

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

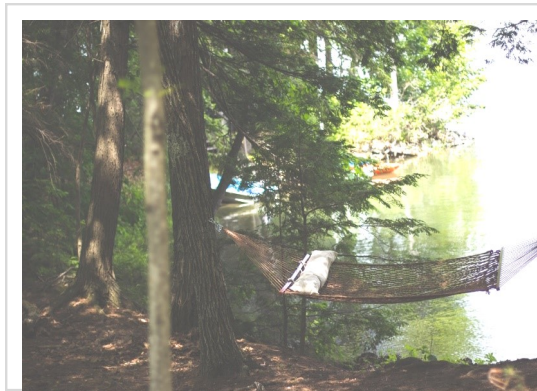
June 2021

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

SABBATH: PERMISSION TO STOP & REST

I am especially savoring the anticipation of some summer vacation time this year, and maybe you are too. In a year of pandemic that has made it unsafe to travel, or even venture out much locally, most of us haven't. We are more than ready to rediscover that freedom, and the uplift in spirit we can get from a change of scene, the experience of a new place, or a return to familiar places we love to spend time at but couldn't last summer. I myself can't wait to get to the coast of Maine.



There's another sense in which the past year has been especially trying on our spirits – not just in the physical limitations it's imposed but in the mental strains that have also come with it. I have heard so many people say, "I'm exhausted," by which they don't mean they are short on sleep, but more that they have been short on peace of mind, and that has taken its toll. Constant vigilance, worry -- even, sometimes, alarm -- is tiring in a deep-soul way. Having your guard up all the time, not only for yourself but for anybody you care about, can wear you out. A normal sense of ease about everyday living has been elusive for more than a year -- and now we're so practiced at this guardedness that the transition out of it may be challenging too.

In fact, as I write this, the CDC has just announced that for the fully vaccinated, the wearing of masks is no longer needed in most instances, though still may be required by businesses in some states for specific settings. The general response to that, so far, has been not jubilation but some confusion and concern, and not at all an immediate, widespread readiness to just ditch the masks. Many of us still feel a little too much concern to be quite that "over" with it just yet. Some natural guardedness remains.

So, we will need to find ways to take our summer-season sabbath – one way to understand vacations, breaks - - while we're still dealing with all of this. "Sabbath" doesn't have to mean just a single day. It can mean a dimension of all our days, some way we stay committed to the true rest, the real breaks, our spirits need. Which means there can be sabbath in a Wednesday, or a Monday. Or any day. The important thing is to truly give ourselves permission to rest, on the premise that that's what God intends for us, and so it's what we need to be truly alive and spiritually well.

The world seduces us with an artificial urgency that requires us to respond without listening to what is most deeply true. In Sabbath time, we cultivate a sense of eternity where we truly rest, and feel how all things can wait, and turn them gently in the hand until we feel their shape, and know the truth of them.

Wayne Muller

While I wouldn't say that "all things can wait," surely we know that *some* things can wait, while we rest and renew. Our capacity to know the difference is a big part of how we get to true sabbath.

Faithfully,

Rev. Brenda

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY

At each choir rehearsal, I have been trying out various warm-up activities on the choir that I have found and are available on line. They incorporate warming up the body to some degree, speech exercises, and vocalizes. Some are silly and all are very helpful in terms of breathing, tonal quality, relaxing, and more. It is my hope that the choir members find them useful and perhaps helping to increase their ranges, both up and down as well as other benefits. We are small right now but hopefully in the fall we will increase in numbers as we are always looking for new members.

*Thank
You*

Special thanks to the members of the choir who have brought happiness to many people including me through their singing and loyalty to the group:

Special thanks to Linda who has been very helpful in identifying just the right song for a certain Sunday.

Special thanks to Karen who has been playing the chimes every Sunday.

Special thanks to Rina.

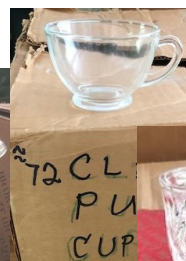
Happy June,

Mary Lou Keefe

Free to anyone interested!

