

# THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

March 2025



## *Message from the pastor...*

*Remember that Lent and Ash Wednesday are not just about putting away the bad things. It is more about creating good things and helping the poor and the needy, being kind to people, and much more. ~Jacob Winters*

As we journey through Lent and prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter, I'm excited to share an opportunity for our church to make a real difference in the lives of those in our community. We can share the joy of the season hosting a truly remarkable organization, Amy's Angels, to showcase its incredible impact on Connecticut residents. Hosting this amazing Simsbury-based non-profit will not only raise awareness of their work but also embody the spirit of compassion and service that defines our church and faith.

Many of you know I've been visiting the son of a dear friend and former detective partner, Jack Casey. Jack Jr., an extraordinary 35-year-old, has courageously battled brain cancer for eleven years and is now on hospice. Through my visits, I learned from Jack Sr. that Amy's Angels has been a tremendous source of support for Jack Jr. & his wife, Charlotte, for the past seven years, helping them financially by paying their mortgage.

Deeply moved by this story, I decided to learn more about Amy's Angels. Meeting with Bob Fiondella, the founder and CEO was truly inspiring. I was amazed at the scope of their generosity and the countless ways they support individuals and families in Connecticut. They truly live out the spirit of compassion and service.

This Easter season, I believe we have a unique opportunity to partner with several local groups to host Amy's Angels and bring their incredible story to the Farmington Valley. I have requested assistance from our Bridge the Gap team and our Church Missions committee and would love others to join us in hosting and marketing the event. I've already begun laying the groundwork for this initiative. I've contacted the Canton and Avon Police Departments, (Captain Andrew Schiffer and Chief Paul Melanson, respectively, with whom I have established relationships,) to partner with us, M & T Bank in Avon (where the branch manager, Flora Pretashi, is enthusiastic about partnering), Canton Social Services (Kara McConville), and Rev. Amy Johnson, minister of the Canton Community Baptist Church. Both Kara and Rev. Amy's congregation is on board to partner.

What needs to be done? Quite simply, I would be very grateful for someone to help design a flyer/poster describing the event, including the names of our partners, to place in and around the Farmington Valley as well as on social media. I will be meeting shortly with Bob and his daughter, Lindsey, to establish a date and time. Bob has a lengthy list of email and media (radio and TV) contacts as well.

This event, "Preparing Our Hearts for Easter," will be a chance for us to reflect on the themes of hope, sacrifice, and new life that are central to the Easter story. It's an opportunity to connect with our neighbors, introduce them to the inspiring work of Amy's Angels, and demonstrate the love and compassion that motivates us as people of faith.

I encourage each of you to visit Amy's Angels website and learn more about their work. You'll be amazed by the scope of their impact and the many ways they are making a difference in our Connecticut communities.

I'm confident that this event will not only be a blessing to Amy's Angels but also a powerful witness to the love and generosity of our church. More importantly, it's an opportunity to share the joy of Easter by supporting an organization that embodies the true meaning of kindness, generosity, and love.

Please share your thoughts on how we can make this "Journey to the Cross, Journey to Joy" a resounding success.

In Christ's love,  
*Pastor Kurt*

## WORSHIP MINISTRY


 Sunday Worship

*(All Sunday Worship ~ 10:00 a.m.)*

- March 2**      **Communion Sunday**
- March 5**      **Ash Wednesday;**  
*(5:30 Soup & Bread, 6:00 p.m. Service)*
- March 9**      **First Sunday in Lent**
- March 16**     **Second Sunday in Lent**
- March 23**     **Third Sunday in Lent**
- March 30**     **Fourth Sunday in Lent**



**MARCH 5 ~ 5:30 p.m. Simple Soup, Bread Supper**  
**6:00 p.m. Worship**

*LOOKING  
AHEAD...*



- April 13**      **Palm Sunday; Beginning of Holy Week**  
*Special choral music*
- April 17**      **Maundy Thursday**  
**7:30 p.m.**      *Tenebrae & Communion Service*
- April 18**      **Good Friday**  
**12 – 3 p.m.**   *Sanctuary open for personal meditation*
- April 20**      **Easter Sunday**

