

# THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

January 2025



## *Message from the pastor...*

*Every new year is a chance to refresh our soul and renew our promises to God. It's a great time to reflect on the things we did well in the previous year, and how we can continue to be better disciples of God in the new year. ~G.K. Chesterton*

As we reflect on 2024, let us remember the moments of love, joy, and fellowship we shared as a church family and offer our gratitude to God. There have been challenges, but we learned and grew through them, emerging stronger in our faith and deeper in our connection with one another. Kudos to all of you for your shared effort and energy that met set goals and opened doors of new opportunities.

As we usher in 2025 may we do so with open minds, loving hearts, and positive thinking. We are all aware of new challenges that can engulf us, or we can embrace with eagerness and excitement. Our Christian Education committee is working toward hiring a Faith Formation Sunday school teacher. The Settled pastor's search committee has worked hard and long to formulate a great profile of our church as they pursue their quest to find the next pastor for FCCCC. These are two sizable endeavors for any church yet with all of us in prayer to find the right people, let your requests be made to God to lead us for a wonderful and bright future.

As I look back over the past year, I relish the times of being together with our church family, witnessing the love and happiness we have shared together and brought to others. As you also reminisce over 2024, I pray you remember the times of laughter, of joy and fellowship worshipping with one another, of working together in unity, getting to know our neighbors outside of the church with events like the chicken pie supper, strawberry shortcake festival, the auction, Artisan Fair and Matsiko. These are times I will always treasure.

Canton Center Church, (c-church) & (C-congregation) has a tremendous foundation to do anything that can be imagined. Discovering ways to act out our faith in service to others can be such a blessing and fun time! Be creative, take a leap of faith when needed, unify the congregation by getting to know each other at a deeper level, be hospitable asking friends and neighbors to join you for worship and fellowship, support one another during difficult times and share with everyone joyous moments and occasions. Let us embrace these opportunities with open minds and hearts, seeking creative ways to reach out to others and build a vibrant community of faith.

Looking ahead to 2025, let us ask ourselves:

- What new things is God calling us to do individually?
- What new initiatives can we undertake as a church to grow and serve our community?

May 2025 be a year of renewed spiritual growth, joyful service, and a bright future for our church.

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy.*

*~Philippians 1:3-4*

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Kurt*

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

The logo for the worship schedule features the word "Worship" in a large, elegant, black cursive font. Below it, the word "SCHEDULE" is written in a smaller, bold, black, all-caps serif font. The text is centered within a white rectangular box that has decorative, flowing lines extending from the top and bottom of the "Worship" word.

*All Sunday a.m. services at 10:00.*

<b>Jan. 5</b>	<b>Second Sunday after Christmas Communion</b>
<b>Jan. 12</b>	<b>First Sunday after Epiphany</b>
<b>Jan. 19</b>	<b>Second Sunday after Epiphany</b>
<b>Jan. 26</b>	<b>Third Sunday after Epiphany</b>

### Deacons' Bench

Paul Stansel, Deacon

I was called out of retirement as an auctioneer in early December to assist a family dealing with an estate in Simsbury. One of their prized possessions is a beat up free standing wooden closet or locker. The family anecdote is that it was used by Martin Luther King, Jr. when he worked the tobacco fields of Simsbury in the 1940's. I treated the item reverently and felt blessed to touch this piece of furniture that a teenaged MLK possibly used.

Dr. King was highly instrumental in getting the Civil Rights Bill passed and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He gave his life promoting nonviolence and peaceful protest to overcome racial inequalities in America.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9-12). This verse emphasizes the importance of promoting peace and harmony, and the idea that people who work to resolve conflicts contribute to a better world.

We are going through a time of uncertainty in our Church as we search for a new pastor while also dealing with national changes and divisions. The Diaconate strongly believes that our Congregation can be peacemakers as we go through these uncertain times without also sacrificing personal beliefs.

### Yet another year of Scrip in the books!

Thank you to all of the dedicated Scrip shoppers who participated in 2024!

I'll be putting together our year in review for the February edition of the mouse, but here's a sneak peek: in December of this year, we raised over 50% more than the amount of funds we raised for our church last December!! This is impressive because December is always our biggest earning month. And in case you missed it - we donated \$2235 in gift cards to Wellmore and Canton Social Services for Christmas. This was nearly \$400 more than last year and the agencies were so incredibly thankful!

Every week, you'll find me in the parish hall with gift cards on hand for immediate purchase and order forms for cards that you'll receive within one week. If you're not in church, you can always call, text or email me (860-371-1016 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.

Looking for an easy New Year's Resolution you can stick to? If you haven't yet tried out our Scrip program, come visit me in during coffee hour to find out more about it. Every purchase, no matter the size or the frequency, gives money back to the church.

Thanks, as always, for your support! Happy New Year!

*Casey*



## FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

### Director of Faith Formation

Dr. Hollace Bristol

Happy New Year! I hope you found great joy in your experience of Christmas!

I finished my Christmas shopping somewhat early this year and as all my children are in Colorado, I forced myself to keep it simple. Once I had mailed or delivered all my cards and gifts, I noticed that I was missing the frenzy a bit. So, on a few days when I didn't have a full list of things to accomplish, I wandered around the Shoppes just to be part of the scene and see what might catch my attention. It was delightful, and, yes, I did buy a few things, but mostly I just wandered, looking around to see what drew me in.

We call our hiking experience at Canton Center Church the **Happy Wanderers**. We explore public use trails, most maintained by the Canton Land Conservation Trust or part of the CT trail system. The age of our hikers ranges from five to 95. As we wander, we talk about how to find our way in the woods, what landmarks and blazes to look for, what obstacles might need a bit more of our attention, and who in the group might need a little assistance.

