

# FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

November, 2020



This is another edition of our church newsletter. We thank those members and friends who have contributed stories, biographies, reflections, letters, poems and encourage any who wish to contribute to our church newsletter. As you can read in this edition, we have many talented friends and church members. We would like to get to know all of you better and encourage you to send your thoughts, poems, stories to us to publish. Thanks so much.

The newsletter will be printed at the beginning of each month and be sent via email to church members and friends, be sent by mail to those who would prefer a written copy and be available in the foyer for all to pick up when the church is reopened. In the meantime, we will deliver the Chatter to those who would prefer paper copy or don't receive email.

**We are always looking for stories, poems, thoughts to contribute. If you have notices about upcoming events which you would like published, please let Anne or Jody know and we will try to include. We try to publish by the beginning but realistically often it is sent out by the 10<sup>th</sup> or so.**

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## Pastor's Thoughts

"I am drafting this message Wednesday afternoon, less than 18 hours since election results began being broadcast. I am having mixed emotions - between hope and disgust. I am working to manage my anxiety by meeting with church folk, cleaning house and preparing for a walk – in between meetings.

"Part of growing as a person of faith, which includes practicing mindfulness is noticing the discomfort, anxiety or fear and not allowing them to overwhelm you – stepping outside the emotion to say, "That is not me but I can see how I am affected by these events. Said more plainly: I am not my feelings. And neither are you.

"No matter what you are feeling, it is not wrong. How you use the energy from those feelings and what you do matters quite a bit, both to yourself and to those who inhabit world.

"The Spirit picked a very difficult lesson for the focus scripture this coming Sunday. It's Romans 13:1-10 where the apostle Paul admonishes his church folk to subject themselves to governmental authority, saying that those in power were put there by God. I do not think God micromanages the affairs of the world to such a degree, so that's my first break with Paul's thinking. The other is that the church is supposed to be among the moral voices that hold the government to account. That has always been the role of religious traditions. It sometimes works for the common good and sometimes for ill. Sometimes it makes no difference because the status quo serves both the government and communities of faith. (Ugh!)

"I have entitled my sermon "Subjects." I already have three drafts in the making. I guess I am managing stress by writing quite a bit, too. Between now and then, I will be praying without ceasing, for you, for our nation, and for the kin-dom of God, whose relational requirements sometimes exceed my convictions. I must pray for and love myself – as should you, beloved child of God."

Peace and power together,  
Pastor Mark

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## Deacons' November 2020 Report

"Encouraged by robust worship service attendance and engagement, the Deacons continue to consider ways to help ensure our on-line worship is welcoming to our congregation, community and beyond.

"In addition, the Deacons have enjoyed partnering with Pastor Mark Seifried to help plan and support new opportunities for us to connect with each other and with the spirit within and around us, such as the Blessing of the Animals and small neighborhood group gatherings.

"Looking ahead, we are now focusing on how to make Advent and Christmas memorable and meaningful. We aspire for our church to live fully and joyfully into the season, maintaining traditions while celebrating in novel ways."

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## WilliNet – Community Television for Williamstown

"All of us at First Church Williamstown know how valuable WilliNet is to our community. We've used it to record speakers and Second Hour programs for several years. (You can still watch your favorites today on [WilliNet.org](http://WilliNet.org)!) When COVID – 19 came to town, WilliNet was deemed an "essential service" by the Mt. Greylock Regional School District.

"The Town of Williamstown depended on WilliNet to provide the technology to deliver municipal meetings remotely. WilliNet began producing weekly local COVID-19 updates; our church and others turned to WilliNet to record and/or distribute their weekly services when we closed our doors.

"The Council on Aging asked WilliNet to produce exercise and yoga classes for the newly home-bound seniors. Local fitness businesses asked WilliNet to broadcast their workouts. WilliNet produced "Storytime" with local folks, young and old, reading picture books, as well as yoga/relaxation classes for elementary school children. These programs are broadcast on Spectrum TV channels 1302 or 1303, uploaded to the WilliNet website posted on the WilliNet

Facebook page, and emailed weekly to some 1,350 subscribers. We count on WilliNet to give us news of local issues, political candidates, town government, and so more much more. They even broadcast our Town Meeting live from Weston Field. That was an accomplishment!

“Full disclosure – I’m on the Board of Directors of WilliNet. Because I’ve gotten a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes, I appreciate this local treasure even more! Next time you see Debby Dane, Jack Criddle or any of the WilliNet crew, be sure to give them a big thank you!

“By the way, did you see our own Carol Stein-Payne in this public service announcement, produced by WilliNet, reminding us to Mask Up!”

Thank you WilliNet!

Lynn Chick

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## Stewardship November 2020 Report

“The completion of the fire suppression system is underway. Final plans are with the engineers and the fabrication of pipes will be ordered. With the help of Centerline Architects, the plans were modified to prevent exposed pipes in the front foyer and under the portico outside. Hiding the overhead pipes will protect our historic architecture.

“The cost was very close to what was estimated 5 years ago. The \$150,500 will come from the Stewardship budget in 2020 and 2021. Work should begin before the end of this year.

“The plans are moving forward to complete repairs that will prevent water leakage in the steeple and sanctuary. These are temporary until the roof can be replaced which is a top priority of the new non-profit. There will be caulking done around the west chimney of the sanctuary roof. The louvers on the upper levels of the steeple will be temporarily covered. Most of the water damaging the front foyer, front of the sanctuary, and leaking down the steeple is coming through these louvers.

