



## Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC  
603-756-4075  
walpolechurch@yahoo.com  
www.walpolenhucc.org

September 2024

Friends,

I have really enjoyed our summer services in Fellowship Hall. I enjoy the intimacy and informality of the café-style seating. Anna Dunne, our new music director, assumed the position in August. I am sure you will all make her feel welcome. She is a real professional and has begun rehearsing with the choir. They will sing at the ecumenical service on The Common, on September 8 (rain date Sept. 15). Our last service in Fellowship Hall will be Labor Day weekend.

Our Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. We were over halfway through Exodus when we paused for the summer so we will continue studying Exodus. The summer book discussion of *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy will be held at 11:30, Sunday, September 22. Several people have told me they found the book difficult and stopped reading before they finished. If you would like to come to the discussion anyway, this will be an opportunity to discuss Israel/Palestine, as we approach one year of war in October. Let's hope and pray there will be peace before that grim anniversary.

I hope you have had a relaxing and refreshing summer. I look forward to seeing you soon.

In Christ,  
Richard Malmberg

## STEWARDSHIP 2024

Two months have passed since we announced our pledge goal of \$105,000, a 5% increase over last year. 36 pledges have been received totaling \$86,464. That's 82% of our goal.

We want to finish the pledge drive by the end of September. We sent out 78 letters in early June so there's room for more pledges to come in. If you need a nudge, it will be coming. And, if it is at all possible, paying all or part of your pledge early puts money into the checking account and that delays the need to withdraw money from the endowment.

### WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?

While visiting with a fellow church member recently, the subject of the shortage of new people in the church came up. The history of our church shows this is not a new trend, but it is more apparent probably because the number of members attending church and participating in its' activities is getting noticeably lower. Plus, we're older and we tire quicker. Why aren't new people coming or, better yet why, aren't people who previously came not coming? We miss people who previously came and contributed to a larger, vibrant church. Certainly, being invitational has an impact, but I've learned from those I've invited that one's faith and beliefs are very personal. It hasn't stopped me from being invitational, but it has changed the way I open the conversation and listen.

I believe there is another factor when considering this question. Participation in main line churches in our nation is decreasing. The problem is national. It's cultural. Being part of a faith community may not be as important to individuals and families. Or maybe they define their faith differently. Or maybe some main line churches sound as though they represent values that Jesus would reject. I'm sure there are more. The point is we need to

keep Being the Church! The next time you're near the front door, take a minute to read the banner to the right. Then take ten minutes, sit in the Memorial Garden and reflect on the words on the banner.

### A 2 MILLION DOLLAR ENDOWMENT

Maybe it's because I was given a diagnosis of ALS, a terminal illness, that my thinking often circles back to my mortality. And when it does one of the thoughts is about Ellie's and my church and what it will look like in the year 2050. We're entering a challenging period. Our membership is slowly declining due to the passing of members and the absence of new ones. We are relying on our endowment to provide the income to balance our budget. We have maxed out the amount of money we're allowed to remove annually. The endowment is currently valued at \$1,300,000. A value of \$2,000,000 is attainable and could provide us with the cushion necessary to stay strong and vibrant. How? Planned Giving. An ad-hoc committee is looking for a financial planner to help us present at the next Annual Meeting a plan for each of us to include our church in your estate plans. It all starts with a will. There are some inexpensive, even free, models easily available that we will identify soon.

Chuck Shaw



## From Council Co-Chair Marilyn Shriver

When September rolls around I always want to wish our congregation a Happy New Year. We will move worship service back to the sanctuary, committee meeting schedules become more regular, and the activity level ratchets up, a lot! I am the MOST excited about the church's new music director, Anna Dunn. I remember when Anna was my son Bennett's music teacher during his middle school years. Her skill as a teacher, her enthusiasm for music, and her cheerful, respectful demeanor all influenced Bennett's decision to pursue a music education degree. With Anna, Bennett always felt he was in good hands. On Sunday, August 25, I attended my first choir rehearsal with Anna. Throughout our time together, I kept thinking, "We are in good hands." Anna knows how to lead a choir. I can hardly wait to see what we all get up to.

