

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

May 2023

Deacons' Bench

Eric Herbek, Deacon

Ministers: Every Member

Greetings everyone, in this month's Deacon's Bench it felt appropriate to me to share some thoughts about our upcoming ministerial transition as a church, discuss what this will mean to our church services, and share how we can all as members contribute to the ministry of the church.

It is important to note that we anticipate a 'gap' period before we have an interim minister in place, and the deacons are required to be prepared to continue our church services during this period, and we will be working hard to ensure that our services continue to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation. We are blessed to live in a community where there are ample 'supply' ministers available who can periodically come to our church and lead the church services. We will be bringing back some familiar faces, as well as a few new ones, over the course of the spring and summer. The deacons look forward to welcoming these guest ministers to our congregation, and we'll all benefit from hearing the service and gospel from different points of view to broaden our interpretation of the liturgy.

When we cannot find a supply pastor to lead our church services – we will employ creative solutions and enlist the support of the congregation. We are of course all familiar with the tradition of 'Laitie Sunday' when typically, one of the deacons leads the service or more recently we heard testimonials from Vicki Rees and Chris Hager. We may, on occasion, conduct similar services where members of the congregation take on a more active role in the liturgy.

While this may seem unusual, lay participation and leadership in a UCC church flows naturally and directly from that congregational polity, i.e., from that way of being organized as a church. The premise of congregationalism is that the ministry of the church is a shared one -- it's not that an ordained person provides and everybody else "receives." Our structure means to remind us that "the people" are at the heart of how we understand a common, shared ministry. Our structure is not hierarchical or top-down, but horizontal, with lay people participating, including all the leaders, officers, committees, working groups and volunteers throughout our church. And while, in general, we appropriately entrust liturgical planning and content to our ordained leaders, that doesn't mean that we as lay members can't be engaged in that too.

Keeping all of this in mind, our 'gap period' is really an opportunity for our congregation to participate in the liturgy in new ways. I encourage all of us to engage with an open mind and hearts, and if you are interested in participating directly, please speak to a deacon. It's a great reminder why, in our bulletin every week, we say that the ministers are "every member".

Blessings and Peace,

Eric

WORSHIP IN MAY

May 7 Fifth Sunday of Easter
Ali Hager

May 14 Sixth Sunday of Easter, Communion
The Rev. Terry Schmitt
Last Church School Day

May 21 Seventh Sunday of Easter
The Rev. Linda Huff
Moment for Missions

May 28 Pentecost Sunday
Sarah Graves,
(student, Andover Newton Seminary)

Care of Creation Sunday - our tablescape was beautifully decorated with items of nature.



Interim Search Committee Update

Updates from the council

The Interim Search process is moving forward. Questions regarding our search can be directed to the Committee at cantoncenterpastorsearch@gmail.com. There will be a second hour on May 21st to discuss the search and any concerns.

I am excited to start my term as Council President and am ready for the challenging year that is ahead of us.

In June is our annual Strawberry Fest, volunteers are needed, please sign up if you can.

Grant Hagedorn

Faith Formation News

Dr. Hollace Bristol, Director of Faith Formation

This edition of *Churchmouse* marks the beginning of a new chapter at Canton Center Church. Rev. Brenda steps aside as our Pastor and we will miss her leadership, care, compassion, and brilliantly meaningful messages, always relevant to our lives.

Karen Needham and I will stay on as your Faith Formation team. We are already having conversations about the next program year.

The last Church School session will be on Mother's Day, May 14th. We will be presenting Bibles to those children eight years or older who have not previously received one. Please let us know if you would like your child to receive one. Rev. Brenda will be signing them before she leaves.

This past Sunday we walked across the street to the School House and held class in this historic school building that dates back to 1848. We talked about what it must have been like to go to school every day in this simple building. How did the children get to school? How many children were in the class? How might the teacher have taught children of different ages in the same class? Might the teacher have encouraged the older children to help teach the younger children? How was the building heated? Was there plumbing? What did the children do for lunch? What kind of writing instruments did the children use? At the end of our Church School time, when we could hear the organ across the street that signaled the end of the service in the sanctuary, each child got to pull the rope and ring the School House bell. We intend to use the School House more regularly for Church School as the weather permits. Karen and I will also finish planting the flower gardens in front of this delightful old building. Thank you to those who donated flowering bulbs for this project!



Shop Scrip for all your Special Occasions!

So much going on this time of year! Graduations, Weddings, Showers, Anniversaries, as well as birthdays that happen year-round. All of these are excellent occasions to purchase and give gift cards. And what better place to get them than right here at church?! Scrip is a very convenient way to shop for gifts and raise money for the church at the same time.

If you don't know about the Scrip program, here is a quick synopsis. Scrip is an easy way you can help raise money for the church by buying gift cards for everyday expenses like groceries, gas, clothing, restaurants and gifts. It is literally "fundraising while you shop" and there are nearly 600 retailers to choose from. The best part about Scrip is that you pay for exactly what you get and the church makes money by purchasing the gift cards at less than face value. You can also order scrip online or through the RaiseRight app. Add gift cards to your cart and either pay by check, credit card or through an automatic withdrawal from your checking account. For more information on how to sign up online and get our enrollment code, just reach out. I'm available via phone (860-693-0134), email (c.levine@comcast.net) or find me at the Scrip table in coffee hour nearly every Sunday.

