

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

April 2025



Message from the pastor...



Easter Spells Out Beauty, the Rare Beauty of New Life ~ S.D. Gordon

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:3)

April brings us a season of vibrant growth, both in the familiar beauty of our surroundings and within the quiet spaces of our hearts. We witness the buds unfurling on our trees, the first brave flowers pushing through the earth, and listen to the joyful melodies of returning birds. For us, the journey through Lent, Holy Week, and Easter offers a similar new beginning, a spiritual springtime.

C. S. Lewis reminds us, *I believe in Christ, like I believe in the sun — not because I can see it, but by it I can see everything else.* Just as the sun's light illuminates the world around us, Christ's resurrection shines a light on the goodness within ourselves and in those we encounter. I believe it is a profound gift to look at another and see the reflection of Jesus within. With that vision, shadows of negativity fade in the radiant goodness of God's spirit dwelling in us. This can feel challenging in a world touched by darkness, but I pray that this Easter you witness the gift, the mystery, and the wonder of God's unwavering love.

Think of the sunflowers, their golden faces turned towards the life-giving sun. In a similar way, Easter calls us to turn our hearts towards the light of Christ, the ultimate source of new life and enduring hope. Just as the first shoots of spring emerge from the earth, Easter reminds us that new life can bloom even after the darkest of times. Let us cultivate the seeds of faith within us, allowing God's love to bring forth new growth in our lives and in our beloved church community.

Please join us here at Canton Center Church for our Palm Sunday Worship on April 13th, featuring a meaningful processional of palms and special choral music, followed by our yearly Palm Sunday potluck brunch. On Maundy Thursday, April 17th at 7:30 PM, we will partake in Holy Communion, and experience The Service of Tenebrae. Our sanctuary will be open for quiet meditation, reflective Readings, and heartfelt Prayers on Good Friday, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM. We will celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Lord at our Easter Worship Service during our regular meeting time of 10:00 AM.

As we journey through these final weeks of Lent towards the joyous celebration of Easter, may you and I lift our voices in thanks for the abundant blessings in our lives, for the strength and support of our church community, and for another year to share the sacred observances of Holy Week and the triumph of Easter together. Most importantly, let us never forget to thank the ONE who is responsible for all our gifts, faithfully guides our way, unconditionally forgives our faults, and loves us beyond measure.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Kurt

WORSHIP MINISTRY



- April 6** **Fifth Sunday in Lent**
Worship with Communion
- April 13** **Palm Sunday; Beginning of Holy Week**
Processional of palms, special choral music
- April 17** **Maundy Thursday**
7:30 pm *Service of Communion and Tenebrae:*
- April 18** **Good Friday**
12-3 pm *Sanctuary open for personal meditation*
- April 20** **Easter Sunday**
Family worship (no church school)
- April 27** **Second Sunday of Easter**

All Sunday Services begin at 10:00 a.m.

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

WORSHIP MINISTRY



The Saga of the Church Organ

On a recent Sunday several people remarked that the organ sounded better than ever, great, pretty, you get the picture. This is the reason for that. A few years ago during the pandemic, a new sound system was installed in the loft, next to the organ. Apparently there must have been some kind of installation mishap but nobody was the wiser. One day when I turned on the organ there was a clicking sound and that was when I discovered a contraption behind the organ that I remembered that Larry Minichiello had installed.

The organ seemed to sound okay and my ears didn't detect any negatives. Meanwhile, I had a great need for organ subs, one of whom was Asher who apparently had trouble with the organ one of those subbing days. This led Phil and Tim to further investigate the problem and called me. I suggested they get Alan MacMillan, organist at Trinity who is very well versed in digital organs and they did. Apparently he was able to get it started and also realized the external speakers were not working. As soon as I was able I tried out the organ to see if that clicking sound was working and it was not so I tried to get in touch with Larry and he did call me back and referred us to the installer of the sound system who came to the church and voila the next time I played the organ the added machine clicked and the sound was definitely coming out of the external speakers.

Special thanks to the following:

to those of you who fed me well

to those of you who visited, called, emailed and sent cards

to the continuing support of the music committee: Kathleen, Marilyn & Judy

to all of the loyal choir members, both senior and handbell choir members



Sing in the choir!

