



# CHURCH AT THE CENTER

## MAY 2026



### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH "CENTER CHURCH"

United Church of Christ

One Church Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

(413) 532-2262

Email: [centerchurch@verizon.net](mailto:centerchurch@verizon.net)

Website: [centerchurchsouthhadley.org/](http://centerchurchsouthhadley.org/)

Facebook: Center Church of South Hadley MA

Instagram: @centerchurchsouthhadley



*ALL ARE WELCOME AT CENTER CHURCH ON THE COMMON,  
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING UCC CONGREGATION,  
WHERE THE SPIRIT OF GOD STIRS US TO EMBRACE OUR DIVERSITY,  
DEEPEN OUR FAITH IN JESUS, SHARE OUR TEARS AND LAUGHTER,  
AND EXTEND GOD'S ABUNDANT LOVE AND JUSTICE INTO THE WORLD.*

I know a few of you weave fabric, others of you weave ideas and solutions, and then there are still some who weave folks to folks. So, let's face it, there is a lot of weavers out there!

In last week's Bible Study at Loomis Village (open to all) we talked about the Gospel of Mary Magdalene. Never heard about it? Well, you are not alone. Mary (a disciple and perhaps intimate friend of Jesus) reiterates how, after Jesus died, the disciples were not to spend time making new laws but simplifying Jesus' message.

There need not be any extra laws as we follow Jesus, but to simply follow the main two. From Matthew 22:34-40 (The Message Translation) the most important commandment is: Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."

Mary tells Peter, Andrew, Levi and a few other disciples, "We should announce the good news as the Savior ordered, and not be laying down any rules or making laws."

I think we have got our work ahead of us; loving God with all our mind, heart and soul and then to boot, loving our neighbor as ourselves. In these days of division, and untruths, in these days of wars without Congress approval, in these days of very high gas prices, where do we turn?

Love God with all our assets. Love one another as we shall love ourselves. That is a tall order for us all. I have complete faith we can do it, that is follow these commandments/ laws. Less gun violence, less vitriolic speech, less bigotry and animosity, less doubt instead of wonder, more joy, celebration of differences, and more of love of the One God we seek.

Many Blessings to all, *Lori*

A reminder that **applications for the Peterson Memorial Scholarship must be received by May 12<sup>th</sup>**. If you have any questions, or need an application, please contact the church office. Thanks so much!



**Vigil:** We will not be holding a vigil, but instead encourage folks to gather at the Northampton Pride Parade on May 2. (see below)



### English Spring Tea



Spring has arrived and our **English Spring Tea, Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, Noon - 3pm**, is on the horizon! "Take time for Tea" is our theme this year and we hope you have marked your calendars and plan to attend. Call the church office, 413-532-2262 for reservations and tickets (\$20 adults, \$12 Students with ID and \$10 for children). This project supports the church, our fellowship, and Allianza, a local support organization providing rescues for Mothers and Children in abusive situations. Spread the word and invite a guest or two and reserve your table!

**Tickets are available! Bring a guest and join us for lunch and tea!**

**Corinne Chartrand 413-219-6563**



### Hampshire Pride Parade May 2 - 11am

**Location:** Parade starts at Sheldon Field, proceeds down Route 9/Main St, and ends near Crafts Ave, NOHO

**Events:** Parade 11am - Vendor Festival noon.-6pm. Drag Stage 2-6pm



For those interested in standing along the Main Street, we will meet at 9:30 at Center Church's parking lot to carpool together to Noho's Fairgrounds. It is an annual favorite where all win from everyone's support and love.

Wear comfortable shoes and use sun lotion. Please bring water.



On May 24<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate those who are graduating from High School Join us as we lift up their accomplishments!



### **Breakfast and Conversation: May 13 8-9am in Fellowship Hall**

Topic: Birthright Citizenship. What is the Biblical meaning of birthright?


U.S. Faith Communities Unite In Support of Birthright Citizenship - and CNN's takeaway of the Supreme Court's understanding.

Please pick up the reading for the discussion at the Church Street entrance.

