THE CHURCHMOUSE

Newsletter of The First Congregational Church, Canton Center, CT *September 2026*

Message from the pastor…

Isaiah 58:11 ~ The Lord will guide you continually…

Dear Church Family,

Every healthy, growing church reaches moments in its journey where it must ask: Where is God calling us next, and how can we meet the needs of our changing community?

To help answer these vital questions, I am launching The Vision & Impact Team ~ a short-term ad-hoc group that will meet just 3 to 4 times over the coming months. Our goal is simple yet all -important: to dream, pray, and map out actionable strategies that will shape our church's future.

We will explore four key areas, as well as generate new ones based on your ideas:

- **Christian Education & Next Generation**

Brainstorming ideas alongside our Church School Director, Jody, and the Christian Education Committee to support youth events, safe childcare, intergenerational worship, and ways to attract young families.

- **Community Outreach**

Connecting our church's mission with the demographics of our surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Projects & Stewardship**

Purposefully caring for our church home, facilities, and future funding.

- **Worship & Fellowship Life**

Enriching our time together on Sundays and throughout the week.

A vibrant and spirited church isn't built on the vision of one person, but on the collective passion and wisdom of its entire body. We need diverse perspectives around the table ~ longtime members who know our history, newcomers with fresh eyes, and young voices ready to lead. Whether you have worshipped here for fifty years or five months, your perspective is valuable and essential for growth, sustainability, and keeping us intentionally focused on God's will for our church.

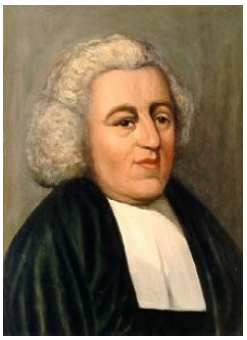
If you feel called to help chart the course, stop by the Pastor's Bulletin Board in the Parish Hall. Check out the poster, the meeting goals, and add your name to the sign-up sheet. I am eager to sit down with you, listen to your ideas, and see what God will do through our combined efforts. Let's build the future together!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Kurt

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music



This is an article about John Newton and no, not the Superman actor but the sailor and cleric who wrote amazing music. John was born on August 4, 1725 in England. As a young lad, John went to sea and was later recruited, much to his disliking, being a sailor in the Royal Navy.

Soon after he found himself on a slave ship as part of the Atlantic Save Trade and ultimately became the captain of the ship. Not only did he believe in slavery but he also invested in it. One fateful day he was kidnapped and was to become a slave to Princess Payes of Leone, now, Sierra Leone, and fortunately was rescued from the terrifying experience. It was that scary event and a very frightful and turbulent storm at sea in 1748 that precipitated his second thoughts about slavery and he became a true abolitionist which means he gave up all thought of ever returning to the slavery route.

At this time he became a cleric aka an English Anglican Church Clergyman and was officially ordained by the Church of England and at the same time became very influential as an anti-slavery believer. He served as Parish Priest at Olney Buckinghamshire for two decades. In the year 1779 he wrote the words to the very famous hymn Amazing Grace. He thought of that hymn as an ode to anti-slavery and also wrote other hymns during that time. John lived to see the abolition of the African Slave Trade in 1807, just months before he died.

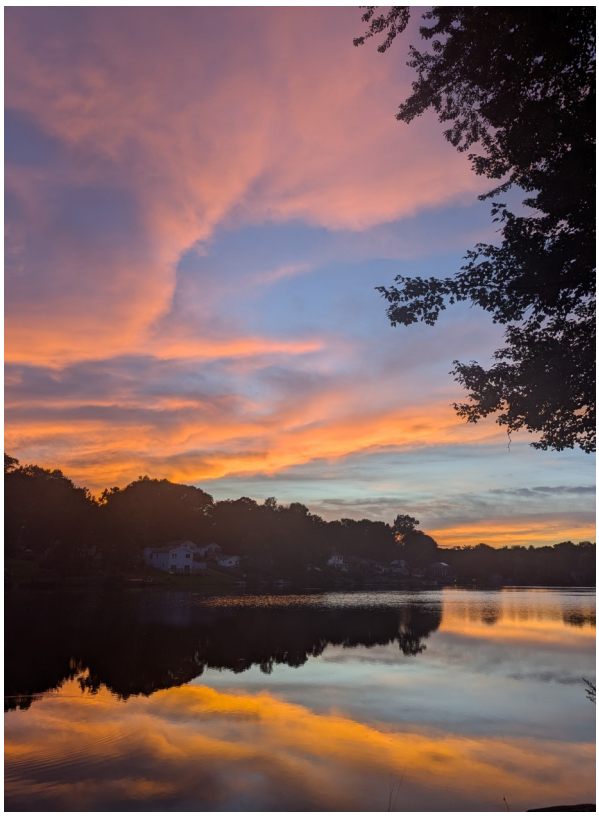
Addendum: A look of the second verse. If you readers are familiar with the usage of less and fewer you may get the same reaction as I do whenever we sing that. "We've no less days to sing God's praise." The less word should have been fewer but his heart was definitely in the right place. The words were written by Edwin O. Exceli in 1900. John Newton - August 4, 1725-December 21, 1807.

