



PO Box 825, Stockbridge MA 01262

Autumn 2026



SAVE THE DATE

November 15 Annual Meeting and SuperSaturday Workshop

Berkshire Association email:
berkshireassociation@gmail.com



BERKSHIRE ASSOCIATION

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 2026 Newsletter

WE CARE, WE HOPE, WE PRAY, WE REJOICE

“Every good and perfect gift is from above.” — James 1:17

After the rush of a Berkshire summer, autumn offers an opportunity for us to slow down and notice the quiet gifts around us, especially within our own churches. Simple things like the way the light comes through the windows of the sanctuary. The elegant lines of the communion table. The eager welcome by a greeter. The hush of feet against the carpet. A glint of possibility in aged eyes.



How good it is to enter, rejoice and come in to any one of our thirteen sanctuaries, each one so very different in history and architecture. Each one filled with a unique family of faithful holding to their mission, praying and singing, serving and growing in spirit together, some for, yes, 2 or nearly 3 centuries now. Each giving thanks even as we face internal struggles and feel the external stressors of climate

change, politics, injustices, violence here and abroad, not to mention the rising cost of living that makes it hard to manage our budgets. Yet each congregation learning how to love well, as Jesus loved.

Members of the Berkshire Association Council have worshiped with each of our churches over the last few years. We have learned how much there is to share among us: our faith stories, our best practices and particular gifts of the spirit that abound in the congregations and impact

the world around us. We feed people. We stand in solidarity against injustices. We act. We organize. We care. We hope. We pray. We break bread together. We rejoice and give thanks. We give. And give again. Thanks be to God! And thank you for welcoming us. We are so blessed by you and grateful for your for being Christ's church in the Berkshires,

Rev. Cara Davis, Moderator

ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 15, 2:30pm and a SuperSaturday Workshop at 3:15pm

The Annual Fall Meeting will be a short business meeting only, beginning promptly at 2:30pm at the Chapel, Church on the Hill in Lenox.

We will review the 2026 budget to date, vote to approve the 2027 budget, and vote on the slate of new Council members and officers. Minutes from 2025 and 2026 written reports from officers will be in your Annual Meeting packet for review.

At 3:15 pm all church leaders, clergy, members or friends are invited to join those of us at Annual Meeting for the workshop: **Building a Relational Ministry - Strategies for Volunteer Recruitment & Development** (offered by Center for Transformational Leadership)



"If we don't get more volunteers for X, we might not be able to run this program anymore." "That's a great idea; we should try that! But who will make it happen?" "I have a passion for Y but I feel like I'm going it alone."

Do comments like these sound familiar, whether from church or other volunteer organizations you're a part of? This interactive workshop will provide a brief introduction (or refresher) on the basics of community organizing. The skills introduced will help lay and clergy leaders respond to the congregation's needs and connect meaningfully with volunteers and community members.

But Before That... Coming Up (soon!)

October 23-25

Although this is not directly church-related...it may be of interest to many of us. **A Festival of Ideas** coming to Shakespeare and Company's Tina Packard Center in Lenox on October 23-25, 2026. The Festival of Ideas offers entertainment, learning and discovery in a different kind of platform—one grounded in curiosity, intellectual rigor, and respect. What's up with our over-obsessed longevity addiction? Will advanced technologies in creativity redefine what makes art, art? Can a complex revolutionary, garden design, and lessons from establishing the Affordable Care Act save the world?

At the Festival of Ideas leading thinkers from diverse backgrounds will put bold ideas front and center. Guests include Kai Bird and Susan Goldmark, with Bill Goldstein, Saidiya Hartman and Jamaica Kincaid explore gardening as both creative practice and metaphor. Maira Kalman



presents an artist's journey centered on her new book, *Joy*. Adam Moss creates a collaborative 'live' work of art with Colm Tóibín. Tom Hammick shares his operatic passion through painting and print making. Pulitzer Prize Winners Annette Gordon-Reed and Brent Staples get political. Ezekiel Emanuel questions our yearning to live to 100 and how do we ensure that scientific innovation leads to safe, equitable care (ie.AI)? Carol Gilligan and Niobe Way. Bessel Van der Kolk and Dr. Ronald Siegel on Healing Trauma: The next frontier. And more yet to be announced.

Tickets go on sale September 25. Festival information, schedules, and ticket details are available at fieldlenox.org.

FROM MID TO REVEREND

It was a joy for our Association to walk with Becky Crane along her “multiple” path to ordination, to examine and approve her fitness for ordination on August 23rd at an Ecclesiastical Council held at FCCUCC, Dalton and finally to celebrate Becky’s ordination on September 20th with the laying on of hands. Called by UCC Pittsfield, it was an added joy to install her on that same date as their settled Minister of Pastoral Care. Becky will also continue her work with Cathedral of the Beloved as Coordinator of Community Care where she continues to meet people where they are, as they are, because they are, and to walk along side them with kindness and care.

Barbara Taylor Brown writes, “Being ordained is not about serving God perfectly, but about serving God visibly, allowing other people to learn whatever they can from watching you rise and fall.” For Rev. Becky Crane it is especially about finally arriving at Christ’s table and having the authority vested in her by the Berkshire Association of the United Church of Christ to bless the bread and cup and share it with all who are gathered at the table.



Left: the laying on of hands

Below: Becky’s daughter Lyssa presenting a stole



Be Prepared to #VoteWithLove on November 3rd!

Election season is here, don’t get caught off guard! Head to the [UCC Our Faith Our Vote Election Center](#) to:

- ☐ Check your registration status
- ☐ Find your polling location
- ☐ Access state-specific voting resources



Second Annual Berkshire Association Picnic



It was a gorgeous early Autumn afternoon – perfect for a picnic at Pittsfield State Forest. More than 30 of us

gathered to enjoy excellent potluck offerings with grilled burgers and hotdogs, cold drinks and plenty of conversation.

