

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

June 2022

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

STAYING CLOSE

Good things as well as bad, are caught by a kind of infection: if you want to get warm you must stand near the fire; if you want to get wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. . . . They are a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very center of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you; if you are not, you will remain dry.

~ C. S. Lewis



These days, we read the word “infection” and probably think Coronavirus and pandemic, since this has been our context for over two years now for thinking about how we “catch” something. So I find fascinating the insight of the great writer C. S. Lewis, that “good things as well as bad are caught by a kind of infection,” that our being near good and life-giving things is as necessary to their getting into us as our being near something harmful (biological or other) will give *it* an opportunity to get into us. Either way, proximity matters: what we’re in the vicinity of will determine what we’re likely to pick up.

I hope that one way we think about church, and about why we might stay close to it, is that, there, we catch some really good things: the inspiration of a faith tradition that's both current and centuries old; *and* the way the rituals and practices of that tradition can form us in a kind of hopeful, faithful consciousness for everyday living; *and* the prophetic voices of that tradition that call us to do justice and love kindness on both personal and societal levels; *and* a community of particular others to get to know and be known by, with whom to love and serve, work and play; *and* a source of comfort and support when we are time of sorrow or need; *and* a chance to be comfort and support for others when they are in need; *and* an intergenerational community where our kids can be loved and nurtured into their God-given beings; *and*... maybe many other things.

Why do you stay close to the church? What do you understand yourself to be near, by doing so? What do you think you might not be near enough to pick up if you were not still connected? And do you know anybody who might need or want the things that church is, but isn't connected enough to "catch" them right now? If so, think about inviting them in closer.

Faithfully,

Rev. Brenda

WORSHIP MINISTRY

SUNDAY WORSHIP

WORSHIP IN JUNE

Current policy is masking-optional at all services.

June 5 Pentecost; Communion

June 12 First Sunday after Pentecost; Baptism
Intergenerational service with children's
participation for the close of the church school year

June 19 Second Sunday after Pentecost; Father's Day

June 26 Third Sunday after Pentecost

Summer Worship

SUMMER SERVICES WITH CANTON

COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

We will once again be sharing services in July & August
with the Canton Community Baptist Church.

We will host in July, they will host in August.

Services in both months at 10 a.m

WHY AREN'T WE PASSING THE PLATE?

A Message from the Deacons and the Pastor

It's been quite a while since we've passed the offering plate in church – since the start of the pandemic in early 2020. At that time, we stopped passing anything, out of an abundance of caution about viruses and shared surfaces, as well as social distancing. Instead, we've had offering boxes at the back and front of our sanctuary, inviting people who wanted to leave monetary offerings to do so on their way in or out of church. We've made sure to keep a Dedication of Offerings as part of our weekly service, using it as a moment to thank God for all that we have to give and to share in love and service – not just money, but everything.

When we first began to think about when to resume the traditional pass-the-plate offertory practice, we actually started to wonder if the question wasn't "when to" but "whether to," a consideration that, we are aware, some other churches have already made. For one thing, we're aware that passing the plate in every service doesn't work well for those in our congregation who pay their pledges monthly rather than weekly, for those who mail in their financial offerings to the church (or process them electronically) and don't use an offering plate at all, for those who may write out checks but forget to bring them on Sunday morning, or for anyone unprepared, for whatever reason, to make a monetary offering on a given day when a plate is passed to them. Those who do want to give an offering each week can, of course, still do so. Our treasurer has reported that the church's financial income has seen no noticeable dip since we've been keeping this practice.

On a spiritual level, our current practice has allowed for an expanded notion of what counts as our offerings in life, and has reminded us that they are more than just monetary. Faith-motivated offerings take the forms of time, talent, presence, and care, as well as "treasure." They are what we do lovingly in the world and not just what we do or give in the church. They are the food donated for a food bank and the time we might spend working at one, the donated winter coats and the time we might spend delivering them, the check we write for a children's hospital. They are anything we give anywhere to any cause that is about love, compassion or justice. God's work through us is not limited in the forms it can take. We remember that better when we don't define "offerings" as meaning only money or only put-in-a-plate-weekly.

