



The Newsletter  
First Congregational Church  
of Westfield  
October 2025

An Attitude of Gratitude

*“How shall I make a return to the Lord, for all that’s been done for me?”  
(Psalm 116:12)*

Each year, many of us involve ourselves in the rituals of leaf peeping, leaf raking, pumpkin carving, and getting ready for Halloween. We may take out window air conditioners as we give way to a bit of “fall cleaning” before settling in for the winter. Many people claim that Fall or Autumn is their favorite season as we have many days of clear, blue, sunshine skies that highlight the splendor of God’s creation.

It is important that we remember to give thanks to God for the gift of creation and all that has been bestowed on us. Our church is fortunate to have been the beneficiary of many great gifts from God and the gifts from members of the congregation. Truly we are blessed by God.

This causes us to claim “An Attitude of Gratitude” as our stewardship theme this year. We know we’ve been blessed, we know that God has provided what we need, and we also know that we need the assistance of our congregation as we seek to continue to bring about the Reign of God here on earth. We must do what we can to ensure that all the good things that our church wants to do can be accomplished without financial concerns.

We have people who have ensured that we are in good and stable financial shape. We must continue, however, our Attitude of Gratitude as we consider how we can be even better stewards of what God has given to us. The Psalmist goes on to remind us that “I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all the people.” (Ps 116: 14)

All of us recognize that the economy is in turmoil as we hear different things on the news. Some struggle with all types of bills and payments. Our church must do the same. I am asking all of us, myself included: are we in a position to make a small increase in pledges this year? If you can, great; if you cannot, we understand. I only ask that we maintain an Attitude of Gratitude. How do we make a return to the Lord for all that’s be done for us?

Love and peace,

*Paul*

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit  
Pastor

**Blessing of the Animals  
Saturday, October 4th**

9:30-10:30  
Southwick Congregational  
Church  
488 College Highway  
Southwick Ma

11-12  
First Congregational Church  
Of Westfield  
18 Broad Street  
Westfield MA



**BLESSING**  
of the **ANIMALS**

## Family Ministries

The Family Ministries Committee is launching a new program on Sunday afternoons from 4:30-5:30. All events are open to anyone in the greater Westfield community.

On October 12, November 9, and January 11, Janet St. Jean will host a Drumming Circle for anyone who would like to join us. If you have a drum, please bring it with you. If you don't have a drum, we have plenty in all shapes and sizes! Drumming is freeing and exciting. You don't need any prior experience, simply a desire to have fun.

On October 19, November 16, and January 18, our committee will re-establish a social group for youth in grades 7-12. What will we be doing? That will be up to our members – although we have many ideas that may interest them. High on the list will be food, games, mission projects and, hopefully a retreat in the winter. We will welcome youth from all our neighbor churches.

Our fabulous Halloween Party will be open to the community on October 25 from 2:00-3:30. Gail Ives will put her magic touch on the preparations.

And finally, on October 26, November 23, and January 25, we will be hosting an alternative worship service in Fellowship Hall. We're recruiting contemporary performers, young adults who will bear witness to the impact of Christianity on their lives, and an inspirational message for all ages.

Please join us for these exciting events!  
Janet St. Jean, Director of Family Ministries  
Michelle Winer, Chair of Family Ministries



### **Church School has resumed with a re-imagined church building!**

I asked our young artists to create a church that included everything they felt should be there. Not only did they create a vibrant sanctuary, but a hovering Star Wars scene, and a tire shop next door. Their church model will be holding court in Fellowship Hall. Please come and look. You might even find yourself there.

Please Congratulate Mara and Mike Winer on their engagements.



Mara Winer and Andrew Holmes



Mike Winer and Meghan Beaumier

## Family Ministries

All Activities are Sunday at 4:30

We invite your church community to join us whenever you are able! Please contact Family Ministries Director Janet St. Jean at 413-568-2833 if you have any questions!

### Drumming Circle for All Ages

(Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

October 12

November 9

January 11



### Youth Group

(Grade 7-12)

October 19

November 16

January 18



### Halloween Party

October 25th

\*2:00-3:30\*



### Alternative/Family Worship Service

October 26

November 23

January 25



First Congregational Church of Westfield

18 Broad Street

Westfield, MA

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome!

## Free Cancer Support in Our Neighborhood By Deacon Brad Alm

For the past 25 plus years I have had the honor and privilege of working at the Cancer House of Hope in West Springfield. I retired from my primary job over a year ago, but choose to continue facilitating a group at the house because I enjoy the work and people there.

The Cancer House of Hope is now a CHD program and offers free support services to anyone with a Cancer diagnosis and their families. Service available at the house include:

- All cancer support group
- Breast cancer support group
- Journaling for Healing
- \*Oncology Massage \*Requirement Must Be Met\*
- Reiki
- Art therapy
- Wig Boutique
- Breast Prosthetics /Bra Fittings
- Relaxation
- Yoga On-site
- Yoga Virtual
- Yoga Restorative
- Therapeutic Horseback Riding
- Crafting

The Cancer House of Hope began when a local social worker experienced breast cancer. She found that during her course of treatment her services were primarily hospital and clinic based. It was her feeling that she would have felt more comfortable if she could have accessed care and support in a more home like setting. She consulted with colleagues and recruited volunteers and the Cancer House of Hope was born, although originally called the Center of Hope. It was first located in Westfield next to Noble Hospital and was its own non-profit organization. The house eventually moved to West Springfield and became a CHD program.