If you are able to read music and can sing or think you would like to be a bell ringer, we want you in the Senior or Handbell Choir or even both!!!

We will train you and you are guaranteed to like the people and the experience.

Pastoral Search Committee Update

Hugh Anderson

The settled pastor search committee continues to engage in a thoughtful and prayerful manner. The position along with our church profile has been live and available countrywide since January 31st. In that time we have received four profiles from potential candidates, all of them within the first two weeks of posting. We have reviewed them and after discussion have agreed that we would pursue introductory Zoom interviews with two out of the four. Those interviews are being coordinated with the candidates and we hope they will have taken place by the time you read this. Our goal is to gain an introduction, learn about each candidate's interest and qualifications, and provide more depth for them on our church and expectations of the position.

It will at the very least be a good learning experience for us, one that will help provide deeper perspective to the committee as we move forward. We hope to receive more candidates as well. We will look to hold a second hour at some point this spring, most likely later in April after Easter. In the meantime, please feel free to speak directly to any member of the committee with any thoughts and ideas you are comfortable sharing.

Calling all Social Media Savvy Influencers

Hugh Anderson

Of all the issues the Church Council regularly discusses, our need to do a much better job of managing our social media presence continues to be raised each month as an opportunity we'd love to improve on. Yes we have a website and a facebook page, and yes we do a good job of leveraging local sources like Canton Patch to publicize events. But what we really need is someone who can help guide us to a more strategic approach. Let's get on other apps such as Instagram and Snap. Let's do a better job of understanding how best to gain brand awareness and influence through proactive content generation. Let's spread the word on all our incredible church community has to offer.

The best idea would be someone from within our church of any age, including youth, who has a knack and a passion for social media messaging. Or perhaps a local resource who does this kind of thing on a consulting basis. We're not looking for perfection or to bust the budget, just some solid improvement that is more proactive as opposed to reactionary.

If you fit the bill, want to find out more, know of someone, or have any other suggestions, please reach out to any committee head, officer of the church, or church council representative.

FAITH FORMATION NEWS

Jody Swan

Hello Canton Church Youth and Families,

I had a great time visiting with Hollace, Karen and several of the youth this past Sunday. It was nice time to gather and play a few get -to -know- you activities to help us all get acclimated with each other! I look forward to starting in April. My initial hope is to become more acquainted with the congregation and its traditions and history. I do have great ideas to integrate into the Ministry in the upcoming months. If you or your child have any suggestions for the Ministry, feel free to chat with me on a Sunday or email me at CE@cantoncenterchurch.org. I am happy to listen and learn!

The Safe Church policy states that I will need a volunteer each Sunday. Please see the sign-up sheet by the kitchen door. I would love to have you [join](#) us for the Church School hour. Please note, there is a blue authorized volunteer application and disclosure form on the table next to the sign-up sheet that needs to be filled out and return to me or the church office.

Many thanks to Hollace, Karen and the Canton Center Church community for extending such a warm welcome!

DEACON'S BENCH

Beth Lingenheld

In this Lenten Season, Pastor Kurt has said that he would like us to consider “transformation” and all that it means to us. In Spring the greatest transformation happens in nature with the changing from snow to rain and the promise of new beginnings of flowers and leaves on trees with soft warm breezes in the air. But I would ask that we consider the transformation within ourselves and the warmth that we can share with each other.

One of my favorite themes in sermons is from Matthew 5:14-16,

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand and it gives light to all the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

We can use this time during the holy season to have our light guide us to be the best and most authentic selves. We can be a living example of what it means to give glory to God through our endeavors of good works now and always.

I call Canton Center Church my church family, because I find the people here to be the most authentic and “shiny” people I know. Blessings be to God.

APRIL MISSIONS



The **Missions Box collection for April** is change for **Holy Joe's Café**. In 2006, members of The First Congregational Church in Wallingford started Holy Joe's Café to support chaplains in Iraq and Afghanistan by providing coffee to serve the troops. Holy Joe's Café has grown since then and currently ships coffee and supplies to hundreds of military locations. As stated on their website, "Holy Joe's Café has become a dynamic part of military Chaplains 24/7/365 service to the troops...in 70 countries throughout the world." As one chaplain explains, "Holy Joe's Café is a place where chaplains in makeshift chapels are able to bring a taste of home to the tired, the anxious, the angry, the lonely and the wounded. They all can get a gourmet coffee, a reminder that the world they willingly left behind still cares."

