THE CHURCHMOUSE

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

Message from the pastor…

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ~Galatians 6:9

Dear Canton Center Church family,

We enter one of the most beloved seasons of the year. October gives us a welcome break between the high costs of summer air conditioning and winter heating bills. It also allows us to get outside more to enjoy the crisp mornings, the changing landscape, and the beauty of the colorful leaves. For our gardeners and gentleman farmers, October is harvesting season, as the seeds planted in spring and nurtured throughout the summer produce a bounty of fresh vegetables. As I witness God's beautiful creation, I'm reminded of two important truths: it's a season for gratitude and a season for letting go.

The fall harvest reminds us of God's many blessings. Whether the seeds were planted in a garden bed or through heartfelt prayers for family, friends, our community, and our world, this season invites us to give thanks for God's faithfulness and the many ways He continues to work among us.

At the same time, the changing colors of our trees offer us a similar lesson. They don't hold on to their leaves forever. They release them trusting that springtime will bring renewal by the Creator who designed it all. Do you sense, as I do, that perhaps God is inviting us to do the same? Maybe there are worries, disappointments, hurts, fears, or jealousies and resentments that we've been carrying for far too long. Such burdens are not meant to be carried indefinitely, and sooner or later they can take an emotional, physical, and spiritual toll on us. What would happen if we placed them in God's hands and trusted Him with the outcome?

As we enjoy this beautiful autumn season, I encourage you to take a few moments each day to thank God for His many blessings and to ask Him for the strength to release whatever may be weighing on your heart. When we do, we make room for the peace, joy, and hope He longs to give us. May this October be a month of grateful hearts, renewed faith, and confident trust in God's unfailing love. As we celebrate the autumn harvest around us, may we also recognize the spiritual harvest God is producing within us and give thanks for His faithfulness in every season.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Kurt

Music Notes

Mary Lou Keefe, Director of Music

We are the Music Makers
and we are the dreamers of dreams
Wondering by lone sea-breakers
and sitting by desolate streams

The loves of my life besides my family and friends are the pollinators and the birds. Life can be precarious and we as humans take life for granted and make many mistakes as our life and others go by, and we need to take care of our precious earth.

The other day on the anniversary of 9/11 I spotted a monarch butterfly for the first time this entire warm season. This is about the time that the monarchs migrate to their wintering ground in Mexico. They weigh about as much as a kernel of corn and to me it's a miracle that they can migrate that far and all they need is water and milkweed on the way to sustain them. Back in the day when I was becoming aware of the perils for the pollinators including the bees, I wrote a song entitled Metamorphosis. The mortal enemy of them is pesticides and herbicides.

In that same week I just happened to look out of my picture window and what to my surprise were four goldfinches eating the seeds from my coneflowers while bobbing back and forth. It seemed to be a family with mom and dad and two babies, almost fully grown. If only I had my camera handy.

Concerning the birds, this is the time of year when they migrate, including such species as thrushes, orioles, and warblers and taking their songs with them. They fly at night when it's cooler and sometimes actually show up on radar. The CT Audubon Society hopes that folks will turn down their lights as sometimes the birds get confused as to where they are and may crash into a window. CT is one of the major migrating routes. While they are flying they will catch bugs and also are helping the ecosystem across the continent.

Why am I writing this and not an article about let's say John Rutter or Bach or Beethoven or numerous others, but we live and die by the pollinators and especially the farmers need them

A musical note* The Senior Choir is working on several pieces to be presented at Sunday services as per usual, but we have also started working on the Christmas portion of the Messiah to be presented on Dec. 20th in the Sanctuary during the afternoon.

As we begin a new month In Church School, we will be focusing on Genesis. To help us with these scriptures, we will incorporate Godly Play alongside a new curriculum, called Two or More. This new curriculum will give our children and youth opportunities to experience the Bible in meaningful, hands-on way. While Godly Play invites children to listen, wonder and ask questions and discover how Gods story connects with their own lives. Using this approach kids will get the best practices from each curriculum.

During the month, we will explore the early stories of Genesis—from creation and the choices of Adam and Eve to Abraham and Sarah's journey of faith. Together, these stories remind us that God gives us choices and new beginnings, keeps his promises, and can bring laughter and joy when we least expect it.

Our hope is that through this combined approach, children will nor simply learn about God's story- they will discover they are part of it.

Confirmation starts on October 18th after church. Feel free to reach out to Pastor Kurt or Jody Swan with questions.

~Jody Swan, Director of Faith Formation

Sunday, October 11th is Pastor Appreciation Day!

We honor and celebrate Pastor Kurt for the love, faithfulness, wisdom, and dedication he pours into our church family. Thank you for faithfully answering God's call and for being a source of encouragement, guidance, prayer, and strength.

Your prayers, sacrifices, and service do not go unnoticed. We are grateful for every sermon, every prayer, every word of encouragement, and every moment you have invested in the lives of others.

May God continue to strengthen you, bless your family, renew your spirit, and richly reward you for all that you do. We thank God for you and are truly blessed to have you as our pastor!

