



The Newsletter
First Congregational Church of Westfield
November 2022



“Give thanks to the Lord who is good; the God’s mercy endures forever.”
(Psalm 118)

Dear Friends,

November is a time when we give thanks to God for all the wonderful things we have been given. Our church community has truly been blessed as we will welcome new members, have had the opportunity to offer hospitality in numerous ways, and give of ourselves to those who would otherwise go without. We use our gifts to help others as a means of spreading the Good News of the Reign of God.

In late October, we were able to host well over 200 people at our Halloween party. We provided games, crafts, dinner, costume parade and candy to all who wanted to participate. This took near Herculean efforts to prepare, carry out, and then clean up afterwards. Many thanks to those who were on hand to help!! We were also able to offer “extravagant welcome” to the Hampden Association of the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. The effort that went into that was equally impressive and the result of great planning and working to ensure that all went well.

Later this month we will welcome the Westfield Food Pantry’s Food Truck for their Thanksgiving meal. We will host those who choose to do so to have their dinner in our Fellowship Hall as our guests. This will be followed by an Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving in our Sanctuary where we will be asked to pray for unity, peace, and an end to hunger in our area. We will be asked to bring a monetary gift or a specific food item (stuffing, cranberry sauce, or gravy) to the service as an offering to the Westfield Food Pantry to assist others through the holiday season.

I continue to give thanks for all you continue to do as we grow our physical, spiritual, and financial energy so that we can spread the Good News of the Gospel in Westfield and surrounding communities.

Peace and love,

Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit





From the Moderator

We are blessed at First Church with an autumn season of renewal and great activity: among other things, our Church school programs have been restarted with great success, new members will be joining this month and we look forward to hosting once again the Christmas community concert.

There are several other items of less visibility, however, on which I would like to report to you. First, we are pleased that we were not asked by our Southwick sister church to revisit our worship time so that we will continue with the 9:30 AM time which has worked well over the last year.

Second, we continue to make slow but steady progress toward the sale of the Old Town Hall to a local nonprofit for reuse as affordable housing for veterans. We recently joined with the nonprofit to seek a zoning variance so that the first floor of the Old Town Hall can be used for residential housing. Funding for the project (which is never certain) will not be achieved until spring or summer of 2024 so any sale will not occur until then. You may recall that the Congregation voted to authorize the sale at our Annual Meeting last February and we are proceeding pursuant to that vote to apprise the Church Committee and all members of our progress.

Finally, we have had a Bylaws Review Committee which has, over the course of this year, spent many hours reviewing our current Bylaws and proposing some revisions. The proposal was approved by the Church Committee at its October meeting but now must go before the Congregation. We are planning an informational hearing on the proposal after church on November 12 and then a Special Congregational Meeting after church on December 10 at which time we will seek the Congregation's approval. Please take an opportunity to review the proposed Bylaws and attend the meetings which are scheduled.

Thank you and, as always, if you have any questions regarding these or other items of church business, please feel free to contact me or other members of the Church Committee. As a Congregational Church, ultimate authority rests with the members to whom the officers and Committee heads are responsible.

Steve Pierce
Moderator

Special Congregational Meeting Sunday December 10th 2023

According to the bylaws a Special Congregational Meeting of the Church may be called, as deemed necessary by the Church Committee or any ten (10) active members.

The Church Committee has called a special Congregational meeting on December 10th to approve changes to the By-laws.

A special Hearing will take place on November 12th following worship service to review the changes.

Copies of the By-Law changes are available by calling the church office 568-2833 or by getting in touch with a member of the By-law review committee. Steve Pierce, Darlene Biggs, Doug James and Bob Brownlee.

Budget Hearing December 10th

The Budget Committee will hold an Annual Budget Hearing immediately following church on Sunday December 10th. This meeting is to present the 2024 budget to church members. Everyone is invited to share their comments, concerns and insights at this hearing.

Once again this year we are planning a Luminaria display on the front steps of the Old Town Hall. The display will be in place on Christmas Eve and Christmas day. You can help us present this display by remembering a loved one or honoring a special person in your life. In each of the past years, the displays have been made up of over 100 Luminaria. A special Cresche Scene designed by Lisa Crean will also be part of the presentation. Forms will be available soon to help the First Congregational Church bring these special lights to the city of Westfield for the holiday season.



