

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

October 2022

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

COMMUNITIES OF RITUAL



As I write this, it is the day of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in London, and I have watched some television coverage of the events. If you watched any too, you know the British way with pageantry and ritual was on full display for days after the queen passed and through the day of her funeral: carefully choreographed processions, royal palace honor guards, elaborately costumed, standing watch by a coffin draped and adorned with the symbols of monarchy, the spectacular space of Westminster Abbey for the funeral service itself, family members and others all precisely placed, moving together when it was their duty to move, standing in silent reverence when silence was called for. As more than one commentator noted, “Nobody does pomp like the British.”

And while that degree of ceremony is beyond what any of us is likely to experience, and may seem excessive by everyday standards, what strikes me about ritual is how universal it is, how much humans seem to need it as a way of making meaning or expressing meaning. Thinking a thought by ourselves does not have the same impact as being in a community of others who are thinking that thought, and doing something ritualistic together to give it importance. Theologian Harvey Cox once noted that “no other species relives the stories of their ancestors, blows out candles on a birthday cake, or dresses up as something else.” Humans develop rituals that hold our stories and the meaning we give them, because somehow the rituals become containers for meaning and can carry more than words alone.

Religious communities know this instinctively. Even a small, simple and relatively informal local church has important rituals: lighting candles, standing to sing, joining voices in unison prayers and responses, taking together the bread of Communion, blessing together the water of baptism. Each time we gather, we tell again the story of who we are as the people of God, and we reinforce our belonging in that story by practicing our place in that community and its precious rituals of meaning.

The next time you come to worship, try to notice three things in the service that are ritual in nature. We are not a “high church” tradition, but we have our rituals. And no matter how simple they may be, they are speaking to us and forming us, telling us a sacred story, every single time we experience them.

Faithfully,

Rev. Brenda

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY



The music department is gearing up for the coming season with the return of both choirs and the hopes of once again having a children's choir. Both the Sr. and Handbell choirs are up and running and the sr. choir members have already begun to sing on Sundays. The bell choir members have voted for their favorites and the first rehearsal is to be Sept 22nd.

With the pandemic came a shortage of singers but hurrah we are back to 14. However there is always room for more and as usual we are always looking for new members or for those persons who could make a commitment for a shorter period of time to sing special music.

The handbell choir is most comfortable at 11 members so with ten we are one short at this time. Due to the fact that two members will be out for an extended period from Jan. through March, and since I am shutting down bell rehearsals for the month of January, we will need two subs for the months of Feb. and March. Please see me or any member of the bell and senior choir for further details about either choir. New members are always welcome.

On Sept. 26, the sr. choir will begin rehearsals on a divisi choral arrangement of "Let the River Run" written and sung by Carly Simon and to be presented on Nov. 20th Thanksgiving Sunday. We already have two interested singers who will be joining in for rehearsals and hoping for more. My son Jon Keefe will be playing the conga drums for the event along with his mom on the piano. The drums were donated a few years ago by Gina and had belonged to her son, Andrew.



Special thanks to Karen Needham who has been playing the chimes for some time now and very well I might add.

Special thanks to the music committee members, co-chairs, Kathy Pickrell and Donna Hammond and Kathleen Lundgren

Special thanks to all the choir members and also the guests singers.

The senior choir rehearses on Mondays at 5:00 for an hour and the bell choir rehearses on Thursdays at 5:30.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

*All Sunday services at 10 a.m., in person & live streamed. Masks optional.
To view a livestream, go to the homepage of our website & click on the icon.
To view a recorded service later, see under “Connect with Us” on our website
(Sunday services usually posted there on Mondays), or go to YouTube.com and search
“Canton Center Church” (morning services usually available there by same-day afternoon).*

- Oct. 2** World Communion Sunday; Sacrament of Communion
- Oct. 9** Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
UCC Disabilities Awareness Week: *Casey Levine will share a reflection*
- Oct. 16** Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Recognition of Long-time Members
- Oct. 23** Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost; Presentation of Children’s Bibles
- Oct. 30** All Saints’ Sunday; Remembrance of the Departed
Members of the congregation are invited to bring photos of remembered loved ones



STAGES OF FAITH

A Small-Group Learning Opportunity

Tues., Nov. 1, 7 p.m. OR Wed., Nov. 9, 10:30 a.m.

Because there are identifiable stages of spiritual evolution in human beings, according to work that’s been done on the subject, we find that different things matter to people in different stages.