“Unfortunately, this will impact the ability to hear the steeple bell until those louvered windows can be removed, rebuilt and replaced. Because of the damage to the wood structure below and the flooring of the

steeple levels this is necessary until we can complete the overall steeple repair.

“The capital campaign task force has submitted an application with the state to create a new non-profit that will fund-raise and oversee the renovations and repairs needed on our historic building. The non-profit is named the Williamstown Meetinghouse Preservation Fund.

“The board will be both church and non-church members and will represent the variety of skills needed for fundraising, construction management, historic preservation, and grant writing.

“Pat Leach has been a tremendous help by researching and writing a history of our several meetinghouses in Williamstown, including the one we occupy today. The meetinghouse preservation fund creates an opportunity to unite our church community, local businesses, and residents to protect and preserve this iconic structure.

“Plans for our annual pledge drive and 2021 budget are underway.

“Stay safe as we move into colder weather.”

Susan Yates

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## Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians – Land Use Acknowledgment

“Thanks again for your interest in the panel on living on Mohican homelands. We had a great discussion. Here's the video, in case you weren't able to join on Thursday or want to re-watch it. The panel will also be rebroadcast through November on WilliNet and posted at [WilliNet.Org](http://WilliNet.Org).

“Also, I wanted to share information about how you can contribute to Heather's work with the Cultural Affairs Department of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. You can make a donation to the library, cultural preservation, or language programs at this link - you'll find the donation forms halfway down the page. You will also find contact info for Heather on that page. If you are able, please donate to support her work!

“Lastly, I’m attaching the land acknowledgment that people in the Stockbridge-Munsee Community developed for public use. As Heather mentioned, we are invited to use it word-for-word, or adapt it to our situation. Please use it and spread it far and wide.

“Stay safe and well, everyone!”

Best wishes,  
Rachel Payne

Note from Christine DeLucia ([cd10@williams.edu](mailto:cd10@williams.edu)):

“The following is land acknowledgment language that the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians has devised and made available to institutions in the Tribe’s ancestral homelands.

“For more information, please see the Tribe’s website ([www.mohican.com](http://www.mohican.com)), particularly this resource they have developed about “Stockbridge Munsee Historic Preservation” (<https://mohican.com/mt-content/uploads/2016/08/mohican-historic-preservation-booklet.pdf>).

“The current Historic Preservation Manager in this region is Bonney Hartley. More information about her office and contact details is here: <https://mohican.com/?url=historicpreservation>.”

### Land Acknowledgment

“It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the

[Insert as appropriate: Muhheaconneok or Mohican people or Munsee Lenape people],

who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.”

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### November Birthdays

These folks have birthdays during November. If you see them wish them a Happy Birthday.

- 6th Terry Clark
- 8th Tenley Smith
- 13th Jean Donati
- 18th Anne Skinner
- “ Anna Duhan
- 19th Doris McNabb
- 29th Ed Bianci

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#### “November”

by Mary Oliver

*The snow began slowly, a soft and easy sprinkling*

*of flakes, the clouds of flakes in the baskets of the wind and the branches of the trees \_\_\_\_\_*

*oh, so pretty. We walked through the growing stillness, as the flakes*

*prickled the path, then covered it, then deepened as in curds and drifts,*

*as the wind grew stronger, shaping its work less delicately, taking greater steps*

*over the hills and through the trees until, finally we were cold,*

*and far from home. We turned and followed our long shadows back to the house,*

*stamped our feet, went inside, and shut the door. Through the window we could see*

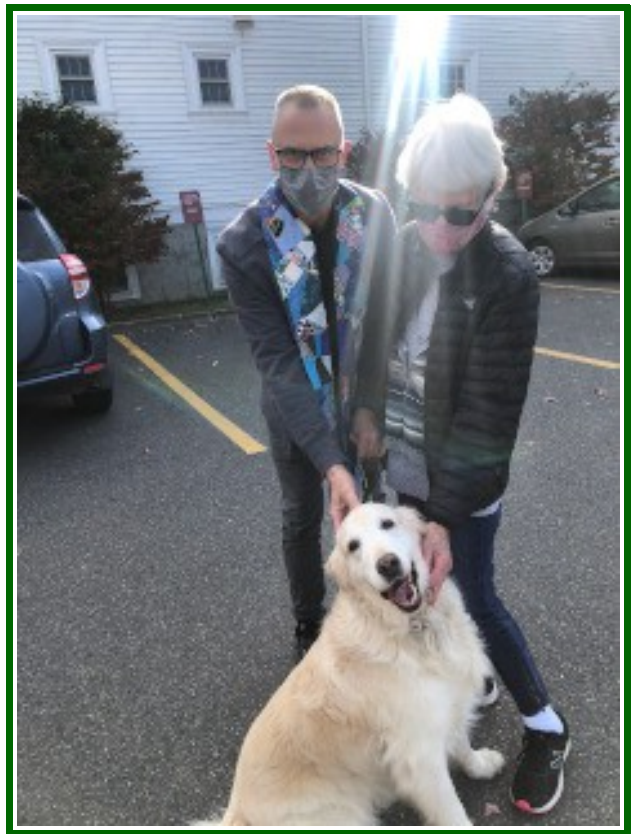
*how far away it was to the gates of April. Let the fire now put on its red hat and sing to us.*

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Blessing of the Animals



and a BIG smile...



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