



Leverett Church Clarion

Monthly Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Leverett, Massachusetts

An Open & Affirming member of the United Church of Christ

www.LeverettCongregationalChurch.org

February 2026

Lee Barstow, Pastor

413-530-4231

leebarstow@gmail.com

Annual meeting, February 22

10:00 a.m. — Brief worship service. Sanctuary

10:30 a.m.—Annual Meeting, Sanctuary, Coffee available

In person and by Zoom

All may participate; Only Members may vote

Agenda

Budget 2026, vote

Officers, vote

Discussion items



*A cheerful heart is good
medicine, but a crushed
spirit dries up the bones*

Proverbs 17:22

WE ARE ALL



IMMIGRANTS



Letter from Lee

Pastor

February 2026



Dear LCC Community,

As I stumble through the stress of our current social crises, I have come across some ideas and advice that have been helpful. Here are a couple of them.

"There are two kinds of people: good people and good people who are hurt." That's the message of Scarlett Lewis, who's life mission is to bring teachings into schools, homes, and communities for developing love, compassion, courage, and gratitude. She does this through her Choose Love Movement, which she founded in response to the fatal shooting of her six-year-old son Jesse at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. I highly recommend learning more about her principles at chooselovemovement.org.

I love Scarlett's principles because they match those of nonviolent action as practiced and taught by Mohandas Gandhi, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and so many others who have helped to overcome so much domination of racism, hatred, economic abuse, and other injustices over the past 100 years.

Commitment to non-violence is deeply spiritual, as in these words of brother Martin: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." (from his 1957 sermon "Loving Your Enemies" and in his 1963 book, *Strength to Love*)

I have been buoyed to witness the vast number of people bringing food and other help to immigrants afraid to leave their homes, and of bystanders documenting details of unjust actions by authorities.

It reminds me of Mr. Rogers' quoting his mom when he was a boy and saw frightening things on the news: "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

The awesome power of love is the dominant force in the movie, "A Force

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More Powerful,” which chronicles the hard-won successes of the movements to end colonial rule in India, to integrate the American South, and to end apartheid in South Africa.

This was the path of Jesus of Nazareth, whose example has inspired so many, including the founders of the movement of democracy. "Blessed are the peacemakers," he said, "for they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27). "Put your sword back in its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword" (said to Peter when he pulls his sword to defend Jesus, in Matthew 26:52).

The sacred principles at the heart of non-violent political action work for those of us at home as well as for protestors. We can't simply make negative feelings go away. We can't change the past. The way to peace is to acknowledge hard realities and yet trust that there is a higher, deeper truth available for dealing with them. What practices help us do that? Let's do more of them.

Peace and blessings,

Lee

UPCOMING WORSHIP

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| February 1 | Communion; Lee will preach |
| February 8 | Lee will read another's sermon |
| February 15 | Lee will preach |
| February 22 | Possible "Talkabout" during sermon time... stay tuned! |



Michèle Anastasia Smith 1959-2025



Michèle Smith, our music director since 2007, died December 31 from complications of flu and pneumonia. She grew up mostly in California and New York, eventually landing in the northeast, graduating from Smith College and later earning a master's degree in musicology from the Eastman School of Music.

After some years working at the Jones Library and the Smith College Library, Michèle went on to direct many church choirs in the area. In Leverett, with her skills and humor, she fit right in, bringing a variety of music to Leverett's

sensibilities. Michèle leaves her long-time partner Rob Winternitz. Her parents and brother predeceased her.

Peace marchers visit Dixon House

The Peace March, slightly truncated, stepped off the morning of January 17, 2026. Ten marchers formed at the bottom of Cave Hill Road, not far from their Peace Pagoda base at the top of the hill, and walked to the Dixon House. They took a welcome break, chatted for a while, then proceeded on their way to Greenfield. Sister Clare, Brother Toby and the others, known to many of us, were appreciative of the church's support.



Leverett's peace marchers take a break in the Dixon House. Host Charlie Paulin is at the left. *Photo: L. San*

Charlie & Nancy Paulin

MISSIONS NEWS—February 2026

Missions Report for February

Community Network for Children (CNC)

The CNC provides services, resources, and support to help families develop and prepare their children for optimal school readiness and school success. Their extensive programming provides knowledge in parenting and early child development, healthy social and emotional development in children, and concrete support in times of need. In addition, they operate The Closet.



CNC Closet Schedule

The CNC Closet provides FREE clothing for young children, newborn through elementary age.

Here is the CNC Children's Closet schedule for the coming Thursdays, from 8 a.m. – 12 noon, and by appointment if unable to make this time:



- February 5, 12, 26 OPEN
- March 5, 12, 19, 26 OPEN
- Saturday, March 28 CNC Closet Open House 10 a.m.--1 p.m.

The Franklin Hampshire area Diaper Bank continues to supply us with disposable diapers we can offer to families for free. You can also find information about other available resources.

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.

Visit the CNC website for more information about the services we provide in our community to families with young children <https://sites.google.com/erving.com/cncprogram/home>. 

Prayer notes**Bill Anderson**, *friend of Lee Barstow***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***Alice Field****John Field***The family and loved ones of **Mary Franks**, friend of the congregation, who died in January***Barbara Goodhind****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***Kieran Kealy**, *brother of John Kealy & Mary Kealy**Church neighbor **Roy Kimmel**, husband of Cynthia Thomas Kimmel. Roy died in August***Nancy Lane** *Patti Lane's sister in Idaho, daughter of the late Russell Lane***Jean Larouche**, *friend of Lee Barstow***Hilda Nachman**, *aunt of Aida Markiw***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**The family and loved ones of **Jack O'Kelly**, Mary Ryan's nephew***Alice Oram**, *friend of Lee Barstow***Marijke van Parijs**, *sister of Elsje Sturtevant***Dan Perkins**, *son of Jim Perkins and father of Alise Perkins***Flip Rosenberry**. *friend of Lee Barstow***Roxana**, *friend of Mary Kealy**(Prayer notes, Continued on page 7)*

(Prayer notes, continued from page 6)



The family and loved ones of **Erika Schütz**, including her niece **Ninette Rothmüller**, her great niece **Lale Rothmüller**, and Erika's husband **Herrmann Schütz**
 The family and loved ones of our music director **Michèle Smith** who died December 31

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

The February 2026 lectionary can be found here —

<https://www.sneucc.org/files/files/documentsdailylectionary/feb+2026.pdf>

Remember our lonely collection plate

You can mail your offering to
 Leverett Congregational Church
 PO Box 324, Leverett MA 01054

• **Or give online at**
www.leverettcongregationalchurch.org/donate

OR find collection plates at the rear of the sanctuary when you attend in person

February Celebrations				
	Tom Hankinson	February 1	B	
	Laszlo Tikos	February 2	B	
	Sue Hankinson	February 2	B	
	Barbara Goodhind	February 5	B	
	Nick Grabbe	February 12	B	
	Fred Bashour	February 13	B	
	Emily Field (Miss)	February 17	B	
A=Anniversary B=Birthday				



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



Calendar

February 8 — Council Meeting
February 18 — Ash Wednesday
February 22 — Annual Meeting

February 2026

Lee Barstow, Pastor

Office Hours (Dixon House):
Sundays following worship, by
Appointment, in ordinary times
Dixon House telephone and answering
Machine & Lee: 413-530-4231
leebarstow@gmail.com

Newsletter deadline: March 2026 issue
Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Judy Ricker, Editor, 548-9895
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Sarah Roys, weekly Bulletin
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The **Clarion** is published monthly by the First
Congregational Church of Leverett, an Open and
Affirming member of the United Church of Christ.
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