Reflecting on this can not only help us understand our own spiritual ideas and perceptions (current and past), but can also help us understand why some things that matter greatly to us don’t matter so much to others.

It can also help us get some perspective on why there are such different ideas of God within Scripture: it turns out that there are different stages of faith reflected in its writings.

Please sign up for one of the groups if you’re interested by emailing Rev. Brenda at pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org, and she will send you three article-length readings in preparation for the conversation.

Deacons' Bench

Casey Levine

WORSHIP MINISTRY

The logo for Disability Awareness Month features the word "Disability" in a large, multi-colored font (D in blue, i in red, s in green, a in yellow, b in orange, i in purple, l in light blue, i in dark blue, t in light blue) and the words "Awareness Month" in a smaller, light blue font below it, all set against a dark blue rectangular background.

October is disability awareness month. In the UCC, the 2nd Sunday of the month is marked as “Access Sunday”. It is a day that those in the UCC will join together in celebrating the gifts of persons with disabilities and the strides that the church has made in becoming more accessible. It is also a day that the church can acknowledge the journey yet to be taken with our siblings with disabilities.

For the last number of years, I have been honored to be a part of the Disability Ministries team of the SNE UCC (and the CT UCC before that). In the time I was on the team, I learned so much about the steps we can take to not only make our churches more accessible, but to make ourselves more accessible, to people with disabilities. It’s not all about elevators and ramps, t-coils and large print bulletins. We have to be engaged, even if that means being vulnerable. We have to not turn away because we don’t know what to say – or are afraid of saying the wrong thing.

There are many small steps we can take in our church and in our lives to be more open to people with disabilities. As a team member, I learned about the Accessible to All program and checklist. There are also people that will come to any church to do a physical audit and give you a list of small and large changes you can make in your building and programming. There was a great article recently printed on the national UCC website, full of information about A2A, the history of Disability Ministries and so much more: <https://www.ucc.org/with-access-sunday-near-members-of-a2a-church-say-checklist-is-important-first-step/>

On a personal note, the last year has been one of incredible growth in “disability awareness” for me, as I’ve watched my son Jason learn to communicate in a way we never knew was possible. He is writing poetry that could make you cry and he has such an insight into the world that blows us away. Never has the old phrase “you can’t judge a book by it’s cover” meant so much to me.

I encourage all of us to make an extra effort this month (and every month) to be welcoming to a person with a disability. What you learn about them – and yourself – may surprise you!

In Faith,

Casey Levine

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Director of Faith Formation

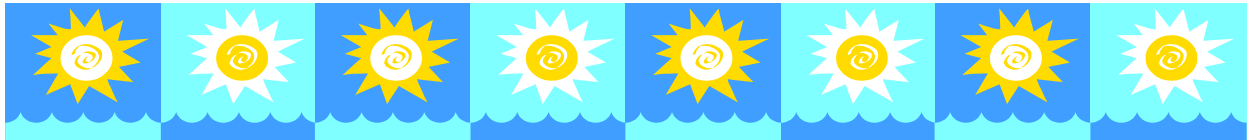
Dr. Hollace Bristol

As I write this, two members of our congregation are preparing messages for the church service on Sept. 25 on “Why Church?” So, I thought I would offer a reflection on “Why Church School?” What is meaningful about our 40 minutes spent with your children each Sunday.

Yes, there is community, intergenerational activities, friendships being built, ritual, celebration, and precious family time. In addition, children are led to explore big ideas. These are ideas from Jesus’s teachings that are experienced in activities that challenge young minds and creative spirits, ideas that the children practice with the understanding that there is no such thing as getting it “wrong” or making a “mistake.” There is only learning in each activity with the intent of owning more and more of what Jesus came to share: compassion, gratitude, appreciating the light that each one carries within them, kindness, offering one’s gifts to complete a challenge, honoring commitments to each other. It’s not that these ideas are unique to Church School, but to work with them intentionally inspires understanding them at a deeper level. I am reminded of a three-year-old who, after scribbling on a paper sun that was attached to a piece of yarn and placed over her head so that it lay against her chest, told Karen and me, “I am the light.”

Isn’t this the goal, to recognize the light in everyone we meet!

Blessings, always!



Our Christian Education program is on Facebook!
Find our page, Canton Center Church Kids, the next time you sign on.
Don't forget to 'like' us and share with your family and friends!



