

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

November 2022

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

GIVE-AWAYS

In a beautiful little book called *Earth Prayers from Around the World*, a collection of prayers, poems and blessings for mindfulness about the sacredness of creation, there's this:

*We give away our thanks to the earth,
which gives us our home.
We give away our thanks to the rivers and lakes
which give away their water.
We give away our thanks to the trees,
which give away fruit and nuts.
All beings on earth, the trees, the animals, the wind
and the rivers give away to one another,
so all is in balance.*



Dolores LaChappelle

In Christian spirituality, we understand all these give-aways as expressions of God, or, to put it another way, as the generous abundance of God. As God has designed this planet, everything is made to belong to, to serve, to befriend, to give itself away to everything else. We all live and thrive because of what other parts of creation give us. And they, in turn, depend on our reverence and care.

What's striking, when you think about it, is that trees, rivers and land can't hoard what they are designed to give away, but humans can. Gardens and fields can't willingly withhold what they are designed to give away, but people can, and do. It's when we hoard instead of sharing, it's when we strive to withhold ourselves rather than to give ourselves to each other, that things get all out of balance. This is worth thinking about.

In the season of Thanksgiving, may there be thanks-giving in us, and an ever-deeper mindfulness of all that is given away for us, and of all that we have to give away for the world.

Faithfully,

Rev. Brenda

WORSHIP MINISTRY

WORSHIP IN NOVEMBER

All Sunday services at 10 a.m., in person & live streamed. Masks optional.

*To view a live stream, 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 there by same-day afternoon).*

Nov. 6 Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost; Communion

Nov. 13 Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Nov. 20 Thanksgiving Sunday

Guest pastor: The Rev. Marcia Cox

Special music by the choir

*Note: Our monthly food collection for the Canton Food Bank
will be on this Sunday, rather than the customary fourth Sunday.*

Nov. 27 First Sunday of Advent

No church school

A note from Casey Levine...

Thank you to everyone who had such supportive things to say regarding my reflection on October 9th about Disabilities awareness, and my son Jason's poetry. I shared all your comments with Jason and he was very happy. A few people did request a copy of his poem and it was suggested that I could add it to this month's Mouse.

If you want to read more inspirational words (and hear songs) from our community of spellers, visit <https://www.mouthtohandtherapycenter.com/student-showcase.html>. At this moment, plans are in the works to self-publish a book, which will hopefully be out within a few months.

Dyspraxia - By Jason Levine

I think my body's thrown its circuit breaker.
I'm sitting in the cockpit and...no light.
The whole machine is having techno meltdown.
I cry out mayday, but no help's in sight.

I am a helpless prisoner in this body.
I push the buttons, pull the levers, hard.
But the shorts are frying the connections.
Orders are met with utter disregard.

I am a general with no real power.
"Hands don't move!" I issue the command.
"Mouth attend!" I pointlessly dictate.
"Legs stay still!" I fruitlessly demand.

My body's a stone prison, caging me.
But my mind's my own, and it is free

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY



At this time of year both of the choirs are generally gearing up for special music presentations and Advent and Christmas music for Music Sunday and this year is certainly no exception. The Senior choir is constantly learning new music or even indulging in a refresher course involving previously sung gems because they sing each and every Sunday with few exceptions from September through mid-June and that is a huge commitment.

For about three weeks now we have been working on one of our more challenging endeavors namely "Let the River Run" written by Carly Simon to be sung on November 20th with the sr. choir as well as five guest singers, Dan, Gina, Meg, Scott and Gert Delon, with our son Jon playing the conga drums. We have also just begun music appropriate for the upcoming seasons and holidays. The bell choir is also working on the same range of music and members of both choirs have agreed on the date of December 18th to present our yearly Music Sunday with music provided by both choirs, and instrumentalists with appropriated scripture readings.

Recently I have noted that the bell choir is in need of substitutes and/or one full time member. In the meantime Judy Robinson has agreed to sub during the winter months and Diana Ferraiuolo is available on request and both are former members of the choir.



Special thanks to Karen Needham who, each and every Sunday, plays the chimes as well as sings, rings, and teaches.

Special thanks to Marianne Burbank who, while not available to chair the harvest sale this year, was a great help in gathering produce from several local farms.

Special thanks to my daughter, Meg with her creative advice and help with set up and breakdown of the bake sale, advertising on facebook, and many of her friends who baked.

Special thank you to all the church members who baked for the bake sale. It was a great success.

