



First Congregational Church of Westfield September 2023

Runners, Take Your Marks...

As you read our September newsletter, the children have returned to school, Labor Day weekend is here, and plans are being made to start up a "new year" of spiritual and recreational activities at First Congregational Church of Westfield. Here are just some of the things that will happen this year.

Our Interim Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries, Janet St. Jean, has been hard at work as she has gathered her team in an effort to re-establish our church school program as well as to introduce families to our church. We hope to take the enthusiasm with which our summer "Make A Joyful Noise" program initiated and carry it through to our Faith Formation and Family Ministries program. (I find it invigorating as we learn that families come in all shapes and sizes.)

The Music Committee and our Director of Music Ministries, Allan Taylor, have been setting up their year to continue the tradition of an excellent music program here at First Church. Plans are being made for our holiday concert as well as other exciting events this year.

It is our hope that we will have either a Bible Study or Book Study in place for mid-September that will run until Advent. Then we can look at the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament as we prepare for Christmas. Your Pastor will be at Southwick Village every week to bring those residents together in prayer and fellowship.

There is room for everyone to be an active member in some manner this year. Our Church World Missions committee will be in full swing with local and global opportunities in which you can participate. Membership/Fellowship Committee is excited to offer some programming this year to bring us together. Our Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe is always on the search for new volunteers as we make our mission known here in Westfield.

This is NOT an exclusive list; I know there are many other exciting ways that you can participate this year. Of course, we'd love to see you in church every Sunday as well. You are all cordially invited to attend and bring a friend as we celebrate "Welcome Back Sunday" with a special service, the beginning of our church school classes, and breakfast during our coffee hour.

As they say at the start of every race, "Runners, take your marks, get set, GO!" I'll happily huff and puff alongside with you.

Peace and love,

Paul

Rev. Paul Nesbit, Pastor

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

Appalachian Trail Magic – July 21st in Sheffield: Alice Flyte, Cindy Gaylord, and Martha Roman represented First Congregational Church at Trail Magic this year. They served 19 hikers from all over the United States and the world who were hiking the Appalachian Trail. The hikers were very appreciative of the food, drinks, fellowship, and the opportunity to rest. They are courageous people who had fascinating stories.

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

Westfield Soup Kitchen: HELP!! Desserts are needed for our **September 26** 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, September 26th by 2:00 PM or take them to the Soup Kitchen between 4:00 - 4:30. If you can stay and help serve, your help would be appreciated.

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

Franklin Avenue Elementary School Needs

School begins August 30th. Jennifer Thielen, one of the teachers at Franklin has posted a request on Amazon Ask for items she needs for her classroom this year. You can go directly to the link and purchase those items.

This is the link: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/38T454DZE0W28?ref_=wl_share. Jennifer Thielen appreciates whatever you give to her classroom.

Get out your knitting needles & crochet hooks. Franklin Avenue School needs **mittens** for the cold weather.

As school begins and throughout the year, the teachers need Tissues, Paper Towels, and Disinfectant Wipes. The students will need Elmer's glue sticks, #2 pencils, 24 pk Crayola crayons, 12 pk Crayola Color Pencils, and 10 pk Crayola Washable Markers. Put your donations for the school in the brightly colored box labeled Franklin Avenue School outside the church office.

September 17, 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. Bring your donations with you to church on the third Sunday of the month.

Children's Clothing s needed for refugee children from newborns to Age 14; the children are small. In the past 30 days 120 children have been brought to a homeless shelter in Chicopee. St Mary's Parish Center at 519 Longmeadow St in Longmeadow is collecting the donations every Saturday from 8:30 AM -10:30 AM. 413-567-3124. The need is great!!.

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 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 meadow is collecting the donations every Saturday from 8:30 AM -10:30 AM. 413-567-3124. The need is great!!.

Please **PRAY** for the people of **Haiti** where violent gangs plague the populous, especially in cities and on roads connecting them. Because of the danger, Elisabeth Kennedy has not been able to return to HELO since last November. She reports that the summer vocational programs continue as usual at the orphanage. HELO is at a relatively safe distance from the center of Les Cayes. School will resume with caution soon.

Please **PRAY** for the people of Maui who have been affected by the wildfires. If you want to donate, go to <https://support.ucc.org/hawaii-wildfires> or <https://www.redcross.org/donate/donation.html/>; select Hawaii.

Deacon's Corner

The meaning of the phrase, "It takes a village" became abundantly clear when we opened Blessed Buys Thrift Shop in the Old Town Hall (OTH) a year ago. During the winter and spring of 2022, the shop was a dream that began to take shape as a small group of us began discussing the details needed to make our dream a reality. The church-owned OTH was rapidly becoming a financial burden with each passing year of vacancy. Our goal was to open a shop offering quality gently used clothing and home goods at affordable prices in order to raise the \$5,000 needed to cover the expenses for the upkeep of the building.