- 11/1 Bob Seher
- 11/2 Lisa Crean
- 11/3 Robert Bard
- 11/5 Michael Cichonski
- 11/6 Seth James
- 11/7 Greg Hamel
- 11/8 Ray Zenkert
- 11/10 Dorothy Cichonski
- 11/11 Phil Zych
- 11/12 Richard Grimaldi, Mayme Lajoie
- 11/12 Marie Marx
- 11/17 Sherry Balzano, Sarah Bray
- 11/20 Dina Slayton
- 11/21 Darlene Klaubert
- 11/28 Jack Tozzi
- 11/29 Tom Samwell

God Loves a Cheerful (and Faithful) Giver

As we head into a busy fall season here at church, we rely on income from pledges to support our ministries. Please keep your pledge up to date.



LOVE & REMEMBRANCE

LUMINARIA



**HELP US LIGHT A PATHWAY TO OUR DOORS
WITH LUMINARIA**

As we approach the Christmas Season

HONOR OR REMEMBER A LOVED ONE

WITH A LUMINARIA

\$5.00 EACH

Your name and your loved one's name

will appear on the Luminaria

Luminaria will be on display

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

In Memory/ Honor of:

Given By:

_____ Quantity @ \$5.00 each = \$_____

Total Donation: \$_____

Please make checks Payable to:

First Congregational Church

Please return to the Church Office by

December 17th

Remembrance Sunday November 5th

On the first Sunday of November, our 9:30 service will be a Service of Remembrance. During the service, there will be a Time of Remembrance when the names of those who have passed away during the past year will be read aloud. Their loved ones will be remembered in prayer. If you have lost a loved one during the past year (from November 2022 to the present), you are invited to bring a picture of your loved one to be displayed on a Remembrance Table in the church. For further information, please call the church office at 568-2833

Attention Committee Chairs

Committee Chairs are reminded to put your meeting dates on the church calendar, check your mailboxes each week, make sure lights are out and doors are locked after your meeting. Please remember the newsletter deadline is the 18th of each month.

Interested in Joining First Congregational Church ?

If you are interested in becoming a member of First Church, please call the church office 568-2833 to arrange a meeting with Rev. Paul.

You can learn more about our church and our ministries. Rev. Paul can also respond to questions you may have about our church.

New Members will be welcomed into the life of the church on Sunday, November 19th



Sunshine Baskets Sunday, November 19th

What a terrific way to show members of our church family that may be shut-in, ill or just unable to make it to church how much they are thought of. We encourage donations of items, time and money to make these baskets possible.

**Please bring gifts to church on
November 19th**



We are in need of the following items:

Fresh Fruit: Apples, Oranges, Pears and Bananas. Grapes

Dried Fruit: Apricots, Dates, Figs, Prunes and Raisins

Individual Wrapped items: Crackers, Muffins or Mini Breads, Cookies, Small gifts, Mints or Soft Candies, Small Jars of Jelly or Jam.

Monetary gifts are needed to defray the cost of supplies. (ribbon, containers, cards)

Blessed Buys

The Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe continues to do very well. Thank you to all who have donated items and helped out at the store. We are still in need of weekly volunteers who can spend 2-4 hours on either Thursdays or Saturdays between 10-2. If you haven't already, please stop by to visit. We think you will be pleasantly surprised!
Cindy Gaylord



Deacon's Corner November 2023 Mayme Lajoie

Twists and turns of life.

Many times I have thought to write about life but it always seems like a mammoth task. However, I realize that for much of my life I have not been the one in control. I grew up without many spoken rules. In Rev. Paul's sermon on October 8th he talked about following rules. The unspoken rules dictated my life and challenged me to be responsive to them.

The twists and turns of my life have often not been my choice. Growing up on the farm was not my choice but God's gift. What a gift!!! My paternal Grandfather was a devout Christian and a staunch advocate for following rules. They were never spoken but we all, 25 of my generation knew what they were.

