

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

May 2022

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

A Gift

*Just when you seem to yourself
nothing but a flimsy web
of questions, you are given
the questions of others to hold
in the emptiness of your hands,
songbird eggs that can still hatch
if you keep them warm,
butterflies opening and closing themselves
in your cupped palms, trusting you not to injure
their scintillant fur, their dust.
You are given the questions of others
as if they were answers
to all you ask. Yes, perhaps
this gift is your answer.*

-Denise Levertov



We are coming up on the end of the academic year at Yale Divinity School, where for the past eleven years, I've been part of a teaching team for a course in pastoral theology & care. It aims to help students learn the basic skills for being present in caring, supportive ways with those whose lives and stories they will encounter when they become pastors or chaplains. When we get to the end of the semester, I always share with my particular group of students Denise Levertov's poem "A Gift," as I can think of no better way to describe pastoral ministry than its opening line: "*Just when you seem to yourself/nothing but a flimsy web of questions/you are given the questions of others to hold/in the emptiness of your hands...*" All through the semester, the students have had to encounter what it means to be invited into the life of another, entrusted to hold some significant wondering or dilemma with them, all the while quite possibly feeling that they are, themselves, nothing but a flimsy web of questions, still learning... everything. It's humbling and also expanding to learn that we can do this, that our own questions don't have to be barriers or obstacles to our staying present with other humans in theirs. In fact, the more conscious we can stay of what feels unresolved or uncertain or inadequate in ourselves, the more we can compassionately accompany another who might be in that same kind of place.

The thing is, this wisdom isn't just for pastors. All of us have experiences when we are "given the questions of others to hold," invited into someone's life at a time when it's our presence and care that are needed to help them know their own strengths and possibilities. This goes with the human journey. This goes with being the Jesus community, the Body of Christ, in the world. This goes with the inherent hopefulness of Easter season – where, to use Levertov's imagery, songbird eggs become butterflies that we get to hold, if we tend them lovingly and are careful not to injure them.

In the beauty and hopefulness of this season, as shaky as we ourselves might sometimes feel, let's remember how much we need each other's presence, how we are entrusted to handle each other with care.... and how much gift there is in that.

Faithfully,
Rev. Brenda

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music



As the Music Director, I am truly pleased with the dedication and perseverance of the Senior choir and Handbell choir members.. As we practice week by week, some pieces being oldies and goodies and some totally new to all of us, it is always rewarding when everything clicks and especially when it occurs on those special Sunday services. I believe this was the case for the music during Holy Week and I am indeed most grateful to all of you. We have had some setbacks along the way but have risen to the occasion and certainly did overcome such situations.

Special thanks to the following senior choir members and guests:

Jerry Alonzy, Art Dewey, Donna Hammond, Megan Keefe- guest singer, Marilyn Larose, Dan LeGeyt-guest singer, Tim LeGeyt, Kathleen Lundgren, Gina Magennis- guest singer, Linda McAllister, Karen Needham, Kathy Pickrell, Judy Robinson, Paul Stansel, Jim Todd, and Clare Workman.



Special thanks to the members of the bell choir:

Karen Needham, Gina Magennis, Cindy Webb, Allison Potter, Hugh Anderson, Kathy Pickrell, Donna Hammond, Martha Stansel, Allison Reder, and Megan Keefe

Special thanks to Jerry Alonzy who was the soloist for The Palms

Special thanks to Jim Todd who sang a cappella for Were You There on Maundy

Special thanks to Jim for searching for and copying a beautiful 4 part choral rendition of the Ukrainian National Anthem

Special thanks to Karen Needham who has faithfully played the chimes every Sunday

On May 22, there will also be special music sung by the Senior Choir and played by the handbell choir in recognition of the brave and loyal people of the Ukraine.

The Senior Choir will be singing their National Anthem and the bell choir will be playing an appropriate song, "Prayer for Humanity" by Linda Lamb.