Our core group initially began with Carol Whalen, Mayme Lajoie, Judy Lyon, and Cindy Gaylord. We cleaned out the front four rooms of the OTH and using whatever tables, shelving, and clothes racks we could find, filled the rooms with beautiful items that had been donated. With a lot of help from people like Bob Brownlee, Cindy LaPlante, and Karen Kedzierski, we opened our doors in July 2022.

We quickly realized we needed a lot more help and put out an appeal to the church. We were delighted with the response as Barb and Doug James, Dorothy and Mike Cichonski, Tina Dunlop, Martha Roman, Janet St. Jean, Donna Dubour, Gail Ives, Jean Zimmerman, Lynn Brownlee, Steve and Christina Pierce, Anne Gelinas, Darlene Biggs, Ardelle Zych, Sharon Billings, Joyce Bard, Lisa Crean, Grace Connors, Julie Dimino, and Rev. Paul all answered the call. Bob, Doug, Rick, and Mike continue to provide the muscle and building skills for our ever-expanding display needs. Many church members generously come in often with donations and moral support

In April, we were able to "up our game" from an amateur to more professional look as we obtained gorgeous shelving units and clothing racks from the closed Rosewood store. Rick Gaylord, Greg Hamel, Jim Yesu, and Dorothy and Mike Cichonski gave up a Sunday afternoon and literally walked and rolled these pieces through downtown Westfield from Rosewood to Blessed Buys. We were quite a spectacle if you happened to drive by.

We are so grateful for all of the donations of new or like new items that continue to appear at our door each week. We are also given bags of gorgeous clothing every month from Soul Shine Consignment Shop. Our customers are amazed at the large selection of other items we offer, as well. Books, toys, household items, shoes, pocketbooks, craft supplies and fabric, home décor, and electronics to name just a few.

I think our favorite result of this shop is the friendships we all have made both among our selves and with our customers. We have really come to care about each other and those who come in on a regular basis and worry when we don't see them for a while. The gratitude on many faces at being able to purchase nice items at low prices is so heartwarming.

We far surpassed our goal of earning enough to cover the OTH expenses in our first year and were delighted to be able to help not only our church, but other non-profits in town with financial donations every quarter. We hope to continue our mission of making a difference in Westfield. It truly took a village, or, in our case, a church to make this project succeed. If you have not stopped in to say hi, please do! We would love to welcome you!

Cindy Gaylord



Make A Joyful Noise

June 2023

Special thanks to
All who made it possible



BLESSED BUYS THRIFT SHOP CELEBRATES ITS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On July 22, 2023, Blessed Buys Thrift Shop, 20 Broad Street in Westfield, celebrated their one year anniversary. The shop is run by volunteers from the First Congregational Church. Visitors on July 22nd had chance to win a gift card to a local grocery store and to Blessed Buys as well as shop special bargains. Thanks to donations made by members of local communities, the shop has been very successful and well received by our shoppers. Local families have donated all types of items which include clothing, jewelry, books, CD's and DVD's, dishes, glassware, kitchen items, sewing material and yarn, children's toys and books, lamps and small furniture. There are four rooms of like new and slightly used items. Each quarter 20% of our sales are donated to a local non-profit organization. Blessed Buys Thrift Shop is open every Thursday and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm.



Church School Committee

The Church School Committee would like to announce that Janet St Jean has agreed to be the Interim Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries. She will be developing the Sunday School Curriculum and coordinating activities and events for families. While doing this she will be assessing what it takes to have a program like this so that the church can move forward and hire a permanent leader

The Church School Committee has already had a very productive meeting with Janet and we are excited to be working with her. Our first project will be to clean up the Youth room on the third floor. We will be doing this on Saturday, Sept 2 at 9 AM. We would appreciate any volunteers to help carry down unusable furniture. A truck will be available to take unwanted items to the dump.

Church School will begin on September 10th with a lesson using Legos. There will be an Open House on Sat. September 16th 5-7 pm, with a pasta dinner, demonstration of the African Drums, face painting, tours and more. ALL ARE WELCOME!!

Other upcoming events will be a Halloween Party, a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving Dinner in November and caroling in December.

We are very excited to see this program come to life and many thanks to Janet for taking this on. *Gail Ives*



Special thanks to the Special Decorations Committee for Pentecost Sunday Decorations.

Christian Fellowship September 13th 11:30Am Stanley Park Westfield Westfield Bank Pavilion

Light Lunch will be provided.
Rain or Shine.