Worship Schedule ~ 10:00 am

October 4	**Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost & Communion**
October 11	**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**
October 18	**Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost**
October 25	**Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost**

Deacons' Bench ~Ann Buckley

Have you ever noticed that people tend to sit in the same place in church each week? I wonder… Do people have a reason that drew them to their preferred location? Do some people like to sit upstairs to see the Choir sing, or the Bell Ringers ring? Do people like to sit in the back so they can come in a tiny bit late, or leave a tiny bit earlier, or perhaps they like to watch people? Do people sit in the front to be able to see and hear better? Why the seats near the windows, to get the nice breeze when the windows are open? Why the center right… to see the flowers better? (Did you see Gail's seashell flowers on Rally Sunday? They were amazing!)

I like to sit in the center of center left, the Hammond family on my left, and John McCormick behind me. This is my favorite seat because as I listen to Kurt's message I love to look at the tree that is perfectly framed by the window to the left of the pulpit. As we return to Church in the Fall, the leaves are ready to turn into their vibrant colors and then slowly drop away. In the winter, the bare branches are drab and dull some weeks, but other weeks dusted in fresh snow and glistening like diamonds.. Come spring, I can see the buds swelling, and by the time we wish our High School Seniors well on their graduation and next steps, those buds have exploded into their full leafy green splendor.

In the Bible we read that for everything there is a season. I feel close to God when I witness "my tree" change throughout the year, and know that while sometimes things seem dark and bleak, color and vibrancy will return.

Scrip is Fundraising While You Shop!

The Scrip table is open 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.

Scrip is a fundraising program our church been participating in for over 10 years! Boy, does time fly! 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. They even have a program where you can earn extra money for the church with your regular online shopping (no gift card required).

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? As we head toward the Christmas season, we'll also be collecting gift cards for Canton Social Services and Wellmore again soon – stay tuned!

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.

Thank you, as always, for your support!

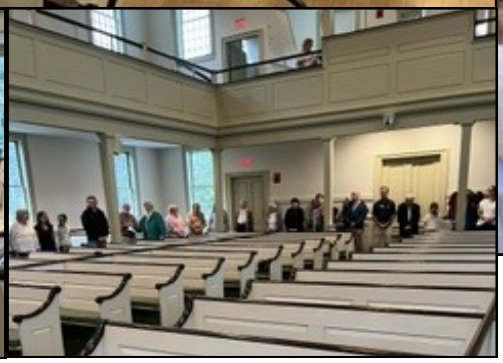
Stop&Shop

RaiseRight™
Simply the right way to fundraise

amazon

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.



Rally Sunday
September 13th

COAT DRIVE

&Blankets/Linens Collection

OCTOBER MISSIONS COLLECTION BOX

Thank you!

4th Sunday
Food Collection

Sunday, October 25th

Please be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Upcoming Events & News

CHICKEN PIE SUPPER & HARVEST FAIR

Saturday, October 17th

4-7 pm

Chicken Pie ~ Gravy ~ Mashed Potatoes
~Turnips ~ Fresh Green beans ~ Fresh Corn ~
Coleslaw ~ Rolls ~ Cranberry Sauce ~
Beverage ~ Pie for dessert

Adults ~ $18

Children under 12 ~ $8

Tickets can be purchased at the event

Invite your family and friends!

Look for volunteer sign ups for the Chicken Pie Supper and to bake for the Harvest Fair!

We are getting a great response from vendors!

Be sure to mark November 21st on your calendar and come out to support this wonderful fair and get some holiday shopping done!

ARTISAN FAIR

Save The Date!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CANTON CENTER
184 CHERRY BROOK RD.

21ST NOVEMBER, 2026
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

- Vendors
- Tea Cup Raffle
- Bake Sale
- Refreshments

Missions & Outreach

SPOTLIGHT ON SUSAN B. ANTHONY PROJECT~ October 2026

The Susan B. Anthony Project, located in Torrington, CT, provides crisis and support services to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Northwest Connecticut. On Sunday, October 11th a representative from the Susan B. Anthony Project will speak during our church service.

The Susan B. Anthony Project was an idea of a small group of people in 1982 and became incorporated in 1983. The name came from Susan B. Anthony who was a "pioneering 19th-century social reformer, feminist, and leader in the women's suffrage movement. The founders chose her name to reflect her lifelong dedication to women's rights, autonomy, and equality."

The Susan B. Anthony Project provides a 24 hour crisis line, emergency shelter, housing services, housing and support groups and advocacy for either in a court or medical setting or for children or teens who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence.

Aside from domestic violence support they have resources for men, women, children and teens who have experienced bullying, stalking, sexual assault and need help with technology safety. Prevention and warning signs can be taught through school programs, community and professional training, awareness months and exhibits.

You can get involved with the Susan B. Anthony Project by volunteering, donating, helping a friend or family member in need or purchasing from their Amazon wish list, Susan B. Anthony Amazon Wish List, which includes things like toiletries, diapers, gift cards, health and beauty items, cleaning and kitchen supplies, bedding for both adults and children and child safety products. The link to the wish list is https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/106OBALP01I1P/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex

Please Note ~ There will be a "live" clickable link in the October 7th eblast or you contact the church office at office@cantoncenterchurch.org and we can send you the link.