Last but not least, thanks to all the loyal choir members, both bell and senior and also to the guest singers. You are all so appreciated

Deacons' Bench

Eric Herbek, Deacon

WORSHIP MINISTRY

It's time for your Booster! But what about a spiritual booster?

We all know now that we're going to be living with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future, and the importance of vaccination to ensure that we can stay healthy and productive members of our community. This became very clear to me as I recently attended a booster shot event (including getting the annual flu as well!) – this is the new normal, and something I should plan for just as I plan to see the dentist, eye doctor, etc. It also caused me to pause and reflect on my overall level of awareness about the virus – I had really 'checked out' once I got the first vaccination and things appeared back to be getting back normal. I started questioning some of my behaviors – was I practicing good hygiene around preventive care? Making sure I have masks handy for when I visit my mother in group living or other healthcare providers? Was I overall simply being too cavalier about my health?

It struck me as I was thinking about this month's Deacon's Bench that there is an interesting parallel with our spiritual life. At times I can get very engrossed in my day to day that I am 'checked out', even when I'm present at church! What is the 'booster' that gives me the strength and awareness that I need to be just as diligent about my spiritual health as I do my physical health? For me – I get a spiritual 'boost' through engagement with our church, and Autumn is a special time of year as we tend to re-engage after a busy summer, especially as our church activities start to look a little more like 'normal'. For starters, my family and I try to prioritize our church time, and I spend the first few minutes trying to get in the right mindset and get the day to day out of my head. This allows me to focus and really pay attention to what is going on – the announcements, the music, and of course the ministry and sermon. There are also lots of wonderful ways to engage in the wider church – I personally enjoy and feel blessed to be asked by our congregation to serve on the Diaconate, and I would recommend it to anyone interested. But there are many options – church committees ranging from the Trustees (with oversight for property and finance) to those that deal with the direct ministry areas we are about as a church (worship, member care, missions and outreach beyond our church, fellowship within our church, education). And the social calendar of events is returning, such as the Chicken Pie Supper, the Cake Auction, and others. I know not everyone is able to attend weekly service every week or the other activities, but I encourage you to get your 'booster' in the way that works for you. We stream every service now which can be accessed on the web page (<https://cantoncenterchurch.org/>), and we continue to keep everyone informed via the Church Mouse.

So – don't forget your boosters! It's that time of year! Be well everyone, and God Bless!

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Director of Faith Formation
Dr. Hollace Bristol

This month we celebrate Thanksgiving, a holiday built around the principle of gratitude. Gratitude is a universal spiritual teaching and an antidote to challenging and anxiety-producing situations. Children, as well as adults, may show stress over life's worries, big and small. In Church School, our theme for the year is "Gratitude." Every child has been given a notebook to take home and decorate and write "My Gratitude Journal" on the cover. Each week that they come to Church School they are to bring their journals with a list of five things for which they are grateful, one of which is something about themselves that they are thankful for. This assignment will prove to be not just an exercise, but a grounding and a recognition of all the blessings that each one experiences every day. This self-reflection, added to over time, will hopefully show young people that the positive things in life outweigh the challenges they may be facing.

A Prayer for Gratitude

Dear God,

Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that your Word teaches us the power of gratitude. Thank you for bringing hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. We love you and we need you, this day and every day. We give you praise and thanks!

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Church School

Please note: there will be no church school on Nov. 27.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

COLLECTION FOR WELLMORE



Our mission box collections for November will be **gift cards for Christmas for Wellmore.**

Gift cards should be for **Walmart and Target** and can be easily purchased through our Scrip program.

Let's make the season joyful for Wellmore, who provides social services to many families in Western Connecticut.

BRIAN'S ANGELS

Please consider helping to **make sandwiches for Brian's Angels, on Friday, Nov. 18th at 11:00 am.**

Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach in Bristol 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.

Please consider helping since it only takes an hour when we have enough people.

A sign up sheet will be on the kitchen door.

SCRIP

The Perfect time to Scrip!

November is here! This time of year always flies by for me. The days are suddenly much shorter, which generally means I want to stay inside more and sleep longer. It also means that Christmas will be here before we know it!

Are you someone who likes to get a jump on their Christmas shopping? Visit me at the Scrip table any Sunday during coffee hour or email me to get a full list of all 600+ brands available through the program. You can make your list and have time to check it more than twice! And if you're more of a "wait until it's closer" kind of shopper? No worries! Gift Cards through Scrip are always here for you! We'll be taking orders right through December 11th to get them in time for Christmas. 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.

