



*The Newsletter*  
*First Congregational Church of Westfield*



# *February 2025*

## Deep In the Heart of Westfield

There are some songs that tend to creep back into our heads. These are called “earworms” as they crawl around in our minds, and we simply can’t get them out. Occasionally, one of my earworms is, for some unknown reason, “Deep in the Heart of Texas.” So, when this comes around, I have learned to change it to “Deep in the Heart of Westfield.” How appropriate for a month when we celebrate Valentine’s Day.

Valentine’s Day is the day when we celebrate love in all forms. We profess our love for our spouses, significant others, our children, our friends, and even our pets. It is a time when we can profess our love for not only our church, but to celebrate God’s unconditional love for all of us. It is also a time for us to re-establish our church as the “Heart of Westfield.”

When our church was officially established in 1679, we definitely served as the heart of village. The center of Westfield wasn’t exactly where it is today but more towards what we now call East Main Street. According to the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the village or settlement of Westfield could not exist without the foundation of a church. This church was actually supported by the town; this continued into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the laws were changed. As a result, church was the heart and soul of Westfield.

As the town green was established, the church moved to the new “center” of town and was prominent on the green. This is a hallmark of almost every Congregational church in New England. We continue to be in the center of the City of Westfield which, in the last year of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, brings a different flavor to what it means to be the “Heart of Westfield.”

Our church continues to welcome various non-profit groups to come in to use our facilities for little cost to us. We practice extravagant hospitality to the Westfield Food Pantry as well as our neighbors as we host the Westfield Food Pantry’s Food Truck as well as welcome folks into our building in the winter months. Our church hosted the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service and the Westfield Historical Society. In the coming months, we will host the Northwest Region of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ as well as the Young Singers of Greater Westfield.

We need to continue to keep the heart of Westfield beating proudly and strongly. As we once again open our doors to our neighbors, let us be proud to hold our place “Deep in the Heart of Westfield.”

Peace and love,

*(Rev.) Paul*

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit, Pastor

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

**To: Members of First Congregational Church**

**Subject: First Congregational Church Annual Meeting**

### Special Congregational Meeting

In accordance with the by-laws of the First Congregational Church, Westfield MA., Article VIII, section 2, The Annual Meeting of the Church shall take place during the month of February upon a date designated by the Church Council. This year's Annual meeting will take place on Sunday, February 9th, 2025 with a snow date of Sunday, February 16th. The meeting will take place following worship service. The reports of all Officers, Committees and affiliated organizations shall be made in writing and accepted at this meeting. Officers of the Church and Committees shall be elected at this meeting. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a ballot nominating one person for each position to be filled at the Annual Meeting of the Church. The right of a member to make nominations from the floor shall always be recognized. This ballot shall be accepted by the church at this meeting. At the Annual Meeting of the Church, the members of the Church will vote on the budget as a single intact entity.

Church Council has recommended changes to the By-laws to be voted at the Annual Meeting.

Copies of these changes are posted outside the church office and are available in writing in the church office. Please pick up a copy.

Janet St. Jean, Clerk

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of the Church. This year it will occur on February 9th (unless snow forces postponement to February 16).

Church members vote on the most important matters of our governance, including the election of officers and committees for the next year as well as the budget for 2025. Both of these items have been prepared by committees but their ultimate adoption depends on the Congregation's review and approval. Since our Bylaws have a requirement of a quorum in order to act (at least 40 members must be present) it is very important as well as desirable, for as many members to attend as possible.

The meetings are not usually long but are informative as well as important to our Church. And coffee and the other great refreshments can still be enjoyed!

Annual Reports will be available on Feb 2nd  
Outside the Office  
Please pick one up!



### February Coffee Hour

**Feb 2nd Team 5** Lori LaPlante, Michelle Winer, Mara Winer and Janice Longstreeth

**Feb 9th Team 6** Bob and Jennifer Waldorf, Elizabeth & Al Cincotta, Nancy Condon, Ray and Darlene.

**Feb 16th Team 7** Martha Roman, Alice Flyte, Julie Kraus, Deb and Brad Alm, Nancy Chamberlin

**Feb 23rd Joint Service @ Westfield Team 8 & Team 1**

Team 8—Carol Whalen, Joyce Bard, Michelle Downs, Martha Scavotto

Team 1 Bob Brownlee, Steve Pierce, Christina Pierce and Anne Gelinas



## Message from the Diaconate

A Life Worth Living Must Have God as Its Master By Anne Gelinas

So goes what I believe. Ever since my parents brought me to the Congregational Church in Indian Orchard as a child. There I was able to learn ballet and tap dance. I sang in our minstrel shows and choir. I participated in Pilgrim Fellowship with my peers from the neighborhood. I was a Brownie, Girl Scout, and baby sat and peddled papers to help my brother Paul out. I worked on tobacco farms for two summers with my best friend, Carol.

