

THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT

June 2026



Message from the pastor...

The Gift of Seeing One Another Clearly

On my way home from church after our Youth Group gathering, I stopped for gas. It was quiet, the kind of stillness that makes you notice things you might otherwise overlook. As I stepped out of my car, a man was digging through the trash can beside the pump. His clothes were worn and dirty, and he carried the scent of someone who had spent many nights outdoors. He looked up, smiled warmly, and began talking about how wasteful people can be. There was no anger in his voice, just a gentle observation. As he turned to leave, I offered him ten dollars. He immediately shook his head. "Oh no," he said. "I never take money. I don't like to beg. I collect bottles because it supports my hobby." "I'm a ham radio operator."

In that moment, any assumption I had made about him dissolved. He wasn't asking for help. He wasn't ashamed. He was simply doing what he needed to do to support something he loved. A store employee came out to empty the trash and greeted him with genuine friendliness. They chatted like old friends. Watching them, I realized how much dignity this man carried and how easily I could have missed it. I went inside, bought a Powerball ticket, and when I returned, I handed it to him. "Please take this," I said. "Because if you ever won, I know you'd be the kind of person who would help others." He was a bit reluctant to take it so I continued my conversation. "Really, all I would ask if you won would be to pay it forward and I really think you would do that." As he started to put the ticket in his pocket, I joked that if we ever met again, he could toss me a million. (The Powerball was close to \$160 million). He laughed and said that if he did win, he'd go on television to try to find me. The employee standing there with us offered me an elbow bump with a big smile saying his gloves were dirty.

As I drove away, I felt humbled. I had met one of the kindest, most gracious men I've encountered in a long time, and I almost missed it. The words of my favorite verse came to mind, almost as if God whispered them into the moment: "*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.*" ~Hebrews 13:2. What a reminder that was. A reminder that seeing another as they truly are can only occur when we get to know them, not by what they are doing, how they look, how clean or dirty their clothes may be, but understanding takes intention. A reminder that every person carries a story we cannot see at first glance. A reminder that kindness is something we can always pay forward, whether it's a smile, a conversation, or even a lottery ticket. God often places people in our path not so we can fix them, but so they can teach us something about grace, humility, and the image of God in every human being.

May we be a church that looks beyond appearances. May we be people who listen before we judge. And may we always be ready to pay forward the kindness God has shown to us.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Kurt

Director of Faith Formation

Jody Swan

Dear Canton Center Church Family,



Welcome to June and to the close of another school year. I hope you take a moment to reflect on all that has been accomplished this year, from the ordinary day-to-day moments to the meaningful milestones along the way.

We hope your son or daughter will join us for our final day of Church School on June 14th. That morning, our youth will participate in the service by greeting, lighting candles, reading, and helping in the service. After the service, the Christian Education Committee will serve ice cream as we celebrate the close of another wonderful year together.

I also hope to plan a few Youth Group gatherings over the summer. If your son or daughter has an activity they would enjoy, please let me know, and we will do our best to make it happen. Please look for an email with more details in the weeks ahead.

Congratulations to the seniors of the Class of 2026 on this wonderful achievement. We also offer heartfelt congratulations to their parents and families, who have supported and encouraged them every step of the way. We pray God's blessing on each graduate as they begin this new chapter.

As we move into the summer months, I pray that you find a more relaxed pace and moments of renewal. I trust that God will be with you each day, in the quiet moments and in the joyful, adventurous ones as well.

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music



An anthem sung by our Senior Choir on occasion begins as follows: When piece like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, It is well. It is well with my soul.

Horatio Spafford (1828-1888) wrote the words to this song. When and why he wrote this will become clear as you read on.

In 1871, Spafford lost his only and very young son to pneumonia. Shortly after this very untimely death, the great Chicago fire destroyed much of Spafford's Real Estate Investments leaving him financially ruined. In November of 1873 he sent his wife and their four daughters abroad to the United States for a vacation. Tragically, their boat collided with another and sank with 226 people aboard including all four of his daughters. His wife survived and while Spafford was crossing the Atlantic to meet up with his grieving wife he wrote the words of the aforementioned song. Sometime later Philip Bliss set it to music.

It seems almost impossible that someone could experience so many tragedies but it was the loss of his daughters that brought forth those beautiful and meaningful words. In spite of those tragedies, he was deeply religious and his faith and resilience enabled him to write. It Is Well With My Soul was sung by the choir on May 31st.

