

The Gargoyle

A publication of Groton Congregational Church

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020



CAROLS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The Annual Christmas Concert , “Lessons and Carols”, performed by our Senior Choir and Handbell Choir on December 8th during our Sunday Worship Service. Please join us.



DECEMBER/JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Carloandre Aguilar
Sue Blaisdell
Anja Brooks
Josh Bryte
Sonja Campbell
Peter Chappell
Lannie Clark
Marilee Dull
Ali Gregory
Brett Guillickson
Joseph Jolicoeur

Kevin Measimer
Wayne Shafer
Hazel Shepherd
Paul Shinn
Sue Stottlemeyer
Abigail Tuck
Anne Vendetti
Rose Marie Ward
Jill Wilson
Grace Woodruff

MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH VISITOR

If you know of anyone in need of a visit or a phone call, contact me or the church office.

Thanks, Connie Stoddard

NOVEMBER BUDGET UPDATE

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Pledge	\$7,670	\$8,135
Plate	\$1,423	\$1,166



A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM OUR TREASURER

With the 2019 Church budget year ending, please take a minute to check to see if your pledge is up to date. Thank You!!



PASTOR'S MOMENT- DECEMBER

Happy Advent! In addition to our familiar Advent rituals of lighting the Advent Wreath each Sunday, Scripture Readings from Isaiah, and Luke, Advent Sermons, and our Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve, we are adding a few new things to this Advent season and hope that you will come to experience all this season brings.

Each Sunday during Advent we will have giant Advent coloring sheets in Dutton Hall for any and all ages to join together in coloring these sheets. Each coloring page corresponds to a different set of characters from the birth story and includes a different name from Isaiah 9:6. We hope in creating this beautiful piece of art, conversations will spark around the different themes presented each Sunday. Here is an example:



We will be singing Advent refrains at the end of Passing of the Peace and after the Children's Sermon. Here is one:

"If in your heart you make a manger for his birth, then God will once again become a child on earth." (Angelus Silesius)

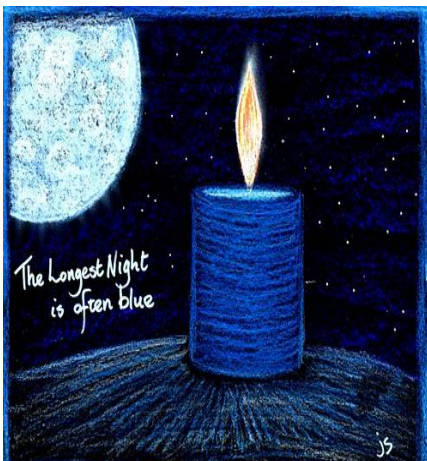
We will have Silent Prayer Stations set up around the sanctuary for anyone to participate before, during, or after worship including our prayer weaving loom where one can add a prayer, cards to sign or decorate for our members who can no longer be with us in worship, and ornaments to decorate for our tree in the sanctuary. Here is what one looked like during Lent.



CHRISTMAS STARS – FOR REMEMBERING



Also, this year we will be honoring and memorializing our loved ones with a star donated in their name. You are invited to donate to any area of the church, and we will include the name of your loved one on a star which will hang on our tree in the Sanctuary. We will list the names in our bulletin on December 22nd, and you are welcome to take the star home after that service. There will be a form to fill out in your pew packet. You can drop the form in the offering plate or at the office.



On the longest night of the year, please join us for this service of prayer, remembrance and hope.

Saturday, December 21, 2010
@ 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Join us for our Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

December 24, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.



A MISSION OPPORTUNITY DURING ADVENT

Each year my children look forward to the gift I give them on Christmas Eve which is always a donation made in their name to a local charity. Usually it involves a gift of food or shelter for a person or family in need. This year we have printed Gift Acknowledgement Cards to support our Community Meals. Each Saturday a team of volunteers serves 30-50 people lunch in Dutton Hall and then delivers a few meals to our homebound. Some come because they need a meal, some come because they need community, but everyone receives both. Over and over I have heard that this is the most important mission we do here at Groton Congregational. Please consider donating any amount of your choosing and you will receive a Gift Acknowledgement Card to give as a gift. Keep in mind that \$100 sponsors an entire Meal for one Saturday. Also, please consider signing up to volunteer to help on a Saturday.

