



The Spire

October 2026

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hanover, United Church of Christ

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Senior Pastor

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Minister of Music

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OUR VISION STATEMENT

We strive to be a church that welcomes all and empowers all in Christ to share their God-given talents.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of inclusive love that has no walls or barriers, where all who enter are loved, respected, and accepted for who they are, reaching beyond social class, gender, race and sexual orientation, welcoming all into our circle of love. We are a community of growth and transformation that is not content with the status quo but a community filled with the love and compassion of Christ, and an overwhelming desire to share that love. We are a community committed to not only praying together, on Sunday mornings, but putting our faith into action daily.



Our Ministry Together

As we move into the fall, our attention turns once again to two important parts of the life of our church: our Stewardship campaign and our nominating process. At first, they may seem like very different things. One is about raising money, and the other is about finding people to serve on committees. But at their heart, both are really about the same thing: how we choose to share our gifts in building the life and ministry of this church.

Stewardship is about much more than writing a check. It is about recognizing that everything we have—our time, our talents, our resources, our creativity, our compassion—is a gift. And we are invited to decide how we will use our own financial gifts for the work of God.

Our church does a remarkable amount with what we have. We worship together, care for one another, support our wider community, provide space for ministry, welcome new people, educate our children and adults, and try to live out our commitment to being a progressive and Open and Affirming congregation. None of that happens by accident. It happens because people give.

Some give financially. Some give their time. Some sing or play music. Some teach. Some visit people who are sick or homebound. Some organize events. Some make phone calls, bake cookies, serve coffee, work behind the scenes, or simply show up when something needs to be done.

That is stewardship.

And stewardship is also about the future. Every congregation has to ask: What kind of church do we want to be? What ministries do we want to sustain? Where is God calling us next? Our financial commitments help make those possibilities real.

At the same time, we have another important task before us: nominating people to serve in the life of the church. *Continued on page 2*

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This year, we embarked on a new project which touches on all of the ministries of the church. The Diaconate, along with the Cabinet and officers of the church identified an issue which faces many churches. Given the number of active covenant members in our church filling all of the elected positions that the bylaws require. The model that we have now requires filling too many positions for the available pool of volunteers.

Following an excellent and well-attended workshop by Rev. Doug Bixby, moderator Ava, vice-moderator Ken and I have been working with a small group who are tasked with looking at different models of church governance. We had our first meeting in September. Those serving on that task force are Ava, Ken, Steve Patt, and Ted.

Every year, we ask members to consider serving on our committees and boards. I know that for some people, the word "committee" can immediately produce a desire to hide behind the nearest hymnal! But serving on a church committee can be one of the most meaningful ways to become more deeply connected to this congregation.

We need people with different gifts, different experiences, different perspectives, and different ideas. You do not have to be an expert. You do not have to know everything about the church. And you certainly do not have to have all the answers.

What we need are people who care about this congregation and are willing to share a little of their time and themselves.

Sometimes we think of church leadership as something other people do. But the truth is that the church belongs to all of us. Its ministry is not the responsibility of the pastor, the Cabinet, or a handful of longtime members. We are the church together.

So as you consider your stewardship commitment this year, I invite you to think not only about what you can give financially, but also about what you can give of yourself.

And as the Nominating Committee begins its work, I invite you to be open to the possibility that someone may ask you to serve.

Perhaps you will even consider suggesting your own name—or the name of someone you think would bring a particular gift to our ministry.

Our church has a wonderful history, but our ministry is not simply about preserving what has been. We are called to imagine what can be.

Stewardship helps provide the resources. Nominating helps provide the people. And together, they help us continue the work God has entrusted to us.

In the next couple of months, you will be hearing from both the Nominating and Stewardship committees, asking for your help to keep the church vibrant and moving forward. There is a place for every gift here. I hope you will prayerfully consider what yours might be.

Faithfully,



Rev. Peter Johnston, Senior Pastor



MainSpring House Meals

MainSpring House is currently feeding 180 people.

Reminder that the months of NOVEMBER and DECEMBER are available for meal donations.

Meals can be dropped off on either the first Saturday or Sunday of the month.

MainSpring House is very flexible with the drop offs. It's a very rewarding experience!

