

The Gargoyle

A publication of Groton Congregational Church

SEPTEMBER 2020



MUSIC DIRECTOR

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

Sue Stottlemeyer



September Birthdays

Lawrence Bentley
Adam Blaisdell
Kyle Brooks
Alan Chappell
Lorraine Chappell
Nick Chirillo
Mary Howard

Phillip Howard
Rachel Meaismer
Tom Potter
Brian Shepherd
Constance Stoddard
Gavin Wall
Marilyn Wright
Emery Young, III

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

JUNE UPDATE



A “Thank You” from to all who continue to send in your pledges or a portion of them to keep our church running.

PASTOR'S MOMENT- SEPTEMBER

Greetings to you all,

I thank you for your warm “Welcome Back” that I received at the Coffee Hour on August 23. It’s surprising to be back with you, but also an intriguing gift to be here at this time in history with all that is going on within the life of your congregation as well as within our world as we continue this bizarre walk through the pandemic. We are trying to discern how to stay ‘safe’ and yet continue on as people of faith and human beings who need to be living in this world. We have much to do in our time together.

I arrive in your midst after serving a congregation in Rowley, MA for 2 years and giving thanks for the chance to return to Niantic, CT, and then having the gift of a 7-month sabbatical time that I’ve never had the privilege of receiving before. A sabbatical time - that was unexpected and precious - as we all listened and learned about how to be people of faith in challenging times. I participated in many Zoom meetings and prayer sessions. I watched the news unfolding and dialogued with colleagues, family, and friends. I was able to watch worship services of 5 of my colleagues weekly, if I chose, including Pastor Joan at a certain point. I appreciated learning from them and being well fed by their gifts.

2020 will go down in history as the most bizarre year for so many reasons: the pandemic; the creative solutions at the hospitals to receive and care for the ill and dying; the odd argument over wearing masks; the wildfires in CA and the west coast; the twin hurricanes hitting the Gulf Coast states even as I write this; the tragic deaths of people of color leading to the Black Lives Matter movement and the call to address racism and white supremacy; the call for our denomination of the UCC to acknowledge our own historic guilt in the slave trade and the creation of racially unjust systems and systemic conflicts, the random acts of kindness shown every night as the last story on each nightly news to remind us of the goodness of humanity in the midst of these hard times; and the bold statements of some to call us all into creating more just communities as we continue to live into the words of Jesus, as quoted in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 25: 37-40 “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? **38** And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? **39** And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” **40** And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Jesus’ Call to be his disciples is not an easy Call. You are all fully aware that many don’t want to make that kind of commitment. But for the rest of us, it won’t leave us alone, right? How many of you have arrived at church and saw that the closing hymn was going to be, “Here I am, Lord?” And then when you went into singing it, you found yourself in tears? God is praying for our open hearts and minds and our tears. God is praying that we will let our compassion lead us into deepening our relationships with one another and help us move into the fall of 2020 so we will be there for one another and our brothers and sisters in SE CT.

St Teresa of Avila wrote a poem that has been put to song and guided me for years:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Are you ready to offer your eyes and ears and hands and feet and hearts and minds to be the body of Christ this day? We each have one day at a time to listen, receive, love, and serve. May God bless us all as we offer our "yes", in whatever ways we can, and walk together in love.

Peace,
Rev. Lee A. Ireland (pastor@grotoncongregatioal.org)
pastor

September 2020 Worship Watch
Rev. Lee Ireland

9-6-20 Communion Sunday

Exodus 12:1-14 and Psalm 149 • Ezekiel 33:7-11 and
Psalm 119:33-40 • Romans 13:8-14 • Matthew 18:15-20

Sermon Title: “Order, Disorder, Reorder”

9-13-20 Sunday Service

Exodus 14:19-31 and Psalm 114 *or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21*
Genesis 50:15-21 and Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13
Romans 14:1-12 • Matthew 18:21-35

Sermon Title: “The Call to Forgive”

