



Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

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September 2026

On Sunday August 9th we said our goodbyes to Pastor Richard and Jane, though they haven't gone far and are still in Walpole for now, they have retired from our church.

Richard has been with us for six years and some of those years were difficult. Covid was his welcoming to our church family. But we learned to ZOOM. He saw us through those hard times and helped us laugh at the good times.

We wish him the best as he settles into retirement. Just a note about retirement, your calendar is still filled with things to do.



People Powered Church

At our August 23rd discussion about the future of the church, we were asked what we value most about our church. The first answer was simple: "The people." Others described a church that is welcoming and friendly, rooted in Walpole's history, active in the community, and "people powered."

That phrase seems especially fitting as we continue our annual stewardship campaign. A people-powered church depends on all of us—on the ways we worship, serve, welcome, volunteer, and give.

Many thanks to everyone who has already made a pledge for the coming year. As of 8/25/26, we have received 34 pledges totaling \$72,194 toward our goal of \$110,000.

If you are wondering about the best time to make your pledge, it is now. Our church is beginning a new chapter. We do not yet know exactly what it will hold, but there is good reason for hope—and each of us has a part in shaping what comes next.

The Stewardship Committee

A BIG SHOUT OUT

Thank you to everyone who helped with Chuck Shaw's memorial service. You made the day work perfectly. All you sandwich makers, dessert people and all the helping hands who made Fellowship Hall beautiful. It wouldn't have happened without everyone pitching in. Thank you so much. Peg and Bonnie



To my dear church family,

Chuck's battle with ALS is over. You all have been there for us the last few years with your prayers, your visits, meals, words of encouragement, hugs and concern. I am and will forever be grateful for your support.

His funeral was amazing, and I hope his spirit was able to witness it. The deacons did a fabulous job, and Peg and Bonnie and the Women's Fellowship crew put on an outstanding reception. Thank you all for taking such care of our family. I am blessed to be a part of this church. Love, Ellie



MISTLETOE MART IS COMING!!

Yes, that's right, now that summer is ending, we need to think ahead. Now's the time to start canning, making jellies and thinking what can I do to make this year's Mistletoe Mart special. So put on your thinking hats and get busy. Women's Fellowship



We are actively working on finding our own new beginnings. Sunday, August 23rd, Rev. David Stinson lead us in worship and a workshop after. We discussed our hopes and aspirations for the future of our church.

We'll have more information coming.

September 12 at 9:00 am is our next Council meeting. I hope every committee is represented. We will have a lot to discuss. There will be coffee and a breakfast treat to keep us going. Peg, Council Chair

Interim Search Committee

We have met several times, organizing our August 23rd service and conversation. We have also invited Melissa O'Brien to speak on August 30. We've been in contact several times with Rev. Linda Hirst, our Conference Transitional Minister, with questions helping us to find the right person to help our church succeed. We will keep you posted. If you have questions or suggestions, let us know.



Jana Sellarole, Ann and Paul Looney, Peg Winnen
Interim Search Committee

The Future of Our Church Congregational Discussion

Here is a summary of our meeting after church on Aug 23 to discuss the future of our church after Richard's retirement. You might read this and think, "I would have answered that question this way."

If so, the Interim Search Committee would love to hear your thoughts. As we make our way through the transition to a new pastor, the more input we get from all of you, the better.

Also, at the end of this summary, you will see two people who have volunteered to be on the search committee for a settled pastor. If you would like to be part of that committee, please let one of us know.

Thank you so much!

Peg Winnen, Ann and Paul Looney, Jana Sellarole

Future of our Church Discussion, Sunday, August 23, 2026

After church service in Fellowship Hall

Rev. David Stinson, Facilitator

27 people present

1) Why are you a member of this church? What do you like about our church? What's good?

- The people
- We have a rich history of being Walpole's central church, who is very active in the local and global community.
- Foundation of Walpole's history
- Welcoming and friendly
- As congregationalists, we choose our leadership. We are a people-powered church
- Community activities like Halloween, BBQ, parade participant and float winner recently, pie sales

2) What would bring people in or back to church? What distinguishes us from other churches and organizations?

- We should keep politics out of our service.
- Messages should connect to people.
- Pastor should connect to people.
- Pastor should go out in the community and invite people to come to church – outreach.
- Personal connection to the Bible.
- Congregation should be able to relate to the pastor.
- Congregation should also invite people to church.
- Teach Sunday School at Kurn Hattin, offer adult classes.
- Services should have a take-home message.
- Pastor should be energetic.
- Pastor with a sense of humor
- Advertise in local free newspapers

3) Why have people left our church?

- Politics from the pulpit
- The church across the Commons who has an energetic pastor and good music
- Some people didn't connect with the pastor.

4) Are our church's best days ahead or behind us?

- Ahead of us, from an optimist.
- Our church has a lot of potential for growth, per David Stinson.

Volunteers for the search committee: Becky Pearson and Marilou Blaine

PIE SALES

I am happy to report a very successful pie sale season. We set up at 7 concerts, had good weather for all of them. We always had donated pies and a crew to sell them. Thank you to everyone that supported us in this effort. The outlying community looks forward to this every year and is disappointed when we are not there!!
Final sales: \$1727.00!! Sue Krebs



The Missions committee will start its fall season with a meeting in September. We will not be having a Fall Rummage Sale this year. We are hoping that by next May we will have more help available to do the heavy lifting. The Christmas-themed articles from our Spring Rummage sale were set aside to be added to the

Mistletoe Mart offerings.

In September we will make the first of our three donations to the Walpole Schools to help with food insecurity throughout the year,

We surprised Rev. David and Cindy Stinson by treating them to their anniversary brunch at Burdick's after his sermon and advise last week! Our note thanked him on behalf of the entire congregation.

The Mission and Action committee currently has four members. (We were sad to see Jane Malmberg go!) Kat Graves, Bonnie Woodward, Linda George and Becky Pearson would love to have volunteers to add to our committee 🙏😊

Becky Pearson

Church DEACONS

The deacons have begun scheduling ministers to

lead us in worship every Sunday. Currently we have Rev. Ruth Gallot for September 13 and Rev. Patrick McLoud leading us in worship on September 20. There won't be an outdoor service with St. John's Church this year, but we may have a combined service with them sometime in the future, either at their church or ours.

We still have a vacant seat on our committee. Perhaps you may feel called to serve as a deacon – if so, please let a deacon know, we would love to have you!

Our deacons are: Linda Wright, Kathy Yardley, Michael Brodeur, Ann Looney, Deb McCollister and Peter Graves.

The Deacon of the Month for September is Kathy Yardley.



Paul Looney	Sept. 13
Linda Graff	Sept. 16
Mark Houghton	Sept. 20
Linda Jeffrey	Sept. 21
Annie Ewaskio	Sept. 22
Ellie Shaw	Sept. 25



Sunday, Sept. 6	Worship Service with Communion in the Sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Sunday, Sept. 13	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Saturday, Sept. 19	Funeral Service for Charlie Montgomery	10:00 am
Sunday, Sept. 20	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Monday, Sept. 21	Senior Potluck Lunch , program to follow	12 noon
Sunday, Sept. 27	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday through Friday, 10 am to noon

October 2026 Parish Visitor Articles Due: Tuesday, September 22, 2026



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First Congregational Church
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