Sign-ups are in the vestry next to the flower sign-up sheet.

Questions? Don't hesitate to contact Dayna for more information: 617-827-3955.



FCC HANOVER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



NEWSLETTER

October News



Welcome to our Christian Education Newsletter! Each month you'll read about all the current happenings in our CE program. We are excited to announce our year long theme- **Growing Seeds of Faith**- and even more excited for the Bible lessons and activities which will help the children explore and find ways to cultivate his/her own faith.



We've had a great start to the new church school year! During our Fall's First Sunday service, each child had a chance to ring our newly repaired steeple bell. They were ready and excited to flex their muscles and pull the rope to ring the bell which calls our church to worship. We also heard the Bible lesson about Jesus's **Parable of the Sower**. We learned the meaning of the parable and how it relates to the faith of people. What fun we had with our scavenger hunt, our role playing, and with the creation of our folding mini book! Come and join our Sunday School class anytime! Whether you and your children can come to church and Sunday School a lot or a little, you are always warmly welcomed.

Questions about our CE program?
Email Janet: jcookie4@hotmail.com

Lessons and Activities

Oct. 4 and 11 *The Parable of the Mustard Seed* (Mark 4: 30-32)

Oct 18 and 25- *Jesus Welcomes the Children* (Mark 10: 13-16)

Reminders

Communion

On the first Sunday of each month, the children will first attend Sunday School at 9:30, then later join the service to observe Communion with parents. This observance of the Sacrament of Communion will begin on Sunday, November 1st.



Important Dates

October 11; 4-6 PM Riley Hall

Calling all middle school/high school youth! This first meeting will be a planning meeting along with fun and yummy fall themed activities and treats! Bring a friend!

October 25 - Trunk or Treat

Community Event! Join in the fun and wear a costume to church! The fun takes place after church at Riley Hall; 11-1. All are welcome! Families, friends, neighbors, kids, and grandkids!





**First Congregational
Church of Hanover**
United Church of Christ



LAURA'S COUNTRY CHURCH FAIR

Saturday, November 7th | 9:30am - 2:00pm

Join in the fun filled fellowship and stop by
one of the following tables.



Plant Table



Jams/Jelly and
Baked Good Table



White Elephant Table



Tool Table



Progressive
Auction



Knitted Table



Bits and Pieces
Table



Woodcraft Table



Jewelry Table



Holiday Craft Table



World Famous Cafe

Contact **Linda Gilardi 339-933-0224** if you would like to participate
Sign up sheets are in the Church Vestry



White elephant and tool items may be dropped off
at the Riley Hall from
Tuesday though Saturday
10:00am til 1:30

Please contact Adrienne or Steve if you are donating a valuable item





Susan Vetterlein
retired as Church
Administrator.

There was a
celebration at Riley
Hall after services
on September 20,
2026.

Thank you Susan
for all of your
leadership over the
last 10 years.

You will be missed!

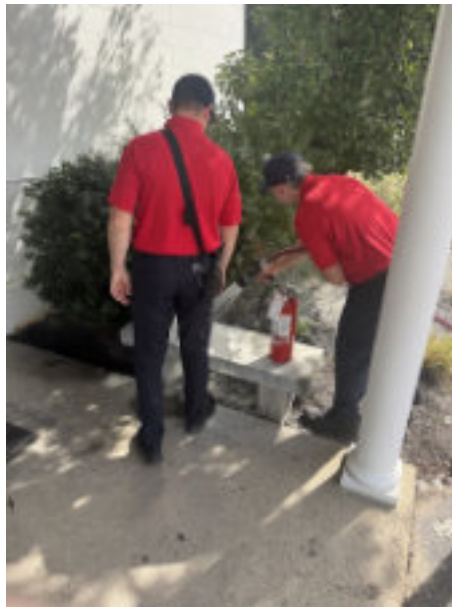


On Thursday, September 17, 2026 Reverend Peter Johnston officiated the wedding of Reverend Kimberley Engle and Jason Harper.

Rev. Kim Harper was a student at FCC Hanover from 2023-2024. She currently serves as the pastor of two churches: First Congregational Church in Lakeville and North Congregational Church of Middleborough.