Donations are welcome for the light breakfast

## PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

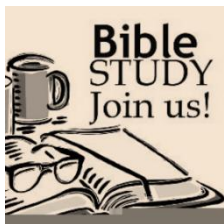
### Continual:

Barbara Blank, on Hospice at Reeds Landing  
Martha Guild's mother, June   
Eileen Halkyard  
Elisa's young friend Elija, addiction recovery  
Eunice Howes  
Elisa Morrison's step-mother Sandy, and  
brother Carl, with heart issues  
Leila Mulder, attending boarding school  
Mary Nelsons father, Dave, with cancer  
Fay Paquette  
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter  
Those struggling with addiction,  
with cancer, and with chronic disease

### Situational:

Cynthia Baker  
Dennis Banks, friend of Karen and  
Estelle Anderson, with cancer  
Bob Cocker, Rob Cocker's dad, after a fall  
Robin Glossner, undergoing chemo  
Kate and John Hoffman's daughter Sarah,  
following surgery  
John Hoffman's parents, Jean and John

**If you have submitted one of these requests  
for prayer, please let us know it is time to  
remove someone's name from the list**



Please join us for conversation on another Gospel found in Robert Miller's edit book, *The Complete Gospels*. Dr Miller has compiled all the canonical and non-canonical gospels, otherwise known as those gospels sanctioned by The Church and those that were later identified and that never "made the cut" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. We can see why the Gospel of Mary ruffled some feathers.

Come ruffle some feathers together. We meet from **11-12 noon in the Loomis Village Conference Room** (upstairs). We will meet **May 14 and 21<sup>st</sup>**. The short reading has not been selected yet, but will be available by May 1<sup>st</sup> out on the table in the Church St entrance, or will be dropped off in Loomis mailboxes or sent to you via email.

## THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

**Ministers:** All Church Members  
**Senior Minister:** Rev. Lori J. Souder

### Christian Education Program

**Children:** Vicki Scherer, Coordinator, Emily Mulder & Julia Nogales, Teachers

**Youth Coordinator:** Kenneth Mulder

**Nursery Caregiver:** Annabelle Burke

### Music

**Organist:** Larry Schipull

**Choir Director:** Ben Coakley

**Associate in Music:** Cynthia Morrell

**Office Administrator:** Cynthia Jubinville

**Sexton:** Robert Farman



## CHILDREN'S



## Faith Formation

Happy Spring everyone! This past month we have been talking about Jesus' miracles in the promised land and we will continue this into next month. The children have been doing lots of fun crafts and activities to go along with these stories.

Best, Vicki



For the next several months, we will take the opportunity to share about each of the great students that are part of the youth program at Center Church. And there is no better place to start than with our seniors. This week's feature student is Annie Burke.

Annie has been an active member of the CC youth for many years along with her mother Julie and sister Maddie. In high school, Annie has participated in the band, track, and cheer. She is also president of the National Honor Society and is a member of the Youth Advisory Board, which collaborates with other local students and leaders to help develop leadership skills and safety for youth. Outside of school, she volunteers as a coach for Girls on the Run.

Annie is a real presence at Center Church. In the youth room, she is a thoughtful and reflective leader that has a well-developed skill for making others feel valued and listened to. And most recently, she has been providing child care when needed on Sunday mornings (we love it when she brings Baby Oliver to the youth room). Her favorite part of Center Church is the friendships she's made.

Annie is graduating very soon, and her plans for next year are to attend Suffolk Law School in Boston. She loves volunteering and looks forward to finding new opportunities in college. She hopes to be an immigration or family lawyer and is especially passionate about working with underserved communities. She will be sorely missed upstairs in the Promised Land.

Kenneth

## News for Trustees for May 2026

Trustees met on April 15 for their monthly meeting. We heard reports from pastor Lori and treasurer John. John reported that we had recently received gifts from the estate of Pricilla Carter, the Graham family, the Fowler family, and in memory of Tom Hazen. These will be added into our Bequest fund. We have also received a substantial gift from the estate of Nancy Lutes (Bobbie Ayers; sister). On the expense side, we continue to be concerned about the rising cost of gas to heat the buildings. It is a good thing that the warmer months are coming now. It was noted that our heating company, Cote, has been purchased by Kleeberg. We are very pleased that our current tech has moved to Kleeberg and will continue to service Center Church. We are continuing to work on a handicapped issue with the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor girls/women's lavatory. We are also thinking about replacing the FHall kitchen outside door. We spent some time talking about a possible sabbatical for pastor Lori and she is overdue for this. More will be coming about this.