Services at the Cancer House of Hope are provided by licensed clinicians and is managed by an executive director, assistant director and volunteers. Services continue to be free of charge. The programs are funded by private donations, grants and fund raising events.

The house is located at: 1999 Westfield St.  
West Springfield (Route 20)

The phone is (413) 733-1858 email: [mtoomey@chd.org](mailto:mtoomey@chd.org)

Margaret Toomey is the Executive Director. Linda Remillard assists her and volunteers answer phones and keep the house functioning.

The house is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Many of the services are offered later in the afternoon or into the early evening. Some services are offered on Saturdays.

Members of our church family have accessed the services at the house in past years. Please keep the Cancer House of Hope in mind should you, a family member or any friend encounter a Cancer diagnosis.

## Committee News

### October Birthdays!

10/03 Tom Lorenzen  
10/3 Norma Cagney  
10/5 Richard Thomas  
10/06 Michelle Winer  
10/09 Robert Thompson  
10/10 Lynn Brownlee  
10/10 Judy Schrecke  
10/10 Steven Pierce  
10/10 Carol Whalen  
10/12 Doug James  
10/18 Noah Perkins  
10/20 Tyson James  
10/23 Pauline Thomas  
10/25 Osborne Gaugh, Jr.  
10/26 Allan Taylor  
10/31 Gail Ives



## Save the Date

Save December 6, 2025 at 3:00 for the Carol Festival! The concert will include the First Church Choir, Handbell Choir, The New England Brass and The Young Singers of Greater Westfield. Allan Taylor will direct the concert and Scott Bailey will be the organist.

Volunteers are needed to greet people at the doors and monitor the donation baskets and to help at the reception following the concert. Cookie bakers will also be needed.

If you can help, please see any member of the Music Committee if you can help. Thank you!

Martha Roman, Deb and Brad Alm, Darlene Biggs, Michelle Downs, Julie Kraus and Christina Pierce.

## Stewardship Month

October is Stewardship month and Sunday, Oct. 19 is Stewardship Sunday when we will all be asked to fill out estimate of giving cards.

This is an opportunity to think about how we support the work of this church — financially, with our attendance and through volunteerism — and how we plan to continue that support through 2026.

It's also a practical necessity. Our Budget Committee needs a good idea of how much money to expect as it plans for the coming year.

So keep a lookout for a letter and a pledge card in the mail. Or pick one up at Church.

Thanks

## Safe Church

The Committee has been working hard to revise the Safe Church Policies and Procedures as it was relevant to renewing our insurance. We are looking forward to share them with you soon. The Safe Church Committee will also begin to reach out to all the current key holders to ensure our Key holder list is up-to-date. Why you ask? We are going to be changing the locks on the outside doors of the church and we want to be sure your key will still work. Therefore, if you currently have a key, we will be verifying the reasons for the need so this can be updated on the master list. Reminder that when your term of committee chairman is over, it is expected you turn in that key to the new chairman as that is how the keys are recorded. If you want to continue to have a key, you will be asked to complete a new key application to be reviewed by both the Safe Church Committee and the Property Committee.

Michelle Winer  
Safe Church Administrator

## 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: 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, Tuna fish, canned vegetables, Cereal, Canned Fruit, Peanut Butter, Jelly.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday** in each month your WSC will make an announcement for the items that are in short supply at the Food Pantry. This month they were asking for Pasta and Pasta sauce, cereal, peanut butter.

**Our Community Table/Westfield Soup Kitchen - 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 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:** Your World Service Committee is in touch with the school office to see what 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church can do to help with their teachers' needs. 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 Westfield River Elementary School.

**HELO Haiti:** World Service Committee asked Elisabeth Kennedy to give the sermon message at First Congregational Church on August 31<sup>st</sup>, after church World Service committee held a meeting with Elisabeth about a HELO Haiti fundraiser at our church. Ray Salois brought the plan to Church Council on September 9<sup>th</sup>. The council approved the plan for a January 10<sup>th</sup> Fundraiser. Jennifer Waldorf is the leader for planning and will contact Elisabeth Kennedy with the firm date. World Service will have more details of the fundraiser as we firm up the details.

The event will be a Trivia night, Trivia will be hosted by a HELO Haiti group that does an excellent Trivia Night per Elisabeth.

Thank you for your continued donations for HELO Haiti.

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

This month we are highlighting: Community Table (Soup Kitchen)

Community Table was started in Westfield by Bob Smith, Gary Johnson, Dick Hansen in 1986 on the Westfield Green. A card table was used, sandwiches and soup were served to all customers the group could find. The Westfield Community Table still serves those in need with dinner and fellowship each night of the week except Saturdays. First Congregational Church prepares a meal the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month plus World Service sends a donation each year.

Thank you all for your donations and time for this great mission project.

**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, Tom Samwell

## October 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.*



**A Celebration of the Life of  
Shirley Anderson  
First Congregational Church of  
Westfield, MA  
October 11, 2025 11AM**



**Interested in Joining First Congregational Church?**

Anyone interested in joining First Congregational Church or learning more about the Church is invited to attend a meeting with Rev. Paul.

New Members will be welcomed into the Church on November 16th.

If you are interested please call the church office, 568-2833 to make arrangements.



First Congregational Church  
Of Westfield

Annual

**Harvest Dinner**

Saturday, Nov. 1st @ 5PM

The menu will consist of:

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

Tickets are \$15.00/person

Reservations are Required  
Please Call the Church Office

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

