

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, United Church of Christ

2025

February

No. 2

## Let's Attend Super Saturday in March

“Bishop William J. Barber II is President and Senior Lecturer of Repairers of the Breach, Bishop with The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, Executive Board Member of

organized by women's rights movement, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., worker's rights movement, religious leaders, and people of all races to fight poverty in the U.S. As a

The graphic is a blue rectangular banner. On the left is a portrait of Bishop William Joseph Barber II. To the right of the portrait, the text reads: "The Center for Transformational Leadership Presents: I Love to Tell the Story Super Saturday 2025 March 8th ~ Onsite & Online". Below this, a purple brushstroke contains the text: "A day of learning for Church Leaders, Pastors, Staff and Volunteers". At the bottom left is the Southern New England Conference logo with the text "Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ Living the Love & Justice of Jesus". At the bottom right is an image of an open book.

The Bishop William Joseph Barber II  
Keynote Speaker

the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, and Professor in the Practice of Public Theology and Public Policy and Founding Director of the Center for Public Theology and Public Policy at Yale Divinity School. Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, and a Kettering Foundation Senior Fellow.

He is the author of five books: *We Are Called to Be a Movement*; *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing*; *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and The Rise of a New Justice Movement*; and *Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation*. *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths about Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy* was released in June 2024.

Bishop Barber served as senior pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church, Disciples of Christ for thirty years and as president of the North Carolina NAACP from 2006-2017 and on the National NAACP Board of Directors from 2008-2020. He is the architect of the *Forward Together Moral Movement* that gained national acclaim in 2013 with its Moral Monday protests at the North Carolina General Assembly. In 2015, he established *Repairers of the Breach* to train communities in moral movement building through the *Moral Political Organizing Leadership Institute and Summit Trainings* (MPOLIS). In 2018, he co-anchored the relaunch of the *Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival*—reviving the 1968 Poor People's Campaign

moral leader Bishop William Barber II engaging in non-violent civil disobedience has been arrested more than 15 times in various states standing up with those who have been marginalized by systematic racism, poverty, and injustice.

A highly sought-after speaker, Bishop Barber has given keynote addresses at hundreds of national and state conferences, including the 2016 Democratic National Convention, one of few preachers in nations history to be invited to give the homily at the 59th Inaugural Prayer Service for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Vatican at Pope Francis's encyclical "Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home" and the Pontifical

Academy of Social Sciences. In June 2018, he addressed the 5th Uni Global Union World Congress to more than 25 countries.

Bishop Barber is regularly featured in media outlets such as MSNBC, CNN, NNPA, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Nation* magazine. He was named one of 2020's BET 100 Entertainers and Innovators and one of the 2019 recipients of the North Carolina Award, the state's highest civilian honor. He is a 2018 MacArthur Foundation Genius Award recipient and a 2015 recipient of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award and the Puffin Award. Bishop Barber has had twelve honorary doctorate degrees conferred upon him."

The gathering takes place from 9:00am – 4:00pm in Shrewsbury, MA and online. Would you like to attend in person for a full day of worship, fellowship, and learning? Onsite event registration ends 2/17 and online event registration ends 2/24. Please click on this link to view onsite workshop descriptions:

<https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/18794786/item/18799114>, and this link to register: <https://sneucc-reg.brtpapp.com/SuperSaturday2025Onsite>.

The topic this year is *Telling Your Story*, and involves stories of innovation, justice and witness, intergenerational ministry, and lay leader trainings for key leadership roles. This is a rare opportunity to hear and see in person Bp. Barber, and to hone our ministry skills for the good of our congregation.

**FEBRUARY EVENTS**

Tue. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Rev. Randy will attend the online meeting of the Association Committee on Ministry at 5:45pm.
Tue. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Rev. Randy will attend the Association clergy lunch in Hadley at noon. Online Bible study group from 7 – 8:00pm.
Wed. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Sun. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Nathan Patti’s Ecclesiastical Council at First Church Amherst at 2:00pm.
Wed. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Book discussion on Percival Everett’s <i>James</i>
Tue. 25 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons at 5:30pm. Online Bible study group from 7 – 8:00pm.

**REGULAR GATHERINGS**

Sundays: Worship Service begins at 9:30am online and in person. Sunday School begins after the children’s sermon during the worship Service.  
Tuesdays: Yoga classes are offered every Tuesday in the church parlor at 5:30pm.  
Thursdays: Choir rehearses in the parlor at 7:00pm, except July and August.

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Historian Carter G. Woodson launched Black History Week in 1926 to recognize the significant contributions of African Americans during the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and abolitionist/writer Frederick Douglass (February 14). Congress expanded it to National Black History Month 50 years later during the nation’s bicentennial celebration at which time then-President Gerald Ford urged the country to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

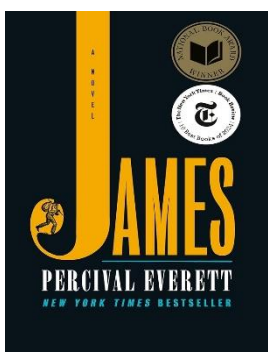
The UCC also played into the “neglected accomplishments of Black Americans.” As it states on the UCC website: “For decades, new members have typically learned about four streams of tradition that formed the Christian, Evangelical and stream — just as strong — United Church of Christ learned about four streams of denomination: Congregational, Reformed. But there is a fifth that has not usually been named. The UCC Historical Council [voted in 2022] to recognize that “fifth stream” — the Afro-Christian tradition — as separate from and equal to the other four.”



