

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

May 2024



Message from the Pastor

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to us. If your gift is prophecy, prophesy in proportion to your faith; if it is service, serve; if it is teaching, teach; if it is encouragement, encourage; if it is giving, give generously; if it is leadership, lead with diligence; if it is showing mercy, do so cheerfully.
~Romans 12:6-8

As we turn the calendar page to the month of May our church family continues its journey of growth. I sense a strong atmosphere of energy that has moved this congregation in a positive direction with the help of many hands. With warmer weather and reasons to 'skip' church on a beautiful Sunday, (really cannot blame you for that once in a while 😊), let us continue to push forward like an army of ants to grow our finances, fill our pews, and make Canton Center Church a household name to those who are unchurched. While we continue to discover new ways to fundraise and grow our church, the warmth and beauty of nature calls us to stop awhile to refresh ourselves, recommit to our faith, and step forward with renewed hope taking one day at a time, being ever so careful we pace ourselves. Rest, refresh, replenish, and repeat the past seven months so we stay on course, explore new ministries, deepen our connections, and reach out further into the community.

I would like to share some exciting news and upcoming events here at our church that Bridge the Gap/Vital Congregations is working on with me. If you're interested in helping, please don't hesitate to contact the church office or me directly. There are so many ways to get involved from making phone calls, to communicate new ideas, join us at our BTG meetings and helping us brainstorm. It's amazing what thoughts pop up when we get together and brainstorm. As the vibrant colors of spring erupt around us let's dive into the exciting events and opportunities blooming here at our church home.

Bullet points:

- Dan LeGeyt and I met with Captain Andrew Shiffer Canton PD, (also a good friend and partner of mine from West Hartford) who will offer a presentation on safety when faced with an outside threat (mass shootings) as seen across the U.S.
- I met with two Town Hall employees in the Social Work/Senior Center hoping we can partner on events. They were very excited as I was when we agreed on further conversations. One suggestion was holding a townwide support group here at our church. I have organized and facilitated several support groups working in Hospice. I would need to know how many of our members would attend.
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors is having a clean-up day on May 11th. Speaking with the Chair, Mary, she was happy to hear our Bridge the Gap Team and other volunteers (YOU) will drive to various work sites in Canton with water bottles with our mailing label and granola bar or similar. Sign up this Sunday, April 28th and next Sunday, May 5th during Fellowship.
- In an attempt to contact schools, housing, and businesses who work with intellectually disabled people, I have called and left messages or met in person with Focus, Favarh, Oak Hill School, and Beanz restaurant in Avon. The others are located in Canton. My immediate objective is to host a gathering or meet and greet at our church. Several members signed up Sunday and Wider Church has offered to sponsor us.

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Let's not forget our Boards and Committees

- Mission and Outreach are helping people in several arenas.
- Trustees and Deacons work above and beyond the call.
- The Church school teachers are doing a superb job with their creativity and energy and if you get a chance to speak with our youth ask them how things are going in Church School. I bet you'll see a huge smile as they tell you some of what they have learned about Jesus through their fun activities.
- We received an invite for a float or anything we choose for the Memorial Day Parade: Please sign up to get things rolling. Sign up to help during Fellowship. We need your creativity! Other suggestions is to have a table with water and a free raffle. This would facilitate a lengthy list of addresses and/or emails to contact residents.
- Bridge the Gap is working on their second fundraiser once the virtual auction shuts down this Sunday. Make sure to thank Gary and Paul when you see them.
- When I was a parishioner years back working on each church committee, teaching Sunday school, volunteering to work with youth groups or Confirmands, I remember how much time is involved and so much planning. Let us acknowledge and shout out accolades for their time, energy, and creativity.
- When you buy a script card from Casey, let her know how appreciative you are for her weekly contribution to our church budget.
- Find out who is on what committee, group, or team and take a moment to thank them and ask what they are focusing on at the present time.
- Thank your new Search Committee members as their role over the next few months will be busy, busy, busy. And the responsibility to fill this position is one of the most important decisions they may ever make for this congregation. Thank them often.

Remember, every act of service, every helping hand, is a seed we plant – a seed that can blossom into something beautiful for our church and our community. With gratitude for your continued dedication, let's keep growing together in faith and love.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Kurt

Deacons' Bench

Phil Doyle

During later March, the Deacons were busy assisting Reverend Kurt with Easter Services and mentally preparing for the departure of the Two senior Deacons, Eric Herbek and Beverly Sealand, whose terms expire at the end of April. Both of the departing Deacons have performed service to the Church well above their "pay grade" this past year. Without a break in step, during a time of rapid change, they offered wonderfully steady leadership to the sophomore and freshmen Deacons. They were flexible in adapting to new and unexpected situations. Following the retirement of Reverend Brenda, they found and coordinated with the Supply Pastors (visiting Ministers), they followed seamlessly integrating with Reverend Kurt, and performed a minor miracle arranging a wonderful stand-in organist when our Choir Director, the irreplaceable Mary Lou, was under the weather. The Deacons have been in awe of Eric's and Bev's commitment to the Church this past year. We look forward to welcoming the freshmen Deacons in May, while saying many thanks for a job extremely well done to Eric and Bev.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday services at 10:00 a.m., in person & live streamed

To watch a service live online, 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.