Chicken Pie Buffet

**Canton Center Congregational
Church**

184 Cherry Brook Road
Route 179, 1 1/4 Miles
North of Route 44

**Saturday
October 15, 2022**



Dinner– Open Seating 4 to 6 PM

**Dinner Includes: Handcrafted Chicken Pie, Gravy,
Mashed Potatoes, Turnip, Green Beans, Coleslaw,
Rolls, Cranberry Sauce, Beverage and your choice of
pie for dessert, Apple, Pumpkin, Mince**

\$15 for Adults \$6 for Children (under 12)

Missions & Outreach

Martha Stansel

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Cake Auction is Back by Popular Demand!!

The Missions and Outreach Committee is sponsoring the return of the Cake Auction on Sunday, Oct 30th. All proceeds will be put into the committee's special fund to benefit food ministries such as the Canton Food Pantry, Brian's Angels, Hands of Grace, Thanksgiving meals, etc. The theme this year is Fall/Halloween. How can you participate in this fun event?

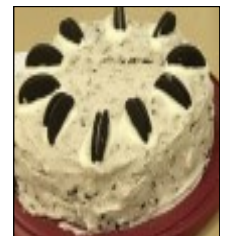
1. Make a cake and bring it to church on October 30th.

All are invited to participate whether you are an experienced baker or a novice. Children, families, and everyone else who wants to participate are encouraged to bake a cake of your choice. Be creative. You can follow the theme or just bake what you'd like.

All cakes should be brought to the Parish Hall before the service to be judged. (There's an overall best cake winner and many other categories, but the judging is really just for fun.) If you can, it helps to bring a taster piece or cupcake so the judges don't have to cut into your cake.

2. Attend the auction after church that day and be ready to bid for the cake or cakes of your choice. Our Auctioneer Extraordinaire, Paul Stansel, will provide a fun experience sure to encourage crowd participation. If you've never been to the cake auction, you're in for a treat!**3. Spread the word** to church members, community members, friends and family who may want to enjoy the fun. This activity was one of our church's most popular events prior to the pandemic. Let's revive the tradition, enjoy being together as a community, and raise as much money as we can to help feed those in need.

(some photos of previous cake auctions)

**Help Make a Hot Lunch and Sandwiches for Brian's Angels on Oct. 22nd.**

The Missions and Outreach Committee has made plans to have our congregation provide a hot meal to Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach in Bristol several times per year and to provide sandwiches approximately monthly. Brian's Angels serves lunch to approximately 50 people every Tuesday through Sunday. Among other services, they also send each person away with a snack bag with food such as sandwiches for dinner.

We are looking for volunteers to help cook the hot meal and make sandwiches on Saturday, October 22nd. We'll meet in the church kitchen at 10:30 and work until approximately 12:30 to prepare the food.

A sign-up sheet will be posted on the kitchen door. Please help feed those in need in the greater Canton area.

SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

Scrip is Fundraising While You Shop!



Scrip is a fundraising program that our church has been participating in for over 6 years. Church members can purchase gift cards for over 750 retailers. You pay face value, but the church buys them for less, thus the fundraising! Every time you buy a card through us, you're raising money for our church!

In order to continue and grow on our success, we need more shoppers! You don't have to make a purchase every week, or even every month. Give it a try if you haven't yet – every single purchase helps! While most people think of buying gift cards for presents, you can also just buy them for yourself to use in place of cash or credit at local grocery stores, restaurants and department stores. If you're spending the money anyway, why not help our church in the process? Local food banks can also use gift cards for grocery stores. As we heard during a recent mission moment, the Canton Food Bank uses monetary (and gift card) donations to shop for perishable items to give out weekly. That's a win-win!

The Scrip table is open in the Parish Hall every Sunday during coffee hour. Stop by to see what gift cards we have available for immediate purchase, for ordering to pick up the following week, or to just find out more about our program. Check out raiserright.com to find out even more about how scrip works or to set up an online account. There is even an app for that! Search "raiserright" in your app store. You can shop from the comfort of your own couch any time of day or night and pick up your order in church the following week or have them shipped to your house! Shopping *and* helping really don't get easier than that. We'd also love to have more people to help run the table during coffee hour. Even if you can only commit to once a month or less it would help a lot.

See Casey or Karen if you can lend a hand.

Thanks for your support!

Trustees News

Phil LeGeyt

Trustees have been very busy this summer.

We have done several different projects.

We started the painting of the parish hall including repairing some rotted areas.

We had the fire escape sandblasted and repainted.

