



The Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Westfield

June 2024



Festive Visioning

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Festival of Homiletics in Pittsburgh, PA. Homiletics is the art or practice of preaching. I understand that this would only seem “festive” to a group of ordained ministers, but it was filled with beautiful worship services, great singing, mostly fantastic sermons, and some stirring lectures that affirmed what I do here in both churches. Fear not, I also learned a few things along the way, but you won’t see any drastic changes.

Besides the “festival” aspect of my time there, I was also able to connect with ministers from different denominations throughout the country and Canada. We were also afforded the opportunity to see the city of Pittsburgh and what it had to offer. It will come to no surprise to most that I sampled various restaurants in the area. One place was a former Catholic church that had been converted into a brewery and restaurant. They kept a great amount of the architecture while being respectful to the memory of the church.

While eating and enjoying the company of new friends, I couldn’t help but think what went through the minds and hearts of the parishioners when their church closed and needed a new purpose for the building. Before anyone gets nervous, neither First Congregational nor Southwick Congregational is on the brink of closure. It did get me to think, though, that we need to plan for the immediate future, mid-future, and far futures of our church buildings and communities.

Over the summer months, I invite you to engage in some time of reflection and discussion as to where you see our churches in the next five years, ten years, and even twenty years from now. Granted, some of us won’t be here in twenty years; we have done a wonderful job of ensuring that our churches are maintained and will be used in even twenty years. But think beyond what will happen to the buildings and what our ministry will look like even after we are gone. Take into consideration that we are still called to worship each week but what can we do with our buildings to further the establishment of the reign of God in the greater Westfield-Southwick area.

As we gear up towards a time of rest and relaxation, please know that Holy Spirit is constantly at work in us. I encourage us all to listen to what the Holy Spirit may have to say as we envision our awesome future together. We can engage in a Festival of Visioning!

Peace and love,

Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor



Deacon's Corner
June 2024



For those that don't know me - My name is Beverly Melville Hamble. My parents belonged to the church since I was 3 years old. Donald Hazel Donald Burgess and Beverly Jane. We loved this church. My brother and I went through the Sunday school. Later I helped in the Sunday school and had my own class. (Remember "cute little Linka Fredrickson Hank") We had a beautiful candle light wedding here Dec. 12, 1953. officiated by Parson Cowles. Cliff was in the service in Alaska - I was a senior at Worfield State College when I graduated - I found him and taught 1 year there. We came back to Worfield and participated in all church affairs. I loved it all - and our church family. I saved all my Cliff's letters he wrote to me this I thought you'd might enjoy. My best friend during school and church was Joan Hansen. Joan was dating Donald "Red" Holmes. Joan wanted Red to help Cliff ask me out for a date and what a little wise squirt you were. and acted as though I was just a jerk trying to dissuade. I remember how Red Holmes almost begged me to take you out. I also realized that one of the big reasons that you went out with me of

① one that you wanted to go to the prom
and ② you figured me as a high school senior -
He had 69 wonderful married years - + 5 going together
We love the church - consider it our family -
Let's keep going caring for everyone - Cliff and
I will love you all - try to do my best -



Pastoral Congregational Relations Committee (PCRC)

- On Sunday April 14th and 21st we distributed and collected a questionnaire that addressed peoples view of how our church is doing.
- We received 55 responses and were very pleased.
- Darlene Biggs has created a document that includes all the results and comments.
- The committee has not spent time reviewing the responses and will do that when we next meet.
- By Quickly scanning the results the overall responses are positive.
- Some comments may be referred to other committees for them to address.
- A number of comments (5/12) as for consideration of Rev Paul Being Full-time.
- The otherall results have provided a lot of information,
- Participants were not asked to sign the survey.



Our "Four Score and More" Luncheon
A First Congregational Church tradition for over 50 years!!

Our "Four Score" luncheon held on May 4th, was a great gathering of our "over 80" Church family members and dedicated volunteers. The event began with a sanctuary service led by Rev. Paul that included Communion and beautiful music provided by Janet St. Jean and soloist, Grace Chan.

A delicious meal prepared and served by our own chef Cindy LaPlante and her kitchen assistants awaited the group following the service. The traditional crowning of this year's Queen, Betsy Gaylord and King, Bob Rising was a highlight of Rev Paul's opening remarks. The afternoon was filled with delicious food, conversation, and a chance to honor our senior church family members.

