



FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

January, 2023

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 10th or so.

In this chatter:

- [Hear, Meet and Vote, Rev. Deanna Shorb](#)
- [UCC Trainings and Events – Racial Justice and Inclusion](#)
- [Habitat for Humanity Newsletter](#)
- [January and February Birthdays](#)
- [Book Discussion – Dick Markham](#)

The Pastoral Search Committee, The Church Council, and the Deacons are thrilled to announce that Rev. Deanna Shorb will be coming to FCC-Williamstown the weekend of 27-29 January 2023 to meet with leadership, the church membership, and preach on Sunday which will be followed by our formal affirming vote to our call to ministry at FCC-Williamstown!

It is essential that we come out and participate in the events and the service this weekend to show our excitement, support, and affirmation of Deanna and the forward direction of the Church!

The schedule of events is as follows:

Saturday January 28

3:30 pm - 6pm

Open House to meet Rev Deanna Shorb at the home of Julie MacDonald

719 Northwest Hill Rd Pownal

Please contact Julie if you have any questions. There is plenty of parking.

508 314 5437 Julie's cell

Sunday January 28

10am service to be followed by Affirming vote by the Congregation.

Reverends Mark and Deanna will lead the service and Deanna will preach the sermon.

UCC Trainings and Events – Racial Justice and Inclusion



Six-part series to focus on Contemplative Practices

Contemplation implies something deeper than thinking only. Contemplation starts from a place of mystery and an acceptance of not knowing. Spiritual truths often begin as a mystery because there is much we must spiritually unlearn, including many beliefs that no longer serve us.

Rev. Matt Carriker will lead this six-part online series exploring Christian contemplative practices beginning Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 7:00 PM and recurring every two weeks.

[Learn more and register](#) for the entire series, or for individual sessions.



Matt Carriker

2

Racial Justice Trainings Offered

A January Racial Justice Training for clergy is already full, but the following online Racial Justice Trainings are being offered this season:

[Racial Justice Training-Microaggressions](#)

February 15, 8:30 AM-Noon

or

[Racial Justice Training-Microaggressions](#)

March 18, 9 AM-12:30 PM

A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group, such as a racial or ethnic minority (definition from Oxford Languages). Join this online session to learn more about this form of racism.



[Racial Justice Training for All](#)

Wednesday, April 12, 7-9 PM AND

Thursday, April 13, 7-8:30 PM

Both clergy and lay people are welcome to join us for this 3-1/2 hour, on-line Racial Justice 101 training facilitated by Rev. James D. Ross II, Minister for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Completed session may apply toward racial justice training requirements for clergy.

Learn more on the [Racial Justice page](#)

3

Authors Needed for Starting With Scripture newsletter

The Starting With Scripture Devotional is a 500-700 word reflection on the common lectionary text that is published weekly on Mondays. The newsletter also includes prayers requested by readers and staff for churches to share.

Editor Marlene Gasdia-Cochrane is inviting returning and new writers to be in touch with her to get added to the schedule for 2023.



4

Affinity Group for Clergy of Color to Begin in Late February

Registration will open in early January for the second affinity group created specifically for clergy of color. The group will be led by Rev. Dr. Danielle Buhuro, an experienced pastoral care practitioner, author, and scholar.

The group is open to all Southern New England Conference clergy who identify as people of color, as well as to clergy of color from the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the New England Synod ELCA.



5

Upcoming Events



[Radical Inclusion: Extending the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

Jan. 16, 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM • Online

Join SNEUCC Theologian in residence, Bishop Yvette Flunder, who will lead worship and participate in an online discussion with attendees afterward. Congregations are encouraged to host watch parties and dialogue in their own settings.

[Racial Justice for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Leaders - Faith Formation Leadership Program](#)

Jan. 14, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM • Online

Students will explore how to create a common language around racism, unmask racism in our lives, and encourage long-term engagement in racial justice ministry as a spiritual issue.