News of the choirs:

The bell choir including our newest member, Heather, along with Jon Keefe on guitar and me using a marimba setting on the new piano, the piece was just about flawless. We will be losing two members this spring and will be actively recruiting starting soon.

Memorial Day Sunday featured patriotic music from start to finish. The chime players, namely Karen and I played the five armed services theme songs. For the prelude, Paul Stansel sang In Flanders Fields, the offertory sung by the choir was an adaptation of Oh Beautiful, and the postlude will hopefully be a Sousa favorite, The Washington Post.

A BIG Thank You to the members of both of my choirs. You are appreciated.



Deacons' Bench

Beth Lingenheld

Our church community will have a celebration of our High School Seniors this month.

What I would like to let these youth know is that they are a very important part of our church because they represent our past, present and future. Our church has watched them grow and loved having them participate in all aspects of church services and activities.

But their future directions may not be near our community of Canton Center Church and will lead them far away on new and exciting adventures. We as a community want them to know that we will love hearing about these adventures whenever they are able to share, through parents, grandparents, email, Facebook, Instagram or any way that will allow all of us to stay connected.

Recently I saw a very moving video that reflects my vision of a community. It was the Buffalo Sabers hockey game verses the Boston Bruins playing in Buffalo. It was not even a Canadian team playing in the hockey game, but because the arena is essentially in a suburb of Toronto Canada many Canadians travel to watch the games. Also, because they are so close geographically, though two different countries, they always play the Canadian National Anthem along with the "Star-Spangled Banner" at the beginning of every game. The soloist at the start of singing "O Canada" had microphone problems where the microphone was fading in and out while she sang. While she continued with the silenced microphone, the entire arena started singing all the words of the Canadian Anthem and finished the song for her. The Buffalo and Toronto people are in my view a community.

In the many years following the senior's graduation I hope they come back often if they are able, if only at the holidays, because they are part of OUR community.

The video can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMbsvYDIQIY>



Worship Schedule

June 7	Second Sunday after Pentecost
June 14	Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 21	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Happy Father's Day!
June 28	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

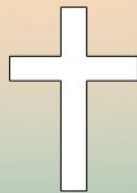


SUMMER WORSHIP



We will be sharing services in July & August
with the Canton Community Baptist Church.

All services are at 9 am.



July ~ Canton Center Church

August ~ Canton Community Baptist Church

If Canton Community Baptist Church is unable to hold services at 9 am instead of 10 am in August, we will let everyone know in advance.

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 or call 860-693-4581.

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. And don't forget those teacher and bus driver "end of the year" gifts!

Happy Anniversary



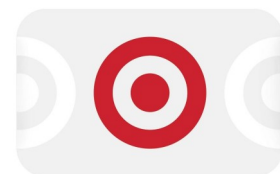
Baby Shower

Scrip gift cards are also perfect for Summer travel or staycations. 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! And don't forget that every card you purchase – big or small – earns money for our church.

Thanks for your continued support!
Casey



2026
Class of

2026
Class of


Congratulations!

Graduate News

Julia Poleyestewa, graduated in May from the University of Hartford with her Masters of Science degree in Organizational Psychology. She has a position at UHart as a *Coordinator for Health and Wellness Education & Outreach* and she will continue her part time Front Desk position at the Swim Center at Westminster School.

Evan Rees graduated from the University of Wisconsin in May with a degree in Industrial Engineering. He was able to be home for a few weeks before moving back to Madison, WI to start his new job.

Janelle Gagnon, will graduate from CHS and will attend Brandeis University in Waltham, MA.

Jack Goodwin will be attending Rochester Institute of Technology.

Jake Wiedrich has enlisted in the United States Marine Corps following in the footsteps of his father, Jason, and grandfather, Tom.





Mother's Day

Thank you to the Bristol Family



Choir Recognition

14 JUNE | 10AM

Sr. Choir & Handbell



Upcoming Events & News



Please be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

June 14th

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

Ice Cream Sundaes

LAST DAY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

June/July Missions Box
for Wellmore

Backpacks

&

School Supplies



JUNE 21ST

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

3-7 PM

The Strawberry Festival will be held on Father's Day, June 21, 2026.

Come enjoy hot dogs, hamburgers and fresh strawberry shortcake with real whipped cream.

Eat in or take out

Missions & Outreach

SPOTLIGHT ON WASTE NOT WANT NOT COMMUNITY KITCHEN



We have recently started to support Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen in Granby when their non-profit came across our radar. For the past seventeen years Waste Not Want Not has been serving about one hundred hearty meals on Wednesday nights to anyone in need. The meals are served at the Granby Congregational Church and include meat, starch, vegetable, salad and dessert along with bread, juice, tea and coffee. Food is donated from local grocery stores as well as local farms, like Holcomb Farm and The Garlic Farm.

