



The Newsletter
First Congregational Church
of Westfield
October 2024

Autumn is perhaps my favorite season. The temperatures flux so we get various temperatures, the leaves change color and show the splendor of creation and football—my favorite sport—is in full swing. Autumn also designates the start of the renewed church year.

Our church year has certainly started off with a bang! Included in this newsletter are many photos from the “End of Summer Worship and Celebration” held at Stanley Park. First Congregational Church led the way in the number of participants as well as handling, organizing, buying and preparing most of the food for the celebration. Our neighboring churches showed up and helped with the setup and clean up that allowed us to get our deposit back and win the admiration of the Stanley Park staff. We had 27 tables and 200+ chairs set up in eight minutes! Truly, the Holy Spirit was present among us as we prepped, prayed, sang, clapped, and tapped along to the theme of the day.

We are not resting on our laurels of our day at Stanley Park. Our church has many events planned to get us all the way through the Autumn season right into and including Advent. It is my hope that we can all find a way to participate to show our own vibrant Autumn colors to the City of Westfield and the greater Westfield area. We continue to fill the area the renewed presence of the Holy Spirit.

My prayer for all of us is that as we grow, pray, listen, and respond to the “wind” of the Holy Spirit, that we do so with grace, dignity, and respectability. I pray that we can all be involved as we spread the Gospel message so that everyone in our midst knows that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome at First Congregational Church of Westfield.”

Peace and love,

(Rev.) Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor

Blessing of the Animals
Saturday, October 5th

9:30-10:30	11-12
Southwick Congregational Church	First Congregational Church
488 College Highway	Of Westfield
Southwick Ma	18 Broad Street
	Westfield MA

A row of small, colorful illustrations of various animals: a hamster, a white cat, a black and white dog, a small orange dog, a large brown dog, a tabby cat, and a black and white dog.

BLESSING
of the **ANIMALS**

A note of Thanks

Walking into the pavilion, someone asked me-- what church is worshipping here? And I answered.... "all of 'em!" ...er... many of them.

This Sunday, I got to just sit, and be, and WORSHIP. Joining alongside 11 congregations at [Stanley Park!!](#)

What a fellowship!

What a joy divine!
When God's people gather in mission and ministry, the laughter of kiddos (including my own) and an awesome cookout, it was so lovely to worship in my own town with so many amazing congregations coming together. I heard about incredible things these churches are doing: Feeding ministries, thrift stores, children's groups and support for parents & grandparents, Open and Affirming celebrations, testimonies of belonging and So So So Much more!

Here's just a slice of what that looked like, just a *few* of the clergy present (including many [Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ](#) clergy!)

Thank you, ALL, for this gift.

(and to Rev. Paul Nesbit for organizing it alongside so many!)

[Rev. Dr. Chris Davies](#)

[First Congregational Church of Westfield, MA](#)

[UCC Second Congregational Church](#)

[First United Methodist Church Westfield](#)

[The Episcopal Church of the Atonement](#)

[Southwick Congregational Church UCC](#)

[Feeding Hills Congregational Church -](#)

[United Church of Christ](#)

[Agawam Congregational Church UCC](#)

[First Church West Springfield](#)

[First Congregational Church of Chicopee, Ma.](#)

[Granville Federated Church, Granville, Mass](#)

[West Granville Congregational Church](#)



Church School/Youth Group News

Church School began on September 22 and Director Amy Platt led the group in team building exercise with marshmallows and toothpicks to see who could build the strongest or tallest tower. This fit in with stories about working together. Tie dyeing with Dan Koehne in Sept. was a lot of fun.

Jim Yesu will host a cook out for the group on October 5th at 4PM and the group will go to the Springfield Museum – Seymour Planetarium on Nov. 16th.

A Halloween party is being planned for Oct. 26. Help is needed to plan and work at the Halloween party. Please let Gail Ives or Amy Platt know if you can help. We will have a planning meeting date to be determined.

Gail Ives, Chair



Historian and Deacon's Corner Report

As our new stewardship campaign is about to begin, I looked back at gifts given to the church in the past.

In 1860, a gift was given by Mr. Edwin Hedges of "the organ pipes and the Johnson Church organ installed in the Congregational Meeting House". Mr. Hedges owned and ran a factory in Westfield for the manufacture of pipes and organs made in Westfield by William Johnson.

May 22, 1862, a gift of a triangular piece of land at the entrance of the alley north of the present church building was given by Thomas A. Lewis.

In 1863 a gift of \$100.00 to the First Church Society was made by Mr. Charles Taylor.

In 1863 gifts of money by church members were made toward the purchase of stained-glass windows for the church "auditorium" at a cost of \$38.00 per window. (Some years later, these windows were removed when the church was redecorated and stored in the basement of the Parish House.)

Oct. 13, 1884, a legacy of \$5,000.00 was given in the will of Henry Morgan, Esq. of New York City, formerly of Westfield, to be known as the Henry T. Morgan Fund. It included a stipulation for the maintenance of the burial plot of his father, Archipas Morgan, buried in the Old Mechanic Street Cemetery.

In September, 1866 and at intervals thereafter, gifts of money to the church by a group of church members were made toward the support of Mrs. Mary Davis, widow of Rev. Dr. Emerson Davis.

Also in 1886, a bequest by an unknown donor of \$100.00 was made to be held in a trust. "The annual income of that amount shall be paid over by the Trustees and their successors as they shall judge necessary for the relief of the female members of the Society as shall be in sick and want."

March 17, 1890, a gift from the Home Fund Society of \$1000.00 was given for the purchase of the site to which the old Bulfinch Church was moved, which later became the site of the present parish house.

On April 1, 1892, a gift of \$1,000.00 by an unnamed donor was to establish the "Henry W. Bates Fund" the income from which was to be used for church flowers.

