

The Newsletter March 2025

First Congregational Church of Westfield

Let's Venture Out of the House

The past month was wild with an “old-fashioned” winter about which before this year, many folks merely reminisced. Now that we have endured it, we are all ready to say “good-bye” to February as we encountered weather that forced us to cancel church services for two Sundays in row. However, March has always been an interesting month. We go from getting excited about the end of snow and ice, to dealing with mud, temperatures that fluctuate from freezing to teasing about spring, and the occasional mid-March blizzard that can stop us for a day or two.

I hope that the February weather allowed all of us to do some reflecting on how we can respond to the call of being true followers of Jesus in the midst of numerous challenges that face some members and neighbors. First Congregational Church has some interesting programs that have been happening and will happen in the next couple of months that I hope will offer something for everyone.

We continue to work with the Westfield Food Pantry to host a **weekly lunch on Mondays** for our neighbors and give them a good, hot meal. This incorporates volunteers from First Congregational as well as neighboring churches. See Alice Flyte or me about volunteering.

•Janet St. Jean, our Acting Director of Family Ministries, will lead a book discussion on **Thursday evenings** (March 6- April 10) with “*The Great Spiritual Migration.*” This study will allow us to enter into discussions about the potential and future of First Congregational Church. See Janet with questions.

•I will lead a “**Breakfast with the Bible**” class on **Tuesdays** (hopefully on-going) for members of both churches and, quite frankly, anyone from the community who is interested in deep diving into the readings for the coming Sunday. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided. We are working on an evening version of this for those who work during the day.

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•To whet your social appetites, Cindy LaPlante and her crew will have our **Annual Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner** on **Saturday, March 22** here in Fellowship Hall.

•Our church will have a **Family Bowling Event** on **Friday, March 29** at Spare Time Bowling in Northampton. This will include pizza!!

•**Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe** will be open every **Thursday and Saturday** as they continue their important ministry with our neighbors and church community. Check in with the crew to see if you can volunteer in some manner.

•**World Services Committee** always has something happening to help those in need. They will have a special event

•Ongoing events include **Church School and Choirs!**

Things are happening here at First Congregational Church on many levels. What can you do in the month of March or liturgical season of Lent to deepen your relationship with God and your church community?

Peace and love,

Paul



Rev. Paul Nesbit

Pastor

Southwick Congregational and First Congregational Churches invite you to

BREAKFAST WITH THE BIBLE

TUESDAYS AT 10:00 AM
FELLOWSHIP HALL
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTFIELD



STARTING MARCH 4, 2025
COME FOR COFFEE, A LIGHT BREAKFAST,
AND A BIBLE STUDY WITH SPECIAL
ATTENTION TO THE READINGS FOR THE
FOLLOWING SUNDAY.

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY,
YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US.

Deacons Corner

Winter Gratitude

Do you know the hymn, "For the Beauty of the Earth?"

Sing with me:

For the beauty of the earth For the glory of the skies For the love which from our birth Over and around us lies. (refrain)

Refrain: *Lord of all, to Thee we raise This our hymn of grateful praise.*

For the wonder of each hour Of the day and of the night Hill and vale and tree and flower Sun and moon and stars of light. (refrain)

This hymn popped into my head one night recently as I was walking my dog around the woodland trail behind our house. The snow was fresh - white frosted every branch. The moon was full - trees cast moon shadows. I stopped, whispered "Wow," and gazed around feeling awestruck by the beauty. This hymn commandeered my voice.

Luna urged me onward. We trudged along and I began to wonder about snow. Why isn't snow mentioned in the hymn? It's a beautiful thing.

Okay, okay, snow and ice can be the nemesis of winter. I just came in from a morning of snow shoveling – I know! Finding beauty in some of God's creations, like ice and freezing rain and snow, can certainly be difficult, causing sore backs, over-exertion, treacherous driving, and even church cancellations! But despite the trouble snow causes, each tiny six-pointed snowflake is a stunning work of art.

"Masterpieces of design," according to Wilson A. Bentley, (1865-1931) a Vermont farmer who worked tirelessly taking pictures of snowflakes. "Snowflake Bentley," had a passion for nature and sharing his photos of the delicate crystals. He called a two-day snowstorm over Valentine's Day in 1928 a gift from King Winter. Now that's a grateful perspective.