Please sign up on the sheet outside the church office.

After lunch we will hear more about the program being developed to attract families and children to our congregation. Janet St Jean, our Interim Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries will tell us about the First Church Sunday School program.

After our meeting, the group is free to enjoy the beauty of Stanley Park on their own.



Judy Lyon Setting up for the "Unified Worship" "Praise and Worship" on August 12th



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH INVITES YOU...

Community Pasta Dinner & Open House

IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN

Saturday, September 16th 5pm-7pm
18 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085

Create with LEGOs
Try out our African Drums
Have your face painted
Tour our Historic Building

FREE FOR ALL!

Share the excitement of meeting with your
neighbors - Bring a friend - Families welcome!



THE MOVEMENT OF THE SPIRIT

Make a joyful noise to the Lord all ye lands!
Serve the lord with gladness! Come before His
gates with praise and thanksgiving! ~ Psalm 100

STORYTELLING, AFRICAN DRUMMING, SINGING & LEGO CREATIONS

Imagine a Church School experience that gives us
a sense that God and the love of Jesus is
everywhere. We can be loud and vibrant, or
meditative and prayerful.

Check us out!

**HOMECOMING SUNDAY ~ SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2023
AT 9:30AM**

First Congregational Church
18 Broad Street, Westfield, MA

Janet St. Jean

Director Faith Formation and Family Ministries
janetstjean@comcast.net

**ALL AGES WELCOME ~ NURSERY CARE IS
AVAILABLE**

Historian's Report - August 8, 2023

Cindy Gaylord, Church Historian

This month's report comes from historical documents of the Committee on Legacies and Gifts to First Congregational Church of Westfield, found in our Historical Room. The following are entries which date back to the 1600s. In 1691, Cat. Roger Clapp made the following bequest: "I give out of my farm at Pochassic in Westfield fifty acres unto the inhabitants of that town towards the maintenance of an able minister in that town with this proviso: that they pay or cause to be paid two bushels of good wheat unto my dear wife in Boston yearly during her natural life."

Dec. 5, 1712- a bequest by Samuel Root (son of Thomas and Mary Gridley Root) of a substantial acreage of land on the south side of Franklin Street from Elm westerly and extending through the property on which Washington Street is now located. It is valued on his death at 279 pounds. A corporation was formed to hold the property in the name of Trustees of Ministerial Fund of Westfield, Massachusetts.

March 9, 1763- a legacy by the will of Capt. John Gunn of 200 pounds, the Executors being Deacon Eldad Taylor (son of Rev. Edward Taylor and Town Clerk) and Deacon John Shepard (from whom recent member, John Shepard, husband of BettyLou Shepard directly descended).

In 1785 Mr. Joshua Green of Boston made a present to the church of a "Bason" to be used for baptism and the Church voted appreciation to him for his kindness,

In 1802, Rev. Noah Atwater provided in his will for a legacy of \$20.00, provided a like amount was voted by the church members (which was voted in a meeting March 3, 1802) for more adequate utensils for the Lord's Table. (note: before the monies were spent, however, flagons were presented by Hon. Samuel Fowler. A flagon is a large container used to hold the wine for the Eucharist.)

Dec. 28, 1803, Hon. Samuel Fowler gave to the church two silver-plated Flagons as suitable vessels for the Communion Table, his initials being engraved thereon.

At a meeting on March 4, 1824, Hon. James Fowler, Executor, announced that by the will of the late Hon. Samuel Fowler, there was presented to the church two additional silver plated flagons and a silver plated basin.

Records are available as to the later presentation of one of the 1803 and one of the 1804 flagons and the basin to Plymouth Congregational Church of Minneapolis. Minn not long after its organization.

Finally, on an unknown date, presumably about 1833, a gift of the marble baptism font by an unknown donor, replaced the former silver basin previously used.



September Birthdays

9/1 Brian Polley

9/4 Marc Winer

9/4 Madeleine Hamel

9/7 Albert Cincotta

9/18 Samantha Albee

9/19 Diane Bray

9/23 Tracey Gamble

9/25 Elizabeth Niergarth

9/26 Bob Brownlee

9/27 Brad Alm

9/28 Beth Gamble

9/30 Mia Bray-Motley

Happy Birthday!

Please watch for weekly emails from First Church for an updated calendar of events. If you have not been receiving them or would like to please let the office know your email. Fccoutlook@outlook.com

WELCOME HOME SUNDAY

September 10th 9:30AM

Join us for Worship
Sunday School
All Ages Welcome
Nursery Care is Available

*First Congregational Church of Westfield
18 Broad Street
Westfield, MA 01085
Office (413) 568-2833*