After clearing out and preserving the church's necessary items, the following surplus items were discovered: One punch bowl, a box of 72 clear punch cups, a box of approximately 40 miscellaneous punch cups, and a box of 18 etched punch cups (from G. Fox).

If interested, please contact Jim Magennis at 860-841-0375 by June 15. All items will be donated elsewhere after that date.



Worship SCHEDULE

*All June services at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary,
and also live streamed.*

*Please see homepage of our website
for access to streamed services & bulletins.*

- June 6** Second Sunday after Pentecost; Communion
- June 13** Third Sunday after Pentecost;
Recognition of High School Seniors
during the service
- June 20** Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
- June 27** Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Summer Worship

We will once again share
July and August services with the
Canton Community Baptist Church.

July services at
Canton Center Church, Sundays, **9:30 a.m.** *

August services at
Canton Community Baptist Church
(125 Dowd Ave., Canton), **10:00 a.m.**

*****Please note the earlier start time.*****

Staff Vacation Schedules

Rev. Brenda will be on vacation from July 5 through 18 and August 1 through 15.

Deacons' Bench

Hugh Anderson

Spring has indeed sprung! Now we might not feel that way every day based solely on the temperatures outside in this cool month of May we are experiencing so far. Yet still the grass is lush, flowering trees and shrubs are bursting with vibrant colors, and green leaves are popping out all over. Time to get those summer gardens planted!

This is truly a time of rebirth and renewal. Not just for the earth, but for our incredible church community. We have weathered the storm and are steadily, within all published association and public health guidelines, expanding the incomparable experience we provide of worshiping God in shared space and in fellowship with each other. Now I will admit to taking advantage of our new livestreaming technology from time to time, but for me there's nothing like being in that sanctuary, greeting and praying with others, and hearing the inspiration of music and scripture live and in person.

I am grateful we belong to a church that is so thoughtful of the needs of our member families and I am equally confident that as we head into the summer and prepare for the fall that we will continue to deliver a safe and nurturing worship experience for all. We will continue live streaming, yet we look forward to welcoming more of you back in person as well.

I will close with these words from Nena O'Neill. *"Out of every crisis comes the chance to be reborn, to reconceive ourselves, to choose the kind of change that will help us to grow and fulfill ourselves more completely"*.

May it be so for our church and all of you in our wonderful church family.

Delegates' Report of the Annual Meeting, Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Grant Hagedorn and I both attended the Second Annual Meeting of the SNEUCC (virtually), on Sat., May 8 2021. Rev. Brenda also attended. I really like the new Executive Conference Minister, Rev. Darnell Goodwin. Grant notes that he could really feel the energy even though we weren't in person. This was true from the speakers to the incredible music from the choir to seeing and hearing Dr Jimmy Green, a father who lost a child at Sandy Hook, playing all 4 parts of a quartet all synched together.

We both also agree that the meeting is a great way to see how the conference is run and to see the challenges in front of the UCC. Some questions posed were the following:

- What does a minister do?
- How do we learn how to listen (again)?
- How can we be better followers of Jesus's Ways?

We both attended two different workshops. Grant attended a workshop on Immigration and one on Technology. In the tech session, they talked about ways to use Zoom interactively to engage attendees more and he even heard about a church where they have a Tech Deacon! Grant notes that COVID has changed the world and the new normal will not be the old normal. So items like streaming and Zoom meetings will be around for a while. He asks how do we embrace that and find ways to grow the church at the same time?

In the Immigration session Grant attended, he was moved by hearing a refugee speak. This refugee, Adama, told of being an asylum seeker from West Africa who entered America through Mexico in 2019. While waiting for asylum, he was only given a couple of apples and a burrito to eat each day. This made an impression on Grant who believes inclusivity, diversity and racial justice are matters with which we, as a church, should concern ourselves.

