



FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

May 2022

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, photos, to us to publish. If you have notices about upcoming events which you would like published, please let Carrie Waara or [Jody Green](#) know and we will try to include. 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.

This month's Chatter is dedicated to our beloved church angel who died several weeks ago, Anne Short. She recommended that we restart the church newsletter and I jumped in because she was so enthusiastic. She kept track of everyone's birthdays because she felt that it was important to acknowledge these dates. All of her church friends will miss her greatly. We haven't heard if there will be a memorial service but I'm sure Pastor Mark will let us all know.

In today's Chatter:

[Memories of Anne Short](#)
[Bee-Friendly Church](#)
[Education Committee Report](#)
[Milne Library Strategic Planning Survey](#)

Memory of Anne Atkinson Short

We are all grieving the recent death of our beloved Anne Short. She has been a member of our church for many years and had been quietly encouraging us to gather together in meaningful ways. She organized and participated in book groups, lunch bunch (recently at Pera's cafe), walks at the Spruces and many more creative opportunities to socialize and connect. She was the one who recently suggested that we resume the church newsletter which we now call the Chatter. We owe her so much for suggesting and organizing these gatherings and now need to carry on her torch, Anne's Torch, by continuing these in her spirit. She touched so many people in so many ways, that I thought that it would be only fitting to include memories and reflections of these folks. Jody Green

I miss Anne! I miss her charm, her sunny disposition, and the many conversations we frequently had. We borrowed each other's books and swapped opinions regarding them. Given her background that included authoring children's textbooks and mine in public administration it is somewhat amazing that we agreed so often.

I first met Anne 10 years ago when I was moderator and I visited her previous husband, a retired pastor, to seek advice. I got far more advice from Anne. My appreciation of her grew when we were both members of Rotary and a small discussion group - experiences that led to telephone talks multiple times a week.

I've been reading and discussing with Karen Armstrong's challenging History of God – and had promised to return it to her. I guess I'll keep it as a remembrance of her. Sam Humes

The last time I visited with Anne we walked with her tiny little dog and talked about her very big garden. She was such a loving, gracious presence, partnering with Mother Nature to nourish our crazy world. She is with us still in spirit, but sorely missed in person. Holly Edwards

Anne was truly a lovely lady and will be greatly missed by all who knew her, My heart goes out to her family. Dolores Lovegreen

I always admired Ann over the years for her smile, kindness and inclusion of so many in her life. She represented keen intelligence and went the extra mile to participate in our Church life. She will be missed. Carolyn Umlauf

Remembering Anne Short quietly helping in so many ways. To choose one: her enthusiasm for the LUNCH BUNCH nourishing our tummies and encouraging social interaction. Jean Vankin

Perhaps because she had no children of her own, but was the epitome of loving, Anne not only became an immediate deeply involved member of each family that came with both Ted and Leigh, but she also seemed to adopt, for instance, our own whole Colonial Village. We all knew and loved her, her amazing, gracious and elegant hospitality, and — her love! Jean Donati

Anne was a loyal farm-stand “regular” and when she learned about Community Supported Agriculture she enthusiastically joined the Core Group to help Caretaker Farm transition to a CSA model. I remember Anne for her creative energy, her love of community and her generosity of spirit that enlivened us all. May she rest in peace. Elizabeth Smith

Anne Atkinson Short was a beautiful and loving person. My memories of her are primarily from the Williamstown Garden Club and our church. She was a valued member of our congregation and a diligent community volunteer. It was always nice to see her at regular church services as well as other events like the Blessing of the Animals. She was smart, hard working and never critical. When she was president of the garden club and I was secretary, I sometimes had trouble summarizing a big, important meeting . A quick call to her and my report would become concise and perfectly presented with no wasted words. She could summarize the entire meeting in just a few sentences! In another area, I knew that Anne adopted at least one senior dog. She provided a loving and caring life for a rescued animal that otherwise might have been euthanized. Anne was certainly an intelligent, kind and compassionate Christian lady -- a pleasure to know and work with. Carol Paul

Anne Short is an unforgettable mentor I've been blessed with in our beloved community of FCC Williamstown.
What have I learned from Anne?

