

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

April 2024



Message from the pastor...

Dear Church Family,

John 16:33, reminds us that *In this world you will have trouble*. However, Jesus continues, *But take heart! I have overcome the world*. Just as April showers lead to beautiful blooms, here in Colebrook we get invested with pesky gnats in April and May. The joys of Spring with its beauty and new growth all around along with the troublesome biting flies and normal heavy rains can be a metaphor for our lives.

Life is beautiful however life throws us curveballs at times. Look again at John 16:33. Jesus clearly tells us the world we live in can cause us dismay, heartache, and troubling times. Yet He promises us release from misfortune and distress if we walk with Him hearing but *take heart! I have overcome the world*. Even challenges that first appear as trouble can lead to growth in our faith. Through faith, we can find peace even in difficult times.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that there is *a time for everything*, including a *time to weep and a time to laugh*. This is one reason we share our joys and concerns during worship. God uses each of us to help one another. Our church family is a prime example of this sharing and lending support to one another through both sunshine and storms.

Let's use this month to focus on deepening our faith. Are you interested in starting a prayer group, a reading group using scripture as a reference, or volunteering your passion on our Care Team, The Shepherds. Kristin Oswald leads a united effort to serve those in our membership going through difficult times. Do you like to cook – prepare a meal; do you like visiting others – what a great way to get to know one another at a deeper level; Are you passionate about the power of prayer – join the prayer team. Do you have a few hours in your week to drive someone to church, to the doctor's or grocery shopping – what a godsend for those who cannot drive. Speak with Kristin or me about volunteering when your schedule allows you some extra time. You will not be disappointed.

Bridge the Gap is a group of dedicated and passionate members lead by Jennifer Herbek and Bob Howson combining fundraising events to strengthen our church resources with the idea that more events at the church will bring in new members as well.

There are a couple of members looking at the possibility of building a bridge from the rear of the church to our church property across the brook. Think of what we could do with the open fields visible to people driving by or stopping for lunch at the Canton Center pizza shop. We are limited only by our imagination. If you're interested see me or speak with Phil Doyle or Dan LeGeyt.

We have one another and we have the room to invite our neighbors and any unchurched folks in towns surrounding ours. We are more than simple acquaintances, we are family. And never, ever forget, Jesus has overcome the world, and with Him by our side, we may not overcome the world, but we can certainly add to its loveliness and beauty with others.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Kurt

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. ~John 16:33

WORSHIP MINISTRY

The logo features the word "Worship" in a decorative, cursive script font, with the word "SCHEDULE" in a simple, all-caps sans-serif font directly below it.**WORSHIP IN APRIL**

All services are in person at 10:00 a.m. and live streamed

April 7 Second Sunday of Easter; Communion

April 14 Third Sunday of Easter

April 21 Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 28 Fifth Sunday of Easter; *Fourth Sunday Food Collection*

Confirmation Schedule for April 2024

April 7, 2024 ~ The Confirmation Class will meet with their Mentors following the Sunday service in the Bunnell Room, lower level. You will share lunch together (I will supply) and discuss what you have learned from confirmation this year, what has changed or not changed in your faith and beliefs of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, church, and more. I will have a short introduction and Mentors/Confirmands can move to other areas for privacy.

I will again speak about the paper you will write and read to the congregation during graduation on **June 2nd**. More details to follow in emails prior to the 7th and if you have questions please contact me. This meeting is required and if there is a conflict let me know and we will set up another time during the week or weekend.

April 21, 2024 ~ Confirmands will join Mr. Herbek and Mr. Lundgren for the second class on their four part series of "The Case For Christ." You will be joined by adults who have signed up for the class. Our first gathering was very enjoyable, interesting, and informative. There are 3 or 4 chapters the leaders would like everyone to read and I will ask Mr. Herbek what was assigned and get back to everyone via email so you are up to date. Please notify me if you are unable to attend.

