

October Newsletter

First Congregational
Church of Westfield

October 2023

Dear Friends,

I don't know if you have felt it, but there is some great positive energy here at "First Church" these days. As I reflect on it, I know that it comes from the excitement of having young people in our church, and new families and members who have come to see us at programs, dinner, and worship. The energy comes from the ministry we do at Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe, the Westfield Food Pantry's Food Truck, the Community Table, and other ways we have worked to spread the Gospel message. Now, how do we keep the energy?

The energy takes some doing in the realm of Stewardship. Last year, we talked about the stewardship of our time, treasure, and talent. It takes all three things from every member to help run our church as well as spread the Good News. We must keep our buildings up to date to be good stewards to those as well. All of this allows us to keep our positive energy as we look to the second quarter of the twenty-first century at First Congregational Church.

This energy is three-fold: we have spiritual energy, physical energy, and financial energy. This energy calls us to come back to church, to worship with the congregation on Sunday, and brings renewed spirit to our prayer lives. When we feel good about church, it helps to improve our spiritual lives. It calls us to be present to assist in ways that we bring the Good News to the people of the Greater Westfield area. It also tells us that our financial stewardship is not in vain. We can see the results of what we are able to financially contribute to the church.

It is my hope that we all can feel this energy as we prayerfully contemplate our stewardship pledge. I ask that we all spend some time in prayer in the next few weeks to see how the spirit is moving you to participate in the stewardship of our church.

Peace and love,

Rev. Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor



Report from the Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries

My role as Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries is to support and educate all members of our church community in their search for spiritual understanding. Whether you are 2 or 20 or 40 or 80, your faith is constantly evolving. With the help of the Church School Committee, I am here to design programs for you.

This past month I have focused on the Sunday Church School program for children and youth.

After the success of our June workshop, *Make a Joyful Noise*, I decided to continue to use African drums during the church year. I faced two challenges: raising the money needed to buy our own set of drums and design a curriculum that connected drum playing to the worship of God.

Finding the money was the lesser challenge. In August we launched a direct fundraiser. Members of the church have been extremely generous in donating money for a set of 13 drums. I am grateful and heartened by this. We have raised the full amount needed.

The more demanding challenge has been to design a curriculum that incorporated drumming skills and material that was connected to the love and welcome of Jesus. In September we are learning a traditional West African song *Fanga*, whose translation is **We welcome you!** The youth and I are getting to know each other and the drums together.

Next month I'll tell you about our use of LEGO blocks to create scenes and passages of the Bible.

Stay tuned.....

Janet St. Jean

Upcoming 2023 Events

On Saturday, October 21, we will again holding a **Halloween party** for the entire community.

In November we will have a **Charlie Brown Thanksgiving**, date TBA.

And in December, we plan to hold a **Christmas Carol Sing and Visit with Santa**, again date and time TBA.

We trust that little by little, the word will get out that children and families are not only welcome, but will have a terrific and meaningful time celebrating the love of God and Jesus.

Finally, let me end with a heartfelt thank you to the amazing and hardworking members of the Church School Committee: Gail Ives, Amy Platt, Jim Yesu, Lisa Crean, Linda Hauk, Jennifer Barykomb and Paul Nesbit. This project is a labor of love for many. These folks have really been stepping up to the plate and I am completely grateful for their support and energy.

Church School Committee

Sunday School started on Sept 10th and had eight youth attend and we anticipate more children coming. There is nursery coverage if needed.

The Open House /Pasta Dinner was a great success and very well attended. Greg Hamel's pasta dinner was wonderful – thank you Greg. Several non- member families attended. Rev. Paul took groups around the church for tours; Michelle Hamel did face painting and Rachel Bilodeau set up Legos for the children to play with. There was a lot of fun and great fellowship. Thanks to everyone that helped.

Looking forward, there will be a Halloween Party on Saturday Oct 21st. More details to follow – watch your weekly updates for more information.





Volunteers of Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe donates a portion of their fourth quarter proceeds to the Whip City Animal Sanctuary 232 Montgomery Road Westfield,



The Christian Fellowship is having a pot luck dinner with entertainment on Wednesday October 11th. The dinner will be at 5PM and reservations are needed. Please sign up on the form which is on the bulletin board or call the office. The entertainment will be from 6:30 - 8PM. "Musically Married" is a couple who do musical show tunes, favorites from the '40's, patriotic and spiritual songs. It's guaranteed that you will enjoy the event.

October Birthdays!

- 10/03 Tom Lorenzen
- 10/06 Michelle Winer
- 10/09 Robert Thompson
- 10/10 Lynn Brownlee
- 10/10 Judy Schrecke
- 10/10 Steven Pierce
- 10/10 Carol Whalen
- 10/12 Doug James
- 10/18 Noah Perkins



- 10/20 Tyson James
- 10/25 Osborne Gaugh, Jr.
- 10/25 Mia Dimino
- 10/26 Allan Taylor
- 10/28 Jenna Brown
- 10/31 Gail Ives



*Community Pasta Dinner
& Open House*



October Newsletter - World Service Committee - God's Love in Action

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV

Opportunities for Giving of your Time and Resources – The Needs are Great!!