Congratulations Kim and Jason!!!

Thank you to the
Hanover Fire
Department for
assisting us with
a mulch fire.



This summer, members and friends of the church gathered to watch and discuss the video series, The Chosen.

Many thanks to Rev. Dr. Mary Lou Gifford for leading this adult education forum.

Fall's First
Sunday was a
success!

It was nice to
get back into a
routine!





FCC HANOVER
RILEY HALL
17 SILVER ST
HANOVER



HALLOWEEN COMMUNITY



TRUNK or TREAT

FREE!

Sunday, October 25

11 am - 1 pm

Games, candy,
prizes! Wear your
costume!

Held inside Riley Hall if rain

All welcome!





Next Meeting October 20th!!!

Please join us on October 20, 2026
at 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Everyone should bring the theme baskets they
have made to sell at the church fair.

At our meeting we will provide cellophane bags,
decorative ribbons, and lists of contents to add to
all baskets.

Youth Group



Mark your calendars for the first meeting on
Sunday, Oct. 11 from 4 - 6 PM. We'll meet at Riley
Hall to have fun with fall themed activities and enjoy
the yummy flavor of caramel.

We'll also be planning our schedule of activities for
the start of the church year calendar. Bring your fun
and creative ideas! Youth Group meets once a
month and welcomes our middle school and high
school students and their friends. Please contact
leaders Jenn Bunar or Nicole Conti, or CE Director
Janet Cook with questions.

Share Your Gifts: Simple Ways to Serve on Sunday Mornings

Sunday worship is something we build together. Whether
you are stepping through our doors for the first time or the
hundredth, our shared service thrives on the warmth,
voices, and hospitality of our congregation.

If you have been looking for an easy, meaningful way to
get involved, consider signing up for one of three vital
roles:

- **Greeter:** Be the welcoming smile at the door! Hand
out bulletins, greet longtime friends and newcomers
alike, and help everyone feel at home the moment
they arrive.
- **Scripture Reader:** Lend your voice to worship by
reading the morning's designated scripture lessons
during the service. Readings are provided ahead of
time so you can practice comfortably.
- **Coffee Hour Host:** Fellowship doesn't end with the
benediction. Hosting coffee hour can be as simple
as making a fresh pot of coffee, putting out a light
snack, and helping tidy up afterward. Partnering
with a friend or family member makes it even easier
and more fun!

No prior experience is necessary, and guidance is always
happily provided.

How to Sign Up:

Sign-up sheets for the coming weeks are available in the
vestry during Coffee Hour. Stop by, grab a cup of coffee,
and write your name down for the dates that suit your
schedule.



The start of a new church school year means the
start of our call for help in our Nursery/Toddler Room.
We will need two adults each Sunday to provide on-
call care. There is a sign-up sheet in the vestry with
Sunday dates. Please consider writing your name
next to a few. Parents who did take advantage of our
Nursery/Toddler room last year were very
appreciative of the loving babysitting provided.



Fellowship **REUNION**

First Congregational Church
of Hanover, MA

October 24th

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

*Bring your significant other
or leave them at home*



✿ RSVP by October 17th
Christine 978-423-9671

✿ Bring \$5 for some pizza & soda
✿ Dig up photos to share

Thank You, Dean

The average pew-sitter in our church may not always see the quiet, tireless work that faithful volunteers contribute behind the scenes. So much of what keeps our congregation thriving—maintaining the building, planning for future generations, and navigating unexpected repairs—happens long after Sunday services conclude.



One such pillar of steady dedication has been Dean Larson.

For years, Dean has served faithfully on our Board of Trustees, giving freely of his time, wisdom, and practical know-how. Serving on the board is rarely glamorous; it often means long evening meetings, inspecting boilers, and making tough decisions about facilities and finances. Yet through every season, Dean approached the role with calm leadership, sound judgment, and a deep, abiding care for this church community and its mission.

Whether offering thoughtful counsel on major campus projects or rolling up his sleeves to tackle an urgent issue, Dean has embodied what it means to be a servant leader. His stewardship has left our facilities sounder, and our community better prepared for the future.

