Church neighbor **Roy Kimmel**, husband of Cynthia Thomas Kimmel, died in August*

Nancy Lane *Patti Lane's sister in Idaho, daughter of the late Russell Lane*

Martha Napierski, *niece of Alice Field, as well as Martha's husband Edward*

*Family and loved ones of **Hugh O'Brien**, friend of John and Sally Kealy*

Julia O'Kelly, *Mary Ryan's niece*

(Prayer notes, Continued on page 9)

(Prayer notes, continued from page 8)

Alice Oram, friend of Lee Barstow

Marijke van Parijs, sister of **Elsje Sturtevant**

Esther Poldvee, friend of Tracey Field

Flip Rosenberry, friend of Lee Barstow

Roxana, friend of Mary Kealy

Michèle Smith

Cat White, Mary Hankinson's niece

*The family and loved ones of **Betty Wilson** who died July 6, 2025. She was the wife of Rev. Fred Wilson, our pastor 1994-2004.*

Victims of injustice & violence against each other and our earth

Prayer updates: If you would like to add a person here, please leave a message on the church phone, 413-548-9199, or contact Lee Barstow, leebarstow@gmail.com; Judy Ricker, judyricker@aol.com; or Sarah Roys, royssarah2@gmail.com



UPCOMING WORSHIP	
Sept 7	Communion; Rev. Nathan Patti Leads worship
Sept 14	Rev. Julie Olstead leads worship
Sept 21	Rev. Julie Olstead leads worship
Sept 28	Rev. Julie Olstead leads worship

"Our" dead tree in front of the church is now gone, thanks to the Town of Leverett who is actually responsible for the tree



September Celebrations



Megan Rice	Sept 1	B
Lee Barstow	Sept 7	B
Jeff & Jen Field	Sept 9	A
Mary Kealy	Sept 24	B
Matthew Field	Sept 25	B
Deb Katz	Sept 25	B
Karen Mathers	Sept 30	B

The September 2025 lectionary
can be found here —
tinyurl.com/23kggn5k



**First Congregational Church
of Leverett**
United Church of Christ
4 Montague Road
PO Box 324
Leverett, MA 01054



Calendar

September 7 – Church resumes from break
September 27 — Harvest Festival/Yard Sale
September 28 — Lakeside Service, weather
permitting
September 28 — Council meeting

September 2025

Lee Barstow, Pastor

Office Hours (Dixon House):
Sundays following worship, by
Appointment, in ordinary times
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Newsletter deadline: October 2025 issue

Tuesday, September 30, 2025
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The **Clarion** is published monthly by the First
Congregational Church of Leverett, an Open and
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