We prepared and had the handicap ramp repainted.

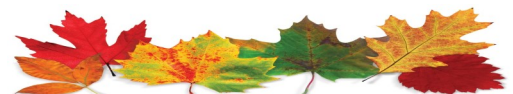
We are now having some electrical upgrades going on including some outlets placed on the exterior and one of the bigger parts of the electrical work would be LED lighting in the parish hall and the kitchen as well as the exterior lights.

Upcoming Stewardship Campaign

The stewardship campaign for 2023 is starting now and will begin with a reminder for everyone that a letter with pledge cards will be coming along towards the end of October.

We ask that when it arrives, please fill out the pledge card and get it back in to the church office.

The email address and phone number of the church office will be on the pledge card. Getting this done in a timely manner (2-3 weeks from arriving in your mail) will be much appreciated so we can put the church budget together.



Historians Corner

Tim LeGeyt

SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

Carrying On

We all know situations in our past or in the past of our family or friends, where one person or group has been charged with carrying on a tradition or obligation or some commitment that a prior relationship has borne. That kind of "carrying on" certainly occurs within a church like ours, to wit., some history from the 1820's.

Rev. Brenda spoke within the last month about this commitment of carrying on. In her words, she referenced a circumstance which occurred during the pastorate of our longest-serving minister, Rev. Jeremiah Hallock. Rev. Hallock served our church from 1785 to 1825, a term of forty years. During that term of service, Rev. Hallock maintained a standard of diligence with respect to his congregants that was at the time, and since, remembered with veneration.

When Rev. Hallock died, he had preached the prior Sunday and then succumbed to some disease process mid-week. He is buried in our cemetery across the street, near the front and in the most northern quarter of the property. On his stone, it says, "may his mantle fall to his successor". His successor was Rev. Jairus Burt, who followed Hallock and served for another thirty years from 1826 to 1856. Imagine - two ministers covering the span of seventy (70) years. Impressive!

When Rev. Burt passed, he was buried in our cemetery as well (toward the back of the third quarter to the north) and his cemetery stone, an obelisk shown here, has a mantle or cape carved into the top of the stone to reflect the saying on the Hallock stone that Hallock's mantle fell onto his successor, Rev. Burt.

We have some fine examples of devoted service to reflect upon within the people who have and are serving our church.

Amen.

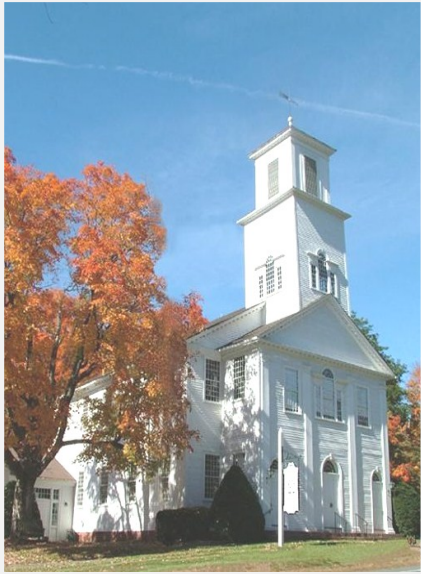


OCTOBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 AA 11:00 p.m.
2 Worship & Communion 10:00 am	3 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	4 AA 7:00 pm	5 Diaconate 7:00 pm zoom	6 Cub Scouts Bell Choir 5:30 pm	7 Cub Scouts	8 AA 11:00 p.m.
9 Worship 10:00 am	10 Choir 5:00 pm Trustees 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	11 <i>Chicken Pie Preparation</i> AA 7:00 pm	12 Council 7:00 pm	13 <i>Chicken Pie Preparation</i> Bell Choir 5:30 pm	14 <i>Chicken Pie Preparation</i>	15 CHICKEN PIE SUPPER 4-6 pm AA 11:00 p.m.
16 Worship 10:00 am	17 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	18 AA 7:00 pm	19	20 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	21	22 Missions cooking for Brian's Angels AA 11:00 p.m.
23 Worship 10:00 am <i>Fourth Sunday Food Collection</i>	24 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	25 AA 7:00 pm	26 J. Vose Memorial 11 am & Reception	27 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	28	29 AA 11:00 p.m.
30 Worship 10:00 am CAKE AUCTION 11:00 am	31 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm					



The Churchmouse
The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
184 Cherry Brook Road
P O Box 133
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133
860-693-4581



Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

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Canton Center, CT 06020-0133

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