For **April and May**, the Deacons and I are looking for greeters, collection of the offering, and readers. Please email me on dates you can help. This is part of the class that is important for our congregation to see and get to know you and for you to know them as well. If I do not hear from each of you, or if it would be easier, I will assign dates for you. Again, any questions, comments, or thoughts please email or call the church office.

Deacons' Bench
Kristin Oswald

WORSHIP MINISTRY



Dear Children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. John 3:11,16,18

Pastoral Care Team Needs YOU!!

The Diaconate kicked off the Pastoral Care Team last year, and it has grown in size and services provided. About a dozen people signed up for various groups of care at a recent Coffee Hour when Pastor Kurt and I were available to answer questions and describe likely duties to people who expressed interest in joining this empathetic outreach. We have already set up, with Gina Magennis' technological guidance, a Meal Train to bring dinner to our beloved Music Director Mary Lou Keefe and her husband Peter for the month of March and perhaps beyond after her stroke and cancer diagnosis and have rallied prayers for Pastor Kurt's son who will be undergoing medical treatment for skin cancer.

Our goal is to provide support to those church members – and maybe beyond in the future once we are established and have a working system in place – in need. Whether it be a request for food or a phone call/visit during illness or loss of a family member or friend, transportation to an important doctor's appointment or prayers, we want to be available when asked.

Please consider joining any of the following subsets of the Pastoral Care Team:

Food Prep & Delivery – prepare meal(s) and deliver (if able) to those in need

Prayer Providers – send healing prayers to those seeking comfort

Visitation – go to the hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation facility or home of someone who is looking for companionship and comfort from their church family members

Transportation – provide auto transport in your own vehicle for critical medical appointments or hospital stay

Contact Kristin Oswald at oswaldfamily90@comcast.net or 860-690-7129 or see me in church to learn more about this program which is in its infancy.

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY



For this month, rather than inform you of any future events , I would like to thank members of the congregation for their many kind acts. First let me say that I missed all of you so much and look forward to the service on Palm Sunday.

I have received many cards and cherish each one. The personal notes are so up-lifting and caring. Also, thank you to those of you who have visited, called, emailed or texted. Special thanks to Pastor Kurt who visited me at Hartford Hospital.

Special thanks to Gina for the meal train and subsequent meals that have been delivered to my house by the cooks. Each one was delicious and healthy and most welcome.

Special thanks to Judy and Gina who directed and played for the bell and sr, choirs respectively while I was out and also special thanks to Donna and Meg, as well as the deacons who communicated back and forth about the choirs and also the sub, Susan, for Sundays.

Lastly, and most importantly, I do so appreciate the prayers and well wishes and also the reaction of the choir members and staff members with lots of hugs and high fives when I returned to church and rehearsals.

Thank you for everything!!

Mary Lou Keefe

Faith Formation News

Hollace Bristol

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

I have adopted a new motto for my personal life. And in looking at this reminder taped above my desk, I realize it is true for my work at FCCCC. "More is on the way!"

Our numbers in Church School are growing. We have welcomed children from four new families since the fall, and some families have returned this program year after opting to stay home during the pandemic. We currently have 18 young folks ages 4 to 13 enrolled in Church School and six teens working their way through Confirmation. These young families add a sweet, enthusiastic energy to our church experience, and they are great ambassadors in attracting other new families. We welcome them whole-heartedly. More is on the way!

Pastor Kurt is an advocate for the young people to be more actively engaged in the church service. You may have noticed the confirmands serving as greeters and occasionally assisting the Deacons with readings from the altar. We will continue to involve them in this broader church experience. More is on the way!

Thank you all for your generous contributions to our fourth Sunday food collection for the Canton Food Bank. The bags of food you bring seem to be getting heavier each month. More is on the way!

Let us know that believing in and practicing abundance attracts more good. May it be so with us!



Having fun making pretzels Sunday, March 10th



Happy Wanderer's Hike Sunday March 17th.

