

# THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

February 2023

## From the Pastor

Rev. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

### “This Day We Say Grateful”

*It is a strange thing  
to be so bound  
and so released  
all in the same moment,  
to feel the heart open wide  
and wider still  
even as it turns  
to take its leave.*

.....  
*On this day,  
we say grateful.*



-Jan Richardson

As you read this, most of you will know that I'll be leaving our church this spring, having discerned that a season of semi-retirement is the next right step for me. While my mind and heart remain engaged in pastoral ways, the season of life my family is now in means that I'll need to find some more limited forms of ministry within which to continue.

To say that this has been a hard decision to make would be an understatement. But I've lived enough life to know that just because something is hard doesn't mean it isn't also right. I have loved being your pastor for these past almost-eight years, and am grateful that that has turned out to be about four times longer than we initially envisioned when I began a ministry with you.

I deeply appreciate the wisdom of Jan Richardson's words, in her *This Day We Say Grateful* blessing, a blessing for a time of closure in a meaningful relationship, as she names the profound truth that we can be "so bound and so released at the same time." Yes. At the same time. We are not at "release" yet, not until the end of April, but we are now looking in that direction. Between now and then, I hope we can share our thankfulness for all the good these years have held, all we have known of God's love and grace, and all that has bound us together.

This day, we say "grateful."

Faithfully,

Rev. Brenda

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

### WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

*All Sunday services at 10 a.m., in person & live streamed. To watch a service live, go to “Connect with Us” on our website homepage, then to “Livestream.” To watch a recorded service later, see archive of recorded services under “Connect with Us,” or go to YouTube.com and search “Canton Center Church. Sunday services are generally posted on our website on Mondays, and usually are available for viewing on YouTube by Sunday afternoons.*

- Feb. 5**            **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany; Communion**
- Feb. 12**          **Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**
- Feb. 19**          **Last Sunday of Epiphany season**  
 Guest pastor: The Rev. Terry Schmitt
- Wed.,**            **Ash Wednesday, Beginning of Lent**  
**Feb. 22**        6:00 p.m. Soup & bread supper in Parish Hall  
 6:45 p.m. Brief service in the sanctuary  
*Service will be livestreamed also.*
- Feb. 26**          **First Sunday in Lent**  
 Moment for Missions: Dale Picard of ECAD  
 (Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities) and his service dogs



Feb. 22

Supper at 6:00, brief service at 6:45

*Join us as we begin the season of Lent.*



## Deacons' Bench

Bev Sealand

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

The past three years have presented us with numerous opportunities for change – some that we have gladly embraced, and some that we would prefer to set aside. Some of these changes have made it easier for us to stay in touch with each other – especially those technological options that enable us to both easily speak with and see our family and friends while comfortably sitting in our own homes. We do, however, lose something when we are not with each other in person. I recently found the following story that I think helps to illustrate this thought.

A member of the church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit her.

It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the woman at home, alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for this pastor's visit, the woman welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.

The pastor made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to the one side of the hearth - all alone – then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all of this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The pastor glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, with a tear running down her cheek, 'Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I will be back in church next Sunday.'

Sometimes the best messages are the ones left unspoken.

For so many of us, this church is a second family – one of our choosing. We share much more than just an hour or two each Sunday morning, and that's when we really get to know each other. We are better when we don't walk through this life alone! Now is the time for us to come together as we prepare to walk forward into our next chapter.

Blessing and Peace,  
Bev

## Christian Education News

Dr. Hollace Bristol, Director of Faith Formation

## FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY



On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, after the service, we held a Second Hour to introduce you to the creative ways in which Karen and I lead Church School children through activities that play out the biblical message and theme for each Sunday. This particular Sunday, Rev. Brenda spoke on the story of Jesus calling the fishermen to follow him and become fishers of men (people). The challenge we chose for both Church School and Second Hour was for you all to pretend that you were the fishermen in the boats with Peter and Andrew, or James and John. Jesus called you to leave everything and follow Him. However, the boats were leaking so you couldn't row to shore. You were provided with floatation devices on which to step in order to cross the sea. Before departing you wrote ideals that would help center the new spiritual community. Those were: helping people, planning, protecting people, faith, devotion to Jesus, meeting people and getting involved, outreach, being respectful and the challenge of being away from loved ones. You then proceeded to help each other cross the sea using the floatation devices without stepping in the water.