When I chose to go to Teacher's College my mother said "Specialize" She had taught in a one room school for many years. During my one year at college, as required to become a teacher in Canada, I was approached by my Math teacher who said "I think I have a job for you". I was put on the telephone with the president of the Ontario School for the Deaf. I had never met a deaf child and few of my elderly family suffered hearing losses. Three months later my father put me on a train for my first teaching assignment. It was four hundred miles from home and I did not know anyone there. A major twist not of my planning. I never looked back!! But the unspoken rules went with me.

During a summer class I was in Northampton at the Clarke school for the deaf. During a swimming afternoon I met a young man who later became my husband and brought me to Massachusetts. At that time I had plans to go to Australia . That was in 1964. I didn't get to Australia until 2000. Who turned me that way?

Later I went to Westfield State College to get my State Teaching Certification. At that time there were too many teachers so I went to work with severe special needs children as a speech teacher. My success rate was very low. None of the children talked. I loved them and I always hoped they loved me. I'm certain they taught me more than I taught them. I feel God sent me there to continue with Grandpa's rules focusing on caring for God's children.

When Lisa and Chris decided to build a new house they suggested that I build with them. What a gift my being here has been. Having the joy of being with the family daily has enriched my life.

Through these twists and turns, and there were many more, I know that most of the turns have been with God's hand at the controls.

As I look around the church each day I see old friends, new friends, young and old. What would I do without that gift of Grandpa's unspoken rules that allowed me to live a God directed life ?

Life is a miracle. Each day we take a breath is a gift from God.

froG (forever rely on God)
Mayme Lajoie



On October 11th, Christian Fellowship hosted a Musical Pot Luck.

Special Thanks to guest "Musically Married" Duo Peter and Laura Hicks for a enjoyable Evening.



Annual Carol Festival

Save the date of Saturday, December 2, 2023 for the annual Carol Festival

Join the choir, handbell choir and New England Brass as we usher in the Christmas Season.

The concert begins at 3:00 and will be followed by a reception in the Dining Room.

We are in need of cookies for the reception. Bakers, please see Michelle Downs or Julie Kraus, reception coordinators if you would be willing to bake and/or help for the reception.



We had perfect weather for the River Walk. Special thanks to Alice Flyte .

The "Upper Room" A Daily Devotional Guide
Is available from First Church.

Please pick your copy up outside the church
office or ask your Deacon for a copy

THE
UPPER
ROOM

First Congregational Church Of Westfield

Presents

The Annual Carol Festival

First Congregational Church

Saturday, December 2nd at 3:00 PM



This year the Festival will again feature the dedicated members of the First Church Choir and Soloists, directed by Allan Taylor, along with the glorious sounds of The New England Brass Quartet.

This concert is free and open to the public. A freewill offering will be gratefully accepted at the door. After the concert, join us for a reception of sweet holiday confections.

Summer Camp...

This summer I attended a week of camp at Silverlake thanks to scholarship support I received from the light bearers scholarship fund. The week at camp was a lot of fun. It was a great opportunity to disconnect from technology and the stress of life. There were a lot of fun activities including swimming at the waterfront, hikes, and 9 square. The week I chose to attend was a video production class. We made a lot of videos and a soap opera and had a lot of fun in the process. I met a lot of great friends over the week at camp. I would highly recommend going to Silverlake for anyone looking for something fun to do over the summer.

Noah Perkins

Hello from HELO -Haiti

Elisabeth Kennedy's July/September newsletter can be read on the bulletin board – Mission section – at church. You will note very serious student faces and a few smiles. These are some of the graduates from the 2023 class. I commend the letter to your reading.

The annual HELO banquet/fundraiser will take place on November 4th in Middletown, CT. There is always good food, lovely people and interesting views of a year at HELO. Live music, dancing and comments by HELO children make it an exciting evening. Funds raised will help HELO to continue its nurturing care of children in the orphanage and in their neighborhood.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Ecumenical Community

Thanksgiving Service

Tuesday, November 21st 2023
6:30PM

First Congregational Church
18 Broad Street, Westfield, MA

All are welcome!



