

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

January 2023

From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka



ON MAKING NEW STARTS

To walk the way of sacred unknowing is to remember that our best ways of thinking and speaking about God are provisional. They are always in process – reflecting our limited perspectives, responding to our particular lives and times, relating us to our ancestors in the faith even as they flow out toward the God who remains free to act in ways that confound us. If our ways of thinking and speaking of God are not at least that fluid, then they are not really theologies but theolatries – things we worship instead of God.

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*, 2020

New starts. New beginnings. Every turn of the calendar to January, every year, tends to plant in us the idea that we ought to be starting new with something or other. The feeling may not last all that long, but something deep in us seems to know the wisdom of “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5) and to believe it applies to us.

The thing is, being able to make new starts and find new avenues for life requires an openness in us. It requires a sense in us that things don’t have to be finished, closed, fixed, done, knowable, predictable or changeless in order to be okay– that we can not only abide through, but thrive in, the evolutions of this life, in us and around us. It means we’ll have to trust process, and trust living itself, without needing to know outcomes and destinations before they are knowable. Or when they are simply not knowable at all. We are sometimes not good at this, as individuals or as churches.

The spiritual writer Barbara Brown Taylor reminds us that even our ideas of God are always in process, “provisional,” as she says. There needs to be a fluidity about them, because, of course, our ideas about God are not themselves God. Our words about God are not God. Our traditions about God are not God. All humanly-created expressions and understandings are part of the evolutionary universe, where they keep moving if they are at all alive. And if we are unable to let them keep moving with that kind of fluidity, what we may have, Taylor says, are not theologies but “theolatries – things we worship instead of God.” Things we prefer in their fixed-ness to the uncontainable, moving spirit of the actual God who journeys with us.

The start of this new year is a good time to remember that as with every other year we have lived, this one stretches out before us full with gifts unknown...with joys and challenges that will appear, with paths that may not be marked out yet but that we’ll make by walking, with new glimpses of a living God who is contained in no box.

May it also be filled with faith, hope, and love.

New Year’s blessings,

Rev. Brenda

Worship in January

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

To watch a service live online, go to our website homepage and click on the icon. To review a recorded service later, see under "Connect with Us" on our website (Sunday services generally posted on Mondays), or go to YouTube.com & search "Canton Center Church" (morning service usually available there by Sun. afternoon.)

Jan. 1 New Year's Day; Eighth Day of Christmas

Deacon-led service.

Jan. 8 Epiphany Sunday; Communion

Moment for Missions

Jan. 15 Second Sunday after Epiphany

Congregational budget meeting follows service

Jan. 22 Third Sunday after Epiphany

Faith Formation Second Hour follows service

Jan. 29 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany; Reception of new members

Deacons' Bench

Hugh Anderson, Deacon

As we turn the page on 2022 and begin a new year, it's easy to just say Christmas is over. Or is it? The twelve days of Christmas is more than just a happy holiday song. And the twelfth day of Christmas, also known as Epiphany, is more than just a word. We may tend to look past this day as we recharge during the month of January, yet we are reminded of the reason that Epiphany is one of the oldest festival days of the Christian church with a meaning that transcends into everyday life.

Epiphany is a celebration of God manifesting as the baby Jesus and revealing himself to the world. It marks the day the three wise men visited Jesus in Bethlehem, and it is a celebration of the baptism of Jesus. We all have what we call epiphany moments. Yet I wonder when we use that term if we remember what it truly means. When we have an epiphany we are saying that in that moment we "see the light". We realize something that becomes clear to us for perhaps just a situation in our life, or we gain peace for a decision that has to be made. We gain peace. We see the light. Not just any light, but God's presence, the light of the world in our life.

I'd like to close by sharing some words from an Epiphany prayer offered by Kathryn Shirey:

Oh God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth. Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face.

And may God's glory continue to bless and sustain this wonderful church family through the season of Epiphany and throughout the new year.



Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

The following is a special thank you to all musical participants this past year.

Senior choir:

Sopranos: Donna, Marilyn, Judy, and Kathy T.

Tenors: Jerry and Tim

Altos: Kathleen, Linda, Karen, Kathy P. and Clare

Basses: Art, Paul, and Jim

Guest Singers for Nov. 20: "Let the River Run", and Music Sunday Dec. 18, Meg, Gina, Gert, Scott, Dan

Handbell Choir: Karen, Gina, Cindy, Allison P., Hugh, Kathy P., Donna, Martha, Allison R., and Megan

Guest Ringers: Janelle & Andrew Magennis, Judy Robinson **Vocal Soloists**: Jerry, Judy, Paul, Jim, & Bill

Instrumentalists: Jon Keefe-djembe, Scott-guitar, Cindy-flute **Chime player**: Karen

Music Committee members: Karen until May '22, Donna, Kathy P. and Kathleen

*I have definitely been blessed with many talented and dedicated musicians
and I am truly thankful to each and every one of them.*

Faith Formation News

Dr. Hollace Bristol, Director of Faith Formation

We continue to be inspired by our Church School children. How wise they are, how willing they are to consider big ideas. The season of Advent has provided Karen and I with the opportunity to reach beyond the surface with the concepts of hope, peace, joy, and love. We had our own Advent wreath in Church School and the children lit the candles each of the four weeks. As we explored these big ideas, we asked the children week by week, "What does hope look like?" "What does peace look like?" "What does joy look like?" and "What does love look like?" We provided them with paper, markers and crayons, building blocks, lengths of rope, and an imaginary stage. We turned them loose to create an expression of these concepts by drawing something, building something or acting the idea out. We then asked them to explain their creation and we related the idea to the season of Advent and talked about the Christmas story and all the ways we prepare for this celebration of Jesus' birth.