You can purchase these Gift Acknowledgement Card in Dutton Hall after the service on Sundays or stop by the office.

FIRST COMING

By Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace
He came when the Heavens were unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Grace and Peace be with you during this holy season,
Pastor Joan



There will not be an “Open Mic Night” at the church in December. We will meet again January 23rd.



Coffee Hour

We are still looking for volunteers to sign-up for Coffee Hour. Our sign-up sheet is in Dutton Hall on the bulletin board. Our Barista, Jim Maynard makes the coffee, we only need help with set-up, a small snack you may wish to bring in, or cookies from our Hospitality Bin. Our Youth Group has volunteered to help with clean up. Below is the listing of greeters for December. Please contact Marilyn Wright if you are unable to be at church. Please arrive by 9:30.

October Greeters

December 1	Bill & Phyllis Gregory
December 8	Marilyn Wright & Mike Byczynski
December 15	Anne Vendetti & Kevin Measimer
December 22	Phyllis Meyer & Dave Bryte
December 29	Lind Wagner & Patty Wagner

October Coffee Hour Volunteers

December 1
December 8
December 15
December 22
December 29

MISSION MOMENTS



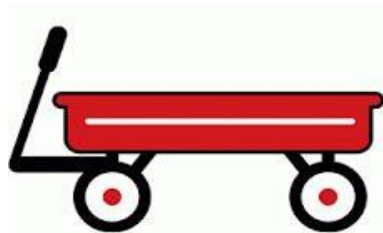
The Missions Team — Beth Chirillo (chair), Laurie Bliss, Phyllis Gregory, Penny Sullivan, and Mary Howard

Thanks to all who gave so generously to the **Thanksgiving Food Basket Drive**. We donated two shopping bags full of food and two turkeys to Groton Human Services for their annual Thanksgiving baskets, which go out to 500 Groton families in need.

If you took a tag for the **Grammies Jammies** drive, please bring your pajamas with the tag to Dutton Hall by **December 8**. They will be delivered to the Child & Family Agency's Groton Early Childhood Development Center on December 18.

The **Little Red Wagon Food Pantry** donates food to area residents who are homeless or experiencing food insecurity. We will accept all shelf-stable items and are most in need of **canned chili, canned pasta (like Chef Boyardee), canned beans, canned vegetables and fruit, crackers, peanut butter, canned corned beef, tuna, sardines, instant coffee, and powdered creamer**.

Our **Community Meals** program serves 50 lunches each week to people in the Groton area who need a nourishing meal. Many of our patrons are homeless and most deal with food insecurity issues. **Please consider making a monetary donation to our program, so we can continue this important ministry.** Meals are served on Saturdays from noon to 1 p.m. If you are interested in helping with food preparation and set up, or just want to visit with our patrons, please see Ellen Kerr or Mary Howard.

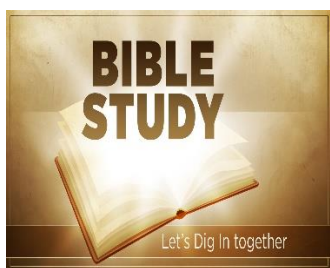


As the weather gets colder, we need to make sure our **Little Red Wagon Food Pantry** is stocked with shelf-stable items. Donations are given to those experiencing emergency need and used in our Community Meals program. Any surplus is given to the Groton Human Services food bank

NOTE: We cannot accept expired items.



We will be having our Monthly Bake Sales on December 1st and January 12th after the worship service. Women's Fellowship has given our 2020 pledge to the church.



BIBLE STUDY

**Our last bible study for the year was held on November 21st.
We will start up again in mid-January.**



The Book Club meets every Wednesday at 11:30 downstairs in the Youth Activity Room. All are welcome!



