

The Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Westfield

April 2025



From Death to New Life!

It has been an interesting start to 2025 as we finally witnessed a true New England winter. However, the promise of Spring is all around us. With the budding of trees and flowers comes the promise of the Resurrection, as foretold by Jesus to his disciples.

April is a “funny” month as it intermingles with two distinct liturgical seasons. It comes in while we are in the midst of Lent and goes out while we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter. As a result, we will observe

- The Fifth Sunday of Lent on **April 6** with Communion in **both** churches (**9:30 FCC/11:00 SCC**)
- Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday on **April 13** at **both** churches (**9:30 FCC/11:00 SCC**)
- Maundy Thursday at **Southwick Congregational Church** at **7:30 PM**
- Easter Sunday on **April 20** at **both** churches (**9:30 FCC/11:00 SCC**)
- Joint Service on **April 27** at **Southwick Congregational** at **11:00 AM**

I know of folks who enjoy the simple but majestic entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. For some, it is the beauty and time-honored ritual of the Maundy Thursday Service. Others enjoy the prayerful quiet that accompanies Good Friday and Saturday as we keep our own Easter Vigil. Of course, we are so pleased to come together on Easter morning to celebrate the Resurrection and how we have new life in the Risen Christ. The light days that follow, especially as we enter Daylight Savings Time, allow us to experience our own version of new life as the earth awakens around us once again.

May we all move from the “death” that comes with winter into “New Life” that comes with spring and the Resurrection at Easter.

Peace and Love,

Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor



The Interfaith Breakfast will be held at Westfield State University on Wednesday, April 9th at 7:30am in the Scanlon Banquet Hall. Rev. Paul has purchased a table for First Congregational Church. Seven seats are available; . If you would like one of the seats, please see Rev. Paul or call the church office.

Deacons Corner

In addition to working at Blessed Buys, two other passions of mine are researching genealogy and cleaning old gravestones. I have been able to combine these two loves with a greater project which may take the rest of my life. As a member of the Westfield Historical Commission, I learned how to properly clean gravestones without damaging the stones or the earth on which they stand. One of our WHC missions is to preserve Westfield's Old Burying Ground on Mechanic Street which includes two community stone cleaning days each year. The stones there date back to the 1700s and 1800s, with a few from the 1600s. As the 2-3 centuries of accumulated dirt and fungus growth wash away, amazing previously illegible stories carved on the stones emerge. The strength and fortitude it took to survive in those early years is something we cannot begin to imagine. I genuinely love cleaning old gravestones, and my husband is an expert at straightening and repairing leaning or broken stones. We are happy to be of assistance if you have an old stone in need of TLC.

In researching our family genealogy, my brother and I have discovered exciting facts. First, looking at both my mother's side and my father's, we found we are related to 8 of the original 51 Pilgrims who survived the first winter in Plymouth. I believe about 30,000,000 Americans can also make that claim, so we are not that unique, but it is still thrilling to know that if those hearty souls had not survived, my family would not exist. We also uncovered other tales from our past such as our 8th great grandfather, Ebenezer Hall, was scalped by Native Americans on Matinicus Island, Maine when he trespassed one too many times on their land. Luckily for us, his daughter, Suzannah, our 7th great grandmother, had already moved to the mainland, married and started a family. A third find was that although we had 12 ancestors fight bravely as Patriots in the American Revolution, we had a 13th ancestor who was a Loyalist, was arrested for being a British spy, and hanged in 1777. Finally, our great grandfather, Albert Cotton, was killed in an explosion on Governor's Island in 1902 in a blast that rocked all of Boston. Again, luckily my grandmother had already been born. The stories just keep on coming as we dig deeper!

Many of our ancestors eventually left Plymouth to travel north and settle all along the coast of Maine. The project I mentioned earlier is to find their burial plots and clean their stones, which I began in 2022. That trip included visiting Owl's Head, Rockland, Camden, Damariscotta, Nobleboro, Vassalboro, Waldoboro, and Phippsburg. It was truly thrilling to first, find the many tiny cemeteries, and then the stones of my ancestors, many so covered in years of grime, they were unreadable. To see their names appear as the water washed away the dirt filled me with incredible joy and sense of satisfaction. I was saying to them, thanks to you, I am here, and you have not been forgotten.

I am proud to say we come from a long line of Congregationalists, including three Congregational ministers, my father, grandfather, and great grandfather. The list of Pilgrims we are related to includes the last names: Alden, Mullins, Standish, Rogers, Warren, Sampson, and Brewster. Do I have any long-lost cousins at First Church?

