

The Gargoyle

A publication of Groton Congregational Church



APRIL 2020



MUSIC DIRECTOR

If anyone is interested in joining the Sr. Choir or the Handbell Choir, please contact me or the office.

Sue Stottlemeyer



April Birthdays

Cindi Bryte

Chris Delaura

Amanda Mayersohn

Ingrid Measimer

Carol Shinn

Kelly Shinn

Sarah Turner

Mark Whalen

Rosiland Wommack

MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH VISITOR

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

Thanks, Connie Stoddard

MARCH UPDATE

SOURCE

**Pledge
Plate**

BUDGET

ACTUAL



Please continue to send in your pledge, either by mail or on-line banking. If you have any questions, please contact Gay Lambert.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEACONS

In this time of increased need we ask you to remember the Deacons Fund. We helped several families in the first part of the year before the Corona virus caused such disruption. Many will be in greater need than before. Many thanks for your help to date and in the future.

PASTOR'S MOMENT- APRIL

Risen by Jan Richardson

If you are looking for a blessing, do not linger here.

Here is only emptiness, a hollow, a husk where a blessing used to be.

This blessing was not content in its confinement.

It could not abide its isolation, the unrelenting silence, the pressing stench of death.

So, if it is a blessing you seek, open your own mouth.

Fill your lungs with the air this new morning brings and then release it with a cry.

Hear how the blessing breaks forth in your own voice, how your own lips form every word you never dreamed to say.

See how the blessing circles back again, wanting you to repeat it, but louder, how it draws you, pulls you, sends you to proclaim its only word:

RISEN.

RISEN.

RISEN.

Spring is here, Easter is here soon, new life emerges around us, resurrection is upon us. And yet, it is such a crazy scary world we live in right now.

The important thing to remember is that we are all in this together. So, each day, take those 7 deep breaths, go outside, unplug from the news, and reach out to one another. I truly believe God is at work here, not having caused this, but is present right beside us, working God's love through all of this. People are helping others, dropping off food or supplies; others are calling and checking in with folks; others are sending in their pledges and extra for the Deacons Fund All in an effort to be church, to be a loving community. Celebrate that with me.

As you know by now, by order of the Governor we have locked down the church indefinitely, not only suspending all in-person worship and activities, but no one is to enter the building at this time, except the few who are checking in on things. We will keep you up to date as things begin to change.

I have no idea what the next weeks or even months will look like but know that we are working hard to provide prayer meetings and worship services. Our plan so far for the month of April is for me to tape a worship service from my home and we are looking into adding videos of hymns and messages for our children. We will post them each week on our website and Facebook page, as well as putting them on UTube for all to watch. We will email out the bulletin with hymns during the week prior. I will keep you posted if that changes. I will do my best to offer Zoom Prayer Meetings during the week and am hoping to have a special Zoom worship meeting on Maundy Thursday (possibly with everyone providing their own communion elements, whether its bread and wine or a cookie and a cup of milk!), a visual Good Friday meditation, and special music for Easter Sunday. If we can get the entire congregation on Zoom, we will worship through that method as it will connect us in a more significant way.

Please keep in touch through email or calls and let us know if you need anything. Please let us know if you or a loved one is ill and/or in the hospital. Connie Stoddard, our Parish Visitor and I will be checking in with our shut-ins and those in need of pastoral care.

And continue to pray for one another. Here is a prayer to read with taking those seven deep breaths each day. We will get through this.

Peace be with you, until we can be together again,

Pastor Joan

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES

-KEEPING YOUR CHURCH SAFE-

The Trustees in consultation with the leadership of the congregation and the advice of the UCC have changed the main locks to the church doors. At this time, only those who must have access to the church building have been given keys. We will distribute other keys when the church reopens.

Please stay safe, stay home.

Edward Magowan-Connie Stoddard

Trustees - Co-Chairs



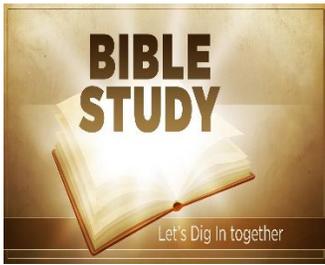
CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



Coffee Hour

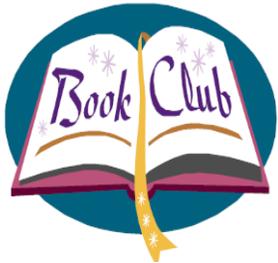
We are looking for volunteers to sign-up for Coffee Hour. Our sign-up sheet is in Dutton Hall on the bulletin board. Our Barista, Jim Maynard makes the coffee, we only need help with set-up, a small snack you may wish to bring in, or cookies from our Hospitality Bin. Our Youth Group has volunteered to help with clean up. Please contact Marilyn Wright if you wish to volunteer, or sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet in Dutton Hall.

We are running low! If anyone would like to donate a can of coffee, please leave in the kitchen or drop it off in the office. THANKS.



BIBLE STUDY

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



There is a 2020 Flower Calendar on the bulletin board in Dutton Hall for anyone who wishes to provide flowers for the Sanctuary in memory or celebration of a loved one, and event or a day special to you. The flowers can be anything you like. Add your name to the chart or contact the Office.



Don't forget to stop by our Volunteer Board and check out the options to serve in the Church. Help is always needed.