If you have ever thought about singing with the choir, or used to be a member, now is a great time to join or re-join. We will rehearse on Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:30 and meet at 9:00 AM on Sundays. It's going to be great.

Peace,  
Marilyn

## Memorial

Time flies and soon we will be saying goodbye to our summer garden flowers—a bittersweet time of year, to be sure. We have been enjoying the informal church services in Fellowship Hall, along with lovely bouquets, but also look forward to worshipping again in our beautiful sanctuary in September. This is the time when the Memorial Committee can announce that the altar flower schedule for September is WIDE OPEN! And.... there are five Sundays in the month! This is a wonderful opportunity for you to celebrate a loved

one's birthday, anniversary, give flowers in memory of a loved one, or just simply celebrate. There is a sign-up sheet on the table by the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall, or you may call Ellie Shaw at 603-756-4866 if there is a Sunday when you would like to donate flowers.

We also are reminding our church family to fill out the Intentional Memorial Giving form (you can find blank forms on the table in Fellowship Hall). By filling out the form, you can indicate how you'd like memorial funds given to the church in your name to be used. We will keep the completed forms in a notebook for easy access, and you will be free to update them at any time. Please drop them off in the church office or leave them in the Memorial mailbox just outside the church office door. Thank you! Ellie Shaw

## Women's Fellowship

Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm we will be meeting in Fellowship Hall. We are supposed to be discussing the book: Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books. But are we? Please contact me at 603-313-9291, if you've read the book. If there's little interest, we'll do something else.  
Peg

## Anniversaries in September

Greg and Annette Wilson September 09

## Birthdays in September

Paul Looney	September 13
Linda Graff	September 16
Mark Houghton	September 20
Linda Jeffrey	September 21
Ellie Shaw	September 25



# World Central Kitchen

Dear First Congregational Church of Walpole,

On behalf of World Central Kitchen, I want to thank you for choosing to donate **\$220** on **June 4, 2024** in support of our work around the globe. We are so grateful for your help as we use the power of food to nourish the world.

Deploying our model of quick action, leveraging local resources, and adapting in real time, WCK has provided more than 400 million meals since 2010 in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises across the world.

We're a team of food first responders, mobilizing with the urgency of now to get meals to the people who need them most. We know that a nourishing meal in a time of crisis is so much more than a plate of food —**it's hope, it's dignity, and it's a sign that someone cares.**

Thank you for your belief and trust in our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Gore', is positioned to the left of the printed name and title.

**Erin Gore**

*Chief Executive Officer*

World Central Kitchen

## Missions

The small but mighty Missions Committee met for the first time this fiscal year on August 8. There are five of us: Bonnie Caserta, Ellie Shaw, Linda Jeffrey, Jane Malmberg, and Becky Pearson. Over the summer we lost some stalwarts due to term limits, resignations and Peg Winnen assuming the role of Council co-chair. However, once a Missionette, always a Missionette, so we will have help behind the scenes going forward!

And, looking forward, here are some dates to mark on your calendar:

**Sunday, September 15** is our monthly **Food Shelf offering**. This offering is the third Sunday of every month, and we welcome either bags of non-perishable groceries or a check (payable to First Congregational, write Food Shelf on the memo line).

**Sunday, October 6** is the **Neighbors in Need offering**, one of the United Church of Christ's special mission offerings. Our church is proud to be a "Five for Five" church as we support Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and the four special mission offerings throughout the year. One third of the Neighbors in Need offering always supports the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two thirds are used by the Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations and also to support advocacy efforts, service initiatives and justice initiatives.

This year the Justice and Witness Ministries have chosen to focus on "Mental Health Justice for All.... A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life's mental health journey."

Look for a donation envelope in your bulletin on Sunday, October 6, and please give generously.

The Missions Committee continues to contribute to the Walpole School Free Lunch Assistance Program, donating \$350 in September, December and March.

