

# THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

July/August 2024



*Message from the pastor...*

Dear Canton Center family,

Experience has taught me there will always be obstacles to positive thinking such as past guilts, pessimistic attitudes and the like. Listen to what the LORD says, *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*  
~Isaiah 43:18-19

Allow me to paraphrase: Let's not dwell on a past that cannot change. Look at Me in your heart or mind's eye because I, your Creator, am doing a new thing! What do you mean you cannot see it? Open your heart, your ears and your eyes with a transforming spirit that caresses the beauty around you. Envision what is inside you or 'can be' just for the asking. Wherever you are or where your mind lets you go when eyes are shut, look for that mystical, glorious pathway I am opening just for you. And for all My children. Join Me ~ All Are Welcome.

July and August are those special months we get to the opportunity to slow down (in most cases) and experience more of what is around us. We witness nature's beauty transforming the landscape, days are longer and warmer, people have a slight skip in their step and, perhaps, discover changes in the way we view our world. Positive changes! Experience has taught me there will always be obstacles to impede our path yet let's look at what the Lord says in Isaiah.

What about Canton Center Church? I believe God is *making a way in the wilderness* of our spirits moving us to greater heights as a congregation united to serve God in countless ways inside and outside the walls of our church. New beginnings; positive transformation; and starting fresh is our July/August affirmation. Ask God for that open, bright pathway to guide us ~ All are welcome!

*In Christ's love,*

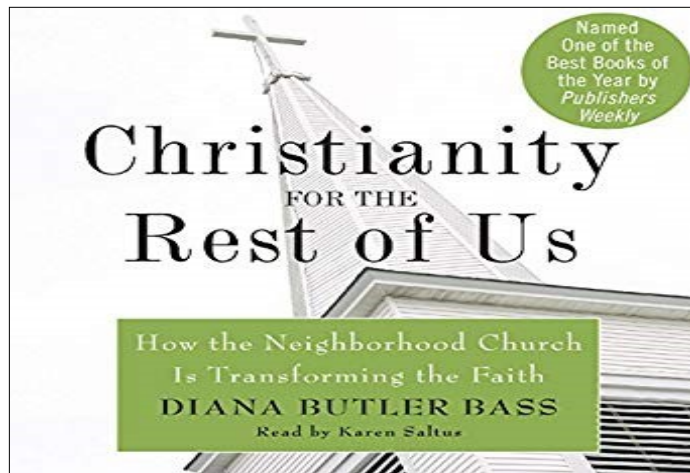
*Pastor Kurt*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ~Philippians 4:6*

(continued from Pastor Kurt)

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

The following are three examples of keeping our congregation flourishing during July and August with what I have been told are very slow months. It can be fun and build toward our September Gathering Sunday. I realize some of you are on vacation, planned for a quiet, kick back, hammock filled days and don't stop those plans. Check out the following and you may be surprised that one or all of the following fit those laid-back days!



Author, Diana Bass, writes in her three-year study on churches struggling or simply staying afloat with so many religious organizations closing. Her book is an enjoyable read and presents the reader with a lot of food for thought that I believe would benefit our members reading. It is a good book to jump-start dialogue with our congregation as we are in the throws of building our congregation via events, committees, ad hoc groups, 'Bridge the Gap' and Vital Congregations with our consultant, Paul Nickerson. We can read it together or chapter by chapter and meet in the pastor's 'air-conditioned office'. July is a slow month I understand and a one-day morning or lunchtime meeting may offer us ways to jump start our fall kickoff. A couple of churches have used it including my prior church.

Something to chew on...



**Community Support Group** is an idea I shared with a few members and Canton town Social Services. I offered support groups during my five years as the Director of Pastoral Care in CT Hospice. This **FCCCC Community Support Group** would not have one specific focus like Hospice, however it will have a common theme of persons needing support within a group setting. Another way we can help our neighbors as the need is great (Social Services mentioned a huge need for this) and members who are willing can join me in facilitating this event.