Our church has supported Holy Joe's for a number of years by collecting change (and bills), often during Lent. Maybe you have some change hanging around your house, or maybe you want to think about contributing the equivalent of your daily cup of coffee. You can save your money in the cup we'll provide or another container of your choice. We know that, in this day and age, many people do not use much cash or change. Checks, paper money, and change are all acceptable for donation. We will have a jar for contributions on the small table at the front of the sanctuary. Please be generous to support our troops.



Thank you to everyone who purchased gift cards for Wellmore and brought cleaning supplies for Canton Food Bank during March. The gift cards will be delivered in early April so families can shop for Easter. The cleaning supplies were delivered mid-March.



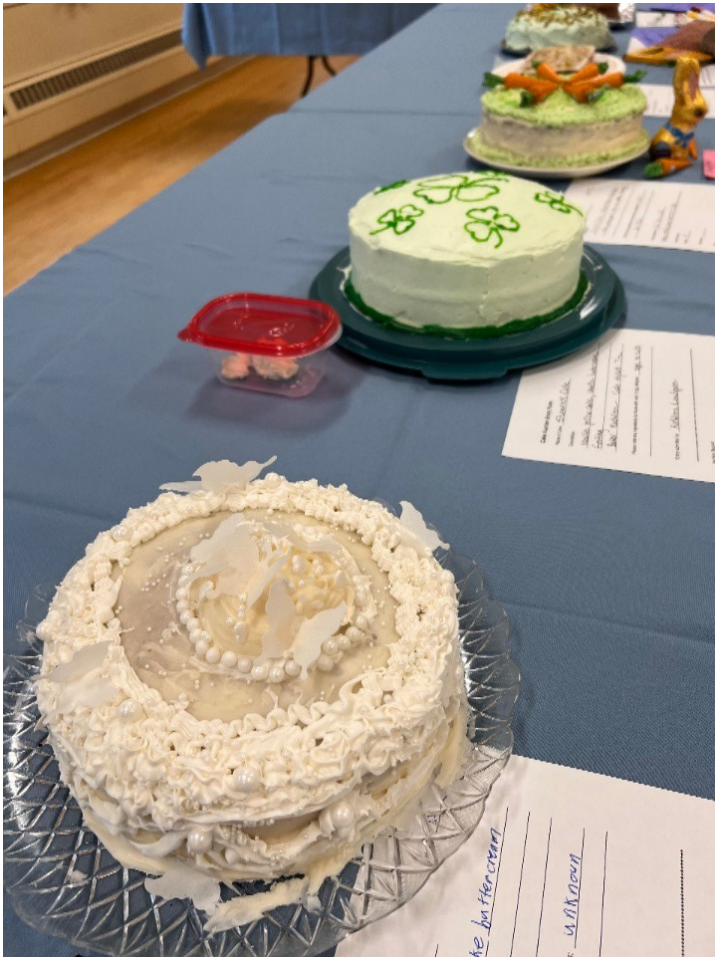
Brian's Angels: The children enjoyed making 80 sandwiches on Sunday, March 23rd. The Missions Committee also provided extras for the Brian's Angels clients such as snacks and bottled water. Watch the mid-week updates for information on providing food for Brian's Angels in April.



The **Knitting and Crocheting Ministry** has been 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 or would like to learn to knit, we'd love to have you participate. 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 or lap blanket) If you have any other questions, please speak to Rebecca for details.

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The Cake Auction was a huge success! We had 22 cakes and averaged about \$100 apiece for them. Thank you to everyone who baked, bid, or just enjoyed the fun!! The Missions and Outreach Committee will use this money to adopt a child through Matsiko as well as purchase food for places like Brian's Angels and the Canton Food Bank.



SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES

Our 9th 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 9 years, we have raised over \$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 or text (860-371-1016), 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



SUPPORT TO OUR MINISTRIES



PALM SUNDAY POT LUCK DINNER

April 13, 2025



A long standing tradition at the church is the Palm Sunday Pot Luck Dinner where everyone gets the opportunity to bring a favorite dish. As always, we are excited to have the dinner this year. The dinner is always well attended and a lot of fun. It gives members and friends the opportunity to spend some time with each other in a very relaxed and social setting while enjoying a superb meal. For new members or those not accustomed to pot luck dinners the following is offered so you know what to expect.