[Clergy Boundary Awareness Training: Clergy Health and Wellness](#)

Jan. 19, 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM • Online

Framed through the lens of clergy health and wellness, join in for a not-so-typical clergy boundary training.

[Lunch & Learn: Building Congregational Legacies](#)

Jan. 19, 12:00 to 1:00 PM • Online

Charlie Kuchenbrod will lead the discussion on changing the narrative of declining congregations from failure, closure, and death to legacy building, completion, and resurrection.

[Changing the Lens of Justice: A Restorative Justice Primer](#)

Jan. 23, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM • Online

The SNEUCC Restorative Justice Task Team presents this two-part introductory series. Susan Maze-Rothstein will facilitate the first session on Restorative Justice 101 and Community Development of Restorative Justice.

[Developing Faith: Ages and Stages - Faith Formation Leadership Program](#)

Jan. 28, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM • Online

Students will explore an overview of human development based on the work of Piaget, Erikson, and Gardner; and faith development based on the work of Fowler and Westerhoff.

Ongoing Events

[Cross-Pollination Gatherings: Environmental Ministries](#)

Monthly on the 3rd Monday, 6:30 PM • Online

For local church leaders involved in environmental ministry.

[Racial Justice Cross-Pollination Gatherings](#)

Monthly on the 4th Monday, 6:30 PM • Online

For local church leaders involved in racial justice ministry.

Partner Events

[UCC Webinar—What Is a Sustainable Economy?](#)

Jan. 11, 1:00 PM • Online

Featuring Edith Rasell, author of *The Way of Abundance: Economic Justice in Scripture and Society*.

[Andy Lang Leading Workshops for ONA and not-yet ONA churches in the SNEUCC](#)

Jan. 28, 12:30 PM

Enfield Congregational UCC, Enfield, CT

The Rev. Andy Lang—recently retired executive director of the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition—will lead two workshops, “ONA NEXT” and “ONA and the Bible.”

All Events

www.sneucc.org/events

But wait, there's more...

Subscribe to our other newsletters at: sneucc.org/subscribe

[Visit our newsletter archive](#)

Have your church administrator (or whoever handles your church's email account) visit the [Church Dashboard](#) to make sure we're connecting with all the current leaders in your church.

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Toll Free: 866-367-2822

Fax: 866-367-0860



This newsletter is made possible by your church's contributions to [Proportional Giving to Our Church's Wider Mission](#).



Northern Berkshire Habitat for Humanity

Please visit the following link to see what is new at Northern Berkshire Habitat for Humanity:

<https://www.northberkshirehabitat.org/news> .

On that link you will find our November Newsletter with articles on the Maple Street Project and the future homeowners of the house. A hilarious article from the perspective of a new volunteer as well as an acknowledgment of our contractor, suppliers and grant foundation supporters and a couple of different ways to support our mission. Several pictures of the progress and articles about the Brush with kindness and veterans' programs options. Our mission is identified and the difference one house can make on a family's lives. Please enjoy the newsletter and our gratitude as mission partners.

January Birthdays

5 Pat Leach
7 Julie MacDonald
9 Lola Bohle
12 Wilder Burris-Wells
12 Susan Clarke
12 Sally Sussman
25 Amelia Murphy
28 Ed Lawrence.

February Birthdays

10 Elayne Murphy
13 Paul Rix
14 Carrie Waara
18 Oliver Longhurst
19 Carol Johnston
19 Bob Janes
27 Carolyn Behr

Discussing My Book?

I have revised my book with a new subtitle, *A Spiritual Perspective* instead of *A Depth Perspective*. If you are interested in discussing my book, *Two Dimensions of Reality: A Spiritual Perspective*, let me know and I will provide you with a free copy. We will meet first at noon on Thursday, January 12 in the Church Meeting Room. Subsequent meetings will depend upon interest; you will not have to commit to them in advance.

You may rsvp by emailing me at richanddonella@gmail.com [Note it is richANDdonella, not richARDDonella)