



NEWSLETTER

THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

Fall Sermon Series The Shape of Discipleship

- 10/4 - The Shape of Faithfulness
- 10/11 - The Shape of Invitation
- 10/18 - The Shape of Integrity
- 10/25 - The Shape of Love

Church Calendar



- 10/4 - *World Communion Sunday*
- 10/6 - *Intentional Discussions (Book of Psalms) 7 pm, Parlor*
- 10/20 - *Intentional Discussions (Book of Psalms) 7 pm, Parlor*
- 10/25 - *Celebration for Rev. Dr. Ruth Shaver our new Area Conference Minister
@ 3:15 pm at the United Church of Christ Norwell MA, more info to come.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holly Fair 2026
Saturday, November 21, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



Our annual Holly Fair is one of our church's favorite traditions, but it takes many hands to make it a success! While we have wonderful volunteers who help the day before and on the day of the fair, we also need people to help with planning and preparation in the weeks leading up to the event. There are many ways you can help:

Planning and organizing before the fair
Decorating and setting up
Baking for the Bake Table or Cookies for the Cookie Walk
Crafting items to sell
Sorting donations
Working in an area during the fair
Helping with the raffle baskets
Cleaning up after the fair

Grandma's Attic Sale Area -

We appreciate your donations to help make our Holly Fair a success! Please donate items that are clean, gently used, and in good working condition, things you would be happy to give to a friend or neighbor.

We are looking for:

Household items
Home décor
Kitchen items
Toys and games (complete and in good condition)
Seasonal decorations
Jewelry and accessories
Pocketbooks

Please do not donate items that are broken, stained, missing parts, or excessively worn. We are unable to accept items that cannot be sold. Please no books, electronics, clothing or furniture.

Questions? Contact a member of the Holly Fair Committee:

Dick Kelsay, Andrea Kelsay, Kerrie Schlager, Annie Schwehm , Jane Conley, Kathy Harsch, or Amy Pierce.

Together, we can make the 2026 Holly Fair a wonderful success!

CHURCH VITALITY AND GROWTH

MARKS OF FAITHFUL AND VITAL LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Upcoming Vitality Survey

Listening, Learning, and Growing Together

This **October**, the congregation will have an opportunity to participate in a Vitality Survey provided by the Parish Relations Team (PRT). The Vitality Survey gives the Congregational Church of Mansfield an opportunity to prayerfully reflect on our shared ministry, celebrate our strengths, identify areas for growth, and discern where God may be leading us.

Why a Vitality Survey?

Healthy organizations regularly ask: How are we doing? What is working? Where can we grow? What is God calling us toward?

The survey provides a shared picture of our congregation's life and ministry while giving members an opportunity to share their experiences, hopes, concerns, and ideas. Participation is an investment in our church's future.

Grounded in Our Faith

The survey reflects the eight Marks for Faithful and Vital Local Churches described in the UCC Manual on Local Church and reflected in our Church Profile. These areas help us consider the whole life of the church, not simply attendance or finances, including spiritual life, worship, community, leadership, outreach, service, and our wider UCC covenant.

What Happens With the Results?

Responses will be confidential and reviewed by church leadership for prayerful discernment. Results will be summarized and shared with the congregation, along with recommended action steps, at the Annual Meeting.

The goal is to:

1. Celebrate what is going well
2. Identify opportunities for growth
3. Strengthen our ministry
4. Help establish priorities for the coming year

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What Will the Survey Include?

The survey will include both rating-scale and open-ended questions.

Example:

On a scale of 1–5, In your opinion, how effectively does our church provide opportunities for spiritual growth?

Example:

What is one thing our church does particularly well, and where do you believe we could grow?

Your Participation Matters

Your response is an investment of time, talent, and treasure in our congregation's future. By sharing your perspective, you help shape the church we will pass on to future generations.

This survey will establish a baseline for measuring our vitality. Future surveys will be shorter and focused on tracking progress.

Our Vitality Journey

SURVEY → LISTEN → DISCERN → ACT → GROW → REASSESS

Our Goal:

Discernment • Gratitude • Accountability • Faithful Growth

Every response is an investment in our church's future.

Timeline:

Survey available October 4th – 25th

PRT assessment and review of results October 26th – November 14th

Detailed report given to Council, November 15th

Lunch and Learn Report to Congregation, Sunday December 13th (tentative)



DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Fall Sermon Series: The Shape of Discipleship

This fall series explores how Jesus forms ordinary people into faithful disciples. Through worship, prayer, humility, generosity, forgiveness, justice, hope, and faithful stewardship, we discover that discipleship is less about mastering information and more about allowing Christ to shape every part of our lives.

INTENTIONAL DISCUSSIONS BOOK OF PSALMS



Join us this fall as we journey through the Book of Psalms, a timeless collection of prayers, praises, and reflections that speak to every season of life. Together, we'll explore themes of faith, struggle, joy, and trust in God, discovering how these ancient songs remain deeply relevant today. Whether you're seeking encouragement, spiritual growth, or a deeper understanding of Scripture, this study offers a welcoming space to connect, reflect, and grow in faith.

September 22nd
October 6th & 20th
November 3rd & 17th
December 1st

Pastor Marissa Rapoza



Faithful and Vital: Becoming the Church God Calls Us to Be

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” Ephesians 4:15–16

When we hear the words “church vitality,” we might immediately think about numbers: How many people are worshipping? How many children are in Sunday School? How much money was given? Those things matter. However, the life of a church is about much more than numbers.