- May 5** Sixth Sunday of Easter; *Communion* **May 12** Seventh Sunday of Easter; *Moment for Missions*
May 19 Pentecost Sunday **May 26** First Sunday after Pentecost;

Summer Worship

SUMMER SERVICES WITH CANTON COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
Canton Community Baptist Church will host in July and we will host in August.

CONFIRMATION NEWS

On **May 5th** following our Sunday worship, Confirmands and Mentors will be visiting White Lotus Haven Zen, Buddhist Temple, 50 Depot Street, Collinsville. Buddhist Priest, Shim Bo Sunim, will host us following their Sunday service at 11:30. Their service ends at 11:00 and their worship area will remain set up as it would be during their 9:00-11:00 service.

- ◆ **Confirmands/Parents:** please respond that you (Confirmand) are able to attend. We will spend time with Shim Bo as he discusses their beliefs, statues, and worship services and return to Canton Center at 1:00 pm.
- ◆ **Mentors:** Please respond if you can attend and if you could be one of our drivers.
- ◆ **Reminder:** On Sunday, May 19th, Confirmands will be attending Mr. Herbek and Mr. Lundgren's book study, *The Case For Christ*, with other adults in our church.

Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

Spring is here but what is with all the inclement weather, such as the colder than usual temps, the excessive amount of rain and with it lack of sunlight, and very windy days, it certainly hasn't been the best of Aprils. Lets hope that May is warmer.

The Handbell Choir: All rehearsals are at 5:30

Thurs. May 2--short rehearsal and polishing bells

Thurs. May 9th- short rehearsal with goodbye party to follow

Sun. May 12th- The handbell choir is playing a favorite,

"Recuerdos, with Jon Keefe on Spanish Guitar and me on piano(vibes). This will be the last performance of the school year and sadly the bells will be put away for the summer.

Congratulations ringers for your loyalty and perseverance for a great year.

The Senior Choir: All rehearsals are at 4:30

Mondays: May 6, 13, 20 - rehearsal

Monday: Memorial Day - no rehearsal

The senior choir will continue to sing through the month of May and again thank you for your loyalty and remember that we are always on the lookout for new members, all parts, Bass, Tenor, Alto and Soprano. Just come to a rehearsal and try us out.

The Youth Choir: Under the direction of Judy Robinson

This choir is a new venture and rehearsals are after church in the Music Room. They are currently working on a song entitled Pass it on to be performed on May 12th Mother's Day. New members are welcome!

Special thanks to the following:

Coffee hour hosts for April: *Donna, Judy, Kathleen, and Rebecca*

Chimes: *Karen Needham* And all my loyal singers and ringers.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

The Missions Box collection for May is coffee and toothpaste for Hands of Grace. In addition, we are collecting **\$25 VISA and Stop & Shop gift cards** so Hands of Grace can purchase milk, butter, and eggs to provide to their clients. The gift cards can be purchased through the Scrip program, or you can donate cash and cards will be purchased with the collected funds. Please see Casey at the Scrip table if you have any questions. (Just a reminder—the VISA cards you purchase through Scrip have no fees.)

Our March collection of money for Holy Joe's Café to provide coffee for the troops netted \$342.50. Thank you!

Brian's Angels: We will make a meal & sandwiches on Friday, May 17 at 10 am. Sign-ups will be on the kitchen door.

Afghan Family Update: The father, mother and four children have settled into a home in West Hartford. Volunteers through the Avon VFW are providing assistance with medical appointments, necessary documents, community acclimation, school enrollment, English lessons, and whatever else the family needs. Paul Stansel helped prepare the house for the family and also transported them to West Hartford on the evening they arrived. He said it was wonderful that the family could tuck their children right into bed with all the linens our church provided.

Exciting Opportunity: The Missions and Outreach Committee currently has two openings. Our focus is on helping the congregation live our faith by serving others, and we'd love to have you join us for this fun and exciting endeavor. If you're interested or would like more information, you can speak to the Nominating Committee or one of the Missions and Outreach Committee members. You're also welcome to visit our next meeting on May 5th at 9 am in the parlor. And, as always, we welcome everyone's ideas of ways to help the congregation serve the broader community.