I agree with Grant and I, in fact, attended a Racial Justice workshop along with an Environmental Justice Workshop. In the Racial Justice segment I attended, I learned that the title of Conference Minister of Racial Justice has actually been changed to the Conference Minister of Inclusion and Diversity. His name is the Rev. James Ross. We also heard about various things that different churches are trying, doing, or have implemented. Folks were offered the chance to state what we would like to see offered by the Conference... Such as courses, training and materials on racial justice and white privilege. A website, The Multicultural Bridge was offered at www.multiculturalbridge.org. Partnerships and alliances with other churches and with coalitions are encouraged. One of Rev. Brenda's recent book talks, which I attended, was on racial justice and we discussed the idea of partnering with a minority church...Perhaps it is something to consider.

The other segment I attended was on Environmental Justice. Rather than a discussion, this was a presentation of various ideas as well as of a program, the Green Congregation Challenge, which congregations apply to be a part of in order to complete steps to then be considered a Green Congregation. Some of what it entails are voter challenges to vote for Green candidates, legislative advocacy, participating in a Youth Conference, faith based support of environmental organizations and actions, using social media, and a Lenten Carbon Fast. The position of Minister for Environmental and Economic Justice will begin [June 1st](#) and will be held by Emma Brewer Wallin. She hopes to provide amongst other things, webinars and workshops, newsletters, etc. for churches.

A resource was provided at www.instagram.com/SNEUCCClimateJustice or www.facebook.com/SNEUCCClimateJustice

Grant and I both think environmental, economic and racial justice are laudable goals to strive towards and support within our own church as well as to support in the greater world. A healthy environment and environmental justice affect economic and racial justice. It is all tied together.

Marianne Burbank

Director of Faith Formation

Sarah Pradhan

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Thank you to the entire CE committee for planning events, brainstorming and keeping our program exciting this last year. Beth Lingenheld, Heather Neumann, Julia Poleyestewa, Marianne Burbank, Judy Robinson and Chris Hager worked to put together events over the last year like our Jackolantern display and the Easter Egg hunt. This church school year has been very different but our team has been creative and thoughtful. I appreciate all of them!

Please pay attention to the church school kids Facebook page. Activities and craft ideas will be shared there throughout the summer months.

During the summer the CE committee will be working hard to get things ready for the 2021-2022 program year. I'm confident that there will be positive changes when we meet up again in person.

Missions & Outreach

Martha Stansel

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

During the pandemic and ongoing health precautions, the Missions Committee has been looking for ways church members can be of service to other people from their own home or close to home. Following is a list of ideas that we've developed. If you have feedback on any of these or have other ideas you'd like us to add, please email Martha Stansel at mwstsl@sbcglobal.net. We hope to develop this into an ongoing resource list.

Volunteer at Be My Eyes Individuals who are blind or have low vision may need help with many things, such as reading expiration dates or distinguishing between colors. When you volunteer for [Be My Eyes](#), you can help by video chatting and communicating what you see. You can accept calls between 8am and 9pm in your local time zone by opening the app, and you may be asked to assist with a variety of tasks.

Become a Mentor at CareerVillage If you have some extra time on your hands, consider signing up to be a mentor at [CareerVillage](#). Sign up and explain what types of career questions you're able to answer. Then, when someone has a question that is related to your topic, you'll get notified. You can respond online and share information with individuals who are interested in your career.

Check out Amazon Smile. Amazon will donate to .05% of your purchases to various organizations when you sign up. Check Amazon for more info. (ex: Gifts of Love is one of the participating organizations.)

Send letters and other items to our troops. Check out these sites.

Support Our Troops <https://supportourtroops.org/cards-letters>

Operation: Military Matters <https://operationmilitarymatters.com/ways-to-contribute/>

Lasagna Love. Volunteer to provide a meal to a family near you. To find out how the program works or to volunteer, go to their website at lasagnalove.org and click on "Get Involved."

Gifts of Love. Gifts of Love accepts a variety of donations such as in season clothes, pots and pans, linens, small appliances, etc. If you're doing spring cleaning, think of them. They also have specific foods they're looking to have donated. Plus, you can order items through Amazon for the Weekend Backpack program.