**Like a good neighbor, FCCCC is there** (jingle of State Farm) **Corny I know!** Is there an interest in starting a FCCCC welcome neighbor group to greet all new homeowners or year renters with a gift basket. The welcome gift can be lots of things (need ideas) that share information about Canton Center Church (Bridge the Gap has a new trifold and we have FCCCC business cards), and with some legwork, fill the gift basket with gift certificates from local establishments and businesses in surrounding towns, along with perhaps, a loaf of bread, a jar of jam, honey or another homemade item. I am sure we can get information from the Town, Chamber of Commerce, or realtors about new residents.

## Deacon's Bench

Paul Stansel

We moved to Connecticut from Georgia in 1986. Joining a good Church was a high priority for us and we visited several in the Rockville/Ellington area where we lived then. I was always surprised at how few people approached us and welcomed us to those Churches. They just didn't seem very friendly (maybe it was my Southern drawl). I decided that being standoffish must be a New England thing. We did eventually join a Church in Ellington and found everyone there to be warm and friendly once you got to know them.

All Churches want to grow, especially these days when overall Church membership is in decline in the U.S. According to Gallup, 70% of adults were members of religious organizations in 2000. That number has declined to 47% today. Gone are the days when all a Church needed to do was open its doors to fill the pews.

We are planning to welcome some new members to our congregation in late September. One way you can help add people to that process is by warmly greeting people you don't recognize at Church. You don't have to put them on the spot or twist their arm to join. Simply say something like, "I don't believe we've met before. My name is \_\_\_\_\_." If they volunteer that they are visiting, you can say, "Please let me know if you have any questions." Also feel free to introduce them to the Minister, Deacons or other Members who might be in the area.

As I reminisce about the Churches our family visited when we first moved to Connecticut I can't help but think, "They could have had us with a warm welcome!"

### Photographs of our Church School Children and Confirmands On June 2nd ~ "Graduation & Confirmation Sunday"



# FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Happy summer vacation to all you young folks! I want you to know how grateful Karen and I are for the experience of working and playing with you in Church School this year. We are so proud of you all!

**On Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 we will welcome you back to Church School with our Gathering Sunday celebration.** We will meet in the School House and have some special activities planned for you. You will all get to ring the School House bell and we will have a picnic lunch after church. In the meantime, here is a summer crossword puzzle for you to figure out! We look forward to hearing about your summer fun!