Clothing is needed for refugee children from newborns to adolescents. Donations are being accepted at the Welcome Center in the School Registration section at the Westfield Public Schools Office, 94 North Elm Street; it's on the first floor opposite Westwood restaurant. Lana, the district translator, will take your donations. The need is great!!.

Westfield Soup Kitchen: HELP!! Desserts are needed for our **October 24** meals. The meals are now being served at the Soup Kitchen, 101 Meadow St, Westfield. We are able to provide an assortment of desserts: brownies, cupcakes, sheet cakes, cookies, squares, and pies. Each donation must serve **24** people. If you are willing to bake a dessert, please contact Nancy Condon, Goodie Guru 413-297-0778 or email her at nancy@paddleforwater.net. Bring your desserts to the church on Tuesday, October 24th by 2:00 PM or take them to the Soup Kitchen between 4:00 - 4:30. If you can stay and help serve, that would be great.

We need **YOU!!** Assistance is needed for serving our meal at the Soup Kitchen. Please call Cindy at 568-2833 or Mayme to learn how you can help and when to arrive. Thank you!!

Franklin Avenue Elementary School Needs

The principal, teachers, staff, and children are very grateful for your support of their activities. Throughout the year, the teachers need TISSUES, PAPER TOWELS, and DISINFECTANT WIPES. The school nurse has requested SOCKS and UNDERWEAR for children in Kindergarten through Grade 4. You may put your donations for the school in the brightly colored box labeled Franklin Avenue School outside the church office.

One of Franklin's teachers, Jennifer Thielen, posted a request on Amazon Ask for items for her classroom. You can go directly to the link https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/38T454DZE0W28?ref=wl_share and purchase items. Jennifer will appreciate whatever you give to her classroom

October 15, 2023 - the 3rd Sunday of each month- Feed the Hungry Sunday: Items requested by Westfield Food Pantry: Rice, Tuna fish, Macaroni & cheese, Spaghetti sauce, Pasta, Cereal, Peanut butter, Jelly, Canned veggies: Corn, Green Beans, Peas, Carrots, Canned fruit, Soup, Juice, Coffee, Tea, Sugar.

The Box is located in the hallway next the the handicap ramp door.



GREAT IDEA from Facebook: Keep a "Blessing bag" in your car in case you see someone in need. You can make these up with items from the Dollar Tree Store, such as gloves, thermal socks, beef sticks, crackers, candy bars, toothpaste, toothbrush, wipes, deodorant, snacks and other items that may help someone who is homeless or in a bad way. It is just a thoughtful, inspiring thing to do Random Acts of Kindness. Annette Fuller

Please **PRAY** for:

the people of **Haiti** where violent gangs plague the populous

the people of **Maui** who have been affected by the wildfires

the people of **Morocco** who have been affected by earthquakes

the people of **Libya** who have been affected by the flooding

the people of the **United States and Canada** who have been affected by the hurricanes and their storm surges



Historian Report Sept. 12, 2023

Cindy Gaylord, Church Historian

This is a Part 2 of the report I began last month on gifts bequeathed to the church over the years. This is an interesting piece as we begin to think about our pledges to the church for this year.

"On April 3, 1855 a gift from Mr. Henry Sacket of a small portion of land on Main St. which was sold for \$100.00, the proceeds going to the church."

"On May 28, 1867, a gift by Mr. James Sacket of his house lot on the west side of Broad St. at approximately the corner of Bush St. which was sold the same year and the proceeds, \$1,111.50 given to the Church."

"During the same year Mr. Sacket gave other land then located immediately south of the present city hall on which had stood the old conference house, which was sold and the proceeds, \$350.00, given to the Church."

"About 1869 - a gift by Hon. Edward Wyllys Taylor, a descendant of Rev. Edward Taylor, of the Rev. Edward Taylor memorial tablet erected in the church auditorium."

"About 1869 - a memorial tablet of the same design as the Rev. Edward Taylor tablet to the Rev. Emerson Davis, D.D. by his devoted parishoners."

"On March 5, 1883, it was voted in church meeting to authorize the purchase "of a suitable receptacle for the old Taylor Bible." Inquiries were made to the American Wing, Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Yale University Library, and Mr. Harold T. Dougherty, former librarian, and a search has been made in the vaults of the banks of Westfield and throughout all of the known closets and boxes of First Church without finding any trace of this Bible."

"In 1904 a gift of "The Reverend Edward Taylor Bible" by Rev. John H. Lockwood, D.D. In a service preached in 1904 Mr. Lockwood mentions this Bible as having been given to the church 25 years earlier and then (1904) placed in a bank deposit box."

(No mention is made of the whereabouts of this Bible from 1869-1904)

Continued next month...

Christian Fellowship
sponsors

POTLUCK DINNER



Come together for delicious food at 5:00 PM followed at 6:30 by the "Musically Married" duo -Peter and Laura Hicks - singing show tunes, favorites from the 40's, patriotic songs and spirituals

Wednesday
October 11

1st Congregational Church
18 Broad Street
Westfield, MA

To reserve a seat, sign up on
bulletin board or call:
413-568-2833

*First Congregational Church of Westfield
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