Little Free Pantries: You can donate food and personal care items to the Little Free Pantry located in the parking lot across the street from the church. There is also a pantry at Canton Community Center on the side facing Dyer Ave. In addition, Friends of the Canton Library has a take and leave spot for books.

Volunteer to help Canton Residents through the Social Services Dept. The Social Services Dept is always looking for volunteer drivers to take Seniors to routine (not sick) medical appointments. You can also volunteer to do things like pick up laundry or food for seniors as needed.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We gather as a welcoming community in worship, learning, service and fellowship to embody Christ's message of love, compassion and justice. Joining faith with action, both within and beyond our church, we strive to build a community that serves all.

An Open and Affirming Church

Scrip is “Fundraising While you Shop”!

At press time for the June Churchmouse, we just had our first coffee hour in 14 months. Our first coffee hour in 62 weeks! Our first coffee hour in 434 days! But who’s counting?! It was so nice to see people visiting, hugging, smiling... yes, seeing their entire faces and all were smiling. What a long time it’s been! Sure, while it was really more like a coffee half-hour until the raindrops set in, it was a wonderful small step into normality. And of course – the Scrip table was there!

Gift cards make perfect gifts for Father’s Day, high school graduations, teacher and bus driver gifts and weddings and showers. They’re great for birthdays as well, of course. And don’t overlook using gift cards for your own everyday expenses. Grocery store and Amazon gift cards are the most popular ones we sell, but we have Ace Hardware, Home Depot and Lowes for all your Spring and Summer yard needs and home improvement projects. We also sell Visa gift cards. If you buy those at the grocery store, you usually pay a \$5 activation fee. No activation fee if you buy them through Scrip!

There are actually over 750 retailers available in various monetary denominations. Reach out for a copy of the retailer list, or go to www.shopwithscrip.com to see what’s available. There is also a mobile app RaiseRight, which is available in the Apple app store or Google Play. You can see what retailers participate, the rebate amount the church earns for each of them, and even place an order right from your phone.

If you want to place an order in any fashion, it usually takes only one week to receive it. You can order through the app, call me at 693-0134, email me at c.levine@comcast.net or see me most Sundays in church. And when we have coffee hour... I’ll be there!

Thanks for your support!
Casey

Graduates & Families:



If you are or have a graduate that would like to share information about your high school, college, grad school, etc with us, for our summer newsletter, please email the church office at office@cantoncenterchurch.org.



*Thank you
to the Bristol families
for the beautiful flowers
provided on
Mother’s Day!*

God is still speaking !!!

.....

Visit our website at
www.cantoncenterchurch.org

Listen to recorded
Sermons and Music
from worship services!

Follow us on

JUNE 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 AA 7:00 pm	2 Deacons 7:00 pm	3	4	5 AA 11:00 p.m.
6 Worship & Communion 10:00 am	7 Trustees 7:00 pm Choir 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	8 AA 7:00 pm	9 Council 7:00 pm	10	11	12 AA 11:00 p.m.
13 Worship 10:00 am <i>Recognition of High School Seniors</i> Missions 7:00 pm	14 ACA 7:00 pm	15 AA 7:00 pm	16	17	18	19 AA 11:00 p.m.
20 Worship 10:00 am <i>Happy Father's Day</i>	21 ACA 7:00 pm	22 AA 7:00 pm	23	24	25	26 AA 11:00 p.m.
27 Worship 10:00 am <i>(Food Collection)</i>	28 ACA 7:00 pm	29 AA 7:00 pm	30			



The Churchmouse
The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
184 Cherry Brook Road
P O Box 133
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
AVON CT
PERMIT NO 426

Change Service Requested



The First Congregational Church
184 Cherry Brook Road PO Box 133
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133

Office

(860)693-4581

Kristen DiMattia, Office Manager
office@cantoncenterchurch.org
M-F 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Pastor

(860)693-4207

Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka
pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org

Organist/Director of Music:

(860)693-4216

Mary Lou Keefe
music@cantoncenterchurch.org

Director of Faith Formation:

(860)810-3070

Sarah Pradhan
ce@cantoncenterchurch.org

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.cantoncenterchurch.org