Many thanks to all those that helped make the afternoon such a special occasion.





Church School Committee. – June Newsletter

The last day the Church School will meet before summer break is June 9th. There will be an intergenerational service on that day.



We would like to congratulate our High School graduates Mya Bray-Motley, Ella Hamel, Casey James, Emery James, and Jimmy Salzer. We would also like to acknowledge any youth that has received their driving license in the past year. Please let Gail Ives or the church office know if there are any other graduates or if anyone that has received their license.

The church school program has greatly expanded this year thanks to Janet St. Jean and Amy Platt. They have created a program that is inspiring and fun. The children love retelling Bible stories with Legos and adding music with the drums. I would also like to thank the volunteers: Amy Platt and Janet St Jean for taking charge and leading this group, Dan Koehne and Jim Yesu for organizing the youth retreat and other youth activities, and Jen Barkyoub for always being there. Also thanks to Rev Paul for supporting our program. I would like to also thank the congregation for all their support at the activities like cooking, making popcorn, setting up, cheerleading and chaperoning. Our program could not be done without your help.

Looking forward we will have a VBS program on July 8-12 from 6-8PM. The theme is Scuba "Diving into Friendship With God". Please contact the office or Amy Platt if you can help or want your child to attend. This program is open to all children so please bring a friend.

The Church School Committee also thanks Linda Hauk for her donation to the Youth program in memory of Rick Hauk .

Please watch the newsletter and weekly updates for upcoming activities in the summer.

The church school committee will also be making sure that they adhere to the new Safe Church guidelines. We wish everyone a safe and happy summer!



Gail Ives



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





A huge thank you to everyone who made our Monday meals possible while our truck was in winter storage. Thank you to [First Congregational Church of Westfield, MA](#) and [Rev. Paul Nesbit](#) for hosting the meal. Thank you to [Peppermill Catering LLC](#) and Chef Marty for cooking so many delicious meals. Thank you to the volunteers from First Congregational, [First United Methodist Church Westfield](#), and [The Episcopal Church of the Atonement](#) who came every week to serve the meal. We have such amazing community here in Westfield! ❤️



On Sunday, April 28th We were delighted to welcome guest musicians, the Westfield State University Chorale, directed by Scott Bailey to our sanctuary, and we hope to see and hear them again in the future.



To the left Rail trail walk Sunday May 19

Alice Flyte led a group of walkers on a tour of the along the Columbia Greenway Railtrail to view the Heroes mural.

Thank you Alice



June Newsletter- World Service Committee

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 for this Easter offering, the total funds donated was \$3570.00. The funds will greatly help those in need.

Thank you letters: Thank you Letters for First Church donations were received from Boys/Girls Club, Domus, Food Pantry, Kamp for Kids. The letters will be on the Bulletin board for your viewing.

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 WSC will make an announcement for the items that are short supply at the Food Pantry. Elizabeth Eastman will be advising WSC each month of the short supply needs. This month we are asking for Breakfast items like breakfast bars, pop tarts, oatmeal packets, mini muffins or fruit cups.

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – May 28, 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 Tuesday 28rd bring your dessert to the church by 2:00pm or take it to the Soup Kitchen at 101 Meadow Street between 4:00 & 4:30. It would be great if you could stay and help, **CALL Cindy or Mayme** to learn how you could help.

HELO Haiti: Prayers are needed for Peace in Haiti. God is good and Prayer works.

Monthly Highlights: Each month your WSC will highlight one or two of our missions.



This month we are highlighting: Westfield Food Pantry and United Church of Christ.

WESTFIELD FOOD PANTRY:

The Missions of the Greater Westfield Food Pantry are to provide food to the needy people of the Greater Westfield area and to foster self-sufficiency in individuals through encouragement, support, guidance and education, to identify and address the root causes of hunger in our community and strive to provide long-term solutions.

In addition to food assistance, the Westfield Food Pantry serves WSU Community Garden, Westfield High School Athletic Food program, Greater Westfield & Western Hampden County Medical Reserve Corps, Westfield Public School Pantries.

If you have questions of how you can help, contact Elizabeth Eastman. Your Donations of money helps the Food Pantry to purchase items at a better cost than most of us can find.