Historian's Corner
Tim LeGeyt

SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

A Gothic Undertaking

Our church has undertaken some big capital campaigns in our recent past, as in the last forty years (the extension of the Parish Hall in 1986) or the last sixty years (the return of the meetinghouse to its original interior appearance in 1968). And those campaigns were expensive (more than \$100,000 each).

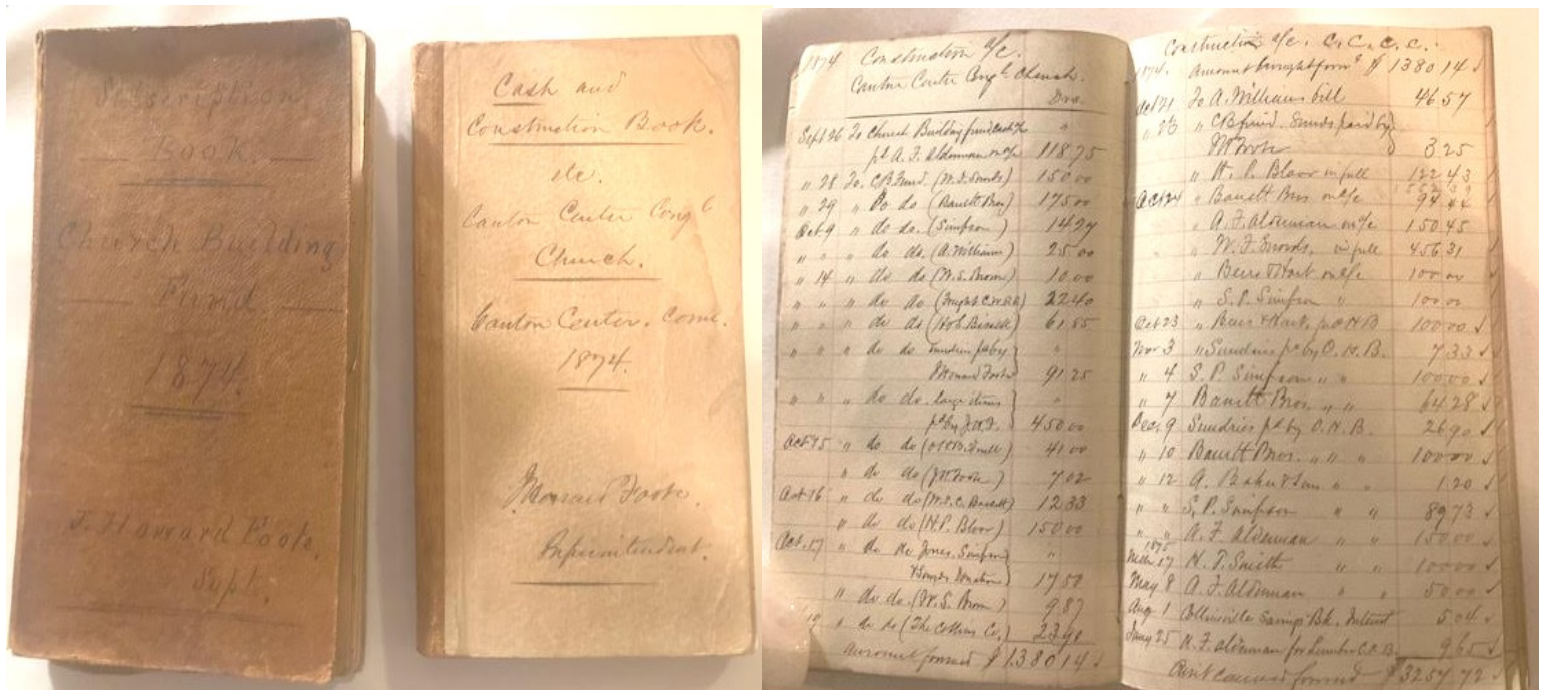
The window segments that were displayed in the meetinghouse recently, part of the stained glass windows that were part of the Gothic interior, encouraged me to share a bit about that Capital Campaign from 1874. I think most of you have seen the picture of the interior from the completion of that project, the false ceiling, the wooden vaults, the windows down each side of the church and large stained glass window that was on the west end of the church room where the pulpit is now.