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Gaylord



Christian Fellowship
Wednesday April 9th 1PM
Fellowship Hall
“Westfield Recycling”



All are Welcome
Refreshments will be served

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.

Attention Committee Chairs

Committee Chairs are reminded to put your meeting dates on the church calendar, check your mailboxes each week and make sure lights are out and doors are locked after your meeting. Please remember the newsletter deadline is the 18th of each month.

Blessed Buys
Thrift Shoppe
Thursday and Saturday
10AM-2PM

Donation's of Spring and Summer items are needed.

Please call the Church office for information and arrangements to drop off your donation



First Congregational Church
20 Broad Street
Westfield, MA 568-2833

April Birthdays

- 04/05 Libby Dillingham
- 04/07-Ardelle Zych
- 04/07-Roy Bascom
- 4/10-Steven Downs
- 4/11-Marylyn Smith
- 4/12 Nick Platt
- 4/13 Paul Nesbit
- 4/14-Martha Roman
- 04/15-Nancy Bush
- 4/19-Mark St. Jean
- 4/30-Julia Kraus



April 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: April 20, 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 – April 22, 2025 -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. On Tuesday, April 22nd please bring your dessert to the church by 3:00 pm 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 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.

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.

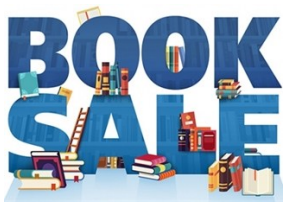
Monthly Highlights: Each month we highlight one or more of the missions we support. **HELO Haiti** mission is to provide Home, Education, Love, and Opportunity to orphaned and abandoned children in Haiti. They provide homes, proper nutrition, education and love so that the children can become literate and learn a trade to sustain themselves after leaving.

EASTER OFFERING: World Service Committee will be mailing out donation letters in April. We will also have donation envelopes in the pews. Your donations are what allows your mission projects to be filled each year. Please pray about what God leads you to do this Easter.

World Service Committee: We mailed out funds on March 10th to the following organizations: Our Community Table, Westfield Food Pantry, Our house, Westfield Elementary School, Kamp for Kids and HELO Haiti. Thank you for your continuing support for First Congregation Church's Mission Projects.

Trail Magic: Thank you for the great interest in Trail Magic , we have 13 Adults interested in going this year. We can only send max. 5 per day but we will be asking for 2 days this year. I will update the congregation and those interested as we get date or dates from Rev. Jill Graham.

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



The Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum
Annual Book Sale

Thursday May 8th through Saturday April 10th
at the First United Methodist Church,
located at 16 Court Street in Westfield.



Donations of books for all ages and jigsaw puzzles will be accepted Monday April 21st through Saturday April 26th. MWF 10-1, T & TH 4-7 Sat 9-12 Back Entrance of the Church.

No musty or damaged books, encyclopedias, textbooks, Reader's Digest books or outdated manuals, travel or self-help books will be accepted.

Email us at info@friendsofwestath.org. For more information



We would like to thank our Church Family for All the outpouring of messages & cards since our Mother's passing. She was our rock, best friend, Queen & light of our lives. We miss her so much & appreciate you All reaching out about how

much she meant to you as well at this time of our grieving. She loved her Church Family so much - no words can express the love she had for you All. It gives us comfort knowing how much you All loved her & she is now with our Dad, Clifton Gamble Jr, the love of her life.

Thank you, Martha Scavotto, Stuart Gamble, Tracy Gamble & Beth Gamble



Memorial Flowers

Each Sunday our Sanctuary is decorated with fresh floral arrangements on the Altar. There are many people and several groups in the Church who give flowers as a memorial, special celebration or holiday remembrance. After each service, the flowers are made into smaller bouquets which are given to sick, bereaved and shut-in members. If you would like to give Altar flowers for a particular Sunday, Please call the church office 568-2833. The cost of an arrangement is \$25.00.



First Congregational Church of Westfield

Continuing Education Fund

The Committee for the Bishop, Seher, Swartz and Taylor,

Moore Continuing Education Fund is now accepting applications for the **2025-2026** school year. Please obtain an application from the church office. Completed forms may be returned to the church office. All applications must be returned by **5/31/25**.

Also, should anyone desire to make a gift or bequest to the scholarship fund, please see Cindy LaPlante, or you may pick up an information pamphlet outside the church office.

