



The Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Westfield

May 2024



On my ride in to church this morning, I took notice that trees had begun the bud process with leaves. Before we know it, we will be gifted with trees that give us “new life” with majestic leaves as well as much needed shade in the heat of the summer. We are blessed to live in Western Massachusetts where the climate allows us to enjoy (or endure) all four seasons.

As we are currently in the season of Easter, this year, Pentecost will be celebrated in the month of May. Our churches will be resplendent in red as we yet again hear the story from the Acts of the Apostles of the first Pentecost. Hopefully, we will feel the breeze of the wind as the Holy Spirit moves and shakes us to renew the face of the earth in both Southwick and Westfield. This does not mean that the Spirit has been dormant in us; in fact, it is an opportunity for us to celebrate!

We must celebrate how we have responded to the call of the Holy Spirit as both churches continue to find new ways to fling open the doors to let the breeze in through our “Extravagant Welcome” of new people. We saw the Holy Spirit at work in the celebration of Easter as both churches welcomed more people than they have in a long time.

The Holy Spirit was truly at work on April 14 as First Congregational Church came to Southwick Congregational’s 250th Anniversary celebration to serve the meal and do the dishes. The Holy Spirit is at work with Southwick Congregational as we continue to welcome people to our dinners at no cost, including the Anniversary Dinner. Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe in Westfield and Henrietta’s Thrift Shop in Southwick both minister to people as our volunteers are “church” for so many who come through the doors. For three and a half months, we were able to provide a free lunch and a warm place to eat it at First Congregational Church; the Holy Spirit moved us to work with Peppermill Catering as well as volunteers from the Episcopal Church of the Atonement and First United Methodist Church. Truly the Holy Spirit continues to work double time!

As we embrace the season of spring, let us also embrace the season of Pentecost as we allow the Holy Spirit to take us, move us, and shake us (gently) to join in the breeze.

Peace and love,

Paul

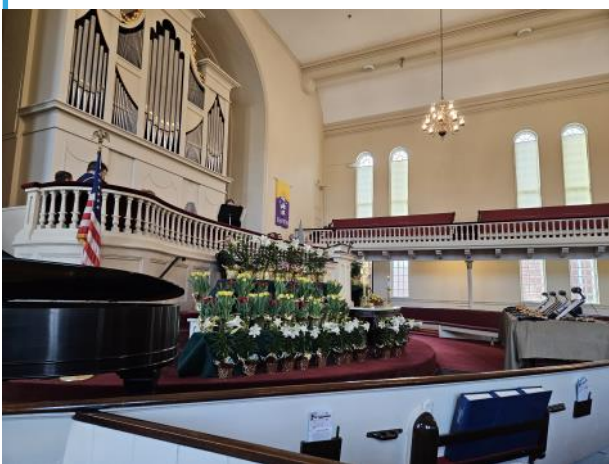
Rev. Paul Nesbit
Pastor



Deacon's Corner May 2024

Do you ever get asked by new acquaintances, "What Church do you go to?" I do & I proudly respond "First Congregational Church of Westfield in the center of Town". I often get the response "ohhh - what a beautiful Church! I've gone to their Christmas concerts". I couldn't agree more. After attending our church for over 5 decades, I'm still in awe of how beautiful our church is - the decorative ceiling, stunning organ & comfortable pews in the sanctuary; the inviting dining room where coffee hour is held weekly as well as special dinners; the upstairs chapel & classrooms. More recently, the sanctuary decorated with the lilies and tulips (pictured) was just so beautiful. But, with all of it's beauty, the Church is not just a building to me - it's the people. I can recall a verse of a song that was taught to us in Sunday school by Miss Dorothy Moore that resonates with me always "The Church is not a building, the Church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the Church is the people" (words by Donald S Marsh, 1972). I feel it's important to meet with our Church family in & outside our beautiful building. This past month I invited the Diaconate to my home for our monthly meeting for a potluck dinner (pictured). I'm so proud to be part of a committee with such wonderful people. We shared personal stories & had good laughs getting to know each other better. It gave us the opportunity to speak openly & discuss how we can better serve you as your Diaconate. As we approach Pentecost Sunday on May 19th, I'll be thinking about this verse from 1 Peter 2:5 (NRSV) "Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".

Love & Blessings, Martha Scavotto



Church School news for May Newsletter

The Thunderbirds hockey outing was a great success – about 24 youth and adults attended. This was organized by Michelle Winer in partnership with Membership/Fellowship.

The Bowling pizza party was great fun – about 15 people came. Bowlers ranged in age from 9 – 85. Rev Paul had the high score of the night. Many of us were just glad we didn't throw all gutter balls.