For all these reasons, we have decided to leave our current practice as is, knowing there may be occasional times when, for a specific service or a specific offering, we still might want to pass the plates.

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

A few weeks ago on two consecutive Sundays I was able to participate in an ecumenical chorus that was to be one of the acts that would be performing at two churches as a benefit concert with proceeds to go to Ukraine. It was unbelievable how much talent there was between Torrington and Lakeville. It was great fun to reconnect with some old fellow singers in our mixed chorus and also meet some new ones.

Our bell choir has theoretically been short one ringer although we have managed to still play 5 octave music. With two ringers on vacation and a performance coming up, thankfully Judy Robinson stepped up to the plate to fill in as well as Janelle, and voila the group played with skill and grace for our Sunday May 22nd day to recognize the bravery and steadfastness of the Ukrainian people.

For that special date on May 22nd, I was able to recruit some guest singers for the choir, namely, Megan Keefe, Gina Magennis and Dan LeGeyt I thank you and I think we sounded superb.

On the Sunday in May before Memorial Day which is a day on which we recognize and thank our veterans and current members of the military, the music department has been presenting a medley of Armed Forces songs for several years now with organ and chimes and this year was no exception. The medley includes the songs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard and this year Karen Needham was the chime player.

FYI The bell choir is on summer break and will resume rehearsals in mid September.

The senior choir will sing on June 5th and 12th and then break for the summer and resume rehearsals in late August.

Judy Robinson will be soloing on June 19th

*Thank
You*

Special thanks to all of my choir members and special guest singers and ringers

Special thanks to Karen Needham, chime player

Special thanks to music committee members, Kathy Pickrell, Donna Hammond, Kathleen Lundgren.

Did You Know...

....that any member of the church can attend a Church Council meeting to listen and observe regular Council business? If you'd like to attend a meeting, please contact the church office ahead of time to find out whether a particular meeting will be held online via Zoom or in person, and, if on Zoom, to get the access information.

Thank You from the UCC for Our Ukraine Donations

Our church has received a thank you letter from the national office of the United Church of Christ, for the donations totaling over \$3200 that we sent in for relief in Ukraine. The letter, in part, reads:

Through all of these donations, families that have been displaced and who are in need of shelter and basic necessities will receive support. Hand in hand with our Partners in Service and other volunteers, congregations and conferences, UCC Disaster Ministries seeks to serve families and communities by identifying and meeting urgent unmet needs, and providing spiritual and emotional support.

...Your love of neighbor will be made tangible through your gifts...United in prayer, action and giving, we stand as a people of faith in love and compassion. Thank you again for spreading God's hope, peace and love through your financial assistance as the United Church of Christ continues to build a just world for all.

In faith,

*The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer
General Minister & President*

*Getting ready for summer!
Our garden plots near the parsonage are ready to grow
cucumbers, squash, and other summer veggies for the Canton Food Bank.*



Historian's Corner

Tim LeGeyt, Church Historian

A Place to Sit and Worship

Whenever I go into our Church, I take in the history of the building and marvel at the stories that are there to be told and remembered. The stories come to me from the people that I've known over the years in our congregation and also from the Meeting House itself.

The building is 208 years old (1814) and the outside, especially the front, is that old. The front, with the vestibule and the steeple, are definitely original. You can see it in the "wrinkled glass" in the windows and the weathered look of the clapboards. It is a beautiful building, strong in proportion and style, and I marvel at the work which must have been done to create this New England classic.



Inside, it is a bit different. So much of the inside is based on the original look and style, from the pulpit to the balconies, from the choir loft to the Deacons Box. However, most of the inside is remade, when, in 1968, the Church sanctuary was remodeled from the Gothic style (done in 1874 with colored glass windows) to the look that most closely resembled the original style of 1814. Almost everything in the sanctuary is of the 1968 restoration, except the pews.