Women's Fellowship wants to thank all who attended or picked up take-out Corned Beef and Cabbage dinners. The dinner was delicious, and many hands made the evening successful and pleasant. Penny Sullivan won the basket drawing. We will wait until the church reopens to begin our craft meetings.



I am hoping that everyone is doing well during the transition. I am thinking of you and miss our physical time together. We are all learning how to navigate with all the changes with school, Sunday school, missing friends, missing those that are our contacts as well as feeling anxious about all that is occurring.

I have some ideas and suggestions to help us all stay grounded in our faith and vein a faith-based community.

1. Please go outside and look up into the sky, think about what you see, smell, and feel. Look to the right and left and down also. Go back inside and draw a picture or write a poem or a paragraph about all the beauty that God has given us ad all the blessing that we feel and hear.
2. Make a prayer chain in your room or somewhere in in the house. Write on a paper flag a worry or stress that you are feeling. God is with us during times when we feel uncomfortable, give up those stresses to him and he will help us. Also write a prayer for what we are thankful for, people, things, feelings, etc. GOD is with us all the time and GOD' s good all the time.

If there are any kiddos that want to zoom or say hello, please reach out to lambert0307@yahoo.com or cedirector@grotoncongregational.org to schedule a time.
MISS YOU ALL.

Lisa Lambert
CE Director

**Here are two prayers from a resource called Prayers for Faithful Families
(written by Traci Smith)**

For Times when there are no words:

Peace, Peace, Peace!
Peace in our hearts, peace!
Peace in our minds, peace!
Peace when we wake,
Peace when we sleep,
Peace shining bright in our lives.

God, when sad things happen:

You are sad too,
You understand,
Thank you, God, for always hearing us,
Help us to be kind and peaceful always,
We light a candle to remind us of your love for all.



What a crazy time. Although we are all staying home these days, I can't help but feel grateful for technology. Even when we cannot see each other in person, the internet has made it incredibly easy to visit each other from the comfort of our own homes.

With that being said, I have been working on creating spaces for virtual youth group. I want to continue to host youth group and get everyone together, via the web, during this time. We will have Zoom meetings and have Netflix watch parties. I cannot imagine waiting until everything has calmed down for us to get together again!

Here is a little prayer during this time:

Dear God,

Thank you for life. Thank you for the love you surround us with. Help to calm our anxieties during these uncertain times. Remind us that You are near, You are working all things out. In Jesus' name we pray AMEN

Rachel Measimer
Youth Group Director

youthgroupdirector@grotoncongregational.org.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Stewardship is about recognizing blessings and managing them well”

It happens out of sight, out of mind – pledges, that is, not our church family!

There isn't one among us that isn't or hasn't been affected, in some way, with the current directive to socially distance ourselves. Church families are not exempt. It was certainly strange not attending Thursday choir rehearsal or driving to 162 Monument Street on Sunday. Maybe for you it was missing bible study or a committee meeting.

So, what can you do to continue the work of the church while not being there in body? You can continue with your stewardship pledge.

The SNEUCC passed along an interesting statistic: over 84% of individual donations to a congregation come in through the offering plate on a Sunday, in person. *Eighty-four percent*. That's a lot. Currently, we aren't in the physical church on Sunday, so that 84% is significant. Everyone worked so hard to develop a budget that alleviates the need for a draw-down on our investments. It's so very important to keep operating in this way and that we do not get behind. We humbly ask that members of our church family do what you can to consistently continue with your pledges.

The physical presence of being in the church building has been my personal reminder to have my weekly pledge ready to put in the collection plate; maybe it was yours. And so now we have to create a new reminder – because the work of the church goes on even when we're not there. This includes, but is not limited to, the work of our church minister and staff.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Create a calendar reminder to mail your pledge to the church. You might even be in a position to make future pledge payments – go for it!
- Set-up autopay. Our Treasurer, Gay Lambert, can provide the specifics. Her email address is Treasurer@grotoncongregational.org, or call the church (860-445-7409) and leave a message for her to give you a call and she can relay the procedure. You won't miss a week!
- When you're watching Pastor Joan's online sermons and/or messages, imagine yourself sitting in the sanctuary. The offertory is announced, and you hear the music begin (we really are working on making this happen!). The plate comes to you and you graciously place in your pledge. This can be your reminder to mail your offering.
- If you have another way of reminding, share it!

As you transmit your pledge in whatever way works for you, keep in mind that the Deacon's Fund can always use donations.

Borrowing from the SNEUCC's article, your Stewardship Committee shares the following:

“Our faith is about more than buildings. Even if we must be apart from one another in body, we can still connect, inspire, support, care, and love each other. Social dissonance does not mean spiritually separate. Together, we can find ways to hold each other's hearts. And in time, our doors will open again, and we will reach out in welcome.”

Thank you, and God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,

Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemyer, Phyllis Meyer

OUR PASTORAL SEARCH & CALL COMMITTEE

The Search Committee will not be meeting until the church reopens, but there is still progress going on. The profile information is coming along smoothly. The committee members are communicating by e-mail. We pray all will be well and safe from this Covid-19 virus. Hope to see you all soon!

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Turner, Secretary

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee has officially been formed, and Committees have been assigned to each coordinator as listed below. We will try to have a meeting when the church reopens to discuss our duties and responsibilities in accordance with our current bylaws.

Bonnie Geisler

Trustees
Stewardship
Memorial

Roz Wommack

Property
Missions
New London/SNEUCC
Delegates

Janice Maranda

Deacons
Music
Ushers
Christian Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Maranda, Chair