## Musical Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

## WORSHIP MINISTRY



The Music Dept. has been thinking ahead to Palm and Easter Sunday and thus the need to choose music that is meaningful, beautiful, and at the same time accessible to the choir members and guest singers. With the help of music committee members and choir members we will be able to choose just the right combination of songs that are familiar in order to create an original cantata. This had been done before with some foresight and I am quite sure we can do it again. I had hoped to perform a beautiful cantata written by Joel Raney but ordering it was a nightmare from beginning to end and the copies had to be E printed which would have taken days and would be delivered too late to be possible to learn. Stay tuned for further developments.

Special thanks to Mary Lee Dunn who donated funds in memory of our dear son, Jason, and also in memory of my dear beloved husband, Peter B.

Special thanks to Kristin Oswald for reinstating the meal train for me and also to all the people who responded and made meals.

Special thanks to Rev. Kurt who traveled from Colebrook to the Bridgeport hospital on a Friday and also on the following Sunday straight from church to the same hospital where Pete had been taken. His support of our family was comforting and so needed at that time. Also, thank you for the home visitations.

Special thanks to those people who sent cards, emailed, sent flowers, called me, or visited after Pete's passing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Lou Keefe- Music Director

## Deacons' Bench

Tim Lundgren

## WORSHIP MINISTRY

This winter is proving to be a return to normal cold and snowy conditions that have the potential to impact Church Sunday activities.

Within the Church By-Laws, the Diaconate is given responsibility for Church services, and with that comes the task of making the determination to have or cancel service. On almost every Sunday, various members and/or committees will have spent valuable time planning events, and the Diaconate understands that some members commonly travel considerable distances to reach Canton Center. Both of our most recent ministers, Rev. Brenda and Rev. Kurt, have commuted and do commute to the church from a distance, from Windsor and Colebrook respectively. The cancellation decision is not easy and the conditions always vary. If the inclement weather is upon us, the Diaconate try to coordinate and obtain the Minister's opinion about travel conditions. If the storm is forecast in advance, we discuss the matter and make the most reasonable determination. In any situation, our focus is upon the safety of the Church community.

When we have advance warning, the Church office will send an email notice to those who have provided their contact information, and the church phone message may be updated. In all cases we try to notify TV Channel 3, WFSB, and add our name to the list of cancellations under "First Cong Church Canton Ctr". The good news is that soon spring will be upon us and winter weather cancellations will be an issue of the past; drive safely.

Respectfully submitted,

*The Diaconate*



## FAITH FORMATION

Most of you are probably aware that Hollace and Karen are leaving their positions as Director and Assistant Director of Faith Formation as of April 1, 2025. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to Jody Swan who is stepping up to take our place and begin the transition to the new Director.

Jody grew up outside of Boston in Concord, Massachusetts. She has been in Connecticut since the mid-1990s and has been living in Simsbury for the last 18 years. She has previous experience working with the Children's Ministry at the Simsbury United Methodist Church and works part time at the Master's School.

She is passionate about having a role in a vibrant church community and feels strongly that involvement in an active church family is important in the lives of families and children. She is excited about meeting you all and is looking forward to this experience.

We thought it would be helpful to this transition for Jody to shadow Hollace and Karen in Church School for a few Sundays in March to introduce her to the kids and observe our scheduling and pedagogy. She will be with us on March 16<sup>th</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup> and officially start on Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Since Jody is taking the place of the two of us, she will need help each week during Church School. Our Safe Church policy requires that two adults be present whenever there is programming for children. We will be circulating a sign-up calendar and we invite you to volunteer.

Karen and I have thoroughly enjoyed our time with your beautiful children. We want you to know that we will continue to be involved in our church community and will still lead the Happy Wanderers hiking group.