Deacons' Bench

Paul Stansel

The Deacons enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner before our August meeting at Fall Mountain Lake in Terryville. The meeting itself was held around a lakeside campfire as we welcomed Dennis Noel to the Diaconate and planned for upcoming events including Communion on September 6th and Rally Sunday on September 13th. As our meeting ended we were treated with a gorgeous sunset. Vicki Rees captured this beautiful photo. We look forward to seeing everyone in September.

Exodus 24:10
and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.



I hope you all had an enjoyable summer! Whether you gathered with family at a favorite vacation spot or discovered a new one, I hope you enjoyed your time and soaked in God's creation.

Rally Day is September 13th, and we invite you and your family to join us again. We'll begin the new year by ringing the church bell—with a little help needed! More on that later. Youth will remain in the sanctuary for the sermon that day, and Pastor Kurt will offer a fun, interactive message for everyone. Afterward, we'll celebrate together with food in Parish Hall and a bounce house on the front lawn for the kids.

If your child is in grades 8–10 and would like to explore their faith through Confirmation classes this year, please reach out to Pastor Kurt or me. Our first classes are scheduled for October 4th and 18th after church. As we did last year, we will also offer Youth Group as another opportunity to gather in faith community. Dates and times will be announced soon.

The Nursery will be open for children (infants-3yr) starting in October. To be compliant with Safe Church Policy, Church School will need a second adult each Sunday.
Please see me or sign up in the hallway between the sanctuary and Parish Hall.

Looking forward to another year of growing in faith and grace!

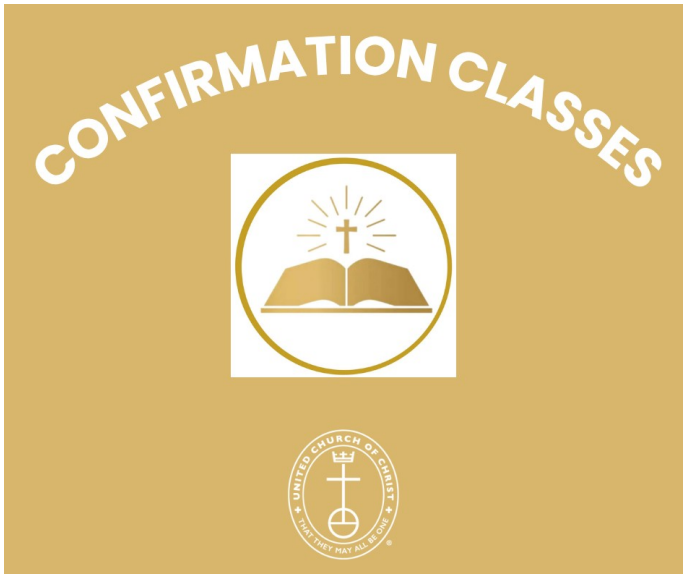
In Him,
Jody Swan ~ *Director of Faith Formation*

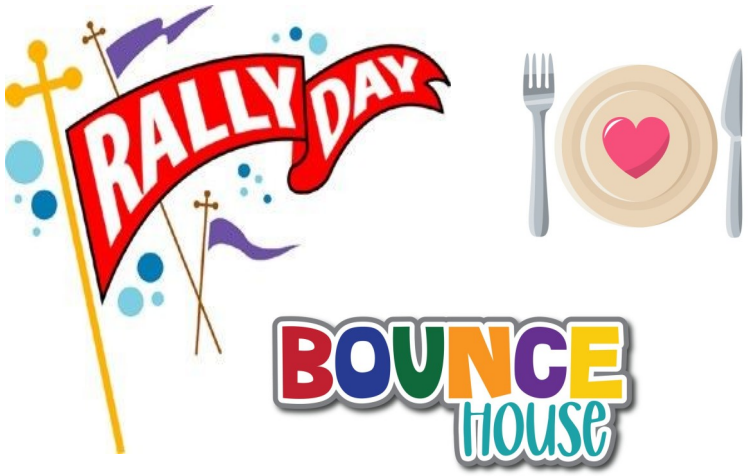
May the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; May the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

Confirmation Classes

Contact Jody at
JodySwan567@gmail.com
or Pastor Kurt at ksatherlie@aol.com

Rally Sunday is
Sunday, September 13th!





Worship Schedule ~ 10:00 am

September 6	**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Communion**
September 13	**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Rally Sunday**
September 20	**Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**
September 27	**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

SMILE...It's Picture Time!