There will be a Disc golf and pizza party on Sunday May 19th

There will be an intergenerational service on June 9th. This will be the last Sunday morning meeting of the youth till Fall. A kayak/canoe outing on the Connecticut River is also planned for the 9th. Please see Amy Platt if interested

Vacation Bible School will be held on July 8th - 12th 6 – 8 PM. The theme is: Diving into Friendship with God. Volunteers are needed!! Please see Amy or Gail Ives if you can help.

The Committee is trying to schedule events or meetings for the youth besides Sunday Morning at least once every month. We hope to have a pool party or picnic at a lake in August, possibly star gazing in September, Halloween Party in October and the showing of Charlie Brown Christmas in November. Help and ideas are always welcomed to make this happen.

Lastly one of the traditions at First church is to recognize our graduating seniors from High School and anyone that has received their Driving License in the last year. Please let me know if you have any children or grandchildren that are graduating or have gotten their driver's license. My e-mail is dmg1952@comcast.net.

Gail Ives, Chair
Church School Committee



May Newsletter- World Service Committee (WSC)

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

Thank You

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen: Thank You to each person who has baked a dessert, assisted with meal preparation, delivered meals, and/or assisted in serving the meal. We could not serve the community without your generosity and assistance.

Easter Donations: Thank you all for your generous donations this Easter offering; the funds will greatly help those in need.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING OF YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES

Westfield Food Pantry: May 19th, 2024 - 3rd Sunday of each month: Each month we bring items for the Westfield Food Pantry. Items that are requested include Spaghetti sauce, Pasta, Soup, Crackers, Macaroni & Cheese, Rice, Tuna fish, canned veggies: Corn, Green Beans, Peas, Carrots, Cereal, Canned Fruit, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Cooking oil, Juice, Coffee, Tea, and Sugar.

The **2nd Sunday** of each month a World Service committee member will make an announcement for the items that are short supply at the Food Pantry. On April 14th we requested Jelly and Marshmallow Fluff for donation on April 21st. Elizabeth Eastman will be advising "WSC".

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen - May 28th, 2024 - 4th Tuesday of the month: We will need desserts for the meal: cupcakes, cookies, brownies, sheet cakes are greatly appreciated by those who share a meal at the soup kitchen. Each donation must serve **24** people. If you are willing to bake a dessert, please contact **Nancy Condon**, Goodie Guru, at 413-297-0778 or at nancy@paddleforwater.net. On Tuesday, May 28th bring your dessert to the church by 1:00pm or take it to the Soup Kitchen at 101 Meadow St between 4:00 & 4:30. It would be great if you could stay and help, **CALL Cindy LaPlante or Mayme Lajoie** to learn how you could help.

HELO Haiti: The donations we gave each year have helped the young people grow in their life. WSC has been in touch with Elizabeth Kennedy about our donation to HELO Haiti. She is still able to take donations but no other items at this time. Jennifer Waldorf will continue to be in touch with Elisabeth Kennedy about HELO's needs.

Prayers are so needed to bring peace back to Haiti.

Monthly Highlights: Each month your “WSC” will have a highlight about one or two of our missions.

This month we’re highlighting: Boys and Girls Club of Greater Westfield and the Springfield Rescue Mission

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Westfield: Nurtures young people’s self-esteem by offering programs that give youth a sense of belonging, usefulness, influence and competence.

Our Mission:

To inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.



Springfield Rescue Mission: Their goal is to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the hungry, homeless, addicted, and poor by introducing them to Christ and helping them apply the Word of God to every area of their lives.

The lives you help save and change in Jesus’ name this season and throughout the year are so grateful for your positive impact and the HOPE your gifts and prayers make possible!

JOE



“I am so grateful I’m here, in a safe place, and that I can sleep at night.”

NATE



“I can now see that God is changing me and I am not responding like my old self.”

SCOTT



“Being at the Rescue Mission has been a life-changing experience for me.”

CARLOS



“I appreciate all the help you have given me!”

Prayers: Prayers are needed in so many areas of the World. Please pray for Peace and God’s Spirit to touch the lives of Country Leaders that peace can be restored.

World Service Committee,
Ray Salois, Nancy Condon, Gail Ives, Jean Zimmerman,
Dorothy Cichonski, Jennifer Waldorf

Come Join Our
BIBLE

STUDY

Bible Study will resume on Thursday, May 2 and May 9 at 2:30 PM at First Congregational Church in Westfield and 7:00 PM at Southwick Congregational Church.



Four Score and More Luncheon

The Deacon's will be hosting the Annual Four Score and More Luncheon on Saturday May 4th 2024.

11 AM

Worship followed by lunch, to honor all our 80+ members.

Help is needed to honor these members.

Please call the church office 568-2833

or Barbara James (413) 562-3046

if you can help.

Interested in Joining First Church

Or learning more about us ?

Please call the church office 568-2833 and let Cindy know you are interested in joining.