WORSHIP MINISTRY


 The logo features the word "Worship" in a large, elegant, cursive script font, with "SCHEDULE" in a smaller, all-caps, serif font centered below it. The text is framed by decorative flourishes on either side.
WORSHIP IN MAY

*As of this writing, masks are optional at our services.
All services are in person and live streamed.*

- May 1 Third Sunday of Easter; Communion
- May 8 Fourth Sunday of Easter; Mother's Day
- May 15 Confirmation Sunday
- May 22 Sixth Sunday of Easter
- May 29 Seventh Sunday of Easter; Memorial Day weekend

How to watch a recorded service

If you are looking to watch the service live as it is being streamed, please see the icon on the homepage of our website. If you want to watch the recording of a service that is past, you may find it by looking under "Connect with Us" on our website, where it is usually posted the next day, OR, to see it sooner, you may go to www.YouTube.com and search "Canton Center Church."

Looking Ahead to Summer Services

We will once again be sharing joint summer services with the Canton Community Baptist Church. We will host in the month of July, they will host in the month of August. Services in both months will be at 10:00 a.m.


 The logo features the words "Thank You" in a large, elegant, cursive script font, with "Thank" above "You". The text is framed by decorative flourishes on either side.

*Thank you to the church member (who wishes to remain anonymous)
who made the cross for the Easter Communion table
from the Christmas tree in our sanctuary this past Christmas.*

Deacons' Bench

Hugh Anderson

WORSHIP MINISTRY

What a glorious holy week it was, as we gathered to bear witness to the miracle of Jesus told once again through moving scripture and beautiful music. From the powerful songs of Palm Sunday to the somber reality of Maundy Thursday then culminating in our Easter Sunday celebration of the resurrection, we are reminded anew of the presence of Christ the savior in our own lives here on earth.

This past month we held our monthly diaconate meeting at church complete with an awesome pot luck spread, to celebrate the "retirement" of Tim and Vicki and welcome our three newcomers Eric, Tim and Kristin. One of my fellow deacons asked me what's next for me in retirement, and while it has been a few years and I'm busy enough that I wonder how I ever had time for a real job, I am mindful that the needs of our community and world are overwhelming and I have more options now to serve. But where to serve, where to be of most help, how much time and energy to give. And maybe the hardest part, how and when to feel I've made a difference and have I done "enough", because there's always so much more to do.

I imagine this is a bit of a struggle for many of us. But holy week reminds us again that the most important thing is to live knowing that Jesus is our savior and we are his servants on earth. We can't solve everything through our service and we aren't expected to but we can always find fulfillment every time we make a difference whether small or large, and be thankful for the opportunities we are given to do just that every day.

This is such a great time of year. I hope everyone has a wonderful spring season.

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

LOOKING AHEAD TO CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

As we look forward to Confirmation Sunday on May 15, we celebrate our 9th and 10th grade confirmands:

Mitchell Buckley, Mason Buckley and Kendall Rees.

While the pandemic conditions of this year, as well as scheduling challenges, have made for some limitations, we've still been able to meet both in person and online to reflect together on the central perspectives of our Christian tradition, to try to think broadly about what it means to live life with a spiritual grounding as followers of Jesus, and to learn about the organization and ministry areas of our particular church. Our Confirmation class has participated in worship, experienced an informative presentation from our church historian (with some fascinating artifacts from our church's history), participated in an online event for Confirmation classes & leaders, offered by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, on the topic of UCC values and beliefs, attended a Friday evening Shabbat service at the Farmington Valley Jewish Community in Simsbury -- and also provided some much-needed help one Sunday when the Diaconate was moving worship-related items and supplies from their several different locations in the church to their new home all in one place, in a designated room near the classrooms! They are working on their Faith Statements, to be shared with the congregation on May 15, when we will celebrate the Rite of Confirmation. Please hold these three wonderful young people in your hearts as we approach their special day.

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FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Church School marks
Earth Day
April 24, 2022



COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY & FELLOWSHIP/INREACH MINISTRY

*Thank you to all -
who donated, planned, prepped and served food
to benefit Brian's Angels in Bristol
on Saturday, March 26th*





SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

A Note from the Church President:

I would like to offer a gentle reminder to those planning any events at church to check the calendar and check in with both Kristen (Office Manager) and Walter (Sexton) to coordinate the details regarding set up. Walter is generally planning to or is available to do the set up. However, I know some folks like to do it yourselves and on your own timetable. That's just fine, as long as nothing else is taking place in that space between your set up and your event. So please just speak with Kristen and Walter to clarify and coordinate. Thanks!

Also, Walter would like to remind everyone that if you need help with anything around the church, at any-time, just ask and he's happy to do it!

