

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

January 2022

FROM THE PASTOR

People sometimes get philosophical at the turn of a new year, wanting to reclaim a connection to some rule of life or intention for living -- or, in the vernacular, wanting to make one or more New Year's resolutions. There is something about a new start, even if our sense of it only lasts a week or two, that is renewing and refreshing. It's hopeful and forward-looking, it reminds us that things don't have to stay as they are if we choose otherwise.



By way of philosophies for living, here's a good one I recently came across and remembered having read many years ago. It's from the ancient Chinese philosophical text known as the *Tao Te Ching* (ca. 4th c. BCE), its author cited as Lao-Tzu:

*Everyone says that my way of life is the way of a simpleton.
Being largely the way of a simpleton is what makes it worthwhile.
If it were not the way of a simpleton,
it would long ago have been worthless,
these possessions of a simpleton being the three I choose & cherish:
to care,
to be fair,
to be humble.*

*When a [person] cares, [they] are unafraid.
When [they] are fair, they leave enough for others.
When [they] are humble, [they] can grow;
Whereas if, like [those] of today, they be
bold without caring,
self-indulgent without sharing,
self-important without shame,
[they] are dead.
The invincible shield of caring is a weapon from the sky
against being dead.*

What do you hear in those words? I hear “*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God?*” (Micah, Hebrew scriptures) and “*What does it profit a person to gain a lot of things but lose their soul?*” (Jesus, Christian scriptures).

In all of them, I hear words from ancient voices that sound as though they are speaking right to us and our moment, reminding us that when we are self-centered, we are out of right relation with everything. Not all of our inherited spiritual texts speak as meaningfully across time, but these do.

New year, new hopes, new responses to the eternal call of love, compassion and justice— our tools for staying alive in spirit, connected to each other and to all others. May it be so with us!

Happy New Year to all,

Rev. Brenda

WORSHIP MINISTRY

WORSHIP SERVICES IN JANUARY

- Jan. 2 Second Sunday after Christmas/
Epiphany Sunday
Guest pastor: The Rev. Terry Schmitt
- Jan. 9 First Sunday after Epiphany; Communion
- Jan. 16 Second Sunday after Epiphany
- Jan. 23 Third Sunday after Epiphany
Reflection shared by Ali Hager on her
Member-in-Discernment journey in the UCC
- Jan. 30 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Per the decision of our Church Council, and in light of current pandemic conditions, masks will be required for all when attending our services, beginning with our Christmas Eve service and for subsequent services until further notice. Exceptions for choir and worship leaders only when they are leading parts of the service and are well away from other people.

Please note that Council reevaluates our policies every month, and will be doing so again at their mid-January meeting. Everyone's safety and well-being is the primary concern.

Deacons' Bench

Casey Levine, Deacon

Happy New Year!

I don't know about you, but I am very much hoping for not just a "happy" new year – but a "different" new year. You know, like an actual NEW year? Not just the same old year we've been living for the last 22 months or so. I *still* find myself referring to things that happened "last year" – and invariably, they all happened in 2019! So here's hoping that 2022 will truly be a new year – and we'll all enjoy the fresh start that comes with it.

Last Year by Catherine Pulsifer

Last year is gone I am happy to say
I had my challenges almost every day
But a brand new year is a brand new start
And life will be good I feel it in my heart.

They say do not look back
They say just stay on track
Don't be discouraged, don't let it get you down
Otherwise you waste your year with lots of frowns.

So let this new year begin
I say this with a grin
Each day I know I can overcome
the challenges - there will be some.

But the good times I know
Will outweigh the bad though
And moving forward I can see
I will be happy as I can be.

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY

December was a busy month musically with the participation of the senior and bell choirs, the men's quartet and several soloists who shared their time and talent with all of you. They are so appreciated and I thank all of them for the rehearsal time as well as their contributions on Sundays. The bell choir played for the first time this year on Dec. 5th with their and the congregation's favorite "Hallelujah". Dec. 19 was the designated Music Sunday with several musical numbers provided by various groups and soloists and the congregation. The bell choir and senior choir as well as soloists also participated on Christmas Eve.



Special thanks to the following Senior choir members: sopranos Donna Hammond, Megan Keefe guest singer, Marilyn Larose, and Judy Robinson, altos Kathleen Lundgren, Linda McAllister, Karen Needham, Kathy Pickrell, and Clare Workman guest singer, tenors, Jerry Alonzy, Tim LeGeyt, and Bill Thomas, basses Art Dewey, Paul Stansel, and Jim Todd

Special thanks to the following Handbell choir members in order of appearance: Karen Needham, Gina Magennis, Cindy Webb, Allison Potter, Hugh Anderson, Kathy Pickrell, Donna Hammond, Martha Stansel, Allison Reder, and Megan Keefe.

Special thanks to the men's quartet: Jerry Alonzy, Art Dewey, Paul Stansel, and Jim Todd

Special thanks to the following soloists:

Bill Thomas	vocalist	Music Sunday and Christmas Eve
Jerry Alonzy	vocalist	Christmas Eve
Jim Todd	vocalist	Christmas Eve
Cindy Webb	flutist	Music Sunday and Christmas Eve

Welcome to our newest senior choir member, Art Dewey and our newest bell choir member, Allison Reder

One of our bell choir members' favorite composers through the years has been Cynthia Dobrinski who sadly passed away on Oct 21, 2021. She wrote 175 bell compositions and was quite popular and well known for leading several handbell workshops at the annual bell festivals. In fact she was the featured clinician at my very first bell workshop which so happened to be in our state that year at the Hartford Civic Center. She and her music will be missed.

