



The Newsletter First Congregational Church of Westfield November 2024



It Is Right to Give God Thanks and Praise!

Of all the holidays, Thanksgiving is my favorite. You don't have to buy gifts, there are minimal decorations, and I get to eat most of my favorite foods. As I have grown older, though, I have been able to set aside some time in prayer to give thanks to God for all the wonderful things with which God has blessed me. I hope members of our Congregation will take some time this month to reflect on how you, your family, and your church have all been blessed by God.

As I near the end of my third year of service to the People of God at First Congregational Church of Westfield, I give thanks to the Almighty for the numerous opportunities we have been given to answer the call of Jesus to spread the Gospel message here in the greater Westfield area. The Holy Spirit is truly at work in First Congregational and the members have been caught up in the enthusiasm as we journey together. Our "Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe" continues to minister to the City of Westfield, we welcomed over 100 people to our Halloween Party, plans are underway for our Harvest Dinner, and a partnership with the Westfield Food Pantry to host the Thanksgiving lunch will allow us to serve others in the name of Christ. Our church will also host the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Prayer Service with new churches and old friends joining us in prayer. Truly, we can give thanks for the many gifts in the one Spirit; imagine what can happen if we keep our eyes, ears, and hearts open to the call of the Holy Spirit?

It is in the thrill of this spirit that I continue to give thanks to God and encourage you to do the same. Amid the traditional celebration of Thanksgiving according your traditions and culture, please set aside some time to offer prayers and songs of thanksgiving to the Creator.

Peace and love,

Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor

Church School News

The Church School students are at it again! October has been a very enjoyable month studying scripture, reflecting on how we can be followers of Jesus' teachings in our daily lives and how we can represent our understanding through our creativity. We have constructed scenes that depict the Ten Commandments using LEGO bricks & imagination. The Halloween party was a lot of fun and we were able to share our church with the community. This month, we are planning a trip to the Springfield Museum for a spectacular Planetarium show. It will be a great time for all ages! Please reach out if you are interested!

Amy Platt

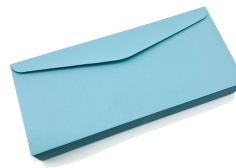
A trip to Springfield Museum – Seymour Planetarium on Nov. 16th. Please see Amy for more information.

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 Mayme Lajoie
11/12 Richard Grimaldi
11/12 Marie Marx
11/17 Sherry Balzano
11/17 Sarah Bray
11/20 Dina Slayton
11/20 Joseph Gonzalez
11/21 Darlene Klaubert
11/25 Jacey Gonzalez
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.



Our Deacons Fund Needs Your Support

As daylight diminishes and the cool winds of fall become the cold winds of winter; it is time to think about the many needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Through your generosity, the Deacons Fund is maintained to help people in need of emergency assistance for such things as food, gas, heating bills etc. Gift Cards for groceries and gas, plus direct payments for emergency situations like rent or utilities have made a huge difference in the lives of many.

This assistance is available through a direct donation to the Deacons Fund. Blue envelopes for your donation can be found on the back of each pew in our sanctuary. Cash or checks with a Deacons Fund notation are gratefully appreciated. Donations can be placed in the collection plate or dropped off at the office. Please consider donating to this important fund knowing it will help someone in our church family or in our community during a time of emergency need.

Blessings and many thanks.

Your Diaconate

Luminaria

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.

Carol Whalen



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First Congregational Church of Westfield

Enrollment Code 2B3C7L7734826

For more information contact
Cindy LaPlante 568-2833



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November 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: November 17, 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 EVERYTHING, the delivery from Food Bank was delayed.

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – November 26, 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 LaPlante or Mayme Lajoie** to learn how you could help.

Franklin Ave. School: Franklin Ave. School has asked First Congregational to hold off supplies until the new school session starts in January as it changes to Westfield River Elementary School with double the students. Your World Service Committee will continue to be in touch with the school office to see what First Congregational Church can do to help with their teachers' and student needs. Thank you for your support for this mission project. Should there be any questions you can contact Nancy Condon who is the direct liaison to Franklin Ave or any member of the World Service Committee.

HELO Haiti: There is a new poster on the bulletin board at church, check it out. Prayers are needed for Peace in Haiti. God is good and Prayer works.



November Donations: There are no donations being sent out in November. In December the balance of funds will go out to remaining organizations.

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

This month we are highlighting: National Military Family Association

The National Military Association is a non-profit dedicated to serving service members and their families. They provide spouse scholarships, camps for military kids, retreats for families reconnecting after deployment and for families of the wounded, ill or injured.

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

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.

Hearing Devices are available for your use during the worship service. If you are missing any words of our service we suggest you give it a try. Just ask an usher for one. We are sure it will make the service much more enjoyable.



Sunshine Baskets Sunday, November 24th

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 24th



We are in need of the following items:

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

Dried Fruit in Individual Packages 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. We will be setting up for Christmas in the next week. Please continue to send donations. At this time we are not accepting any summer clothing. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Ecumenical Community
Thanksgiving Service
Tuesday, November 26th 2024
6:30PM

First Congregational Church
18 Broad Street, Westfield, MA
All are welcome!

Free will offering to Benefit
The Westfield Food Pantry



Christian Fellowship
Wednesday,
November 13th

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!



Save the Date! We Need your help!

The 24th annual Carol Festival will be on Saturday, December 7, 2024 at 3:00.

There will be a reception following the concert and we are looking for cookie bakers to help out. If you can bake for the reception, please see Michelle Downs or Julie Kraus to let them know.

Thank you.

Martha Roman

First Congregational Church Of Westfield

Presents

The Annual Carol Festival

First Congregational Church

Saturday, December 7th at 3:00 PM



This year's festival will include our choir, hand-bell choir, New England Brass, organ, and audience participation carols.

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.

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

THE
UPPER
ROOM

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

First Congregational Church Of Westfield

Annual



Dinner

Saturday, Nov 16th 5PM

The menu will consist of:

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

Tickets are \$15.00/person

Reservations are Required