How about a new verse:

*For the marvel of each flake
For the gentle crown of snow,
Even though it makes me ache
Gifts from God of this I know.*

-Nancy Condon

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH PRESENTS**

Book Discussion Group

**THE GREAT SPIRITUAL
MIGRATION**

LOVE BOOKS? LOVE GREAT CONVERSATIONS?

be a part of a community that shares a desire to
understand the direction Christianity is taking in our
world



Thursdays, 7-8 PM
March 6-April 10

**YOUR NEXT GREAT
READ AWAITS!**

Let's connect, share ideas,
and celebrate the joy of
reading together.

FREE BOOKS



18 Broad Street,
Westfield, MA
413-568-2833



- 3/02 Ann Mundy
- 3/08 Lois Nason, Joey Crean
- 3/09 Ella Hamel
- 3/10 Steven Grimaldi
- 3/12 Elizabeth Cincotta, Albert Reynolds
- 3/15 Shirley Anderson
- 3/20 Shay Towart
- 3/22 Mara Winer
- 2/23 Ken Longstreeth
- 3/26 Bonnie Miller
- 3/30 Regina Holzapfal

Christian Fellowship

March Meeting

Wednesday March 12th at Noon

Lite Lunch and Fellowship

All are welcome

Sign up on the bulletin Board or
call the church office if you
would like to attend.



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

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



FAITH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

January was a series of craft events that connected with Bible passages from our morning service. We created stars for Epiphany, doves for the spirit of God coming down to Jesus, and a mosaic image of Jesus. All of these are in fellowship hall. Along with everyone else, we experienced two snow Sundays in February. We all are hoping to be back together soon.



**First Congregational Church
of Westfield**

Family Bowling Night

Saturday March 29 5—7PM

Spare Time Bowling
Pleasant Street
Northampton



March 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. 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: March 16th 2025 – 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 their supply needs. This month they were asking for Granola bars and cereal.

Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen – March 25th -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 March 25th 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 can help.

Westfield River Elementary school: Westfield River Elementary School with double the students opened 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 the 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.

The collection box is back, this month the needs are tissues and wipes.

HELO Haiti: World Service Committee is still able to send donations to help the students 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. Check the bulletin board for the latest pictures.

Monthly Highlights: Each month your WSC will highlight one or two of the funds we donate to, this month is The RED CROSS.

Dorothy Cichonski from our World Service Committee is our leader for RED CROSS. The Red Cross provides food and shelter in emergencies. All assistance from the Red Cross is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. Please keep the people having need of the Red Cross in your prayers.

Trail Magic: Ray Salois will be having information for those interest in learning for about Trial Magic during coffee hour. March 9th will be the cutoff date for those that have interest to sign up. We are only allowed up to 5 people, 18 years old or older so if you have an interest please see Ray Salois. The information sheet will have the work duties like cooking, listening to the hikers stories and clean up.

Rev. Jill Graham will be sending the available date's mid-March for First Congregational Church to pick from. We can only pick one date so we are trying to be ready with our people with the day of the week that best works for the group. The days available to pick from are a Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday.

World Service Committee

A promotional poster for a spring sale. The background is a bright blue sky with white clouds and a green grassy field with white daisies at the bottom. The text is centered and reads: "Blessed Buys Thrift Shoppe", "20 Broad Street Westfield, MA", "Spring Sale !!", "Open Thursdays & Saturdays", "10AM-2PM", and "A Mission of First Congregational Church of Westfield".

**Blessed Buys
Thrift Shoppe**
20 Broad Street Westfield, MA
Spring Sale !!
Open Thursdays
& Saturdays
10AM-2PM
A Mission of First Congregational Church of Westfield



**First Church Annual
Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner
Saturday March 22, 2025 5:00PM
Dine in or Take-Out
Tickets \$15.00 each**



Menu:

Corned Beef - Cabbage - Colcannon
Boiled Potatoes - Carrots –
Rolls with Butter
Dessert and Beverage



**Reservations are required.
Please Call the office for tickets 413-568-2833**

***First Congregational Church of Westfield
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[Email : fccwestfield@outlook.com](mailto:fccwestfield@outlook.com)***