One evening I wanted to take a shortcut through the Catholic cemetery while walking home from peddling papers. It was a leap of faith (perhaps), to walk through the entire cemetery to get to Page Boulevard from Berkshire Street.

The moment I entered, my entire thought was that no one would be walking in the cemetery at the same time. It was already dark. Well, guess what? Along comes a man walking from the opposite direction and my heart raced about what to do. I only knew one thing that would help me at that time. I prayed that Our Lord would walk with me and keep me safe. I prayed no one would speak to me nor walk to me.

In the middle of the cemetery was a statue and a circle. I went to the right and the stranger went to the left. I did not look back. With relief in my heart and mind, I reached Page Boulevard and then looked back. To let God know how thankful I was, I headed to the lake across the street and prayed extremely hard to Jesus for being that stranger and keeping me safe. I tell you, that I did not walk through the cemetery during the night or day again!

I have counted on and believe strongly in my heart and mind that prayer is always the answer. Was I lucky, well you could say that is true, but I was never alone during this walk of faith.

This is just one of many stories that I know God, Jesus, Angels, Saints and Church have stepped in my way to keep me safe so far in my 82 years. I count on this continued support and love and know most people have a story to tell themselves.

I feel blessed every day and am happy to share this story with the members of First Congregational Church who are now a part of my ongoing life story.



**Interested in Joining First Congregational Church?** Anyone interested in joining First Congregational Church or learning more about the Church, please call the church office 568-2833. New Members will be welcomed into the Church on February 9th.



Special thanks to Carol Whalen and family for this year's luminaria display.



## FAMILY MINISTRIES

Our Church School began the New Year by creating two powerful Christian symbols: a star for Epiphany and a dove for God descending from heaven to Jesus. Our paper making and direction following skills served us well and the results are hanging in Fellowship Hall. Stay tuned for our next projects.

Our church is about to have a new committee! The Church School Committee and the Membership/Fellowship Committee are on track to be combined into **The Family Ministries Committee**. Our Church Council has already voted to recommend this change. At our Annual Meeting on February, 9th members will vote to approve this new committee. The following is an excerpt from the new bylaw that describes the function of the committee:

*The Family Ministries Committee shall have the responsibility of planning and coordinating social, educational and spiritual activities for the children, youth and adults of the Church. They shall also have the responsibility of membership growth, recruitment and development.*

I'm excited about offering more opportunities for our church to bring EVERYONE together on a regular basis. This change will aid in the continuing revitalization of our church body.

I'll see you at Annual Meeting on February 9!

Janet St. Jean

Acting Director of Faith Formation and Family Ministries.





## Church School/Family Ministries

January is off to a great start – activities in the Sunday School have included paper star and dove cutouts. They came out beautiful!

Looking forward to February a Lock-In event is being planned for grades eight and above on Friday Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> – Sat. Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. Feeding Hills Congregational church youth will be invited also. If you would like to help or donate food please talk to Dan Koehne, Jim Yesu, Gail Ives or Janet St Jean.

A vacation movie is also being planned for grades K-4 on Friday February 21<sup>st</sup>.

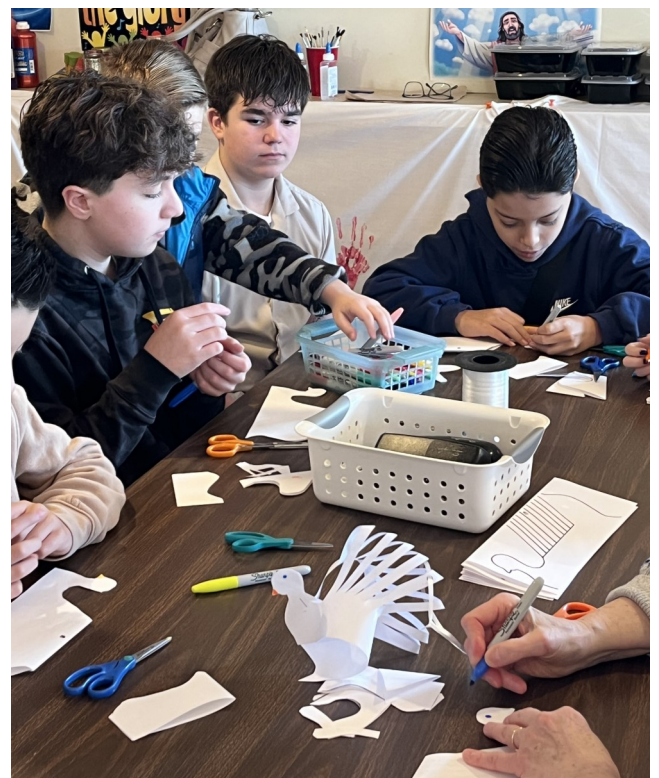
In March we are planning on having a bowling night on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

An all church book discussion is being planned for the following dates: March 6,13,20,27, April 3, 10 (7:00 PM)

Also, to be determined we will be attending a Thunderbirds Hockey Game.