These meals give people a chance to come together for food, company and conversation. Throughout the evening, community members are also able to shop for groceries and other items they may need. Waste Not Want Not is a non-profit that is 100% volunteer.

Missions Box: The Missions Box Collection for June and July will be our traditional back-packs and school supplies for Wellmore. If you were in church when Catherine Haugh from Covenant to Care spoke, you'll remember that we signed a covenant to support our Wellmore Social Workers. They will distribute the supplies to the families and students they work with for the beginning of the school year. School supplies include pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks, notebook paper, scissors, rulers, and any other items students might need.

Our collection for April was Holy Joe's Café. **Thanks to your generosity, we were able to send \$527.21 to Holy Joe's to help military chaplains provide support to our troops.** Thank you to everyone who provided Diapers and Wipes for Gifts of Love in May. These will support families in our area who are working to get through a short-term financial crisis.

Brian's Angels: Jody and the children in Faith Formation made 50 sandwiches for Brian's Angels in May. Thank you to everyone who contributed apples for the dinner take-away bags. In addition to providing the supplies for the sandwiches, the Missions Committee also provided applesauce cups for the bags as well as coffee and lemonade mix for the sit-down lunch. We are able to provide these extras using the money earned through the cake auction.

The children will make sandwiches again on June 7th. We are asking the congregation to provide apples, oranges, or pears that day. The fresh fruit is very appreciated by the recipients of the take-away bags.

Speakers: Our May speaker from Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities (ECAD) shared how the amazing dogs they train assist so many people. We hope you enjoyed learning about this organization that our church supports. If you have suggestions for other speakers or for other organizations for us to consider, please speak to one of the members of the Missions and Outreach Committee.



Joy Petersen passed along some information about the Greater Hartford Threshold Choir that her friend Betty Goldfarb is a member.

This group at the family's request will sing a cappella around someone who is at the end of life. Whether in hospice, long term care facilities as well as private homes. They do this free of charge, although people can make donations.

They are always looking for more singers or if you know someone who may be in need of this service, you can check out their website as there are chapters all over the country and in CT. <https://thresholdchoir.org/>

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 Congregation



Brian's Angels

HOMELESS OUTREACH



The Sunday School children will be making sandwiches for Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach on June 7th. These sandwiches are provided to Brian's Angels clients as part of an evening paper bag meal. The bags also include snacks and a piece of fruit as well as foods like boiled eggs or toaster pastries for breakfast. Our Missions Committee often donates waters, coffee, lemonade mix and snacks in addition to the sandwiches that are made.

SANDWICHES



WE ARE ALSO ASKING THE CONGREGATION TO HELP BY PROVIDING FRUIT ON JUNE 7TH. PLEASE BRING A COUPLE (OR A FEW) APPLES, ORANGES, OR PEARS TO CHURCH THAT DAY. BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN PROVIDE THE FRUIT FOR ALL OF THE BAGS.

4TH SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION

Please place your non-perishable food item in our red wagon.

Thank you all for your continued support.



Sunday, June 28th

**Visit our website
using our
QR Code**





JUNE 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	2 AA 7:00 pm	3 Deacons Mtg 7 pm	4	5 Knitting 9 am 	6 AA 11:00 pm
7 Sr. Choir 9 am Missions Mtg 9 am Worship 10:00 am Communion Graduates Recognition	8 Trustee Mtg 7 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	9 AA 7:00 pm	10 Council Mtg 7 pm	11	12	13 AA 11:00 pm
14 Sr. Choir 9 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Sunday & Choir Recognition	15 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	16 AA 7:00 pm	17	18	19 Office Closed ~ Juneteenth Holiday  Knitting 9 am	20 Celebration of Life 1pm AA 11:00 pm
21 Worship 10:00 am Strawberry Festival  3-7pm Happy Father's Day	22 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	23 AA 7:00 pm	24	25	26	27 AA 11:00 pm
28 Worship 10:00 am 4th Sun Food Collection	29 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	30 AA 7:00 pm				



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

Pastor

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Pastor Kurt Satherlie

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Organist/Director of Music:

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Mary Lou Keefe

music@cantoncenterchurch.org

Director of Faith Formation:

Jody Swan

CE@cantoncenterchurch.org