



Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

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2023

Friends,

New Years' is really an arbitrary date. We all have multiple new years every year: a new school year and various fiscal years. Our Christian liturgical year starts about a month before the secular calendar. I bet you didn't know that *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish new year, comes in the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. In our personal lives, birthdays and wedding anniversaries mark the end of one year and the beginning of another. Each year, the date of my ordination is cause for introspection and self-appraisal. Whatever the new year, each is a simple measure of time, as well as an opportunity for reflection.

Contemplation and renewal are central to Christian spirituality. By God's grace, we are invited to renew and re-imagine our lives at any given moment. Consider John Newton, author of *Amazing Grace*: he started a voyage as the captain of a slave ship and returned to London, an Abolitionist. New years and anniversaries remind us of the ground we have covered and spur us to ponder the future. New Year's resolutions reflect a sense of possibility. Disappointments can always give way to recommitment.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." The Christian liturgical calendar takes us from Christmas to Epiphany. At the darkest time of year, we celebrate the miracle of light breaking into darkness. I pray that in 2023, we will each discover new enlightenment and shine for one another. I pray that First Congregational Church of Walpole will be a beacon of warm fellowship, nurture and inspiration for our members, and a sign of hope to our community and beyond. This year will reveal possibilities God has in store; we have not likely imagined. I pray that we will share the goodness we have come to know, by the grace of God.

I wish you all the very best in 2023 and beyond.

Yours in Christ,
Richard Malmberg

Giving Tree Thank You

Dear Walpole community:

Thanks to so much generosity from so many people, the 2022 Community Giving Tree provided a brighter holiday season for almost 30 local families and almost 100 local children. We would like to thank The Congregational Church of Walpole, St. John's Church, St. Peter's Church, The Hungry Diner, Spencer's Place, the Walpole and North Walpole Libraries, Mascoma Bank, and The Savings Bank of Walpole on Westminster Street for displaying tags and collecting gifts. We would like to also thank the "Toys for Tots" program based at The Savings Bank of Walpole in Shaw's Plaza for providing many extra toys so that parents could choose 2-3 more gifts besides those that they requested. The staff at the Westminster St. Savings Bank of Walpole also provided wrapping paper and tape for the parents. We thank everyone who sent us donations, as we purchased over \$600 worth of gifts for tags that were not taken. Finally, we want to thank EVERYONE who chose tags and purchased gifts. A special thanks also to the "Women of Walpole" who chose many tags and purchased many gifts. This whole project is a perfect example of a small-town holiday spirit. THANK YOU SO MUCH to all who helped in any way!

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you and yours! We hope that 2023 brings you peace, joy, and good health!

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Cloues and Marcia Weil

Giving Tree Project coordinators

From Judy Daniels

If you missed this year's Christmas service, you were dearly missed. The sanctuary was beautiful in every way. A large tree with lights. The altar was lovely with two huge wreaths and many red and white poinsettias. The banners were on the wall and the windows aglow with candles, and as the custom, the all-white Nativity and candles were on the altar below the cross. All truly beautiful! And then there was the wonderful music and a reminder of our friends in Ukraine with 3 selections. How blessed we are that we have members that are keeping traditions alive. Next year think about joining your friends and invite a relative, a new neighbor, or a friend at Applewood, or someone new to town. You will be happy you did. (And so will they!) Thanks, and Happy New Year to all.
Judy Daniels

A Note from Minna

Many of you have been asking me how Paula Gallagher is doing. Well, she has just finished one round of a brand-new treatment plan. When I spoke with Paula 3 nights ago, she told me she is supposed to start a second round very shortly. She said the treatments have completely "run her down". When she sees the oncologist next week, she will ask to have a break from starting the second round because she really needs time to rest.

Paula's PET scan results show mets throughout her body. The good news is that she is having absolutely no pain!

She humbly asks for continued prayers as she knows that prayers always work and are the best possible medicine.

Paula sends thank you's for all your thoughts and prayers and friendship from the Walpole First Congregational Church.

Sent to you all with permission from Paula Gallagher.

Minna Good



Trustees Report

-Energy reduction is going well. The sanctuary is staying at 55F during the week. The programable thermostat raises the temp to 63F on Saturday afternoons to adjust for the organ and piano and our congregants on Sunday. The fellowship hall remains as we have always had it, at 55F when not in use. Too early to gauge savings.

-Steeple is in the news again as the wind sheared off a piece of the fiberglass cladding on the spire, north side. A claim has been filed with our insurance company as wind damage is covered. Pending an adjuster visit. The good news for us is that we have no recent claim history, so the \$2500.00 deductible is being waived. We're anxious to see the claim result.