Prayer Squares

If anyone would like to knit, crochet, or sew some prayer squares for our prayer square basket at the back of the sanctuary, please contact the office.



We are just finishing up our unit on gratitude and kindness. The kiddos found many ways to show kindness and gratitude to their peers, family, and strangers. It was fun to see them react and put into practice the ideas that we shared. The children are focusing on living like Jesus and showing kindness.

The next six weeks we will be busy getting ready for our pageant which will be on January 5th during the Worship Service. This is going to be a great one, so plan to be there. This is going to be very interactive and multi-generational. The love of the Holiday Season and Love to God is with us.

There are several dates to keep in mind. December 20th in the evening is our caroling event. We are inviting all local churches and making it an outreach program. January 19th is our Silver lake fundraiser of Lunch and a Movie, Stay tuned for more details.

Lisa Lambert

CE Director



The youth group had a wonderful month in November! We have kept up with meeting every week after church.

The youth group had a lock in on the 22nd. Most youth brought friends. It was wonderful to have a bigger group to play games with and be in fellowship with each other. The youth always enjoy participating in lock ins. They play a role in deciding what games are played and what snacks are available. They enjoy being able to bring their friends to youth events.

On November 15th-17th, three of our youth went on an Emmaus weekend. Emmaus is a wonderful teen-to-teen ministry that meets youth where they are on their faith journey. The weekend is based around the story of the Prodigal Son and reminds youth that no matter how far they may stray from God, he will always welcome them back with open arms. It was touching to see our youth come in and really enjoy the weekend. They made friends with other youth that share similar beliefs. I am excited to see them continue in the program in the coming years.

The youth group will be holding a caroling night on Friday, December 20th. We will meet in Dutton Hall at 5:30 p.m. and begin caroling around the neighborhood at 6 p.m. There will be snacks too enjoy when we come back. The whole church is invited to come! I am excited to continue youth group through the advent season!

In January, the youth group will begin to discuss their next mission project. We will be looking into a more local project where the youth can see the impact of their help. Our outing this month will be going to the trampoline park on the 17th. This is a yearly trip that the youth look forward to and always have a fun time!

I am excited to see what God has planned for our youth group in 2020. I am grateful to be able to plan meetings and outings for the youth and I am hopeful for a positive year!

Rachel Measimer

Youth Group Director

youthgroupdirector@grotoncongregational.org

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Christ King Church, Old Lyme Ct will present a Christmas Concert performed by the Con Brio Choral Society on Friday, December 6 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m.

See the poster on the Bulletin Board in the Breezeway for more information.

HOLIDAY SING – A Holiday Spirited Concert and Sing-along

Presented by The Hartford Gay Men's Choir

December 15, 2019 @ 21:00 p.m. , Harkness Chapel, Connecticut College

Tickets \$20.00 an be purchased at the door or online @ [TICKETS.HGMS.ORG](https://www.tickets.hgms.org)

See the poster in the Bulletin Board in the Breezeway for additional information

The Mystic Congregational Church Women's Fellowship
invites you to their Christmas Program on Tuesday, December 10th
featuring the Patina Due (with Laura Stetler and Time Labert
Time: 9:15 a.m. tea/10:00 a.m. for music – FREE!

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE NEWS

It's official: at the November 2019 Annual Meeting of the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences, a unanimous vote approved the name of the merged conferences to "The Southern New England Conference." The name will become effective on January 1, 2020. Additionally, the Connecticut Conference voted to dissolve the Connecticut Conference; the Missionary Society of Connecticut will continue to manage endowments and properties in our state.

An implementation team is working on a proposed structure for the organization and running of the new conference.

An Executive Conference Minister Search Committee will be working to find a new leader for the new Conference. The members of the new search committee were announced at the meeting and they were commissioned for their work.

The three current Conference Ministers – Kent Siladi, Marilyn Kendrix and Don Remick – will serve as bridge Conference Ministers during 2020, working with a staffing implementation team to move toward a new structure. All three have announced that they will not seek the executive position.