Future events include Ukama Sunday at the end of October, the Thanksgiving Food Drive in November, Souper Bowl Sunday in February, the Peanut Butter Drive in March, and our ever-popular Spring Rummage Sale, So stay tuned!  
Ellie Shaw

## Finance

The Finance Committee will be meeting for the first time on Sept. 10 at 4pm at Chuck Shaw's or by Zoom. We welcome to the committee Charlie Lennon and look forward to the year. Sue Krebs is stepping back into the role of Chair; Janet Wilson is staying on for another year to help us maintain our structure. We also value her vast experience.

We are all grateful for Chuck Shaw's steadfast attention to Stewardship. He keeps the congregation well-informed on the state of the pledges and income to the church. We hope to replicate the success of the last fiscal year. The very consistent attendance to the summer services is a positive indicator for the upcoming year. We have a very committed and active congregation! Thank you all!

We note also the return of the choir under the leadership of Anna Dunn. We welcome new singers. There is no need to be shy, all levels are welcome. And singing is SO MUCH FUN!!

Best of luck to all the committees as we rev up the motors for another year!

Sue Krebs

## CROP Hunger Walk 2024

Its CROP Walk time again! This is an annual event coordinated by our church in partnership with St John's Episcopal Church and the Unitarian Church of Walpole. Over the 20+ year history of the Walpole CROP Walk, we have raised many, many thousands of dollars to "transform communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster."

Last year the Walpole CROP Walk raised over \$12,000! Our small but mighty Walk was recognized as a "National 2023 Cream of the CROP top fundraising team", 54th in the country!! A quarter of each year's Walk income goes to a local program, which for us is usually the Fall Mt Food Shelf.

This year's CROP Walk is on **Saturday, October 12 at 9:15 am**. We meet at our Church to begin our 3-mile route around the village. If you would like to participate in the CROP Walk or just raise money for this important cause, go to [crophungerwalk.org/walpolenh](http://crophungerwalk.org/walpolenh).

If you have questions, please call/text me at 603-313-4076, or email me at [jgsellarole@gmail.com](mailto:jgsellarole@gmail.com)

Thank you so much!

## Deacons

The deacons had a quiet summer. We are getting ready to host the outdoor service with St. John's Episcopal church on the common on September 8, 2024.

After that Sunday we will be worshipping in the Sanctuary again.

October will be a very busy month in the church. Details will be in the next Parish Visitor.

Linda Jeffrey has stepped down as a deacon, citing health issues. Thanks for your service, Linda! The Deacon of the month for September is Linda Wright.

Becky Pearson  
603-860-0221

## Trustees

Quiet times! The Trustees have no summer projects going on.

Next up will be residing the upper portion of the east side (back) of the church with a new product called cement board. Once done, that area will not need painting or maintenance for fifteen to twenty years. We have sufficient funds with the generous donation of one of our parishioners to supplement the balance carried forward from previous years' work. The elevator and fire monitoring system inspections were completed in August per State of NH regulations.

You will note that Paul Looney has stepped down as Trustee chair for a needed break. I have been reupped as Chair continuing the Paul/Dale tag team to leading the Trustees. Too early to talk about fall....so that's all for now.

Dale Woodward  
Trustee Chair.

## Church Calendar September 2024

Sunday, September 1	Communion Sunday Worship in Fellowship Hall and on zoom	10:00 am
Saturday, September 7	Funeral Service for Jean Washer, First Congregational Church	2:00 pm
Sunday, September 8	Ecumenical service with St. John's church on the Common	10:00 am
Saturday, September 14	Council meeting in Fellowship Hall	8:30 am
Sunday, September 15	Sunday Worship back in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Wednesday, September 18	Bible Study Returns on Zoom	4-5 pm
Sunday, September 22	Worship Service in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Wednesday, September 25	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Sunday, September 29	Sunday Worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Monday, September 23	Parish Visitor Deadline	
Church Office Hours:	M-F 9 am – 12 pm	



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PO Box 393  
Walpole, NH 03608