The United Church of Christ’s Manual on Local Church offers Eight Marks of Faithful and Vital Local Churches. They invite us to look at the whole life of a congregation: our spiritual foundation, our stories and traditions, our community, our leadership, our ministry, our outreach, our commitment to justice and mercy, and our identity within the wider UCC. These aren't eight boxes for us to check. They are eight invitations to ask: Who is God calling us to become?

Paul reminds the church in Ephesians that we are a body, and that a healthy body grows when every part is connected to Christ and working together. That means vitality isn't about becoming someone else's church. It isn't about remaining in our past. It isn't even about becoming a bigger church.

Vitality is about becoming more fully alive to God's presence and purpose among us. That means celebrating what is already bearing fruit, pruning what no longer gives life, or even trying something new. Sometimes it means remembering why we are here, at this church, and as a church.

So as we consider these eight marks, perhaps the most important question isn't: “How are we doing?” rather: “Where is God already at work among us, and where might God be inviting us to grow?”

The goal isn't a perfect church. The goal is a faithful church, a community rooted in Christ, growing together, bearing fruit, and sharing God's love with the world around us.

Prayer

God of life, thank you for calling us together as your church. Help us to see the life you have already planted among us. Give us courage to grow, wisdom to know what needs pruning, and faith to follow where your Spirit is leading. Root us deeply in Christ, strengthen us as one body, and make our church a place where people are seen, welcomed, loved, and invited to discover your grace. Amen.



Emma Ceurvels, Music Director

It has been wonderful to be back in the sanctuary making music and spending time with the choir once again! As always, all are welcome to join us for choir rehearsals at 7pm on Wednesday evenings in the music room and Sunday mornings at 9am before our worship service. We are always welcoming new members!

On a personal note, I want to just share how deeply moved I have been by your prayers, cards, meals, notes, and hugs as our family has dealt with my husband's health issues. Thank you so much for helping me and my family feel so supported and well loved during this time. My kids never want me to cook again after having all of your delicious meals!!

This has been a really difficult chapter in our lives—but even in the hardest moments of uncertainty, I have felt an overwhelming sense of peace and trust that everything will be okay. I know how many people in our lives have prayed for us—and we have felt those prayers. You all have shown us God's love and light in the most beautiful way. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!

With love and gratitude,
Emma

Sunday School/Children's Ministry



Sunday School Schedule

October 4: No Sunday School (Intergenerational Sunday)

October 11: No Sunday School (Holiday Weekend)

October 18: Sunday School

October 25: Sunday School



Meghan Rego, Children's Ministry

Dear Church Families,

We've had a wonderful start to the Sunday School year and were so glad to welcome the children back after the summer break. We're delighted that Veronica Torres will be co-leading Sunday School this year, and we're excited to have her background in education enrich our lessons.

In October, the children will be making cards for the Veterans Day Luncheon, a meaningful way for them to say thank you to those who have served.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!

Meghan

Church Council and Ministry Leaders

Council

Moderator - Peter Ham
Treasurer - Kim Greenberg
Clerk - Rick Haines

Deacons

Chair - Eric Greenberg
Nate Adkins
Kerrie Schlager
Deb Svenson
Dick Kelsay

Parish Relations Team

Co-Chair - John Partridge
Co-Chair - Peter Ham
Laurie Geminiani
Krista Young
Will Reynolds
Kerrie Schlager

Ministry Leaders

Christian Ed. - Meghan Rego
Hospitality - Annie Schwehm
Prayer Team - Mary Hourigan
Missions - Dick Kelsay, Kathy Harsch,
Rick Haines

Trustees

Nicole Reynolds
Carol Ham
Dick Kelsay

Staff

Office Administrator - Emma Ceurvels
office@occmansfield.org
Sexton - Ed O'Connell

Electronic Ways to Give
QR Code (paypal)
E-Giving (forms in office)



The Congregational Church of Mansfield
An Open and Affirming United Church of Christ Congregation

Leadership Communication

As we move through this new program year, we are aiming to provide streamlined communication for the congregation to our leadership team. Please refer to the following contact information if you need to contact a member of our leadership team.

Leadership Preferred Method of Communication Contact information Update

Pastor Marissa Rapoza – pastor.marissa@occmansfield.org or
508-207-7803 (cell)

Office Admin/Music Director, Emma Ceurvels – office@occmansfield.org
To schedule an event at the church, order flowers for the communion table, sign up for coffee hour, and anything music related, please contact Emma using the office email to ensure all information is in one place.

Council Officers

Church Moderator, Peter Ham – peterwham@comcast.net
Treasurer, Kim Greenberg – kim.greenberg12@gmail.com
Clerk, Rick Haines – jalama23@gmail.com

Ministry Leadership

Head Deacon, Eric Greenberg – greenberg.eric101@gmail.com
PRT Co-Leader, John Partridge – partridge_john@wheatoncollege.edu 508-243-0019 (cell)
Prayer Team, Mary Hourigan – Omahourigan@yahoo.com
Sunday School, Meghan Rego – meghanrego233@yahoo.com
Hospitality, Annie Schwehm – annieschwehm@gmail.com

Trustees

For all building related issues, please contact a trustee

Carol Sosman Ham – Sosham@comcast.net 774-266-6220 (cell)
Nicole Reynolds – 508-951-2036 (cell)
Dick Kelsay – dickkelsay@yahoo.com