While it doesn't directly affect our congregation and our building, the Conference empowers PURA to consider the creation of a new rate class for customers of gas companies for those customers that are exempt from taxation. The study is to include recommendations for the creation of such a new rate class. The origin of the bill came to the legislature from houses of religious worship (HOW) that are charged a commercial rate for their gas usage and who are subject to a demand fee under that commercial rate. These demand fees are collected 12 months per year, regardless of the amount of gas used. This can and does culminate in the thousands of dollars a year which, as we know, can become a financial burden to a congregation. If anyone is interested in learning more about this and reading the various submissions, you can find the docket at

[http://www.dpuc.state.ct.us/dockcurr.nsf/\(Web+Main+View/All+Dockets\)?OpenView&StartKey=19-07-03](http://www.dpuc.state.ct.us/dockcurr.nsf/(Web+Main+View/All+Dockets)?OpenView&StartKey=19-07-03)

A reminder that we can submit events taking place at our church on the Conference's website calendar. You can submit by going to <https://www.ctucc.org/submitanevent>. The submission will be reviewed by the Conference prior to placement on the events calendar.

In conjunction with *Simply Smiles*, The Conference is organizing a week-long trip to the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota from May 9 to May 16, 2020. *Simply Smiles* is an organization founded by Bryan Nurnberger, who grew up in the Naugatuck UCC congregation, and will be the hosts and guides. Participants will be staying in the town of La Plant, one of the most impoverished places in America, working to restore hope for a better future. To find out more about *Simply Smiles* and the trip, go to <https://www.ctucc.org/eventdetail/simply-smiles-service-and-learning-trip-13013236>

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

‘Stepping Up Into The Future’



Thank you to all who have turned in your pledges for 2020. We are so pleased to announce that the amount pledged exceeds 120,000. Your commitment to supporting our Ministry here at Groton Congregational s incredible.

If you haven't turned in your pledge card, there is still time!!

Thank you for all the good you are making possible.

Your Stewardship Committee,

Doris Pulaski, Sue Stottlemeyer, Phyllis Meyer

CHURCH PHOTOS

Stewardship Luncheon



DECEMBER 2019

Merry Christmas

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u> Worship-10:00 Rev. Joan Priest	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> Stewardship- 10:00 Bylaws -4:00	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> AL-Anon-12:00 AA-12:30& 7:00	<u>7</u> Community Meals 12:00-1:00
<u>8</u> Choir XMAS-10:00 Program Youth Group- 11:30-1:00 Deacons-11:30 AA-6:00 AA-7:30	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> AA-12:00 Bylaws -4:00	<u>11</u> Book Club- 10:30 Women's Fellowship – 12:30	<u>12</u> Bells-6:30 Sr Choir-7:30	<u>13</u> AL-Anon-12:00 AA-12:30& 7:00	<u>14</u> Community Meals 12:00-1:00
<u>15</u> Worship-10:00 am Rev. Joan Priest Youth Group- 11:30-1:00 Trustees-11:30 AA 6:00/7:30	<u>16</u> Organist Guild Dinner 5:00-8:00	<u>17</u> AA-12:00 By-Laws-4:00	<u>18</u> Book Club- 10:30	<u>19</u> Bells-6:30 Sr Choir-7:30	<u>20</u> AL-Anon-12:00 Youth Group Carol Sing & XMAS Party AA-12:30	<u>21</u> Community Meals 12:00-1:00 Blue XMAS Service- 6:00 p.m.
<u>22</u> Worship-10:00 am Rev Joan Priest Youth Group- 11:30-1:00 AA-6:00 AA-7:30	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> AA-12:00 Christmas Eve Service-7:00	<u>25</u> CHRISTMAS	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> AL-Anon-12:00 AA-12:30& 7:00	<u>28</u> Community Meals 12:00-1:00
<u>29</u> Carol Sing-10:00 Youth Group- 11:30-1:00 AA-6:00 AA-7:30	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> AA-12:00 .				