Blessings,  
Hollace and Karen



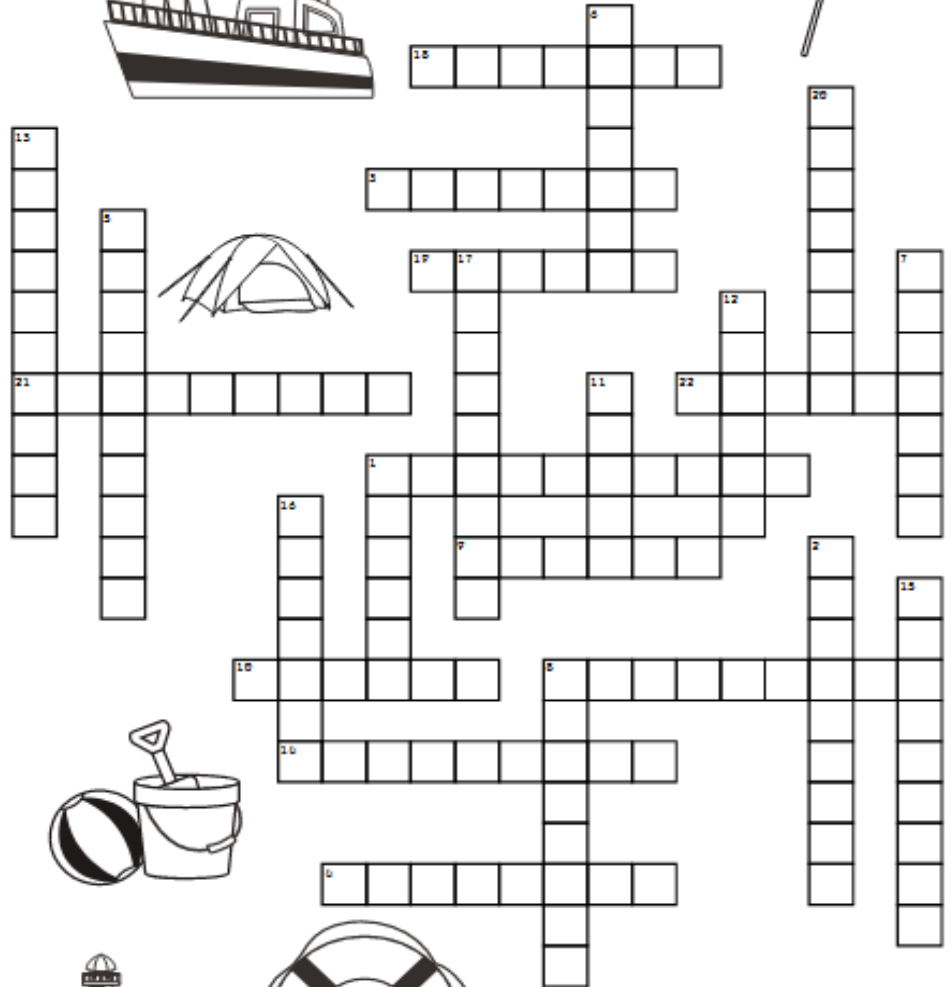
## Summertime Crossword Puzzle

Solve the clues and fill out the grid



### DOWN

1. A bronze look from sunbathing
2. What can be both sparkly and loud during a celebration
3. A fruit that's 92% water and great for hydration
4. A large nut used in Hawaiian cooking
5. Bio-luminescent insect seen in warm weather
6. A workout that involves water
7. Area where you might find seashells and seaweed
8. A deliciously chilled fruity dish
9. A temporary fortress built on the shore
10. Summer garden favorite
11. Going on an adventure with a tent and fire
12. Positive emotion during a picnic
13. Frozen fruit-flavored treat enjoyed during hot weather



### ACROSS

1. Fashionable accessory to prevent sun glare
2. Balancing on ocean swells
3. A getaway for rejuvenation
4. Sunblock to ward off harmful ultraviolet rays
5. Helps to prevent sunburn on your head
6. Recreation meal on a blanket
7. Growing and tending to plants as a hobby
8. Summer activities take place
9. Casual lower garment for soaring temperatures
10. This board helps you ride ocean swells
11. Nature's cooling fan



## MISSIONS & OUTREACH



### SCHOOL SUPPLY & BACKPACK COLLECTION CONTINUED THROUGH JULY

**Missions Box:** In June, we continued our yearly collection of backpacks and school supplies for Wellmore. These supplies are given to their Social Workers' clients for the start of the school year. We will continue to collect items through July even though we are not holding Sunday services at our church. Just drop items off in the office or the Missions box before August 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Wellmore particularly needs backpacks** since they can be a bit costly. However, school supplies are also welcome including: **pencils, pens, markers (non-permanent), colored pencils, crayons, binders, notebook paper, spiral notebooks, colorful folders including pocket folders, glue sticks, blunt scissors, tape, rulers, etc...**

any supplies a child would need to be successful in school. Thank you for helping these students have a good start to the school year.



Our May collection of toothpaste, coffee and gift cards for Hands of Grace netted \$650 dollars in gift cards as well as the requested items.



**Brian's Angels needs people to make sandwiches and/or hot meals this summer.** It is more difficult for them to get volunteers in the summer, but the need continues as evidenced by their requests for help on Facebook. For the summer, the congregation is encouraged to make sandwiches or a meal at home and take them to Brian's Angels.

How to volunteer: Go to <https://briansangels.org/how-you-can-help/> then click on Meal Train. You will see a calendar that shows what they need day by day. You'll be able to click on the day you want to donate and sign up. (You will be asked to create a simple username and password.) Specific information about making sandwiches and delivering the food is available on the website, or you can contact Martha Stansel at [mwstsl@gmail.com](mailto:mwstsl@gmail.com) or 860-747-5344 for written directions.