There is always something that the woods teach us when we wander; there is always something to notice. My meandering through the stores reminded me how any adventure presents opportunities for noticing what catches my eye; what calls me to explore further; what are the clues that remind me of my heart path; who needs a bit of attention; what obstacles present themselves that require me to pause and notice.



May we approach 2025 with a sense of wandering and the knowing that the clues to fulfillment are all around us.

*Blessings always!*

Missions & Outreach  
Martha Stansel, Chair

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

### Missions & Outreach



Our Canton Center Church congregation was so amazingly generous during the Thanksgiving to Christmas holiday season!

\*You donated baked goods and money that provided at least 5 apple pies, 8 pumpkin pies, 5 dozen cupcakes, 12 dozen cookies and brownie bites, whipped topping, and 2 bags of gluten free cookies to the Canton Senior and Social Services Community Thanksgiving Dinner. (We provided plastic bags so people could take home left-over desserts to enjoy later.)

\*You donated toys as well as \$1100 worth of gift cards to Canton Senior and Social Services, and an additional \$1135 worth of gift cards for Wellmore's clients. These contributions helped so many people have a wonderful Christmas.

\*You donated well over 300 items to be given to the residents of Cherry Brook Healthcare Center, ensuring that each resident received several small gifts.

\*You donated many hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks that will be distributed to various organizations in our area in January.

\*You contributed to *The Christmas Fund* for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund which provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties.

\*And finally, you gave generously to the Christmas Eve Offering which will help the Canton Emergency Fuel Bank assist people to stay warm this winter.

The Missions and Outreach Committee recognizes that we gave the Congregation a huge challenge in December, so we've decided to do something a bit different for the month of January. In January we will be sponsoring Missions Awareness Month. Each Sunday we will present a Moment for Missions during worship in order to share information about what our committee does as well as some of the groups and agencies our church supports. You will also be invited to participate in a simple missions related activity during coffee hour. We are looking forward to sharing our church's Missions and Outreach with you.



**Sunday January 19, 2025**

# Italian Buffet

## All You Can Eat !

**Chicken Parmesan • Sausage & Peppers**  
**Spaghetti & Meatballs**  
**Cheese Stuffed Manicotti**  
**Vegetarian Dishes**  
**Salad • Dessert**  
**Homemade Italian Bread**

**Adults \$17 Kids 7-12 \$8 Under 7 Free**

**Canton Center Congregational Church**  
**184 Cherry Brook Road, Route 179**  
**Canton Center, CT**

**11:30 — 2:00 PM**



## Wider Church News...

Craig & Linda McAllister, Chairperson

The “Christmas Carol” event on Sunday December 8 was very successful. Around 20 people went to lunch at the Royal Coachman and 25 of us went to see the play “A Christmas Carol” at the Riverton Congregational Church. It was a great way to celebrate the Advent season.

On January 19 we will have our annual Italian buffet. The meal will start after coffee hour at 11:30 and run until 2:00. This will be open to the public.

In February we will have a chili dinner and game night. Sledding will be available on “Church Hill Downs” if there is snow.

More events will be planned for the spring...stay tuned.

## “A CHRISTMAS CAROL”

Some members of our senior choir celebrating after a successful weekend of 6 sold-out presentations of “A Christmas Carol” at the Riverton Congregational Church. The show, mostly faithful to Dickens’ vision (with a few fun twists), has run for over 30 years and is always on the search for new talent! In the photo, left to right, are Karen Needham (Mrs. Dilbur and vocalist), Jerry Alonzy (Scrooge), Judy Robinson (music director, vocalist and actress of uncountable roles), Grace Robinson (lighting and special effects) and Art Dewey (vocalist and dancer/party guest).”



**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.*

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*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2024**

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Sunday, January 12, 2024 after the 10 am service, *OR* on January 26 or subsequent Sundays until a Quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the proposed 2025 budget.
2. Any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bev Sealand, Clerk*

**IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER**




Please tune to:  
**WFSB Channel 3** or **NBC CT**  
or check the church web site at:  
[www.cantoncenterchurch.org](http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org).



**DID YOU KNOW.... We send out "WEEKLY EMAIL REMINDERS"**

If you would like to receive weekly emails about our upcoming Sunday Worship and reminders of events and happenings for the week ahead, please email the church office at [Office@cantoncenterchurch.org](mailto:Office@cantoncenterchurch.org) or call 860-693-4581

# JANUARY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2  Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	3	4  AA 11:00 p.m.
5  Worship & Communion 10:00 am	6  Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	7  AA 7:00 pm	8  Diaconate 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	9  Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	10  Scouts 6:30-8 pm	11  AA 11:00 p.m.
12  Worship 10:00 am Congregational Meeting (following worship)	13  Choir 4:30 pm Trustee 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	14  AA 7:00 pm	15  Council Meeting 7:30 pm ACA 7:00 pm	16  Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	17	18  AA 11:00 p.m.
19  Worship 10:00 am ITALIAN BUFFET 11:30 - 2 pm	20  Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	21  AA 7:00 pm	22  ACA 7:00 pm	23  Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	24	25  AA 11:00 p.m.
26  Worship 10:00 am (Food Collection Sun.)	27  Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	28  AA 7:00 pm	29  ACA 7:00 pm	30  Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	31	



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**

184 Cherry Brook Road, PO Box 133  
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133  
Cantoncenterchurch.org

**Interim Pastor**

860-693-4207

Pastor Kurt Satherlie

pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org

**Office**

(860)693-4581

Kristen DiMattia, Office Manager

office@cantoncenterchurch.org

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

**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.**