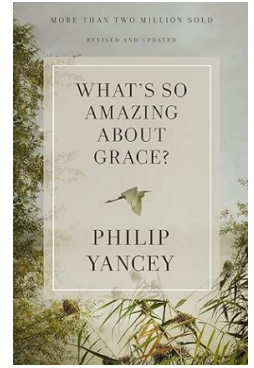
Blessings always,

*Hollace, Karen and Jody*

## BOOK/BIBLE CONVERSATION

Starting on Tuesday **March 11th** and every other Tuesday (next: **March 25th**) I will lead a dialogue/study, with our membership and others who would like to join from 10:00 - 11:30, as we discuss by acclaimed author, Phillip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace? Revised and Updated: The Key to Transforming a Broken World*.

Years ago, I read the original writing of this book and began reading the new revised edition with a reflection guide. We will enjoy coffee, tea, water, and snack as we share our thoughts and comments as well as any biblical connection to our conversation.



Here is a brief summary of *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

It's the most powerful force in the universe, our only hope for love and forgiveness, and a foretaste of eternal life: amazing, radical, life-changing grace. Millions of lives have been changed by award-winning author Philip Yancey's startling exploration of grace at street level. Grace is the one thing the world can't duplicate, the healing force we need, and the key to transforming a broken world. In this revised and updated edition of his personal and provocative book, Yancey offers true portraits of grace's life-changing power. These stories, set in the midst of life's stark realities, evoke such questions as:

- If grace is God's love for the undeserving, how do I get it?
- How well are we dispensing grace to a world that knows far more of strife and unforgiveness than it does of mercy?
- Can grace make a difference in the midst of such atrocities as the Nazi holocaust, and how can it withstand the brutality of hate?

With powerful stories, rich theology, and practical suggestions, Yancey challenges us to become living answers to a world that desperately needs to know, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

***This Sunday, March 2nd, there will be a signup on the Script table for those interested in joining and the book costs \$14.60 from Amazon. It truly is an 'Amazing' read. Phillip Yancey is not only an exceptional writer but once considered himself an atheist as he now shares his love for our Lord.***

*Pastor Kurt*



**EASTER FLOWERS** - It's time to order plants for our Easter Sunday service. **Lilies \$14. & Tulips 8.** Please take your plants after the Easter service to enjoy at home. Orders for plants will be **accepted through April 11th.** Forms will be available in the Easter Basket at the back of the church.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# of **LILY** plants ordered \_\_\_\_\_ x \$ **14.00** = \_\_\_\_\_

# of **TULIP** plants ordered \_\_\_\_\_ x \$ **8.00** = \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please write checks to: **FCCCC** with Memo: **Easter Flowers** and return by: **April 11th.***

*Welcome to our New Members:*

*Pastor Kurt Satherlie*

*Robin Staszak*

*Karen Macbeth*



*New Member Sunday ~ February 23, 2025*



*Thank you to our  
Church School Youth  
who helped to make sandwiches  
for Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach  
on February 23rd!*





# MISSIONS & OUTREACH

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY



### Extended for a few weeks - February Missions

Don't forget your **cleaning supplies and juices** for the Canton Food Bank. Since we missed a couple of weeks of church, the Missions Committee is extending this collection into March

### March Mission Box Collection ~ Gift Cards for Wellmore



The **Missions Box** collection for March is Target and Walmart gift cards to be donated to Wellmore. These gift cards are given out by the social workers to help clients have an enjoyable Easter celebration with their families. The social workers often shop with the clients and use the gift cards as a tool to teach how to budget and shop smart. If you would like to donate, please see Casey at the Scrip table.



### **Brian's Angels:**

We will make 80 sandwiches on **Sunday, March 30th**. Church school children will work on them during their time together. If there are any supplies left, the adults can finish them up after church.



### **The Knitting and Crocheting**

**Ministry** is being re-activated under the leadership of Rebecca Glinsman. The initial projects will be prayer shawls and lap blankets.

If you're experienced with knitting and crocheting, we'd love to have you participate. If you'd like to learn to knit or crochet so you can participate, Rebecca will be offering instruction after church on some Sundays. Watch for announcements of dates.

We're also accepting donations of yarn which can be left in the Missions Box or given to one of the members of the committee. (3 skeins of yarn will make 1 shawl/blanket) If you have any other questions, please speak to Rebecca for details.