Thanks for your continued support!
Casey

Missions Box: Thank you for your generosity to Holy Joe's Cafe in April. Holy Joe's provides coffee and a caring space for our military troops all over the world. We will update you with the final amount after we get it all cashed in.

May Mission Box Collection

The **May Missions Box** collection will be toiletries and 64 oz. bottles of juice for Hands of Grace, an outreach of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Hartford. Their mission is to "help individuals and families experiencing a financial crisis meet their basic needs so that they can achieve and maintain self-sufficiency." Hands of Grace offers help with food, clothing, and household goods. Our own Linda McAllister volunteers with this wonderful organization and has informed us that they particularly need shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes and deodorant as well as juices. Any 64 oz. bottled juice will do, but the favorite juice for families is apple juice. If you want to know more about Hands of Grace, you can check them out at handsofgracect.org.

Brian's Angels: At 11:00 on May 19th, we will be making sandwiches for Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach in Bristol. Signups are on the kitchen door.

50-60 clients are served a donated hot meal six days per week. Clients are also given a take away bag that contains a sandwich, snacks and other food that can be used for dinner. So far this year, our church has provided three different lunches including chili and rice, spaghetti with meat sauce, and chicken pot pie. We also provided additional food such as rolls or bread and butter, a salad, or dessert for each of these meals. Additionally, our dedicated volunteers have also made over 300 sandwiches and taken fruit or other items to go into the dinner bags.

Moment for Missions: We hope you enjoyed hearing about ECAD (Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities) during our April Moment for Missions. If you missed their presentation or want to know more about how you can contribute or volunteer, check out ECAD's website at ecad1.org. You can even watch a live puppy cam!

On May 21, Catherine Howe from Covenant to Care will be our guest for the Moment for Missions.

Time to plant!



Every year we grow cucumbers, squash, and other summer **veggies** for the **Canton Food Bank** in our raised beds next to the Post Office.

If you are interested in signing up for one of the garden plots, please see Art Mauger at church or email him at amauger8819@gmail.com

The Prime Timers on April 21, enjoying the American Mural Project in Winsted.



Thank you to our volunteers who helped to spruce up our grounds on Clean Up Day - April 22.



Wider Church News

Linda McAllister

We had a great turnout for our Palm Sunday potluck dinner on April 9.
Thank you for all the delicious food that was shared.

Mark your calendars....



Our next event will be an evening at a Yard Goats baseball game on June 9 at 7:10 pm.
We will start taking ticket reservations on Sunday, May 7. Tickets \$10. each with a limit of 6 per family. Check your calendar and hope you can make it!



Be on the lookout for information about the Strawberry Festival on Fathers Day - June 18.
This is a fun, busy event with many hands needed to make it successful. We need to fill the positions required in order to hold the festival on Father's Day, The festival would be SHORTCAKE - TAKE OUT ONLY. We have fewer slots to fill but hullers and bakers are required. The decision whether the festival can be HELD or NOT depends on how many positions are filled by Sunday, May 29 to allow time to advertise the event. Church attendance has increased but is still very light and we cannot commit to holding the festival if we don't have the people to work. Please respond by signing up at church or by calling Donna Hammond at 860-693-8676 or 860-882-8375 by May 28.

Both events are sponsored by the Wider Church Fellowship Committee, as ways to allow our faith community opportunities to spend time together. Hope you can join us!!

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 Church



*Our Deepest Sympathy
is extended to the
family and friends of:*

Muriel LeGeyt

*who passed away on
April 19, 2023*



**LET US KNOW ABOUT
GRADUATES AND AWARD WINNERS.**



In our summer issue, we are pleased to share news about recent graduates and award winners connected with our church family.

You may call, e-mail, drop a note in the mail or call the church office.

EASTER SUNDAY ~ APRIL 9, 2023



**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS!**

*We extend our warmest
welcome to those who
recently joined our church.*

Richard Herbek

Robert Howson

Rebecca Glinsman

Colin Lussier



MAY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Sr. Choir 5 pm Al-Anon & ACA 7:00 pm	2 AA 7:00 pm	3 Deacons Meeting 7:00 pm	4 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm Cub Scouts 6:30 - 8:00 pm	5	6 AA 11:00 pm
7 Worship 10:00 am	8 Sr. Choir 5 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Al-Anon & ACA 7:00 pm	9 AA 7:00 pm	10 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	11 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	12	13 AA 11:00 pm
14 Communion & Worship 10:00 am 	15 Sr. Choir 5 pm Al-Anon & ACA 7:00 pm	16 AA 7:00 pm	17	18 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	19 Missions Sandwich Making 11am	20 Memorial M. Wilson 10:00 am AA 11:00 pm
21 Worship 10:00 am <i>Moment for Missions</i> Second Hour	22 Sr. Choir 5 pm Al-Anon & ACA 7:00 pm	23 AA 7:00 pm	24	25 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	26	27 AA 11:00 pm
28 Worship 10:00 am <i>Fourth Sunday Food Collection</i>	29  Al-Anon & ACA 7:00 pm	30 AA 7:00 pm	31			



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

We're on the Web!

Visit us at: cantoncenterchurch.org