Thank you,
Marianne Burbank

A Note from the Cheer Committee:

I will be the new Cheer person for our church and I am looking to get the birthdates for anyone over 65 so I can send birthday cards to our older members. If you could send me your birthdates and anyone else's that you may know and yes, I do want the year, too!! My email is cblmutch@comcast.net and my phone number is 860-693-0015. I want the older members of our church to feel remembered, whether or not they are able to attend the services.

Thank you,
Cora Mutch

Changes coming to the Scrip Program!

Coming in May, the official name of the Scrip program will be changing from ShopWithScrip to RaiseRight. When they launched the mobile app, they enhanced the way participants could shop for and access their gift cards, making it even easier to fundraise anytime, anywhere. Now, those same great features will be available on the website too—all under one name, RaiseRight.

If you don't currently use the website or mobile app, you will see no difference to how we run the fundraiser at church or how you make out your check when you purchase a card (still paid to FCCCC, and you can note "scrip" in the memo line). If you ever visit shopwithscrip.com to view the retailers that are available or place an order with through your online account, that website name will eventually be changing to RaiseRight.

Stay tuned for more information and thanks for your ongoing support as we start our 7th year of Scrip at FCCCC!

Thank you,
Casey Levine

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

May Mission's Collection:

For the month of May we will be collecting
healthy snacks for Gifts of Love.

*Thank
You*

*Our Italian Dinner Buy a Meal Give a Meal was extremely successful thanks to everyone who purchased food and all of the folks who helped prepare it! A special thank you to Craig and Linda McAllister for leading all the food prep. Seven of us went to **Brian's Angels** and served meals to about 40 people. In addition, we took 42 grinders, which were placed in bags along with other items that folks were taking to eat later. The food was very much appreciated.*

While we were there, several of us got a tour of their space and heard more about the services Brian's Angels provides for the homeless in Bristol. We were amazed by what they accomplish within the limited space they have. The Missions and Outreach Committee is pleased to announce that, due to the number of meals we sold to the congregation, we have enough money to begin a Food Outreach Fund to support future efforts.

*Thank you to everyone who donated to **Holy Joe's Cafe**.
With your generosity, we raised \$460. to support the coffee mission for
the chaplains and service members stationed around the world.*

*Our special offering for **Ukraine Emergency Relief** raised a total of \$3,225.*

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.



LET US KNOW ABOUT GRADUATES AND AWARD WINNERS.

In our summer issue, we are pleased to share news about recent graduates and award winners connected with our church family.

You may call, e-mail or drop a note in the mail or the church office. (Also, because graduation often means a change of address, please let us know where our newest graduate members will be living.)

**Join Us for
COFFEE HOURS**



Please consider hosting Coffee Hour one Sunday! The coffee is provided, you can make it a family activity... all you need to bring is a quart of milk. Snacks are optional.

We thank our committees, who fill in on a monthly rotation for any Sundays when we don't have individuals or families hosting coffee hours. Our goal is not to have to tap our committees regularly for our hospitality function.

Sunday coffee hours matter to all of us! Please use the sign-up sheet to take a Sunday. Thank you!

God is still speaking !!!

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Visit our website at
www.cantoncenterchurch.org

Listen to recorded
Sermons and Music
from worship services!

Follow us on 

MAY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship & Communion 10:00 am Canton H.S. Class 6:30 pm	2	3 AA 7:00 pm	4 Deacons Meeting zoom 7:00 pm	5 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	6	7 AA 11:00 p.m.
8 Worship 10:00 am 	9 Choir 5:00 pm Trustees 7:00 pm	10 AA 7:00 pm	11 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	12 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	13	14 AA 11:00 p.m.
15 Worship 10:00 am Confirmation Sunday Yard Goats Game	16 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	17 AA 7:00 pm	18	19 Cub Scouts Meeting 6 pm Bell Choir 5:30 pm	20	21 AA 11:00 p.m.
22 Worship 10:00 am	23 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	24 AA 7:00 pm	25	26	27	28 AA 11:00 p.m.
29 Worship 10:00 am	30  ACA 7:00 pm	31 AA 7:00 pm				



The Churchmouse
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Pastor

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Organist/Director of Music:

(860)693-4216

Mary Lou Keefe
music@cantoncenterchurch.org

Worship
Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.cantoncenterchurch.org