As the two committees join together there are many other activities that we are looking forward to planning.

*Gail Ives*



## February Newsletter - World Service Committee

*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. John 6:35*

### 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: February 16th 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 short supply needs. This month they were asking for TUNA.

**Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – February 25th -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 22<sup>nd</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 or Mayme** to learn how you could help.

**Westfield River Elementary school:** Westfield River Elementary School with double the students is open as of January 6, 2025. 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 Westfield River Elementary school or any member of the World Service Committee.

**HELO Haiti:** World Service Committee is still able to send donations to help the students to be able to have an education. Elisabeth Kennedy is our contact at HELO Haiti. Jennifer Waldorf is direct liaison if you have questions about HELO Haiti. Prayers are needed for Peace in Haiti.

**Monthly Highlights:** Each month your WSC will highlight one or two of the funds we donate to, this month is SAMARITAN INN.

Samaritan Inn is an emergency shelter for homeless men and women, who can stay for up to 90 days. The Inn provides 2 daily meals and snacks. It offers case management, advocacy, mental health therapy, medical services, some clothing, outside referrals, aid in obtaining health insurance and assistance with finding housing and jobs.

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

LOCK-IN FOR YOUTH  
IN GRADES 8-12

# Gratitude

HOW TO BE A GRATEFUL CHRISTIAN  
IN ALL SEASONS

1st Congregational  
Church

5PM FRIDAY,  
FEB. 7 THRU  
NOON FEB. 8

18 Broad Street,  
Westfield, MA

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION AND TO  
SIGN UP, CALL:  
413-568-2833



## Property Committee Bylaw Change

The Property Committee completed Roy Bascom's performance appraisal in November. Roy had one request under "Employee Comments". He asked to consider changing his title from "Custodian" to "Church Sexton" and backed his request with information on the use of the title Sexton.

The Property Committee discussed his request at our December meeting. Webster's defines "Sexton" as a "church officer or employee who takes care of the church property...". A Sexton's duties go beyond custodial cleaning. It includes church safety and security and care of the church property.

The Property Committee approved Roy's request and it was presented and approved at the December Church Council meeting. This will require minor wording change to Article V1 Section 19 of the Bylaws. Where the word "Custodian" appears, it will be changed to "Church Sexton". This will be addressed at our Feb 9th annual meeting.



# February

BIRTHDAYS

## Church Security on Sundays and Special Services

The Academy St. doors are unlocked 45 minutes before the start of the service (8:45 AM Sundays). The Broad St. front entry is unlocked 20 minutes before the start of the service (9:10 AM Sundays). The Academy St. doors are locked 15 minutes after the start of the service (9:45 AM on Sundays) while the front entry remains open during the service. The front entry door is locked 10 minutes following the end of worship (or when most people have left the sanctuary) so please use an alternate exit after coffee hour.

02/01 Ellen Prest  
02/03 Stuart Gamble  
02/07 Cailyn Crean  
02/07 Robert Crean  
02/09 Russell Klaubert  
02/10 Kailey Downs  
02/10 Chris Davies  
02/15 James Yesu  
02/17 Daniel Koehne  
02/18 Cindy D'Angelo  
02/19 Darlene Biggs  
02/20 Jim Kinney  
02/21 Judith McClure  
02/21 Jacqueline R. Thayer  
02/24 Billy Balzano  
02/26 Lesley Lorenzen  
02/28 Sandra Chamberlain  
02/28 William Reed



Christian Fellowship  
Lite Lunch  
Wednesday  
February 12 2025  
12Noon

Bring a Valentine card to send to a member of  
First Congregational Church  
And

Can or Box of food for  
Westfield Food Pantry

Sign Up on Bulletin Board or See  
Jean Zimmerman at  
Coffee Hour





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

# February 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 10-2 Blessed Buys
2 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Communion Sunday Coffee Hour Team # 5 10:30 Blessed Buys	3 10:30 AM Staff Mtg	4 7:15 World Service	5	6 10-2 Blessed Buys	7 5PM Youth LOCK IN	8 10-2 Blessed Buys
9 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 6 Annual Meeting	10 12:15-12:45 Food Pantry Lunch	11	12 12 Noon Christian Fellowship	13 10-2 Blessed Buys	14	15 10-2 Blessed Buys
16 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 7 10:30 Blessed Buys	17 12:15-12:45 Food Pantry Lunch Office Closed	18	19	20 10-2 Blessed Buys	21	22 10-2 Blessed Buys
23 Joint Service with Southwick 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 8 & 1 10:30 Blessed Buys	24 12:15-12:45 Food Pantry Lunch	25 3-5 Soup Kitchen	26	27 10-2 Blessed Buys	28	

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Rev. Paul : [revpaulnesbit@gmail.com](mailto:revpaulnesbit@gmail.com)  
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