If you'd like to get reimbursed: There are orange sheets in the Missions mailbox in the office. Just fill one out and return it to the box with your receipts. We'll make sure it gets submitted for you.

If you do volunteer this summer, we'd love to hear about your experience.

Wider Church Committee  
Donna Hammond

# FELLOWSHIP/INREACH MINISTRY



*Thank you to all the great workers at the Strawberry Festival. People were willing to work wherever needed. Many people stayed to help with the cleanup. Our customers were gracious with their compliments. It was a job well done by all from the hullers to the dishwashers, from the beginning to the end. It was a successful event. Thanks again to one and all.*



## News from the Pastoral Search Committee...

Dear fellow members of Canton Center Church,

An essential part of the search process for our next settled pastor involves writing a Church Profile. This document will allow UCC ministerial candidates across the country to learn about us and decide whether to apply to become our pastor. The settled pastor search committee plans to begin working on this document over the summer, so that we can receive feedback on it at a Second Hour in September and post our job opening soon after.

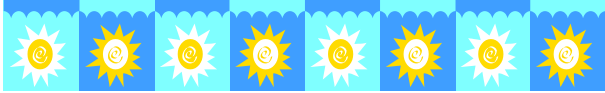
To be sure our profile draft reflects the perspectives of all members, we ask that you take a few minutes to fill out a simple survey. The first part seeks your thoughts about our church and our next pastor; the second part asks for some demographic information that the UCC church profile form requires from us. All responses will be anonymous (unless you choose to identify yourself in your responses) and kept strictly confidential; only the members of the settled pastor search committee will see them.

You can complete the survey online at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/canton-center>. Paper copies will also be available in the church office or on the table upstairs near the missions box; you can pick one up or ask Kristen to mail one to you. We kindly ask that you submit your responses by **Sunday, August 4**.

If you have any questions about the survey, or if you would like to share your thoughts another way, please contact any member of the search committee. Thank you very much, and may God bless you this summer.

*Hugh Anderson, Chair, Art Dewey, Chris Hager, Noah Herbek, Bob Howson, Susan Lampros, Tim Lundgren, Gail Macbeth, Gina Magennis, Heather Neumann, Joy Petersen*





### Scrip Your Summer

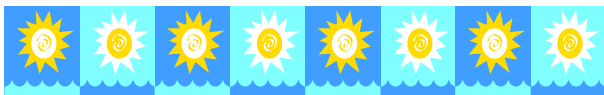
Happy Summer!

This year, there will be no services at Canton Center in the month of July. If you'd like to make a Scrip purchase though, I'm just a phone call or an email away. Of course, you can always call or email me any time of year to place an order (860-371-1016 or [levine429@gmail.com](mailto:levine429@gmail.com)). You can also order on [www.raiseright.com](http://www.raiseright.com) or via the RaiseRight mobile app. You will need our church's unique enrollment code to place an order electronically, so just reach out to me for that. I'm happy to deliver cards to your home or you can come to me. We'll be back in August – every coffee hour you'll find me there!

Scrip gift cards are perfect for Summer travel or stacations. We have offerings for gas stations, airlines, hotels and restaurants all over the country. If you're staying close, think about Target, Walmart or Amazon as good cards to have on hand for last minute needs. Of course, grocery stores remain our most popular cards. Stop and Shop and ShopRite are our local ones, but we also have Safeway, Publix, Giant Eagle and Albertson's... just to name a few that you might want if you are traveling out of state. Just about anywhere you might go around the country, we have Scrip cards you can use while you are there. The ways you can use Scrip gift cards are only limited by your imagination! Just reach out if you'd like a full list of all 600+ retailers that are available. And don't forget that every card you purchase – big or small – earns money for our church.

Have a wonderful Summer and thanks for your support!