**Kid's
NIGHT OUT**
MUSIC-FOOD-FUN
REGISTER ONLINE AT
ATONEMENTWESTFIELD.ORG
NOVEMBER 11TH
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
36 COURT STREET, WESTFIELD MA
AGES 3-12 ~ ALL ARE WELCOME!

Christian Fellowship

Wednesday,

November 8th

1PM

Welcomes

Westfield High School Chorus
and Dance group

For many years they have brought us an amazing performance from the energetic and talented young folks. If you have seen this before, we know you will want to be there. If you have not seen this before, you are in for a treat for sure!!

All are welcome refreshments will be served.

November 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

Thank You Notes – Cards and Letters are on the Bulletin Board

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield – Thank you for your generous donation which will go to supporting youth in our community.

National Military Family Association – Many thanks to the First Congregational Church of Westfield for your gift to NMFA.

Kamp for Kids – On behalf of all of us at BHN's Kamp for Kids, thank you for your continued support.

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. Refugee children are coming from countries around the world. The need is great!!.

Franklin Avenue Elementary School Needs

Cold and windy weather will be here before we realize it. And, the children at Franklin will need **mittens**. Whether you want to knit, crochet, or purchase them, the school will appreciate your gift. Little children lose mittens, so extras are helpful.

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. The principal, teachers, staff, and children are very grateful for your support of their needs and activities.

Westfield Soup Kitchen: HELP!! Desserts are needed for our **November 27th** 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 nan-cy@paddleforwater.net. Bring your desserts to the church on Tuesday, November 27th by 2:00 PM or take them to the Soup Kitchen between 4:00 - 4:30. It would be great if you could stay and help.

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

November 19, 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, Juice, Coffee, Tea, Sugar, Cooking oil, Canned veggies: Corn, Green Beans, Peas, Carrots, Canned fruit, Soup, Crackers.

Please **PRAY** for:

- the people of **Israel and Palestine** who have been affected by the violence in the Gaza Strip
- adults and children who live where violence and hate are common
- individuals and families who have been affected by the wildfires or earthquakes
- adults and children who have been affected by flooding, hurricanes, and storm surges

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You get the full value.



The brand gives back

No extra money comes out of your pocket.



Your organization earns

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Jen H., earns for hockey

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First Congregational Church of Westfield

Enrollment Code 2B3C7L7734826

For more information contact

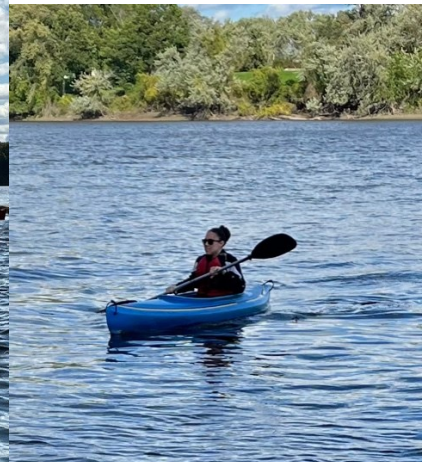
Cindy LaPlante 568-2833



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Kayaking on the Connecticut
With the expert assistance of Nancy Condon and her husband Tom, 17 intrepid souls launched their kayaks on the Connecticut River on Sunday, October 8th. The weather was gorgeous, spirits were high, and **NO ONE** capsized! We're looking forward to another trip in the spring.



First Congregational Church Of Westfield



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 7:00 PM Deacons Mtg	2 10-2 Blessed Buys	3	4 10-2 Blessed Buys
5 9:30AM Worship Service Service of Remembrance Communion Sunday Coffee Hour Team #2	6 7:00 PM Church School Committee	7	8	9 10-2 Blessed Buys	10	11 10-2 Blessed Buys
12 9:30AM Worship Service 10:30 Am By-Laws Changes Hearing Coffee Hour Team #3	13	14 7:00 PM Church Committee	15	16 10-2 Blessed Buys	17	18 10-2 Blessed Buys
19 9:30AM Worship Service New Members Coffee Hour Team #4	20	21 6:30PM Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service	22	23 	24	25 Blessed Buys Closed
26 9:30AM Worship Service 10:30 Decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas Coffee Hour Team #5	27	28 3-5:30 Community Table	29	30 10-2 Blessed Buys		