I wish I had photos to share. We are so grateful that so many of you chose to participate with us as we enacted this faith-based passage. We hope to offer other intergenerational experiences that help embody who we are as ones who hear the call. Blessings always!

Hollace and Karen

**A THOUGHT FOR LENT**

Remember, hope is not some vague belief that "all will work out well," but *biblical hope is the certainty that things finally have a victorious meaning no matter how they turn out.* We learned that from Jesus, which gives us now the courage to live our lives forward from here. Maybe that is the full purpose of Lent.

Richard Rohr, *Wondrous Encounters*

## Church Historian's Corner

Tim LeGeyt

**A Young Peoples Group**

We have had many church groups over the years - many that I remember since the 1950's such as:

Pilgrim Fellowship - mainly with Marg and Dave Ayres and Shirley Sutton  
 Silver Lake Retreats - several of the "all church" variety  
 Senior Youth Fellowship - same as Pilgrim Fellowship with Rock-A-Thons, etc  
 Every Member Canvass - former pledge gathering events with home visits  
 CAST Festival - in the 1970's with displays in the Church  
 BOSOX game bus trip - up to Fenway and then Quincy Market  
 Honor Court - providing food to the people in Hartford at the Court Bldg  
 Ladies Aid Society - group which provided support for Church activities (1930's)  
 Friday Night Dinners - families gathering for dinner at the Church (1960's)  
 Christmas Carol in Riverton - from the 1980's up to present day

There was also a group known as Christian Endeavor, comprised of teens and twenty-somethings which got together to work on projects for fun or for the good of the Church. The picture here shows that group around 1947 or so, gathered at the Humphrey House across from Cherry Brook School (in the back-ground). I can only identify less than half of the participants. See if you can find:

Earl and Evelyn Badger	Elsie May (Richardson) Dlubac
Carolyn (Richardson) Merriam	Ruthie Humphrey
Muriel (Bristol) LeGeyt	Ken King
Sam and Mary Humphrey	Glenna (Forker) Bagley
Bernie (Bristol) McNamee	

I'm not as sure of some of the others, so I didn't list them, but if you see somebody that you recognize other than the ones I've listed, please let me know.

Our Church congregation has been active and interactive in so many ways over the years! We can give thanks for all the church members and friends who have enriched each other's lives.

Thanks be to God!!!



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

### As always the Missions and Outreach Committee has been busy!

On Sunday, January 8th, the missions committee gave a presentation of what our "mission" is and the various charities we support during "A Moment for Missions." Thanks to all the members of the committee and our most generous congregation.

We continue to support Brian's Angels in Bristol by providing a hot meal and sandwiches on Friday, January 20th.

We have received Thanks from Canton Social Services (see below), Canton Food Bank, Gifts of Love and were able to secure \$1734.17 for the Canton Fuel Bank from our Christmas Eve collection.

### Our Missions Box collection for February is:

Twin Sheets, Blankets, new pillows to support IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services)

### Brian's Angels

We will be making sandwiches on Friday, February 24th at 11.

In March, we'll make a meal and sandwiches starting at 10 on Friday, March 24th.

### Coming in February:

ECAD (Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities) will be here with a service dog on February 26th.