How fun to see Ann Clark-Killam with her daughter, all the way from New Mexico by way of Mexico! Also two new UCC ministers settled or settling into the Berkshires who came to meet Berkshire Association colleagues and friends: Rev. Joe Medlin new to Richmond with his wife and two sons, and retiring minister Rev. Marilyn Cox with her adult son, Jared planning a move to Pittsfield after Easter 2027.

It was a joy to welcome Area Conference Minister, Rev. David Jones and folks from eight of our Berkshire UCC congregations: Canaan, Stockbridge, Lee, Sheffield, Lenox, Pittsfield,



North Adams, and First Williamstown. It was particularly good to have as many as six young and playful children join us for lunch before heading out to hike the nearby trails. If you missed it, there's always next year!

Our Churches' Delegates

Lee: Barbara Mahony, Rick Gregg, and Elaine Gross

Pittsfield: Carol Killian, Sally LeBarron

Dalton: Donna Bishop, Tom Towne

Lenox: Emily Johnson, Bob Gardiner, Amy Chin

Sheffield: Margi Larkin

Stockbridge: Margaret Hornick, John Canning

First Williamstown: Margaret Oxtoby

Second Williamstown: Anne Tiffany, Susan Rockefeller

Canaan: Susan Bues, Jay Aronson

North Adams: Julie Filkins, Dave Rhoads

Great Barrington: (alt delegate) Bonnie Daniels

7th Annual Meeting of SNEUCC – A Recap

The Southern New England Conference had record attendance at its 7th Annual Meeting Sept. 25 - 27 at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA, and online. At least 800 people attended in person despite the nor'easter, and more than 200 were online.

On Saturday, delegates were asked to consider three separate motions accepting the legal mergers of the historic Rhode Island Conference, the historic Massachusetts Conference, and the Missionary Society of Connecticut into the Southern New England Conference. Each historic board and the SNEUCC Board had previously approved the proposed mergers. Approval by SNEUCC's voting membership was an additional required step.

U.S. Senator the Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock spent an hour with the 35 youth attending the Woven Youth Collective program on Saturday morning, gave a rousing keynote address on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday preached at the Conference-wide worship service. The recording and worship bulletins are available here: www.sneucc.org/worship.



Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock preaching in front of the Conference Choir on Sunday.



LOST AND FOUND

A pair of sunglasses and one plastic container with a red lid left behind at our Annual Picnic at Pittsfield State Forest.

email Cara at
caradavis01230@yahoo.com

Workshops & Day Retreats

Local Church Search Committee Gathering: Overview of the Search & Call Journey

Oct. 13, 7:00 to 8:30 PM • Online

This workshop will discuss the Five Phases of the Search and Call process including: how to set-up the on-line profile portal; introduce you to available resources; review the different types of pastoral ministry; and touch on some best practices for your search and call team.

Racial Justice for Authorized Ministers & Lay Leaders: Renewal - Practicing Anti-Racism Together

Oct. 14 & 15, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM • Online

In this 8-hour workshop, we will co-create brave space and practice embodying anti-racism within ourselves and in ministry/church settings.

Member Churches

- Canaan Congregational Church
- First Congregational Church of Dalton
- First Congregational Church of Great Barrington
- First Congregational Church of Lee
- Church on the Hill (Lenox)
- First Congregational Church of North Adams
- Second Congregational Church (Pittsfield)
- United Church of Christ, Pittsfield
- First Congregational Church of Sheffield (Old Parish)
- Church of Christ in Mt. Washington
- The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge
- First Congregational Church of Williamstown
- Second Congregational Church of Williamstown

SHARE YOUR NEWS

What's happening at your congregation?

Are you witnessing "justice in action" through your congregation? Share your story by sending a short blurb to the Berkshire Association Newsletter. Send it to our email, with pictures if you have them for the

For the December edition, send your Advent and Christmas announcements. If including pictures, please attach a **jpeg**.

Items for the newsletter can be sent to:
berkshireassociation@gmail.com



Berkshire Association Council

- Rev. Cara Davis, Moderator
- Rev. Suzy Aja Burba, Vice-Moderator and chaplain to the Delegates
- Rev. Liz Goodman, Registrar
- Donna Bishop, Treasurer
- Rev. Joel Huntington, COM chair
- Rev. David Jones, Area Conference Minister, SNEUCC

Members:

- Amy Chin
- Rev Marisa Brown Ludwig
- Sara Milano
- David Anderegg



UCC Digital Programs

Nurture the Soul

Monday, October 19, 3:30 pm ET - [*Future of Faith: Communities of Deep Conversation*](#)

Thursday, October 22, 3:30 pm ET - [*Civic Discipleship in Critical Times: Election Day Preparation*](#)

Or look up www.ucc.org/events/

BE FIRST TO ANSWER THIS QUIZ

Which of our Berkshire Association churches will host the Berkshire Association Annual Meeting on November 15 at 2:30pm?

Send your response to Amy Chin at amye.chin@gmail.com and win a prize!



Canaan Congregational Church on an autumn day.

Youth Group visits Benedict Pond

On October 1, the youth of The First Congregational Church, Stockbridge, visited Benedict Pond for a fun outing. Ted Randolph shown here taking a photo.



For even more news...

- [Messenger Archive – First Congregational Church of Lee, MA](#)
- [News - First Congregational Church, Stockbridge, Massachusetts](#)
- And check out the [blog of Church on the Hill, Lenox](#).