Geri Bunnell, Rebecca Glinsman, Casey Levine, Beth Lingenheld, Carol Orlando, Debbie Poleyestewa, Martha Stansel.

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.

Here's an additional reason to shop Scrip in May... The Missions committee will be collecting Visa and Stop & Shop gift cards for Hands of Grace so they can purchase perishable items for their clients like milk, butter and eggs. If you purchase these gift cards through Scrip, your giving goes even further. And Visa cards purchased through Scrip have no activation fee, like they do when you buy them at a grocery store or pharmacy. We will also be collecting cash through the month of May to turn into larger gift cards to give Hands of Grace.

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

Christian Education News

Dr. Hollace Bristol, Director of Faith Formation

What do acorns, bug repellent, snacks, water, and companionship all have in common? Happy Wanderer Hikes! Our first hike of 2024 was Jones Mountain in New Hartford. Our second hike was on the Butler Trail in Pine Meadow, a peninsula bordered by the east and west branches of the Farmington River. Walking together promotes conversation and sharing and singing and laughing and exploring new things that nature offers (including our sighting of a black bear across the river).

Sunday, May 19th will be our last hike for the spring. I hope you will join us.



FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

On April 21st the Church School gang put on their gloves and grabbed their bags and scoured the ground around the church to pick up trash in honor of Earth Day.



On Mother's Day every year since the late 1940s, Bristol's Farm donates pansy plants to be given to mothers in the church in memory of Sterling Bristol who was a B-17 pilot in Europe in WWII. His plane was shot down by the Germans. His mother, Ruth Bristol, started this tradition in our church and it continues.

Also, on Mother's Day this year Judy Robinson will lead the children's choir in the song, "Pass It On."

June 2nd is the last Sunday of our Church School program year. The youth will play a major part in that service. Confirmants will read their statements of faith; children will receive certificates for their participation in Church School; and graduating seniors will be honored with a special ceremony.

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

SAVE THE DATE

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL ~ SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2024

The Strawberry Festival will be held on Sunday, June 23, instead of Father's Day. Please note the change of date as we will need volunteers to have a successful event. Last year was very successful and with your help, we can do it again.

**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2024
3 PM - 7 PM**

SAVE THE DATE



**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CANTON CENTER
184 Cherry Brook Road
Route 179
Canton Center, CT
06020**

**SHORTCAKE WITH REAL WHIPPED CREAM
Hamburgs, Hot Dogs & Beverages
Eat In or Take Out Available**



Our Deepest Sympathy

Our sympathies are extended to the family and friends of :

Winifred Bristol

who passed away on
April 10, 2024



**YARD GOATS GAME
June 16 at 1:00 p.m.**

Tickets are now on sale for \$12 . Please see Linda McAllister during coffee hour.

"Out to Lunch Bunch"

We will have lunch at Crown & Hammer on May 15th at noon. Please see the sign up sheet on kitchen door. All are welcome!

**Mission & Outreach Committee
is looking for gardeners!**



Every year we grow veggies in our raised beds next to the Post Office for the Canton Food Bank. If you are interested in signing up for one of the garden plots, please see Art after church.

MAY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Deacons 7:00 pm	2 Cub Scouts 6:30 - 8 pm Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	3 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><i>Auction pick up 9 - 1 p.m. by appt.</i></div>	4 AA 11:00 p.m.
5 Worship & Communion 10:00 am Moment for Missions Conf. Class & Mentors to Buddhist Temple Canton H.S. Class 6 pm	6 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm ACA 7:00 pm	7 AA 7:00 pm	8	9 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	10	11 AA 11:00 p.m.
12 Worship 10:00 am 	13 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	14 AA 7:00 pm	15 "Out to Lunch" Crown & Hammer noon Council 7:00 pm	16 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	17 Meal & Sandwich making for Brian's Angels 10 am	18 AA 11:00 p.m.
19 Worship 10:00 am Book Club & Confirmands <i>(following Coffee Hour)</i> Happy Wanderer's Hike	20 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm ACA 7:00 pm	21 AA 7:00 pm	22	23 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	24	25 AA 11:00 p.m.
26 Worship 10:00 am <i>Fourth Sunday Food Collection</i>	27  ACA 7:00 pm	28 AA 7:00 pm	29	30 Cub Scouts 6:30 - 8 pm	31	



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



Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

The First Congregational Church

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Cantoncenterchurch.org

Interim Pastor

860-693-4207

Pastor Kurt Satherlie

pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org

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Kristen DiMattia,

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

Organist/Director of Music:

(860)693-4216

Mary Lou Keefe

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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.