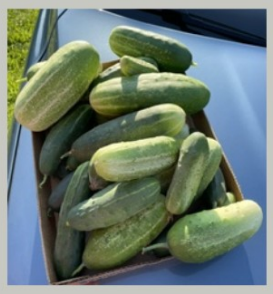
We need a new church photo directory. A committee has been formed and would like a more informal format. We are hoping to use your photos. Please start considering what current photo you could submit. More details will follow ~ this is just a "heads up."

Community Info to Share

If you would like to support the
Canton Center Cemetery Association
in their work of replacing the fence as well as for ongoing cemetery maintenance of the grounds, please send your donation to:

Canton Center Cemetery Association
P.O. Box 11
Canton Center, CT 06020

Church Garden



Our Church Gardeners donate the harvest each week to Canton Food Bank during the season.

Thank you to Art Mauger, Jim Magennis, Kristin Oswald, and Anne & Julius Ziemba for tending to the garden and providing this wonderful bounty to help people in our community!

Fall into Fundraising While You Shop!

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer. Church and School are back in session and so is scrip! We're excited to be back in our regular routine, and that includes being at the Scrip table in the Parish Hall every Sunday during coffee hour. Stop by to see what gift cards we have available for immediate purchase, for ordering to pick up the following week, or to just find out more about our program.

If you don't know about scrip yet, I'm not doing my job very well! It's a fundraising program our church been participating in since 2016! Church members can purchase gift cards for over 600 retailers. You pay face value, but the church buys them for less, thus the fundraising! Every time you buy a card through us, you're raising money for our church! You can order in person, online or through the RaiseRight app. If you're not in church, feel free to email or call / text anytime – levine429@gmail.com or 860-371-1016.

In order to continue and grow on our success, we need more shoppers! You don't have to make a purchase every week, or even every month. Give it a try if you haven't yet – every single purchase helps! While most people think of buying gift cards for presents, you can also just buy them for yourself to use in place of cash or credit at local grocery stores, restaurants and department stores. If you're spending the money anyway, why not help our church in the process? We'd also love to have more people to help run the table during coffee hour. Even if you can only commit to once a month or less it would help a lot. See Casey or Karen if you can lend a hand.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone soon! Keep scripping!

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.

Welcome Back

Sunday, September 6th ~ 10 am

Sunday services resume at Canton Center Church

Have you thought about joining the choir or handbell choir?
Now is the perfect time to join!
You can learn more about each choir by
contacting Mary Lou at music@cantoncenterchurch.org

SAVE THE DATE

We will be hosting a Meet & Greet with FOCUS Center for Autism on Sunday, October 4th at 11 am after our Sunday service.

Please join us!

SAVE THE DATE

Chicken Pie Supper & Harvest Fair

Saturday, October 17th ~ 4-7 pm

Be on the lookout for sign up sheets to volunteer coming soon!

Please be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Getting To Know Your Pew Partners

There is a special loveliness in discovering the stories of the people who sit beside us in worship. Sunday after Sunday, we share hymns, prayers, and the written Word, yet often we know only a fraction of the journeys that have shaped the hearts around us. When we pause long enough to listen, 'truly listen', we begin to see how God has been at work in lives that are wonderfully different from our own and yet interwoven in the life of faith we share. As a pastor I have been the recipient of many conversations that has allowed me to know people in our congregation in a more grace-filled way, to see the beauty of your stories and know how powerful this can be.

Getting to know your pew partners is not simply an exercise in friendliness; it is a spiritual practice. When someone shares a memory of childhood faith, a challenge they've endured and weathered, or a hope they carry for the future, they share a piece of God's grace in their life story. And when we share our stories, our own faith is reinforced.

These conversations deepen our connection because they remind us that the church is not simply a building, not only a sanctuary, nor a venue simply for programs or committees, it is about the people who have a stake in something together. Real people, with real joys and real burdens. When we learn more than one another's names, and engage with others in conversation to hear their histories, hopes, dreams, and beliefs, the congregation becomes less like a gathering of individuals and more like a community knit together by grace. We begin to carry one another's stories with us, letting them shape how we pray, how we serve, and how we show up for one another.

During fellowship we will have a handout with questions that you can ask a fellow church member. We will ask that you fill out the form and leave it in a designated space. We would also appreciate it if you could send a picture with your name to the church office email at office@cantoncenterchurch.org so that one shared moment will be highlighted in our weekly Wednesday eblast and we can match your form with your picture. More details to follow as we come back together this month.

Missions & Outreach

SPOTLIGHT ON FAVARH ~ September 2026

Favarh, The Arc of the Farmington Valley, Inc., founded in 1958, is located right here in Canton. Favarh helps people with intellectual and development disabilities live as independently as possible, experience continual growth and live the lives they want to lead.