On the fourth Sunday, we carried it a bit further and asked them not only "What does love look like?" but "What does love sound like?" "What does love feel like?" and "What does love taste like?" They answered, "Love feels like a warm hug." "Love tastes like warm cookies that Mom bakes." "Love feels like a wet kiss from a beloved pet dog, or a nudge from the nose of a favorite horse." Then we asked them "How big is love?" and "Where does love come from?" Again, their answers were so insightful.

On **Sunday, January 22nd**, Karen and I will offer a **second hour after the church service** to introduce you all to the experiential method within which we structure our Church School lessons. We will format the hour around playing with some big ideas and leading you through some activities to realize differently some of the lessons Jesus came to teach. We hope you will join us.

Wishing you all the miracles imbedded in the New Year!

Sunday January 29, 2023

Italian Buffet

All You Can Eat !

**Chicken Parmesan • Sausage & Peppers
Spaghetti & Meatballs
Pork Marsala
Vegetarian Dishes
Salad • Dessert
Homemade Italian Bread**

Adults \$17 Kids 7-12 \$7 Under 7 Free

**Purchase Tickets or Make Reservations
During Coffee Hour**

11:30 AM—2:00 PM

Public invited to come at 12 Noon



Yet another year of Scrip in the books!

Thank you to all of the dedicated Scrip shoppers who participated in 2022. Scrip has weathered all the chaos of the last few years and I'm happy to continue to run this little fundraiser. I'll be putting together our year in review for the February edition of the mouse. Stay tuned!

Every week, you'll find me in the parish hall with gift 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.

Looking for an easy New Year's Resolution you can stick to? If you haven't yet tried out our Scrip program, come visit me in during coffee hour to find out more about it. Every purchase, no matter the size or the frequency, gives money back to the church.

Thanks, as always, for your support!

Casey



Photos of our Christmas-season Services



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.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2023

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, January 15, 2023 after the 10 am service, *OR* on subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the proposed 2023 budget.
2. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bev Sealand, Clerk

God is still speaking !!!

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Visit our website at
www.cantoncenterchurch.org

Listen to recorded
Sermons and Music
from worship services!

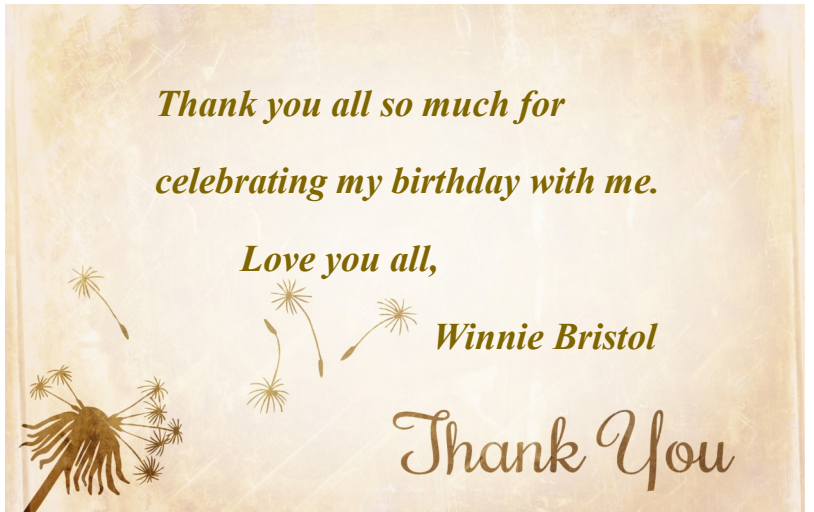
Follow us on 

*Thank you all so much for
celebrating my birthday with me.*

Love you all,

Winnie Bristol

Thank You



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.



JANUARY 2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Worship 10:00 am | 2 Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm | 3 AA 7:00 pm | 4 Deacons Meeting 7:00 pm | 5 Cub Scouts 6:30 pm | 6 | 7 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 8 Worship/ Communion 10:00 am New Members Meeting 11:00 am | 9 Trustees 7 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm | 10 AA 7:00 pm | 11 Council 7:00 pm | 12 | 13 | 14 Memorial AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 15 Sr. Choir 9 am Worship 10:00 am BUDGET MEETING 11:00 am | 16 Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm | 17 AA 7:00 pm | 18 | 19 | 20 Hot Meal & Sandwich Making for Brian's Angels 10:30 am | 21 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 22 Sr. Choir 9 am Worship 10:00 am Faith Formation Second Hour 11:00 am | 23 Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm | 24 AA 7:00 pm | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 AA 11:00 p.m. |
| 29 Sr. Choir 9 am Worship 10:00 am New Members Joining ITALIAN BUFFET 11:30-2:00 pm | 30 Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm | 31 AA 7:00 pm | | | | |



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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