Scrip cards are available for over 600 retailers – from large chain stores and restaurants to smaller national shops, and lots of online retailers. We even have Visa cards available in various denominations – with no activation fee that you would pay if you bought them in the store. Of course, grocery stores remain our most popular cards - Stop & Shop and Shop Rite are available every week in different denominations. The ways you can use Scrip gift cards are only limited by your imagination! And don't forget that every card you purchase – big or small – earns money for our church.

Thanks, as always, for your support!

Casey



FELLOWSHIP/INREACH MINISTRY



Thanksgiving Potluck

November 20, 2022

Our annual Sunday before Thanksgiving will take place on Sunday Nov. 20 after the church worship service. This event is annually sponsored by Wider Church Fellowship. This event brings our church family together to enjoy a thanksgiving style lunch.

We will need a few people to bring roasted turkeys and others to bring side dishes and dessert. Please see the sign-up sheet on the kitchen door.

SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

Trustees News

Phil LeGeyt, Chairperson

Hello fellow members and friends of The First Congregational Church of Canton Center,

Riska electric has finished the upgrades to our lighting for now.

LED lighting in the parish hall the kitchen and at most exterior locations.

I really noticed the brighter lights outside when I turned them on Wednesday evening.

The one on the school house lights up the front of the church and helps illuminate the sidewalk.

We are moving forward with the stewardship/ pledge campaign for the 2023 year.

It will probably be noticeably more due to heat and insurance cost. Most other numbers should be fairly close to last year.

Please keep your eye on the mail from the church, you'll be mailed a letter and a pledge card in the same envelope.

The trustees would like to see the pledge cards returned within 2-3 weeks from receiving it.

Also you can call or email your pledge amount to Kristen in the church office. Also electronic withdrawals directly from your bank is also how some have been sending their pledges in.

If you need help setting this up we can give you some direction.

Any questions ask myself or any of your trustees.

See you in church.

Phil LeGeyt

A Note from the Nominating Committee...

The Nominating Committee is gearing up to ask members to serve on the different committees for the next term. If you would like to volunteer, please let one of the members of the Nominating Committee know. The committees for the church are the Diaconate, Trustees, Christian Education, Missions and Outreach, Music, Wider Church, Flowers and Nominating Committee. Another avenue to serve is as the 2nd Vice President.

There are other opportunities to serve the church including chairing or co—chairing the Strawberry Festival, the Harvest Fair or Chicken Pie Supper. We are also looking for members to be delegates to the Farmington Valley Association, too. Please ask one of the Nominating Committee for more information about any of these ways to serve the church. We are happy to let you know about each of the committees.

Members of the Nominating Committee,

Daniel LeGeyt, MaryLee Dunn, Jim Magennis, Kathy Pickrell and Cora Mutch.

*Thank you to everyone who helped and supported our CHICKEN PIE BUFFET!
Some pictures below from our eventful day on October 15th.*



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 Congregation

Congratulations

To our long term members of 25 years:

Katha Kerr, Linda Solomon, Matt Solomon

To our long term members of 40 years:

Peggy Borchert, Bill Borchert, Betty Erickson, Lloyd Erickson, Gail Pedersen



IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please tune to: **WFSB Channel 3 or NBC CT**



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



NOVEMBER 2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| | | 1 Stages of Faith Small Group Discussion 7:00 pm AA 7:00 pm | 2 Diaconate 7:00 pm zoom | 3 Bell Choir 5:30 pm Cub Scouts 6:30-8:00 pm | 4 | 5 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 6 Worship & Communion 10:00 am | 7 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm | 8 AA 7:00 pm | 9 Stages of Faith Small Group Discussion 10:30 am | 10 Bell Choir 5:30 pm | 11 | 12 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 13 Worship 10:00 am | 14 Choir 5:00 pm Trustees 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm | 15 AA 7:00 pm | 16 Council 7:00 pm | 17 Bell Choir 5:30 pm | 18 Missions sandwich making 11:00 am for Brian's Angels. | 19 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 20 Worship 10:00 am <i>Food Collection</i> Thanksgiving Potluck 11 am | 21 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm | 22 AA 7:00 pm | 23 | 24  | 25 | 26 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 27 Worship 10:00 am <i>No Church School</i> | 28 Choir 5:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm | 29 AA 7:00 pm | 30 | | | |



The Churchmouse

The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
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Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

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Visit us at: cantoncenterchurch.org