*Casey Levine*



### Wider Church

Casey Levine



### Canton Summer Concert Series

Join your friends from church at Mills Pond to kick off August! We'll be gathering to experience River of Dreams (a Billy Joel tribute) at the Canton Summer Concert Series. The concert is at Mills Pond Park from 6:30 – 8 pm on Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Bring a chair or blanket, a meal or snack and get there early to visit. It should be a great time! The Canton Lions Club will be there selling burgers, hot dogs and drinks as well.

Call Casey if you have any questions  
At: 860-371-1016.

See you there!



Thank you to  
Nancy & Skip Alford  
for the beautiful flowers  
that adorn the outside  
of our 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.*

An Open & Affirming Congregation

**JULY** - *July Services will be held at 10 a.m. at the Canton Community Baptist Church, 125 Dowd Ave.*



Those who wish to view July services online rather than in person (via Zoom) may get the Zoom link from the church's website at: [www.CantonCommunityBaptist.com](http://www.CantonCommunityBaptist.com).

To get the bulletin online, go to the CCBC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/111441395567215>

**AUGUST** - *Joining us for the month of August at 10:00 a.m. will be the congregation of the Canton Community Baptist Church.*

**Congratulations to:**

*Quinn Emerson Young - Who graduated from Northwest CT State College with a B.S. in Micro Biology. Quinn is from Winsted and is the grandson of Peggy Young*

**Graduating seniors from our church family and their plans for the fall are:**

*Noah Herbek - Worcester Polytechnic Institute*


*Alena Scott - Marist and major in biology*

*Kendall Rees - Clemson University*

*Mitchell Buckley - attending a technical school TBD for welding*

*Brooke Potter - taking a gap year at Hotchkiss School where she will continue to play competitive soccer and hopefully be on a team at a college of her choice the following year.*

# JULY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	2  AA 7:00 pm	3	4  	5	6  AA 11:00 p.m.
7  Worship 10:00 am at Canton Community Baptist Church	8  Trustees 7:00 pm  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	9  AA 7:00 pm	10  Diaconate 7:00 pm  Council 7:00 pm (if needed)	11	12	13  AA 11:00 p.m.
14  Worship 10:00 am at Canton Community Baptist Church	15  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	16  AA 7:00 pm	17	18	19	20  AA 11:00 p.m.
21  Worship 10:00 am at Canton Community Baptist Church	22  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	23  AA 7:00 pm	24	25	26	27  AA 11:00 p.m.
28  Worship 10:00 am at Canton Community Baptist Church	29  Sr. Choir 5:00 pm  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	30  AA 7:00 pm	31			

# AUGUST 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3  AA 11:00 p.m.
4  <b>Worship &amp; Communion</b> 10:00 am  Church Profile Survey due back today	5  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	6  AA 7:00 pm	7  <b>Diaconate</b> 7:00 pm	8	9	10  AA 11:00 p.m.
11  <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am	12  <b>Trustees</b> 7:00 pm  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	13  AA 7:00 pm	14  <b>Council</b> 7:00 pm	15	16	17  AA 11:00 p.m.
18  <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am	19  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	20  AA 7:00 pm	21	22	23	24  AA 11:00 p.m.
25  <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am  <i>4th Sunday Food Collection</i>	26  Al-Anon/ACA 7:00 pm	27  AA 7:00 pm	28	29	30	31  AA 11:00 p.m.



The First Congregational Church  
(United Church of Christ)  
184 Cherry Brook Road  
P O Box 133  
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133



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184 Cherry Brook Road, PO Box 133  
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133  
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**Interim Pastor**

860-693-4207

Pastor Kurt Satherlie

[pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org](mailto:pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org)

**Office**

(860)693-4581

Kristen DiMattia

Office Manager

[office@cantoncenterchurch.org](mailto:office@cantoncenterchurch.org)

Mon.- Fri. 8:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**Organist/Director of Music:**

(860)693-4216

Mary Lou Keefe

[music@cantoncenterchurch.org](mailto:music@cantoncenterchurch.org)

**Director of Faith Formation:**

Hollace Bristol

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