New Members will meet with Rev. Paul by appointment.

May Birthdays

5/01 Michelle Hamel
5/02 Casey James
5/08 Ami James
5/09 Louise Thompson
5/10 Betsy Gaylord
5/10 Mike Stefanik
5/16 Joyce Bard
5/16 Tina Dunlop
5/18 Martha Scavotto
5/21 Gavin Connors
5/21 Karen Zenkert
5/22 Roger Zimmerman
5/28 Jennifer Barkyoumb
5/29 Barbara James
5/30 Maddie Sylvester



Christian Fellowship

May 8th 1PM

"May Baskets"



Please join us

Refreshments will be served

Continuing Education Fund

The Committee for the Bishop, Seher, Swartz and Taylor, Moore Continuing Education Fund is now accepting applications for the **2024-2025** school year. Please obtain an application from the church office. Completed forms may be returned to the church office. All applications must be returned by **5/31/24**.

Also, should anyone desire to make a gift or bequest to the scholarship fund, please see Cindy LaPlante, or you may pick up an information pamphlet outside the church office.

Cindy LaPlante, Daniel Koehne, Gail Ives

Memorial Flowers

Each Sunday our sanctuary is decorated with fresh floral arrangements on the altar. There are many people and several groups in the Church who give flowers as a memorial, special celebration or holiday remembrance. Some have given flowers for many years around the same date or Sunday. This is such a beautiful way to think of people! After each service, the flowers are made into smaller bouquets which are given to sick, bereaved and shut-in members. If you would like to give Altar flowers for a particular Sunday, please call the Church Office (568-2833) for more information. The cost of an arrangement is \$25.00.

Light Bearers Scholarship Fund

Christian Fellowship of First Congregational Church has a special fund for the youth of the church who are interested in furthering their spiritual education and or experience.

The Light Bearers Scholarship Fund, which has been perpetuated by the Christian Fellowship and established by Miss Lucy Gillette, is for the youth of our church who wish to participate in Bible Camp, Religious Retreats, Missions or any event that is church related.

Youth who wish to apply for financial assistance may obtain a form from the church office or an officer of Christian Fellowship and submit it along with a letter of intent.



First Congregational Church of Westfield

Vacation Bible School

July 8th - 12th 6 – 8 PM.

Volunteers are needed!!

**Please see Amy Platt or
Gail Ives if you can help.**

Or call the church office 568-2833



Our many thanks to both Dorothy Cichonski and Julie Kraus for their enlightening explanation of the multi-faceted services the Red Cross provides to those in need. The Red Cross is one of the organizations we support in our mission donations.

Many thanks to Deb Alm for the beautiful and delicious Easter bread she baked for the Maundy/Thursday Communion. It was a nice addition to this meaningful service.



Thank you to all who participated in our service of Tenebrae. Our readers from both Westfield and Southwick created a very moving and meaningful Maundy/Thursday service.

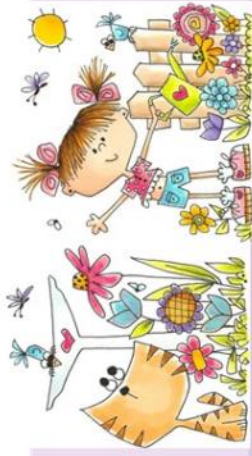




Many of us were thrilled to be a part of the Southwick Congregational Churches 250th Anniversary. The service, speeches and delicious dinner were enjoyed by everyone in attendance. We were pleased to offer a hard-working crew who served the 100+ plus dinners following the service and managed the cleanup. Congratulations to our sister church and its many years of serving as the heart and soul of Southwick.



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

MAY 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 Am Fellowship Communion Sunday Coffee Hour Team # 2			1 7:00 PM Diaconate	2 10-2 Blessed Buys 2:30PM Bible Study	3	4 10-2 Blessed Buys 11 AM Four Score and More Luncheon
5 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 Am Fellowship Communion Sunday Coffee Hour Team # 2	6	7 7:00 PM Church Council	8 1:00 PM Christian Fellowship	9 10-2 Blessed Buys 2:30PM Bible Study	10	11 10-2 Blessed Buys
12 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 Am Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 3	13	14 7:00 PM Church Council	15	16 10-2 Blessed Buys	17	18 10-2 Blessed Buys
19 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 Am Fellowship Food Pantry Sunday Coffee Hour Team # 4	20	21	22	23 10-2 Blessed Buys	24	25 10-2 Blessed Buys
26 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 Am Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 5	27  MEMORIAL DAY	28 3:00 PM Soup Kitchen	29	30 10-2 Blessed Buys	31	

Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe



Thursday and
Saturday
10AM-2PM

20 Broad Street
Westfield MA 01085



Mission of:
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Of Westfield
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