- People who will be coming to the dinner are asked to sign-up on the list outside the kitchen door and indicate a category of dish that they'll be bringing. This helps all of us know what types of dishes are being brought and therefore helps us decide what our own offering should be. A special category is baked ham. It generally takes 3 or 4 baked hams to serve everyone. There will be a column to check if you would like to bring a ham for your contribution. A count of the sign-ups allows the Wider Church Fellowship Committee know how many tables to set and how many supplies to buy.
- On the day of the dinner, bring your dish to the kitchen before you go into church. Someone will be in the kitchen to receive your contribution. Let it be known if your dish is a cold dish or if it needs to be heated before serving. Salads and desserts that need chilling will be kept in the refrigerator. The committee will heat the hot dishes in the ovens and assure that everything is put out on the serving tables at the proper time.
- We'll gather for dinner right after the church service.
- The fellowship committee will provide coffee, tea, water, juice and milk.
- With so many appetizing things to choose from, most people tend to eat a bit more than they normally do at home (this is part of the fun). To accommodate this and assure that there is enough food to go around everyone is asked to bring an amount that is more than what would be needed for their family group.

We hope to see a big turn out on Palm Sunday April 13th. If you haven't been to a pot luck before, give it a try. You won't be disappointed!

Wider Church Fellowship



Yard Goats Baseball

Yard Goats **Baseball**—Save the date May 18,2025.
Tickets go on sale end of April. More information to come.

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 and Affirming Church



CONGRATULATIONS!

to our recent new members:

Karen Macbeth

Robin Staszak

and our Interim Pastor,

Kurt Satherlie



*A very special thank you
to
Casey Levine
for her dedicated
hard work
in organizing our
Scrip Program
that has raised over
\$12,000. in nine years.*



*Happy Spring to all Church Members & Friends ~
from your Board of Trustees.*

**Spring Clean-Up ~ Saturday, April 12 ~ 9-12 pm
Volunteers welcomed**

We will be doing outdoor projects hedge trimming,
raking, mulching and sweeping are some of the
things we expect to do. Jobs for all ages

**EASTER
LILIES & TULIPS**



Friday, April 11,
will be our last day to purchase
Easter Lilies for \$14. per plant
and **Tulips for \$8.** per plant
to decorate our Sanctuary for Easter.

God is still speaking !!!

Visit our website at CantonCenterChurch.org

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

Like us on Facebook

APRIL 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 AA 7:00 pm	2 Deacons Meeting 6:30 pm ACA 7:00 pm	3 Choir 5:30 pm Scouts 6:30 pm	4	5 AA 11:00 pm
6 Communion Sunday Worship 10:00 am	7 Book/Bible Conversation 10:00 am Sr. Choir 4:30 pm Trustee's 7 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	8 AA 7:00 pm	9 Council Meeting 7:00 pm ACA 7:00 pm	10 Choir 5:30 pm Scouts 6:30 pm	11 <i>Easter Flower money due</i>	12 SPRING CLEAN UP 8 - 12 pm AA 11:00 pm
13 PALM SUNDAY Worship 10:00 & Potluck Dinner	14 Sr Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	15 AA 7:00 pm	16 ACA 7:00 pm	17 MAUNDY THURSDAY Worship 7:30 pm Choir 5:30 pm	18 GOOD FRIDAY Sanctuary Open 12-3 pm	19 AA 11:00 pm
20 EASTER Worship 10:00	21 Sr Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	22 AA 7:00 pm	23 ACA 7:00 pm	24 Choir 5:30 pm	25	26 AA 11:00 pm
27 Worship 10:00 <i>4th Sunday Food Collection</i> Canton HS Class 6-8 pm	28 Sr Choir 4:30 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	29 AA 7:00 pm	30 ACA 7:00 pm			



The Churchmouse
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(United Church of Christ)
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Mary Lou Keefe
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Director of Faith Formation:

Jody Swan

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Worship ~ Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

cantoncenterchurch.org