-Winter ice and snow is with us now, so beware of the road and walkways. There is sand and ice melt at each doorway, so if you find it icy and you are able, sprinkle a little on to help make things safe.

-trustee's budget is in good shape so far. We would like to investigate new pull-down shades for the fellowship hall, that are insulated. The current shades are from the windows prior to the renovations and don't fit properly and two are inoperable.

-Stay warm and happy holidays!

For the Trustees,
Dale

From Our Council

As we venture into another New Year while still needing to consider the restraints of Covid, let us all be reminded of our progress in the last year.

Since opening the church on Palm Sunday, we;

- reinstated the coffee hour after church that Sunday.
- held the Easter Breakfast after the Sunrise Service.
- hosted a celebration of Rev. Malmberg's arrival in the congregation.
- later in the Spring held the large Rummage and Yard Sale.
- Right away we started talking about Old Home Day and pulled off the Chicken BBQ.
- over the summer we put on a shortened version of the Pie Sales.
- This past Fall, we held the Outdoor Service with a Potluck and a meeting afterward for fundraising ideas.
- hosted a Blessing of the Animals, followed closely by another Halloween event.
- in November, we held a Community Potluck, following up on a very popular idea for more participation in the Community, and raising money for World Central Kitchen.
- Before Thanksgiving we held a very successful soup and bread sale, which was very well received and sure to become an annual event.
- We held a Thanksgiving Prayer Circle on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.
- in December we hosted an organ recital, which again opens our church to the community and was well attended.

This certainly demonstrates a good level of commitment in our church, and we thank everyone who has helped. Participation is vital for us to continue.

Looking forward to 2023, plans for monthly potluck suppers are in the works, the next one being planned for January 14. We also hope to host more music and entertainment functions. Revival of the popular Cabaret has been discussed. Stay tuned for more information.

May you all be blessed with a happy, healthy, and safe New Year. We will all be praying for peace in Ukraine and the World.

Sue Krebs

Church Calendar for January 2023

Sunday, January 1	Communion Sunday Worship Service live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Monday, January 2	Office Closed for Federal Holiday	
Friday, January 6	Epiphany	
Sunday, January 8	Epiphany Sunday Worship Live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Wednesday, January 11	Bible Study resumes on Zoom	4-5 pm
Saturday, January 14	Council Meeting 8:30 am in Fellowship Hall, Community Potluck Supper	5:30 pm
Sunday, January 15	Sunday Worship Live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Monday, January 16	Office Closed for Federal Holiday	
Wednesday, January 18	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Saturday, January 21	Peanut Butter and Jelly Drop Off for Fall Mt. Food Shelf	TBD
Sunday, January 22	Worship Service live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Wednesday, January 25	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Sunday, January 29	Worship Service live and online via Zoom	10:00 am

Monday, January 23 Parish Visitor Deadline

Church Office Hours: 9 am to 12 noon, T-F

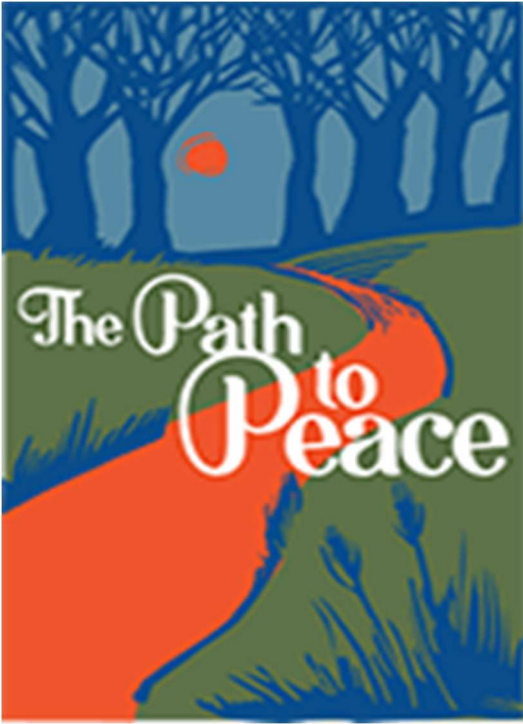
The office is closed on Mondays



The Origin of the Nativity Set: Back during the time Reverend Evelyn Clowes was here, Doris Brainard purchased the greenware and at a couple of evening workshops a group of ladies got together and painted it. Gwen took the set to Alstead to Erin Relehans ceramic shop and she fired it. Gwen cannot remember who helped paint the set. She is thinking most of them have either moved or passed on. One person Gwen remembers was Karen Pickard who with her husband owned the now Malnati Farm. If you helped with this project please call Gwen and your name can be added to the list.

For many years Sandy Pickering and Marjorie McGill were in charge of setting up the display.

Gwen Yardley



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