



## *The Newsletter*

*First Congregational Church of Westfield*

*September 2024*

### Words of Encouragement

This summer allowed sports fans all over the world to feast on the 2024 Olympic games in Paris. Our sermons even referred to the Olympics as we reflected on good, better, and best. One church member even texted me when she heard a commentator say, “That was a good routine, but he could do better by...” It is nice to know that some people are listening!

As we continued to watch the Olympics, I enjoyed watching the crowds, especially when they showed fellow Olympians cheering on their teammates in individual events or other US teams. What was even more wonderful to watch is when USA team members are enthusiastically applauding a good performance by someone from another country. Even on the medal podium, both Simone Biles and Suni Lee bowed to Rebecca Andrade in deference to her floor exercise performance in the individuals. In a moment where it was her turn to shine, Katie Ledecky insisted that her teammate, Paige Madden, join her on the Gold Medal level. Truly, the athletes who did this embody the spirit in which the games were supposed to be played.

Encouragement and recognition are two things that we can take with us as Christians. We encourage each other to be better Christians. Sometimes we do this through words but, most often, through example. This summer, we have answered calls for assistance from families, friends, and our neighbors when meals could not be served indoors, among other things. We see you and we recognize you!! We encourage you to keep up the great work.

As we come off our summer vacation and into a new church programming year, I’d like to encourage all of us to make your faith a priority. I hope that you can take some time for regular prayer, better attendance at church (although our summer numbers weren’t bad), and re-establish the good practices as we live out the Gospel message. Come together as we recognize the goodness of God and encourage each other to be better Christians.

Peace and love,

*Paul*

Rev. Paul Nesbit  
Pastor

**We will have a Blessing of the Animals on  
Saturday, October 5  
Southwick 10-11 Westfield 11-12**



## *Deacon's Corner September 2024*

*Barbara James*

I sit at my computer feeling gratitude for the many blessings God has bestowed on us this summer season. Outside my window tall healthy stalks of milkweed wait for the Monarch butterflies to stop, lay their eggs and produce caterpillars that cocoon and emerge as their next generation. Their life cycle from egg to caterpillar to butterfly: just one of the many miracles that surround us.

It has been a summer of beautiful wild and cultivated flowers; bringing explosions of color, and sweet aroma into our summer days. Their rich pollen, creating the gift of new life to many growing things. Bird song, like a symphony that filled the spring air, quiets as pairs nest and new broods of offspring appear; their parents tirelessly filling their hungry beaks and teaching them to survive on their own. Tiny hummingbirds zip in and out, stopping occasionally to look us in the eye when we wander too close to their food source. A beautiful doe and her twin spotted fawns appear on the edge of the wooded area in our backyard. The sun glistens on their shiny coats as they browse the bushes and undergrowth. They appear, and with one leap disappear into the safety of the woods.

As we turned the calendar to August and watched one day fade into the next, I want desperately to hold onto each, treasuring its many blessings. The days of long light are now noticeably shorter, and the mornings of bird song have finished their symphony. The amazing cycle of seasons and life continues as it must. We choose to accept and enjoy its changes or resent its implications. Changing seasons will always be a reminder of our dependency on the will of God to guide us as we start each new day, move into another month, and embark on a new season of our own lives.

As I face the reality of this year, the year I turned 80, my mind is filled with the wonders I have seen, continue to see, and anticipate seeing in whatever future lies ahead. God's many miracles are everywhere if we take the time to look beyond life's busyness and focus on the amazing wonders that surround us. May your days be filled with God's blessings and your eyes be focused on his many gifts.

Barbara James, Senior Deacon



**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.**

**[Fccwestfield@outlook.com](mailto:Fccwestfield@outlook.com)**

## Committee News

Church School will begin on September 22nd. Director of Faith and Formation and Family Ministries, Amy Platt, will be revamping an older curriculum. There will be separate lessons for older youth. The Church School committee has discussed having the children stay in church on Communion Sundays. We will work with families to see what they want. Rev. Paul will see how many youth want to be confirmed and will form a Confirmation class. Activities are being planned for the Fall -tie dyeing, disc golf and a Halloween party in October. Watch the weekly update for more dates.

Volunteers are needed to help in the Sunday School – please see Amy Platt if you can help.

Gail Ives

### Youth Events this Fall

#### **1PM- Saturday, September 21, 2024**

Pizza and making Tie Dye at First Church.  
*Must register for this event because I need to know the t-shirt sizes and t-shirts need to be prepared before being dyed.*

#### **4PM- Saturday, October 5, 2024:**

Cook out at the Yesu house.