The pews are original to the 1814 building, having been maintained during the Gothic period (1874 to 1968) and not replaced during the 1968 renovation. The pews, therefore, are always a source of curiosity and veneration for me. As I sit in any pew on a Sunday or during the week, I find myself wondering who sat there over the years. I imagine that the pew where I am sitting was owned by a family of my relations at a time when pews were sold as "slips" and the payment secured a pew for that particular family for the year. As I look at the pew where I am sitting, I see the nicks, dings and bangs on the handrail or the dent marks in the boarding and imagine how those "scars" might have been created. The picture included with this writing shows one of the pew doors that we have in our collection, which would have offered some privacy to a family who had purchased that pew for the year.

During the tenure of our third longest pastor, Rev. Jairus Burt, a significant "dust up" occurred. Rev. Burt had been preaching on the shameful tradition of slavery for several years and there was a mix of abolitionists and pro-slavery attitudes held by members of the congregation. In 1844 the issue came to a head and forty families refused to renew their pew rents. Obviously a concerted initiative, this action could have dealt a real blow to the financial well-being of the Church. I like to imagine some of the back and forth which occurred in those pews before, during and after any Sunday worship service.

Anyway, to the rescue came Dea. Warren Humphrey, who lived just north of the cemetery. As a man of means and also convictions, Dea. Humphrey paid for all forty of the pews and the financial challenge was averted. However, those forty families then had to go to Dea. Humphrey to purchase their pews. A little bit of humble pie was consumed!

There is a lot of history which has occurred in the pews of our church. Think about the people who inhabited your pew when you have a quiet moment to reflect. These are not the only challenging times we have endured as a congregation!!



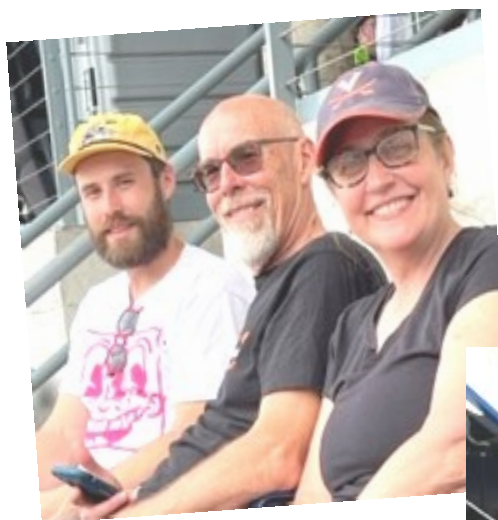
**Third Annual Meeting of the
Southern New England Conference**
A Sure Foundation: Built Upon 400 Years of Service
~ Matthew 7:24-27

Based on your feedback, annual meeting will again be held online.

Saturday, June 18, 2022
9 AM – 2:30 PM
8:30 AM - "Doors" Open
Hopin Platform

See <https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/annual-meeting-15483325>
for info. on speakers, workshops, registration

A FUN DAY AT THE YARDCOATS GAME ON MAY 15!



TIRED OF POLITICAL VITRIOL? JOIN
US FOR ONE OF TWO **FREE**

CIVILITY TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Facilitated by the Institute for
Civility in Government

Please join Avon Congregational Church, The
Farmington Valley American Muslim Center, and
The Avon Free Public Library

June 4, 2022

8:00 am & 1:00 pm

Avon Congregational Church

6 West Main St

Avon, CT 06001



Register here: <http://www.avonctlibrary.info/>

Session 1

or

Session 2



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 & Affirming Congregation



*Congratulations to
Silvie Frances Hager,
daughter of
Christopher & Alison Hager,
who was baptized on
May 22, 2022
at Canton Center Church.*



*Congratulations to
those who were confirmed on
May 15, 2022
at Canton Center Church.*

*Mitchell Evans Buckley,
son of Ann & Evans Buckley*

*Mason David Buckley,
son of Ann & Evans Buckley*

*Kendall Telfer Rees,
daughter of Vicki & Andy Rees*



**The Strawberry Festival has been
CANCELLED for this year,
due to insufficient sign-up.**

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 Dan Bristol for once again providing beautiful pansy plants for our congregation on Mother's Day, a tradition begun by Ruth Bristol in the 1940s, in memory of her son, Sterling W. Bristol, Jr., who was killed in WWII.

JUNE 2022

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



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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.cantoncenterchurch.org