Some of us remember the Gothic interior and maybe the back and forth within the congregation to initiate the renovation from Gothic to original - quite a process and quite a change. I imagine that it was equally as challenging to come to agreement in 1874 to change the interior from the original to Gothic. The pulpit and the balconies had to come down to make room for the windows. Thankfully, in my opinion, the pews were kept so that we have something from the original 1814 building interior along with some of the windows in the East end of the church room.

The choir loft was walled off for the Gothic conversion with a full wall at what is the east end of the church room and a rose window installed, which allowed the sunlight of the Sunday morning to shine into the Church. That window is now installed (with backlighting) in the entryway between the church room and the Parish Hall. There were five windows installed on each side of the church room, each window unit about 10 feet high and consisting of five pieces.

The whole project was documented in the two books that are shown here and the accounts were kept by the Superintendent, J. Howard Foote, including a record of who offered a share or shares, and an accounting of the work done by the bills payable throughout the almost year of the work. The whole project was completed for a cost of over \$3000!

It was quite a change to make such a change to the Puritan Meetinghouse and not quite as much but still a significant change to remove the Gothic decor and return to the original. As you look at the window sections of the Gothic style displayed in our church now, try to imagine the incentive of our forebears to make such a change!



SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

Our 8th Scrip Anniversary!

Another April, another Scrip Anniversary!

In early 2016, I was sitting in a special council meeting and the trustees had been exploring lots of options to increase revenue and reduce expenses. The scrip fundraising program had been previously brought to their attention and they had researched it and explained to council briefly how it worked. It seemed like an easy way to bring in a modest addition to our bottom line and it was up for grabs if anyone was interested in coordinating it. I could hardly stop myself from volunteering, as often happens. I did some additional research, the treasurer opened up a dedicated bank account, and in April, we set up a table for the first of hundreds of coffee hours.

Over these last 8 years, we have raised around \$12,000 for the church. While it's nothing to balance the budget on, it's an easy fundraiser with no real downside.

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.

If you are interested in helping out at the table once in a while during coffee hour, just give me a call. We can always use the extra hands. It's a fun way to socialize and do good at the same time.

Thanks for your continued support!
Casey

First Congregational
Church Canton Center

ONLINE AUCTION FUNDRAISER!

Our resident auctioneer Paul Stansel, and antiques expert, Gary Adajian, are teaming up to lead a unique auction fundraising event. However, unlike our previous auctions, this one will be purely online. It will be hosted for us by Absolute Auctions & Realty, Inc., a company that Paul has used to host hundreds of his auctions in CT, NY and MA. Absolute Auctions has a buyer base of thousands of people in the Northeastern U.S. and their website gets more than a million visitors each month.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Donate - TAX DEDUCTIBLE!
Collection Begins March 10th- April 14th

Antiques (no large furniture items)
Paintings & sculptures
Musical Instruments
Jewelry (including costume jewelry)
Coins & Stamps
Collectible Items (figurines, baseball cards, etc.)
China & Silver
Lawn equipment & Vehicles
Sports tickets
Gift cards
Business Services
AND MORE!

Spread the Word

After you clean out and donate to the auction- tell everyone about the auction- pass out flyers, post on social media and invite your neighbors to view the auction!

Bid

Bid on exciting items and join in raising funds to support the Church.