#### **1PM-Saturday, November 16, 2024;**

Visit the Springfield Museums  
Visit the Seymour Planetarium

Parents/Chaperones are welcome. As these dates get closer, further details will be provided.

Dan Koehne



9/2 Ray Salois  
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!

### Christian Fellowship

Wednesday, September 18th 11:30 AM.

### Tiger's Pride Restaurant

Westfield Tech High School Culinary Department



**Weather permitting,  
we plan to tour Grandmother's Garden**

**Call or email the Church Office about  
Hospitalizations and Prayer List Updates  
fccwestfield@outlook.com 568-2833**

If you know of someone in the congregation who has been hospitalized, has upcoming surgery or is in need of our prayers, please call the church office so that Rev. Paul knows. Any updates to the prayer list are appreciated.

## September 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: September 15, 2024 – 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Pasta and Pasta sauce.

**Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – September 24, 2024 -4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:nancy@paddleforwater.net). Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> 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 LaPlante or Mayme Lajoie** to learn how you could help.

**Franklin Ave. School:** The new school year brings more challenges and needs for Franklin Ave. School as it changes to Westfield River Elementary School with double the students. Your World Service Committee has been in touch with the school office to see what First Congregational Church can do to help with their teachers' needs. The first items that would be of great assistance would be facial tissues, wet wipes and glue sticks. These items are needed during the entire year. The School box is back at church for your donations. WSC will check the box each week and bring the items to the school. Thank you for your support for this mission project. Should there be any questions you can ask Nancy Condon who is the direct liaison to Franklin Ave or any member of the committee.

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

**JUNE DONATIONS:** World Service Committee received Thank You notes and letters from the following organizations: Heifer, Springfield Rescue Mission, Sarah Gillet, Salvation Army and Samaritan Inn.

The notes and letters are posted on the bulletin board at church, they will be there until beginning of September.

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

This month we are highlighting: Our House and The Kinship Program

Our House is located on Broad Street in Westfield. The mission is to help homeless young adults ages 18 thru 24 years of age to improve their lives by offering the skills sets needed to obtain their high school Equivalency Credential and move forward in their lives. Each resident is given an individual apartment with a kitchenette and communal living space so they can learn to live independently.

The Kinship Program is located in Westfield High School. The mission is to help students between 14 to 19 years of age. This group of students could be experiencing trauma and/or financial hardships. The program assists with school supplies, groceries, clothing, medical help, and other essentials needed in life. The program usually has about 30 kids in need of help. The joint effort of Kinship program, Boy/Girls Cub program and YMCA program have helped young people to be able to move forward and stabilize their lives.

**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 a 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



## Notes From the Congregation !

Dear Rev. Paul, First Church Dear Friends,

Where do I start! At the beginning , I guess. I live at Quail Run Estates in Agawam and Friday evening, June 21st, we got struck by lightening. Since we are a senior community, it was a devastating experience. We were told by the Agawam Fire Department that we all had to immediately evacuate the premises. We all were walking outside in the rain (many with pets-my cat Evie was unhappy in her cage completely confused) for direction. My daughter, Laura, was with me as we were planning to go on vacation in Vermont the next day, Saturday. Where would we go for the night?? Laura and I both thought of First Congregational Church and Dan K immediately came to mind... (he lives close by in Agawam).

So I called Dan at 8 o'clock in the evening and he said he would be over in 10 minutes, and he was! Dan took us all in! Laura, me and Evie, my bedraggled cat. Dan handled everything so graciously .. A room for us, food and a welcome to Evie. I have never been treated so kindly ever! Dan is a bona fide gentleman. And it doesn't end there!

We had to leave on our vacation on Saturday with the clothes, etc. that we had with us. And what would we do with Evie! I had planned for a young resident to take care of her but they couldn't stay at Quail Run. So Dan made a phone call and Michelle Winer showed up with cat food and an invitation for Evie to stay with them for the week. How kind and thoughtful was that!

It was a traumatic experience for us. I will forever be grateful for the kindness and love of my First Church Friends. It proves once again that God is very much present and in our lives.

Thank you ! Thank You !

Elizabeth (Betty) Niergarth

PS. Sorry for the written note, but I don't have my computer.



**Trail Magic 2024**

# Ecumenical Service

## End of Summer Worship and Celebration

Sunday, September 15th 10:30 am

Stanley Park Beveridge Pavilion  
Westfield Ma



**Cookout to follow!**

All are Welcome!



**Ecumenical Service**  
**End of Summer Worship**  
**And Celebration**  
**Sunday, September 15th**  
**10:30AM**

**Stanley Park Beveridge Pavilion**  
**Westfield MA**

**Cookout to Follow!**

*First Congregational Church of Westfield*  
*18 Broad Street*  
*Westfield, MA 01085*