FELLOWSHIP/INREACH MINISTRY

# CHILI FOR A CHILLY FEBRUARY

**Join the chili cook-off on 2/25/2023 12:00 Noon**

**Bring a pot of chili to the contest-  
We'll all have some and...**

**If you don't want to cook just come and eat and vote...**

**Let the voting begin!**

**There will be plenty for everyone!**



**Sledding on Church Hill Downs (Snow Permitting)**

**Bring a board game to play with friends and family**



**Play Cards**



**Bring your friends and neighbors and we'll all  
Have Fun**

**Everyone is invited  
It's FREE!**

**Wider Church Fellowship will provide condiments to go with chili and drinks. Please sign up on the kitchen door if you plan to come. Also, please indicate if you will be able to bring some corn bread to share.**



## SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

## Scrip Year in Review 2022

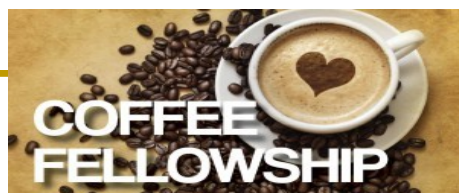
Thank you to the 45 dedicated Scrip shoppers who participated in our gift card fundraiser throughout 2022. In just a couple months, we'll be celebrating our 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program at our church. Time sure flies....

If you have not tried Scrip yet, stop by the table in the parish hall during any coffee hour. You will always find me there - with cards on hand for immediate purchase and order forms for cards that you can order and receive within one week. There are nearly 600 retailers to choose from! If you're ever not in church, you can always call or email me (860-693-0134 or [c.levine@comcast.net](mailto: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.

For the calendar year 2022, the Scrip program sold 619 cards and netted \$731.50. This is 18% less than 2021, and just over 1/3 of what we typically had done in prior "normal" years. November and December are still consistently the two months where our fundraising is the highest and in 2022, we made \$96.53 and \$194.78, respectively. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> highest month in 2022 was June, coming in at \$85.60. The top 3 most popular cards remained unchanged from 2021 (and 2020) – Stop & Shop (121), ShopRite (70) and Dunkin Donuts (66). Target moved up from #6 to #4 this year with 47 cards sold, and Walmart stayed at #5 with 43 sold. Amazon and Visa tied for #6 with 39 each. Nearly 70% of the cards sold in 2022 came from these 7 retailers! A number of the cards purchased for the grocery stores and Walmart & Target were donated to the Canton Food Bank and to the various programs the Missions Committee was collecting for throughout the year. This was a great collaboration that helped our church as well as the worthy organizations. It made it very easy for everyone to participate and shows just how generous our church members are, even when inflation is through the roof and money is tight.

Whether you are shopping for everyday necessities, giving a gift to a loved one or helping people in need, there are so many ways to use Scrip gift cards! And every single one of them, no matter what the amount, gives a little bit of money back to our church.

Thanks, as always, for your support!  
Casey




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!



# FEBRUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1  <b>Deacons 7:00 pm</b>	2  Bell Choir 5:30 pm Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	3	4  AA 11:00 p.m.
5  <b>Worship &amp; Communion 10:00 am</b>	6  Senior Choir 5:00 pm  Al-Anon 7:00 pm	7  AA 7:00 pm	8	9  Bell Choir 5:30 pm	10	11 Cub Scouts a.m. Pinewood Derby  AA 11:00 p.m.
12  <b>Worship 10:00 am</b>	13  Senior Choir 5:00 pm <b>Trustees 7:00 pm</b>  Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	14  AA 7:00 pm	15  <b>Council 7:00 pm</b>  <i>Annual Reports Due</i>	16  Bell Choir 5:30 pm	17	18  AA 11:00 p.m.
19  <b>Worship 10:00 am</b>	20  Senior Choir 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	21  AA 7:00 pm	22  <b>Ash Wednesday Meal 6:00 pm Service 6:45 pm</b>  	23  Bell Choir 5:30 pm	24	25  <b>Chili Dinner &amp; Games 12 noon</b>  AA 11:00 p.m.
26  <b>Worship 10:00 am</b>  <i>Fourth Sunday Food Collection</i>	27  Senior Choir 5:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	28  AA 7:00 pm				



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*We're on the Web!*

Visit us at: [www.cantoncenterchurch.org](http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org)