Cindy LaPlante, Daniel Koehne, Gail Ives

Nominating Committee

At the March 11th Church Council Meeting, Cindy LaPlante, Ray Salois and Jim Kinney were appointed to the 2025 Nominating Committee. They are looking to fill some vacant spots on committees and will be contacting members soon. If you would like to serve on a committee please check in with them. A list of committee is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship hall.



Easter Lily and Tulip orders form
Each year on Easter the Church is decorated with
Beautiful Easter Lilies, and Red and Yellow Tulips
Following worship the flowers are delivered to
Church Members

The cost of plants this year is \$10.00.

Orders need to be placed by **Monday, April 14th** .

I would like to order ____ Easter Plants at \$10.00 each

Given By: _____

In memory/honor of: _____

Please make checks payable to "First Congregational Church"

Please return form to:

First Congregational Church


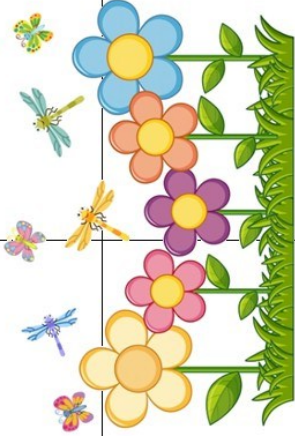
18 Broad Street Westfield MA 01085



First Congregational Church of Westfield
 18 Broad Street
 Westfield, MA 01085
 Office (413) 568-2833
www.firstcongregationalchurchwestfield.ma.org

April 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 6 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Communion Sunday Coffee Hour Team # 8	7 10:30 Staff Meeting 12:15-12:45 Food Pantry Lunch	1 6:30 Diaconate 7:00 Family Ministries	2 9 12:30PM Christian Fellowship	3 10-2 Blessed Buys 7-8 Book Discussion	4 11 10-2 Blessed Buys 7-8 Book Discussion	5 10-2 Blessed Buys
13 <i>Palm Sunday</i> 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 1	14 12:15-12:45 Food Pantry Lunch	8 10AM Breakfast with the Bible 7PM Church Council	16 23 10AM Breakfast with the Bible 3-5 Soup Kitchen	17 10-2 Blessed Buys Maundy Thursday Service in Southwick	18 25 10-2 Blessed Buys	19 10-2 Blessed Buys Hockey Game
20 <i>Easter Sunday</i> 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Fellowship Coffee Hour Team # 2	21 Office Closed	22 10AM Breakfast with the Bible 3-5 Soup Kitchen	30 29 10AM Breakfast with the Bible	24 10-2 Blessed Buys	26 10-2 Blessed Buys	
27 11:00 Worship in Southwick	28	29 10AM Breakfast with the Bible	30			



SPRINGFIELD THUNDERBIRDS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTFIELD SPRINGFIELD THUNDERBIRDS NIGHT

SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH

VS.  **CHARLOTTE CHECKERS @ 7:05PM**

EXCLUSIVE \$19 TICKET RATE FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTFIELD, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS.

OPTIONAL \$3 FOOD VOUCHER ADD ON FOR A HOTDOG AND SODA.

PRE GAME ZAMBONI EXPERIENCE AVAILABLE AND 1ST INTERMISSION ON ICE TSHIRT TOSS.



ORDER TICKETS VIA QR CODE OR LINK

TO ENSURE SEATS WITH THE GROUP, PLEASE ORDER NO LATER THAN APRIL 10TH

**FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR PURCHASE TICKETS OVER THE PHONE, CONTACT LAUREN : (413) 417-2289
[HTTPS://SPRINGFIELDTHUNDERBIRDS.FORMSTACK.COM/FORMS/FCCW419](https://springfieldthunderbirds.formstack.com/forms/fccw419)**



LAUREN BLANCHARD

Senior Account Executive, Groups & Experiences

(413) 417-2289 SpringfieldThunderbirds.com

@ThunderbirdsAHL

PROUD AFFILIATE
ST. LOUIS BLUES



IN CELEBRATION OF LOWERING 1000S OF PRICES AT OUR WESTERN, MA, STORES STOP & SHOP IS PROUD TO SPONSOR LOWER TICKET PRICES FOR GROUPS AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE FAMILY FRIENDLY ENTERTAINMENT!



Palm/Passion Sunday
Service
April 13th 9:30AM
First Congregational
Church of Westfield



Maundy Thursday Service
Southwick Congregational
Church
April 17th 7:30PM



Easter Sunday Celebration
April 20th 9:30 AM
First Congregational
Church of Westfield

First Congregational Church of Westfield

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