CHURCH SCHOOL CONTINUES IN THE NEW YEAR

Hollace Bristol and Karen Needham will be continuing their devoted church school ministry with our children, every Sunday morning unless otherwise noted. It's experiential, interactive and coordinated with the themes of the services and the church year. The Parish Hall space is used, so there's plenty of room to spread out, and all adults working with children are masked. All children Pre-K through Grade, come join us!

January Mission Collection

We are collecting a variety of warm clothing -
hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, warm socks...

Men's items will be given to South Park Inn
and other items will go to Gifts of Love.



Thank you for your support!

Yet another year of Scrip in the books!

Thank you to all of the dedicated Scrip shoppers who participated in our gift card fundraiser throughout 2021. It's very hard to believe, but we have been doing this for over 5 years now! I'll be putting together our year in review for the February edition of the mouse. Stay tuned!

As long as we are having coffee hour, you'll find me in the parish hall with cards on hand for immediate purchase and order forms for cards that you'll receive within one week. If you're not in church, you can always call or email me (860-693-0134 or c.levine@comcast.net) or you can place an order online or through the RaiseRight app. Reach out to me for our church's unique enrollment code if you wish to place an order electronically.

Thanks, as always, for your support! Happy New Year!

Casey

Trustee News

Dave Heyer

Stewardship

One of the important events marking the end of this year is our annual stewardship campaign, which is obviously the beginning of the next year. I'm happy to report that in spite of the pandemic, the Church having gone to online-only service for a major piece of it, and many normal Church activities having been cancelled, we really have no choice other than to persevere. In that regard, thanks to you, our pledge payments have held up fairly well, and as of 12/10 we had received 67 pledges totaling \$121,554. Last year we had slightly over one hundred pledges; our monetary objective this year is one hundred fifty-five thousand dollars. We have begun telephoning some eighty-four members to request their help in meeting this goal. We met all our salary obligations to our employees, and want to continue to do so. Your pledges will greatly help.

Parsonage Improvements

Byron Case left the parsonage to the Church in his will when he died some fifty years ago. It has been a wonderful asset that has housed various of our pastors, members, and non-members over the course of the years. Unfortunately we have never had a long-term plan for upgrades to keep it up-to-date with normal maintenance and technology improvements. Church Council this week recommended spending less than ten thousand dollars to add attic insulation (it is now insulated to R-13 values) and to upgrade the house's electrical supply (it now has only one hundred amps electric supply capacity). This will improve the value of the property, reduce the costs to heat the house, and encourage our current tenant family (mother and three children) to stay there.

Energy Costs

The starting point for trying to reduce energy costs is to conduct an energy audit, a fifty dollar investment what should return many times that every year. The energy audit takes only two hours to perform, and provides a wealth of information to help you judge what needs improvement. The report we had done for the parsonage told us that the cost of added insulation would pay back in only four years, and included a significant cash rebate (funded by the State of CT). If you are interested in looking at the parsonage energy audit results, contact me (heycrd@comcast.net) and I will forward you the report and explain it if you want. This is seriously a can't-lose opportunity.



A beautiful Crèche loaned by Karen Needham.

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.

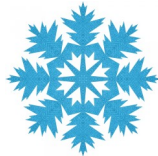
CANCELLED January 16th ~ Italian Dinner

Due to the Covid-19 rises and the need for masks, the Italian Dinner is cancelled. We will keep you posted of a new date.

Coffee Hour after service is also cancelled for the time being.

Craig McAllister

**IN THE EVENT OF
INCLEMENT WEATHER**



Please tune to:

WFSB Channel 3 or NBC CT
or check the church web site
at: www.cantoncenterchurch.org.

God is still speaking !!!

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Visit our website at
www.cantoncenterchurch.org

Watch live streamed worship services!

Follow us on 

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2022

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, January 23, 2022 after the 10 am service, *OR* on subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the proposed 2022 budget.
2. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bev Sealand, Clerk

JANUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1  AA 11:00 p.m.
2 Worship 10:00 am	3 Sr. Choir 5 pm ACA 7:00 pm	4	5 Diaconate Zoom Meeting 7:00 pm	6 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm	7	8 AA 11:00 p.m.
9 Mission Meeting 9:00 am Worship & Communion 10:00 am	10 Trustee Meeting 7:00 pm Sr. Choir 5 pm ACA 7:00 pm	11	12 Council Zoom Meeting 7:00 pm	13 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm	14	15 AA 11:00 p.m.
16 Worship 10:00 am	17 Sr. Choir 5 pm ACA 7:00 pm	18	19	20 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm	21	22 AA 11:00 p.m.
23 Worship 10:00 am Budget Meeting <i>(Fourth Sunday Food Collection)</i>	24 Sr. Choir 5 pm ACA 7:00 pm	25	26	27 Handbell Choir 7:00 pm	28	29 AA 11:00 p.m.
30 Worship 10:00 am	31 Sr. Choir 5 pm ACA 7:00 pm					



The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
184 Cherry Brook Road
P O Box 133
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Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

**The First Congregational Church
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Organist/Director of Music:

Mary Lou Keefe
music@cantoncenterchurch.org

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.cantoncenterchurch.org