Missions Box: Fall has arrived and the weather is getting cooler. Are you sorting your clothes, checking the coat closet to see what fits, and changing the contents of your drawers to warmer clothes? The Missions Box Collection for October is coats as well as blankets and linens. These will be donated to Gifts of Love in Avon. The coats and clothing should be clean and in good condition.

Gifts of Love

Gifts of Love serves families throughout north central Connecticut. According to their website, "The individuals and families we serve often face a short-term crisis in their lives due to reduced working hours, illness, divorce, death of a spouse/mate, domestic abuse, or a significant unexpected increase in expenses. They are hardworking people who simply cannot make ends meet.

By assisting our clients with food, clothes, and energy assistance, we allow them to use their income on other necessities such as rent, car repairs, and medications. …

By helping them meet their family's most basic needs – food on the table or a winter coat – we enable them to focus on putting their lives back in order and regaining their self-sufficiency. We are helping your neighbors."

Moment for Missions: In September, we enjoyed hearing from Linda McAllister about the good work being done by Hands of Grace in New Hartford. Our October 11th moment will feature Susan B Anthony Project which provides crisis and support services to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Northwest Connecticut. We look forward to hosting their representatives on October 11th.

Knitting Ministry: The Knitting Ministry continues to meet two Fridays per month under the leadership of Rebecca Glinsman. The group has been busy making prayer shawls/blankets as well as prayer squares. Their next project is to knit hats for preemies and others who may need them. Donations of yarn are much appreciated and can be left in the Missions Box or given to Rebecca.

Please join us!

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

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

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING: First Congregational Church, Canton Center

On Sunday, October 25, 2026 after the 10 am service or on subsequent Sundays until quorum is obtained.

AGENDA

1. Discussion and subsequent congregational votes on the following:

   a.) Should we put air conditioning using splitters in the Parish Hall?

   b.) To Change the wording in Article IX, Section A of the by laws to read:

DIACONATE - There should be three male and three female Deacons elected for three-year terms at the Annual Meetings. The Nominating Committee should strive to nominate one female and one male deacon for each three-year term, but if they are unable to find one female and one male to serve for a given term, they can fill the term with either two male or two female deacons, as needed. The terms should be arranged so that the term of only one female and one male Deacon shall expire in any one year, as best possible.

This is the By Law as it reads now:

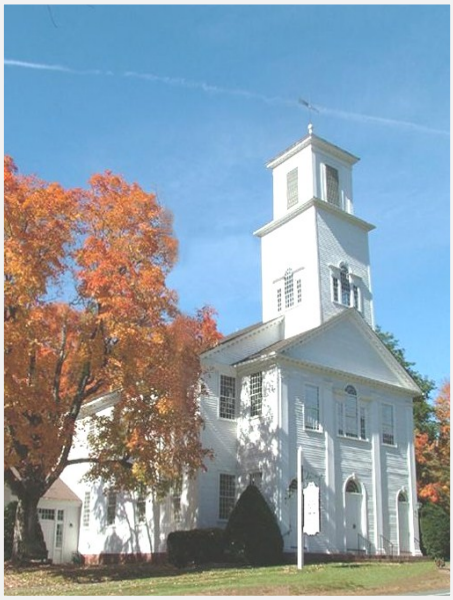
DIACONATE - There shall be three male and three female Deacons to be elected for three year terms at Annual Meetings. The terms shall be arranged so that the term of only one female and one male Deacon shall expire in any one year.

Respectfully Submitted ~ Bev Sealand, Clerk

OCTOBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm Cub Scouts 6:30pm	2 Knitting 9 am	3 AA 11:00 pm
4 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am** **Communion** **FOCUS Meet & Greet after Svc**	5 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	6 AA 7:00 pm	7 **Deacons Mtg 7 pm**	8 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	9	10 AA 11:00 pm
11 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am** **Missions Moment Susan B. Anthony Project**	12 Office Closed Columbus Day **Trustee Mtg 7 pm** Al-Anon 7:00 pm	13 AA 7:00 pm	14 **Council Mtg 7 pm**	15 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	16 Knitting 9 am	17 **Chicken Pie & Harvest Fair 4-7 pm** AA 11:00 pm
18 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am** **Confirmation Class**	19 Cherry Brook Garden Club Setting up 8 am - 3 pm Al-Anon 7:00 pm	20 Cherry Brook Garden Club Luncheon 8 am - 3 pm AA 7:00 pm	21	22 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	23	24 AA 11:00 pm
25 **Sr. Choir 9 am** **Worship 10:00 am** **4th Sunday Food Collection** **Congregational Mtg after Svc** **Brian Young Svc**	26 Al-Anon 7:00 pm	27 AA 7:00 pm	28	29 Handbell Choir 5:30 pm	30	31 Happy Halloween AA 11:00 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

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