*Cindy Morrell* for the Trustees

## Deacon's Notes

Do you ever wonder who does this or that about the church? Or wonder what is behind a door, what is in a closet, what is stored in an area? Maybe yes, maybe no. Either way we letting you know there is a relatively new storage place that was developed in what the Deacons have named, the narthex cove. Curtains were put up in this area a few years ago to hide the materials needed for the installation of the fire alarm system that was completed over a several months. Once completed, "stuff" seems to have just landed there. Seems familiar? After checking with several folks, along with their approval, the Deacons have claimed the cove as a great place for the storage of all the Christmas decorations, as well as relocating appropriate places for where those non-Christmas items to have new homes. The other seasonal wreaths will most likely be stored in the cove. A majority of decorations are there now as well as other locations about the church. Hopefully by the time this article is read, the Deacons would have gathered all the decorations that are in those other locations and have organized the cove. Our plan is to get the project done after our meeting on April 26. For containers, the former green recycling bins have been washed to be used for some of the storage. The investment to get the project done is the deacons' time. The goal is when Advent arrives next November, everything will be in one spot for the decorating to occur efficiently as well the years thereafter. Thanks to Randy Purinton for the idea of the curtains and putting them up. Thanks to Randy Hyvonen for making the manger collapsible, along with making improvements, for this storage space to be able to be useable. A special thanks to Bobbie Ayers for all years she has organized the sanctuary Christmas decorating as well as hanging all the wreaths on outside doors. Another thanks is to David Morrell for decorating the Church St entrance area. Thanks to Bob Farnum for washing the bins. Thanks to all the church family members who have assisted with the decorating and putting the decorations away, a long list. Of course, a huge Thank You for all the other tasks that are being done for and about the church, an even longer list of volunteers who help keep the church going. If you are curious, take a peek behind the narthex cove curtains. Spring cleaning is happening at Center Church!

*Karen Anderson, for the Deacons*

## Notes from Church Council

The Council met virtually on April 7. Moderator Rachel Alldis opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Karen Anderson led us in devotions. She quoted from Robin Roberts' *"From the Heart"* about "rules to live by." One should "keep faith, family and friends close by and seek the light of God." During Old Business the Council discussed the future of the Fall Tag Sale. The handout "Options Regarding the Fall Tag Sale" by option was thoroughly reviewed. It was agreed that the tag sale should have "captains" for each section and to keep things simple. It was also agreed not to take a year off. Cashing-out procedure should be reorganized. There were many "odds and ends" discussed, and the consensus was to go ahead with the tag sale. In other business, the "fun-outings" should be family-friendly and oriented to encourage youth and adult participation together and also separate. Team updates can be found in this *Church at the Center*. The next scheduled Zoom meeting is Tuesday May 5 at 7:00 p.m. Rachel Alldis will lead and Corinne Chartrand will present devotions.

*David C. Morrell, Clerk*

## Outreach Team



The **Strengthen the Church Offering** furthers the work of our conferences and the national UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. The offering is divided with 50% staying regionally within your conference and 50% supporting the National Ministries. **We will take an offering for Strengthen the Church on May 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Cathedral in the Night is an outdoor Christian community in downtown Northampton, MA which seeks to create a safe place for all people: the homeless, the housed, the church-less, the church-ed, the student and the resident to explore, question and live out their spiritual beliefs; to gather for a meal and to empower one another to engage in issues of social justice by working to fight the causes of inequality and homelessness. **The Outreach Team is providing meals Sunday on May 17. Coming Soon - sign up sheet for food and people needed to help with this ministry.** Come and help. Come to the worship which starts at 4:30. You will be blessed.



## Activities Team

### TAG SALE ????

The Church Council and the Trustees have been discussing the viability of the Fall Tag Sale Fundraiser. This project, along with the Holiday Bazaar and the Spring Tea, generated over \$19,000 in 2025 to the church, growing annually. The current discussion wonders if pledges can increase to not only cover normal operating expenses each year for the church, but the loss of this income.

To continue the Fall Tag Sale Fundraiser, we need additional *committed* help to deliver a fundraiser that attracts our community successfully. Traditionally, we draw donations and buyers to a well-oiled project that has grown since humble beginnings in 1996. This project needs more hands and volunteer hours "on the floor", to happen this fall. We have changes being discussed to control the hours the project takes to complete, but volunteer hours are what is needed.