📞 **Contact Paul Stansel**
203-592-1961
Or Gary Adajian
860-352-2186

🌐 **Hosted for us by Absolute Auctions & Realty, Inc.**
www.aauctions.com



**15-
29**
APRIL

ONLINE AUCTION

GOODS & SERVICES
www.aauctions.com

MISSIONS & OUTREACH



The Missions and Outreach Committee set some big challenges for the congregation in March, and you really stepped up. You bought \$845 worth of gift cards for Wellmore to help their clients provide Easter for their families. You provided all the linens for an Afghan family of six relocating to our area for a safe, new start. You provided a meal of pasta and sauce, salad, and rolls as well as evening sandwiches for Brian's Angels. You also provided extra snacks and water when Pat Stebbins from Brian's Angels came to share a Moment for Missions. In addition, you contributed your change to our annual collection for Holy Joe's Café. This congregation is amazingly generous!!

Moment for Missions

Pat Stebbins presented our Moment for Missions on March 17th. Her message struck home and coordinated so well with Pastor Kurt's sermon about caring for one another. Pat shared how she was led to start Brian's Angels as an all-volunteer organization and how she continues to serve the homeless and underserved in Bristol. She is very grateful for all the support she receives from our congregation, other organizations, and all of her volunteers. Pat and Krystalee that came with her were both very impressed with our church—the beautiful and relaxing sanctuary, the friendliness of the people, and the congregation's generosity.

May Mission's Collection

Our Missions Box collection for April is diapers and wipes for Gifts of Love in Avon.

Their website states "Gifts of Love helps meet the basic needs of individuals and families in the Greater Hartford area experiencing a short-term financial crisis so they can return to self-sufficiency." They have told us that diapers and wipes are always needed. You can learn more about Gifts of Love on their website at <https://giftsoflovect.org>.

Sandwich Making for Brian's Angels will Be Friday, April 19th, at 11 am.



**Time to start thinking about planting!
Missions Committee is looking for gardeners!**

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 contact Art Mauger at amauger8819@gmail.com or see Art after church.

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.



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 or drop a note in the mail or the church office. (Also, because graduation often means a change of address, please let us know where our newest graduate members will be living.)

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, April 14, 2024 after the 10 am service, OR on subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Call to order and opening prayer.
2. Reading of the call of the meeting
3. Approval of the Settled Pastor Search Committee as recommended by Church Council.
4. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bev Sealand, Clerk

A Search Committee Meeting will follow after the Congregational Meeting.

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



**Our spring cleanup day will be
from 8:30 to noon,
on Saturday, April 27th**

Put this on your calendar, bring your garden tools, and kids are welcome to help too.

APRIL 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 AA 7:00 pm	3 Deacons Meeting zoom 7:00 pm	4 Cub Scouts Meeting 6 pm Bell Choir 5:30 pm	5	6 AA 11:00 p.m.
7 Worship & Communion 10:00 am Confirmation Class (following service)	8 Choir 5:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	9 AA 7:00 pm	10 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	11 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	12	13 AA 11:00 p.m.
14 Worship 10:00 am Special Congregational Meeting (after service) Search Cmt. Meeting (following)	15 AUCTION BEGINS Choir 5:30 pm Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	16 AA 7:00 pm	17	18 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	19 Sandwich Making for Brian's Angels 11 am	20 AA 11:00 p.m.
21 Worship 10:00 am Book Club (after Coffee Hour) & Confirmands Canton H.S. Class 6:00 pm	22 Choir 5:30 pm Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	23 AA 7:00 pm	24	25 Bell Choir 5:30 pm	26	27 Clean Up Day 8:30-Noon AA 11:00 p.m.
28 Worship 10:00 am 4th Sunday Food Collection Canton H.S. Class 6:00 pm	29 AUCTION ENDS Choir 5:30 pm Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	30 AA 7:00 pm				



The Churchmouse
The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
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The First Congregational Church

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Kristen DiMattia, Office Manager

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Organist/Director of Music:

(860)693-4216

Mary Lou Keefe

music@cantoncenterchurch.org

Director of Faith Formation:

Hollace Bristol

CE@cantoncenterchurch.org

Asst. Director of Faith Formation:

Karen Needham

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Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.