Favarh's programs include Day, Employment and Transition Services which range from School to Adult Services, Project SEARCH (internships), Employment Services, Life Enrichment Programs and Transportation Services. Many Favarh clients have the opportunity to work in the community which fosters a more inclusive environment. Favarh has residential and independent living opportunities with supportive housing, in-home support or residential housing.

Favarh promotes a healthy lifestyle through recreation, sports and the arts. They participate in Unified Special Olympics and each year their theater group, The Favarh Players, puts on a wonderful family-friendly production as a fundraiser.

Favarh has a thrift store, also located in Canton, which has been a fundraising effort since the beginning. All the proceeds from the store, which is staffed by volunteers, go to fund programs and services for the clients of Favarh . The items that are donated to Favarh are sorted, cleaned, washed and prepped by Favarh clients each day.

Favarh has several fundraisers during the year. On Saturday, September 12 at the Simsbury Meadows, Mike DelGuidice Under the Stars, is making his fourth appearance there. If you love Billy Joel, Elton John and music of that genre this show is well worth it. Tickets are very reasonable and support a great cause! You can go to the Favarh website to purchase those. www.favarh.org

Involvement with Favarh can be in the form of donating, to hiring a worker, to volunteering or for your own employment.

Missions Box: Our Missions Box Collection for the month of September will be cat and dog food to be donated to the Canton Food Bank. When it's available, the food bank provides pet food to help people who may be having difficulty affording food for their pet.

In addition, donations are also being collected for Beacon of Light Rescue. This is a local all-volunteer organization that was started by Megan Keefe. They rescue, rehabilitate, and find loving homes for animals in need as well as work with feral cat colonies. Megan has let us know that they are particularly in need of cat food and kitten food for rescued moms with kittens. The nursing moms are fed kitten food to support their health and the growth of the kittens.

Brian's Angels: Some of you may have seen the sad news that Brian's Angels will be closing at the end of August due to their lease not being renewed. The Missions Committee will be watching to see if Pat Stebbins, the founder of Brian's Angels, and her volunteers find another avenue to support the homeless in Bristol. There are several other organizations helping those in need in Bristol, but Brian's Angels was the only one run completely by volunteers.

Knitting Ministry: You may recall that we dedicated prayer shawls and blankets in the summer. Some of them have already been shared with people needing comfort, and this ministry will continue in the fall. If you want more information about how to participate in the knitting, speak to Rebecca Glinsman. If you know someone who might benefit from receiving one of these shawls/blankets, speak to one of the Deacons or Pastor Kurt.

The knitting ministry also dedicated a number of prayer squares at the same time as the blankets. These knitted squares have a Bible verse attached and are wonderful for carrying in your pocket, purse, backpack, etc. They are a small way to provide comfort, encouragement, and a reminder that God is always with you. The prayer squares are in baskets on the back table. Feel free to take one for yourself or to give to someone else.

God's Creatures Great and Small: The Missions Committee has also placed a number of small Creatures in a basket on the back table. They are available to give to others or to take for yourself during times of stress, celebration, loneliness, sadness, joy, etc. These creatures, along with the prayer shawls and squares, are a good way to nurture ourselves as well as reach out to others in our families and communities.

Other Needs: If you know of another organization that you think the Missions Committee might be interested in supporting, please speak to one of the members.

Darryl Haberern, Debbie Poleyestewa, Casey Levine, Rebecca Glinsman, Heather Neumann, Martha Stansel

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

SEPTEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Missions Mtg 6 pm AA 7:00 pm	2 **Deacons Mtg** **7 pm**	3	4 Knitting 9 am 	5 AA 11:00 pm
6 **Worship 10:00 am** **Communion**	7 **Labor Day** **Office Closed**	8 AA 7:00 pm	9	10	11	12 AA 11:00 pm
13 Sr. Choir 9 am **Worship 10:00 am** ***Rally Sunday***	14 **Trustee Mtg 7 pm** Al-Anon 7:00 pm	15 AA 7:00 pm	16 **Council Mtg** **7 pm**	17	18 Knitting 9 am 	19 AA 11:00 pm
20 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am**	21 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	22 AA 7:00 pm	23	24 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	25	26 AA 11:00 pm
27 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am** **4th Sun Food Collection**	28 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	29 AA 7:00 pm	30			

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

Pastor
860-693-4207
Pastor Kurt Satherlie
pastor@cantoncenterchurch.org

Office
860-693-4581
Christine Motasky
Office Manager
office@cantoncenterchurch.org
Mon.- Fri. 8:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Organist/Director of Music:
860-693-4216
Mary Lou Keefe
music@cantoncenterchurch.org

Director of Faith Formation:
Jody Swan
CE@cantoncenterchurch.org