**The Cake Auction Is March 16th!!** This year's much anticipated auction will be held after church on **Sunday, March 16th**, so grab coffee and a snack, have a seat, and be ready to bid on your favorite cake. Suggested themes this year are St. Patrick's Day and Spring, but feel free to follow your fancy on your design. Anyone can make a cake to be auctioned, so feel free to invite your friends and family to bake as well as to come and bid.

Cakes should be delivered to the Fellowship Hall before church so they can be tagged. During church, cakes will be judged in a variety of mostly for fun categories. You can either provide a small tasting piece or the judges will cut a tiny bit of the cakes.

If you've attended the cake auction before, you know we receive a variety of delicious and creative cakes. You also know how much fun our very own professional auctioneer, Paul Stansel, makes the whole event. Plus, all proceeds benefit the Mission and Outreach Committee's Off-budget Fund. This fund supports missions such as meals and sandwiches for Brian's Angels and specific requests from Hands of Grace and the Canton Food Bank.

## 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

## NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

of the First Congregational Church, Canton Center, Connecticut, on Sunday, **March 23, 2025** following the service OR on subsequent Sundays at until a quorum is obtained.

### AGENDA:

1. Call to order and opening prayer.
2. Reading of the call to the meeting.
3. Presentation of the Minutes from the previous meeting(s).
4. Receiving and accepting of the reports of the church officers, committee chairpersons, and staff.
5. Any other business proper to come before the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, *Bev Sealand, Clerk*



### Shop Scrip and Help Families in Need!

As many of you know, the Scrip Program is an easy way to raise money for our church through the purchase of gift cards. Our 4 most popular cards in 2024 were Stop & Shop, ShopRite, Target and Walmart. Why not buy a gift card to pay for things you need anyway instead of using your credit card?

For the month of March, the Missions committee will be collecting Target and Walmart gift cards for Wellmore for their Easter collection. If you purchase the cards through Scrip, you can help our church while also helping these families in need. It's a win-win! The most requested denominations are \$25's and \$10's, so they can be dispersed among their clients. I'll be selling / collecting the cards during coffee hour throughout the month and they will be delivered in time for families to shop for Easter. If you are not in church, but still want to help out, just email or call me to place your order ([c.levine@comcast.net](mailto:c.levine@comcast.net) or (860) 371-1016).

Thanks for your support!  
Casey

**God is still speaking !!!**

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Visit our website at

[www.cantoncenterchurch.org](http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org)

Listen to recorded **Sermons and Music**  
from worship services!

Follow us on



**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)



# MARCH 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 AA 11:00 p.m.
2 <b>Worship &amp; Communion</b> 10:00 am	3 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	4 <b>Deacons</b> 7:00 pm AA 7:00 pm	5  <b>Supper 5:30 pm</b> <b>Service 6 pm</b> ACA 7:00 pm	6 Cub Scouts 6:30 - 8 pm Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	7	8 AA 11:00 p.m.
9 <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am	10 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm <b>Trustees</b> 7:00 pm Al-Anon 7:00	11 <b>Book/Bible Conversation</b> 10-11:30 am AA 7:00 pm	12 <b>Council</b> 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	13 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	14	15 AA 11:00 p.m.
16 <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am <i>4th Sunday</i> <i>Food Collection</i> <b>CAKE AUCTION</b>	17 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	18 AA 7:00 pm	19 ACA 7:00 pm	20 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	21	22 AA 11:00 p.m.
23 <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am <i>4th Sunday Food Collection</i> <b>ANNUAL MEETING</b>	24 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	25 <b>Book/Bible Conversation</b> 10-11:30 am AA 7:00 pm	26 ACA 7:00 pm	27 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	28	29 AA 11:00 p.m.
30 <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am <i>Sandwich making for Brian's Angels</i>	31 Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm					



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



### **The First Congregational Church**

184 Cherry Brook Road, PO Box 133  
Canton Center, CT 06020-0133  
[Cantoncenterchurch.org](http://Cantoncenterchurch.org)

#### **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

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

#### **Asst. Director of Faith Formation:**

Karen Needham

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

**Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.**