While his term on the Board of Trustees has come to a close, the positive impact of his service will be felt for years to come. Please take a moment when you see Dean at church to shake his hand and express your personal gratitude for his years of faithful, behind-the-scenes service.

Thank you, Dean, for your devotion, your leadership, and your heart for our church family!

Going forward, the trustees will be chaired by Dave Fiske. We are grateful for all that the trustees and our sexton do as faithful stewards of our church properties.

A Word About Microphones



A quick reminder about something simple that makes a big difference in worship: please use the microphone when you are asked to.

It can be tempting to think, “I’m loud enough—I don’t need a microphone.” But the microphone isn’t really for the person speaking. It is for the person listening.

Some people in our congregation have difficulty hearing, even when they are sitting fairly close to the front. Others rely on hearing aids or cochlear implants that work especially well when sound is amplified clearly. And for those joining us online, the microphone is often the difference between hearing what is happening and missing it altogether.

So, during worship, please speak directly into the microphone and keep it close to your mouth. If you are reading Scripture, offering a prayer, making an announcement, or speaking from the floor, use the microphone provided. And if someone hands you a microphone, please assume there is a good reason!

Good sound is not a distraction from worship. It is part of hospitality.

When we use our microphones, we are making sure that everyone—not just those with the best seats or the best hearing—can fully participate in worship.

So, consider this your friendly worship reminder: If there’s a microphone, use it!

Faithfully, The Diaconate



Our Policy Regarding Children in Church

Friends, please be aware of our policy regarding children in church:

If your kids are loud, please still come to church.

If you're running late because getting everyone out the door was a battle, please still come to church.

If your toddler won't sit still, please still come to church.

If your baby needs to eat, please still come to church.

If your child asks questions at the least convenient time, please still come to church.

If someone cries, drops a toy, needs a snack, or has to make their third trip to the bathroom, please still come to church.

If your child doesn't know all the words, all the prayers, or exactly when to sit and stand, please still come to church.

If you feel like you spent the entire service managing your children and heard approximately 12% of the sermon, please still come to church.

If Sunday morning feels messy instead of peaceful, please still come to church.

If you're worried your children are distracting the people around you, please still come to church.

Because children do not learn how to be part of the Church by staying home until they can sit quietly.

If your child has a disability, please still come to church.

They learn by being here.

They learn the hymns by hearing us sing them

They learn the prayers by hearing us pray them.

They learn to worship by watching us worship.

They learn that church is home because we make room for them here.

The wiggles, whispers, dropped crayons, crying babies, and little voices are not interruptions to the life of the Church.

They are evidence that the Church is alive.

So bring the babies. Bring the toddlers. Bring the big kids. Come late. Sit in the back. Sit in the front. Step out when you need to and come right back in.

Just come.

Children are not simply the future of the Church.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6:00pm - 7:00pm AA	2	3 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
4 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	5	6 7:00pm Scouts Troop 38	7 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 6:30pm - 7:30pm Prayer Shawl 7:00pm Big Book AA	8 4:00pm CE Mtg Riley Hall 6:00pm - 7:00pm AA	9	10 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
11 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship 4:00pm Youth Group @ Riley Hall	12	13 7:00pm Scouts Troop 38	14 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 3:00pm Minister's Tea 7:00pm Big Book AA	15 6:00pm - 7:00pm AA 7:00pm Finance	16	17 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 1:00pm - 3:00pm Girl Scouts 3:30pm - 5:00pm Cub Scouts
18 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	19	20 2:00pm Moonlighters 7:00pm DIACONATE MEETING 7:00pm Scouts Troop 38	21 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 7:00pm Big Book AA	22 6:00pm - 7:00pm AA	23 6:30pm Potluck	24 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 3:00pm Fellowship Reunion
25 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship 11:00am - 1:00pm Trunk or Treat @ Parking Lot	26	27 7:00pm Scouts Troop 38	28 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 7:00pm Big Book AA 7:00pm Troop 38 Com Mtg Rm1	29 6:00pm - 7:00pm AA	30 7:00am All Pro Dad	31 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop



The Spire

First Congregational Church of Hanover
An Open & Affirming Congregation of the
United Church of Christ

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Hanover, MA 02339