How to be active into my nineties, physically,, intellectually and emotionally
How to serve others with generosity, beauty and kindness
How to advocate for myself and others
How to make sure a pet like Poochie is always part of the welcome
How to be a listening ear when someone calls
How to be the complete hostess

When I meditate each day, Anne is one of my touchstones.
I will never stop missing her and her presence at our book group/dinners.
Gail Oberst

In Memoriam

Anne Atkinson Short

On the way
there will be losses
no doubt
blessings too
attend the sparrows
consider the lilies

What matters now?
attention
reverence
gratitude
an open heart

Hugh L. Guilderson

[\(return\)](#)



Spruce's walkers and friends– Anne Short is second from left.



Anne hosting book club gathering at her home with Gail and Bill Oberst and Dick Markham. [\(return\)](#)

Bee Friendly Church

Last fall, Williams students Aaron Stanton and Sam Holmes conducted a study of properties abutting Town Green, a wide strip of land on either side of Main St that is owned by the Town, but managed by its abutters. The students' report examines the negative impacts of lawns on our environment (e.g. decreased biodiversity, increased carbon emissions and noise) and the benefits of "pollinator meadows," which provide food and habitat for the insects vital to our own food system. Pollinators are in decline worldwide, as suburban sprawl and industrial agriculture have eradicated their ecosystems. Groups such as Bee Friendly Williamstown, inspired by the writings of Doug Tallamy, Heather Holm, and many others, are working to plant gardens and meadows of native plants in public spaces (Spruces, Williamstown Elementary School), with a goal of inspiring more homeowners to do the same.

Aaron and Sam met with Lauren Stevens and Sherwood Guernsey to discuss the church's centrally located property. They noted the small raised-bed garden in the front of the building, "meant to act as an example planting . . . to show people something they can do to help pollinators." All agreed that the church would "make a great spot for a pilot project," presumably on a larger scale than the current bed.

Originally installed as a church youth project showcasing vegetables and herbs, the bed was replanted in 2019 by myself and Laura Bentz, who brought in purple coneflower, black-eyed susan, bee balm, and other key pollinator-friendly native species. The bed also hosts a crop of tulip bulbs that are greatly appreciated each spring by the local rabbit population, which explains why we see virtually nothing flowering there until June.

The church's pollinator bed, like our banners on the walls, our protests on the steps, and our many actions in the community, underlines our values and concerns—in this case, for the

preservation of indigenous biodiversity and the health of our planet.

If we were to respond to the implicit challenge posed by Aaron and Sam’s report, how might we increase the scale and beauty of our “anchor pollinator meadow” to begin building a pollinator pathway across our town? My proposal is that we map out an area on the right side of the building and plan a larger garden, along the lines of the beautiful Peace Garden installed at Caretaker Farm. To do it right, we would begin by eliminating the grass currently on site. As we enter a period of construction work on the church building, we can “sheet mulch” the planned garden area with cardboard and wood chips for a year or more. When the construction is finished, the sheet-mulching would likewise be complete and the area would be ready for planting or seeding. The Costleys have generously donated a new spruce tree for the front of the church—in my dreams, I can already picture it surrounded by a gentle, multicolor meadow buzzing with life.

Contributed by Anne O’Connor

[\(return\)](#)

Anne O'Connor reports from the Education Team-

With spring here and summer fast approaching, we encourage First Church community members to host and/or present small programs and small groups at/through the church, especially in-person gatherings. Think broadly and creatively! Book groups! Cooking groups! Meditation! Folk Music Jams! A guest speaker on a topic that interests you and might interest others! The Ed Team is here to support you in these endeavors by promoting your idea and putting you in touch with the right people for logistics. Contact any member of the Ed Team for more information: Lauren Stevens, Charles Fox, Sam Humes, Doris McNabb, Anne O'Connor, or Anna Robertson. (In a pdf clicking on the blue names will take you to your email program.)

[Lauren Stevens](mailto:lstevens@berkshire.net) lstevens@berkshire.net

[Charles Fox](mailto:chaswfox@hotmail.com) chaswfox@hotmail.com

[Sam Humes](mailto:sam.humes@gmail.com) sam.humes@gmail.com

Doris McNabb (no email)

[Anne O'Connor](mailto:education@firstchurchwilliamstown.org) education@firstchurchwilliamstown.org

[Anna Robertson](mailto:abr1@williams.edu) abr1@williams.edu

[\(return\)](#)

Milne Public Library Strategic Planning Survey



Because the library belongs to everyone, help shape the Milne's future & fill out this [Strategic Planning Survey](#)

<https://www.milnelibrary.org/survey>

Your input will allow the Milne to better serve you & the community.

[\(return\)](#)