Prayers for Westfield Food Pantry are always needed.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

The Mission of UCC emphasizes God's continuing testament in the world with your donations to help the wider church with UCC Youth camps, youth events, scholarships UCC Clergy continu-

ing education, clergy gatherings, scholarships and resources. United in Spirit and inspired by God's Love and Grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

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



Historic Walk of Downtown Westfield Sunday, June 9th 1PM

Join us as we learn about some of the monuments, statues, buildings, and markers you have probably passed for years, but never knew anything about. It is an easy, level ground walk that will last about an hour. We will meet on the front steps of the church at 1:00 PM. Please bring a bottle of water and plenty of questions I'll try to answer! Thanks, Cindy Gaylord

Dear Church Friends,

Thank you also much for the lovely "Senior" Luncheon—it was so classy and so wonderful to see so many friends.

I am truly grateful to be a member of this Church

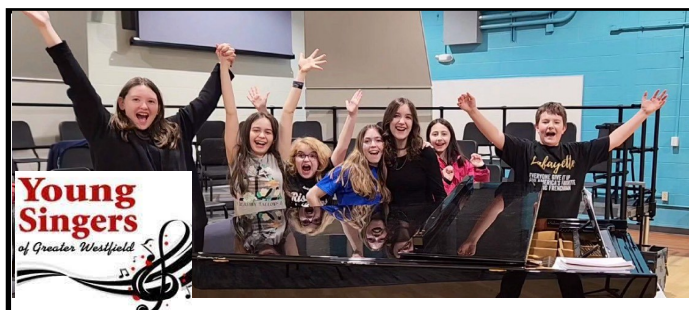
Elizabeth (Betty) Nergarth



Special Thanks to People from 1st Church of Westfield for all the work put into our celebration dinner. You made our day so much more enjoyable

Karen Brzezinski

Southwick Congregational



SPRING CONCERT

June 9, 2024 at 2:00 PM

**First Congregational Church
18 Broad Street, Westfield, MA**

Young Singers of Greater Westfield Kerry Cipoletta, Artistic Director with **The Handbells of First Congregational Church**, Allan Taylor, organ and piano four-hands, and **Scott Bailey**, piano four-hands

www.ysgw.org

Event is free and open to the public.
(Donations gratefully accepted.)

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 as well as people from out of town who give flowers as a memorial, special celebration or holiday remembrance. After the 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.



Christian Fellowship

Annual Spring Luncheon

WEDNESDAY, June 12th 11:30AM

At Tigers Pride

(Westfield Technical Academy)

Cost: \$13.00

Please call :

Judy Lyon (413) 326-4669

for reservations or

more information.



Happy Birthday



6/01-Nancy Rowe

6/02-Karen Lajoie

6/04-Linda Hauk

6/10-Nancy Grimaldi

6/10-Maddie Balzano

6/11-Emery James

6/12-C.J. Crean

6/13-Cynthia Reynolds

6/15-David Wolanin

6/16-Karena Downs

6/20-Joyce Andrews

6/21-Ed LaPlante

6/28-Joyce Piper-McLean

6/28-Debbie Grobe



Saturday June 29, 2024 Noble View Outdoor Center Church hike and cook-out

For those of you who would like to go for a very casual guided hike, Alice Flyte will be leading a short hike starting at 10 am. This hike will be on the Noble View trails and will take about 1 hour along relatively flat trails.



Around 11 am we will start firing up the BBQ.

We will provide the hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks. Please feel free to bring a side dish.

Where: The Noble View Outdoor Center, 635 S Quarter Rd, Russell, MA 01071.

<https://www.outdoors.org/destinations/massachusetts-and-new-hampshire/noble-view>

When: Saturday June 29, 2024.

10 am – short hike (2 miles) on local trails.

Noon – BBQ time.

What to bring: Yourself and friends.

Church members and friend's welcome.

Notes: Wear outdoor shoes
(if you are going on the hike).



Questions: Please contact Daniel Koehne (413-433-7599).



Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe



Thursday and
Saturday
10AM-2PM



20 Broad Street
Westfield MA 01085



Sponsored by:
First Congregational Church
of Of Westfield
(413) 568-2833



First Congregational Church of Westfield

18 Broad Street
Westfield, MA 01085
Office (413) 568-2833



June