In May, 1893 and again in 1894, various members of the Society pledged the sum of \$15,100.00 and later an additional \$3,000.00 for the building of the Parish House.

We now will need to look into our hearts and decide what we each are able to pledge to our church for this coming year. In a time when many mainline churches are failing, First Congregational Church of Westfield is thriving, thanks to the leadership of Pastor Paul and our many dedicated members/volunteers. I look forward to watching our church continue to grow and sharing happy moments with so many of the friends we have here.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Gaylord

First Congregational Church of Westfield
[Www.firstcongregationalchurchofwestfieldma.org](http://www.firstcongregationalchurchofwestfieldma.org)
Email : fccwestfield@outlook.com

Committee News

Membership/Fellowship

As vacations are dwindling and fall is upon us, we want to take a moment and welcome you! Connecting our First Congregational Church community is the goal of our committee and we welcome suggestions and other opportunities to connect. If you have suggestions, please reach out so we can take the idea to the committee and try to make it happen. We would like to start this welcoming time of fellowship by having greeters at worship on Sunday mornings at both the front and back doors. That warm welcome means the word to some and connects us together in more ways than one. If you are interested in serving as a greeter, please see Kelly Gonzalez, Marc Winer or myself. It would be great way to meet or catch up with friends. Be on the look out for a save the date for "Pasta with the Pastor". The Thunderbird's are also back in action and we are looking at dates now. Stay tuned...

Michelle Winer, Chair
Membership/Fellowship

Stewardship Committee

A short reminder that folks should watch their mailboxes for the stewardship letter. Now is a good time to start thinking about your 2025 pledge. October is Stewardship Month. Speakers are lined up for the Month with pledges being collected on October 27th.

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.
10/26 Allan Taylor
10/31 Gail Ives



Safe Church

The Committee has been working hard to revise the Safe Church Policies and Procedures as it was relevant to renewing our insurance. We are looking forward to share them with you soon. The Safe Church Committee will also begin to reach out to all the current key holders to ensure our Key holder list is up-to-date. Why you ask? We are going to be changing the locks on the outside doors of the church and we want to be sure your key will still work. Therefore, if you currently have a key, we will be verifying the reasons for the need so this can be updated on the master list. Reminder that when your term of committee chairman is over, it is expected you turn in that key to the new chairman as that is how the keys are recorded. If you want to continue to have a key, you will be asked to complete a new key application to be reviewed by both the Safe Church Committee and the Property Committee.

Michelle Winer
Safe Church Administrator

October 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.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING OF YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES

Westfield Food Pantry: October 20, 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** in each month your WSC will make an announcement for the items that are in short supply at the Food Pantry. Rebecca Hart will be advising WSC each month of the short supply needs. This month they were asking for Soup, any and all kinds.

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – October 22, 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 22nd 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.

September Donations: World Service Committee in September will send our donations to Kinship Fund, United Church of Christ and National Military Family Association. December will see the final monies sent to American Red Cross, Franklin Ave. School and the Discretionary fund money. The Discretionary Fund remaining money will be decided in December by the World Service Committee.

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

This month we are highlighting: Community Table (Soup Kitchen) and Franklin Ave. School

Community Table is a program that serves those in need with dinner and Fellowship each night of the week except Saturdays. We support the program by preparing a meal on the 4th Tuesday of each month and by giving an annual financial contribution.

Friends of Franklin Ave. School is a partnership with teachers and staff to assist with school projects and help them connect their students and families with food, clothing, household items and other resources. There are times when we have done special projects for the school like tutoring. The church has a box next to the church office door where items the school asks for can be dropped off.

The Westfield River Elementary school will be the new name for Franklin Ave. School in January 2025 when classes start up after the Christmas break.

Continued

Continued

YOUR CHARITABLE DONATIONS: QCDs : Do you know what a **QCD** - Qualified Charitable Distribution is? You can use **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCDs)** if you are aged 70 ½ or older, you can make contribution directly from your traditional IRA to a qualified charity. You can donate up to \$100,000 per year without it being considered taxable income, this lowers your gross income (**AGI**) and you do not have to pay tax on the distribution. You can use google or another search engine on a computer for more information or talk to your financial adviser if you have one.

First Congregational Church is a qualified charity.

This could be a wonderful way to support your church and charitable giving. Pray about it and see where God is leading you.

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. Pray that peace will be restored.

World Service Committee,

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



Interested in Joining First Congregational Church?

Anyone interested in joining First Congregational Church or learning more about the Church is invited to attend a meeting with Rev. Paul and the Membership Committee.

New Members will be welcomed into the Church on November 17th.

If you are interested please call the church office, 568-2833 to make arrangements.

A promotional banner for a "Fall Sale Thrift Shoppe". The background is white with a decorative border of colorful autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red. On the left, the word "Fall" is written in a cursive font, and "SALE" is written in white on a dark brown banner. To the right, "Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe" is written in large, bold, yellow sans-serif font. Below that, "20 Broad Street, Westfield Ma" is written in a smaller, bold, yellow sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text "Open Thursdays and Saturdays 10AM-2PM A Mission of First Congregational Church of Westfield" is written in a dark brown sans-serif font.

Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe
20 Broad Street, Westfield Ma

Open Thursdays and Saturdays
10AM-2PM
A Mission of
First Congregational Church of Westfield

First Congregational Church
Of Westfield

Annual

Harvest Dinner

Saturday, Nov 16th 5PM

The menu will consist of:

Roast Pork, Gravy, Stuffing, Potatoes, Carrots,
Butternut Squash, Applesauce, Rolls and Butter,
Apple Crisp and Beverage.

Tickets are \$15.00/person

Reservations are Required
Please Call the Church Office

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