By the way, the most time-consuming parts of the fair preparation are:  
Pricing...Sorting into categories...Cleaning donations

The fair always needs Donations!!! That are sale-able!!! We are always interested in donations that are *oriented to our market*. The time to plan for our early fall fundraiser starts in May.

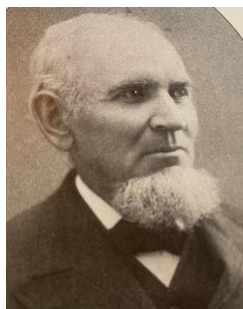


If you are interested in keeping the Tag Sale Fundraiser, and willing to pledge time to make it happen, we are very accommodating to individual availability. Please contact Corinne Chartrand and Karen Anderson, co-chairs, if you can join in.

# From the Church Historian – May 2026

## The Gaylord Memorial Library

1904 -



William H. Gaylord

During the recent 2026 override in South Hadley, the Gaylord Memorial Library was drawn into the controversy of how Town money is being spent. Places mentioned for cutting cost was the Gaylord. A fact not mentioned is that the Gaylord is a private library run by a private board of trustees. Gaylord also has an endowment. When the library merged with the main public library (in the 2000's), much of the "running costs" were provided from the main library's budget. Because of that "money", the Gaylord is considered a branch library.



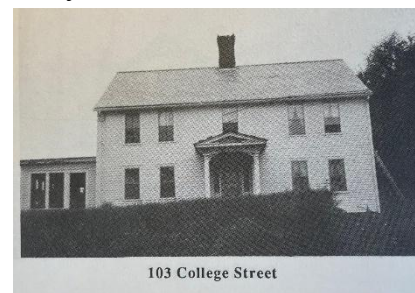
Betsey Stone Gaylord

The Gaylord Memorial Library was founded by William H. Gaylord (1821-1904) and Betsey Stone Gaylord (1830-1904). The Gaylords married on September 8, 1858. They had one son, Burton. They were a very active and civic-minded couple. Both were involved in our church and town affairs. As members of Center Church, they donated the magnificent church organ in memory of their budding-organist son who died tragically at 20 years of age. It is still in use today. They also donated the Civil War memorial statue on the Town Common.

"Ye Social Library of South Hadley" was established in 1802. It was housed in 103 College Street. Another library was part of the Anson store (once located near the Common) and for many years, it was "kept up" by **Miss Sophie Eastman** (author and historian) from a prominent South



Hadley merchant family. In 1902, the town granted a portion of "the old burial grounds" land (directly across from Mount Holyoke College) to be sold. It was then "incorporated." William Gaylord then paid "a sum of money in trust" to the town in order to build a library on that land. The Gaylords also donated a substantial endowment for "the running of and maintaining the library." It was designed and built in the "Jeffersonian style" of architecture by Putnam and Cox of Boston. The Gaylord was dedicated on May 18th of 1904. It was then "placed in charge" of nine trustees. There are nine trustees still in place 122 years later.



103 College Street

The Gaylords lived to see their hope for a library completed and dedicated. Both William and Betsey died on December 22, 1904 from complications of "flu-like" illness. They are buried in Evergreen Cemetery. Through their heartfelt and dedicated devotion to the people of South Hadley, we are still enjoying their legacy.



Gaylord Memorial Library



- 01 Bobbie Ayers
- 06 Emily Carle
- 12 Cathy Bozek
- 14 Blake Bryan
- 23 Gayle Kenneson
- 24 Brynn Bryan
- 27 Ken Bozek
- 31 Dianne Clinton



# 2026

If you have a graduate (college, high school, pre-school etc.) whose name you would like listed in our June C@C, please let Thia know their name, and from where they will graduate, and we will include them in our listing.

## Call to attend an Installation

Members of the Hampshire Association, UCC are invited to attend the installation of

**Larry Picard, Lay Pastor**

North Congregational Church, UCC  
243 River Drive Hadley, MA 01035

**Sunday, May 24, 2026 3PM**

Visitors are welcome

## Call to attend an Installation

Members of the Hampshire Association, UCC are invited to attend the installation of

**Rev. Susan Cartmell**

South Congregational Church  
1066 South East Street Amherst, MA

**Sunday, May 17, 2026 3PM**

Visitors are welcome

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



## 2026 Annual Meeting

**HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION**  
of the Southern New England UCC  
United Church of Christ

**June 7, 2026, at 3pm**

Plainfield Congregational Church  
356 West Main Street Plainfield, MA