The 2025 theme for Black History Month is “African Americans and Labor.” The founding organization of Black History Month explains, “It intends to encourage broad reflections on intersections between Black people’s work and their workplaces in all their iterations and key moments, themes, and events in Black history and culture across time and space and throughout the U.S., Africa, and the Diaspora. Like religion, social justice movements, and education, studying African Americans’ labor and labor struggles are important organizing foci for new interpretations and reinterpretations of the Black past, present, and future. Such new considerations and reconsiderations are even more significant as the historical forces of racial oppression gather new and renewed strength in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

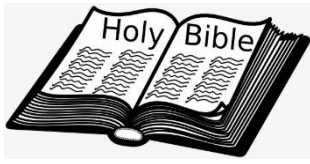
As the church, we will strive to keep these thoughts in mind and in our worship throughout February.

**BOOK DISCUSSION**



To honour Black History Month we are inviting people to gather for a Book Discussion. *James: A Novel*, written by Percival Everett, is a retelling of Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, but from the perspective of James the escaped Black slave who accompanies Huck Finn. It is a National Book Award Winner and the *New York Times* named it one of the ten best books of 2024. The tentative date to meet for the Book Discussion is Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. The exact time in the evening and the choice of online or in person will be decided by those who plan to attend. The Book Discussion is open to anyone who is interested. Please email [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com) if you plan to participate so that we may plan accordingly.

**ONLINE BIBLE STUDY GROUP**



Our online Bible study group is open to anyone with a desire to become more acquainted with the sacred writings of our faith tradition. We are currently finishing-up with the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, commonly known as the Pentateuch, or The Law. After this we will move on to the Book of Joshua. No prior Bible knowledge is required. Hopefully, whether an everyday Bible reader or one just beginning, our discussions will have something to offer. If interested in joining our group, send an email to [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com) for the Zoom login or if you have any questions.

**WIDER-CHURCH COVENANT**

We are a part of the wider church through our covenants within the United Church of Christ. The Hampshire Association is the collection of congregations within Hampshire County and a bit beyond. The Association, on behalf of the church universal, through its Committee on Ministry and eventually a called Ecclesiastical Council determines and confers ordained ministerial standing upon called and qualified candidates. Nathan Patti is a member of First Church Amherst and is currently serving as a chaplain at Yale New Haven Hospital. Nathan has completed all of the requirements needed so that an Ecclesiastical Council may be called to determine his merits to be Ordained. This Council will meet at his home church on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00pm. All churches of the Hampshire Association, including ours, are encouraged to attend and participate in this sacred undertaking. If you would like to represent our congregation as a voting member of the Council, please email [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com) and I will share Nathan’s Ordination Paper with you to read beforehand. And thank you.

**CHURCH DINNER DATES**

The Church Council has set the dates for this year’s church dinners. They are as follows: Spring Roast Pork Supper, Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>; Chicken Barbecue, Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>; and Fall Roast Pork Supper, Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. Please place these dates on your calendar and share them with friends and family.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Don’t forget to check in at our website and FaceBook page. The links are directly below. They are updated several times each week and often share information from the larger church that we may not know of otherwise. Please like our pages and posts and share them as you choose.

The Conference has created and constantly updates a new social media presence called *Find Hope Now*. It can be found at [www.findhopenow.org](http://www.findhopenow.org). The site is a concerted effort to offer messages of hope when so much involving religion is defined by judgment and aspersion. As the site grows, it will allow individual congregations such as ours to maintain a presence and to reach out to people in the southern New England region who are looking for churches of hope. Take a look if you have a chance.

**GROCERY CARDS**

*Big Y* grocery card sales are a continuing fundraiser of our congregation. Please contact Linda M. if you would like to purchase any. The church earns 5% on all sales. Thank you.

**CONTACT INFO: HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Website: [www.hatfieldchurch.org](http://www.hatfieldchurch.org) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC](https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC)

Pastor: Rev. Randy Calvo 413-824-1630 [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com)

Music Minister: Anthony Tracia [anthonytracia@gmail.com](mailto:anthonytracia@gmail.com)

**Committee Chairpersons:**

<i>Benevolence, Amy N.</i>	<i>Music Committee, Christina M.</i>
<i>Christian Education, Anita W.</i>	<i>Real Folks Society, Amy N.</i>
<i>Church Moderator, Jonathan B.</i>	<i>Treasurer, Mark G.</i>
<i>Clerk, Carolyn F</i>	<i>Trustees, Ed M.</i>
<i>Deacons, Jeff F.</i>	