9-20-20 Sunday Service

Exodus 16:2-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Jonah 3:10-4:11 and Psalm 145:1-8
Philippians 1:21-30 Matthew 20:1-16

Sermon Title: “The Compassion of God”

9-27-20 Sunday Worship

Exodus 17:1-7 and Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 and Psalm 25:1-9
Philippians 2:1-13 • Matthew 21:23-32

Sermon Title: “Emptying Ourselves”

UPDATE ON CHURCH STATUS FROM THE LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Committee has determined that we will not open our church on Sept 13 2020. The reasons behind this decision are two-fold.

1. The camera that has been ordered to record the live services is on back order. If we open the church for 25 people (max at this time) the rest of the congregation will not get any on-line services. We feel to be fair to all we record on-line services as we have been until we can record the live services.
2. We also feel it is better to wait and see how the schools fair. We do not want to open and have to shut down again. There has been somewhat of an up-tick with positive cases of Covid this last week.

Therefore, the deep cleaning has been delayed until the other concerns have been satisfied and we will continue recording services as they are now being done.

Committees can meet in Dutton Hall using the protocol given to committee chairs. So, if you want to see your friends volunteer to be on a committee when a member of the nominating committee gives you a call. Hopefully we will all be together soon.

The Leadership Committee

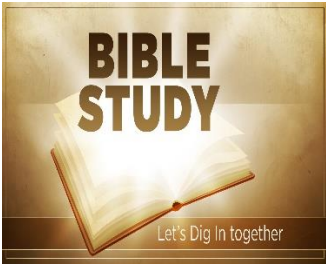
Barbara Dutton, Rev. Ireland, Ed Magowan, III, Kevin Measimer, Constance Stoddard

DEACON'S MESSAGE

A special welcome to our bridge minster, Rev. Lee Ireland. We look forward to her pastoring us through this time as we search for a settled minister and as we continue as a worship community during this era of Covid-19.

Autumn will soon be upon us. The church leadership team continues to reevaluate the safety of reopening the church for worship.

Kevin Measimer
Chair, board of Deacons



BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is over for the summer. Hopefully, we will resume in the fall.



CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER



Hopefully, we will be able to hold a Zoom Meeting on September 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.



CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



COFFEE HOUR

Visit us on Zoom for our virtual coffee hour at 11:00 a.m. The link is on the Sunday Service email.



Welcome to the new school year 2020-2021. This year is definitely going to look different. I am excited to start a new year with the learning that we are going to do. I am not sure when Sunday School will start but know that we miss you and cannot wait to see you soon.

As you go into the new school year, remember all the things that we have learned about walking and following Jesus. Step one, count all your blessings and thank God everyday for even the small blessings. Step two, BE KIND. We are all adjusting to the new normal so be patient and thoughtful in the choices that you make. Step three, have fun. Learn and remember to be in the moment and do not worry about things that you cannot control.

I am excited to hear how everyone started the school year and share all our stories. Remember God is with us all the time, and God is good all the time.

See you soon,

Ms. Lisa



Wow, another summer that has come to an end too soon! Hopefully, everyone was able to get outside during the summer and enjoy the warmth of the sun and the fresh air.

This summer I planted a vegetable garden in my yard. I've never done this before, and I was worried that my plants would not grow. I planted the seeds anyway. Watching the little seeds sprout and grow bigger and bigger was such a blessing. While we are still practicing social distancing and being careful, it felt good to take care of a garden and be able to use the veggies in our home. I don't think I would have started this garden if I hadn't been spending so much time at home. I think it is great to have a project to work on during this time. If you haven't started a new project, it's not too late! Is there something you have been thinking about doing, but for one reason or another haven't started yet? Now is a great time to start! You'll find great rewards will come from it. And you'll see God's grace through it all.

Going into a new school year, the youth group will start meeting regularly again. We will meet via Zoom for the time being. We'll chat and play games. If your child is starting 6th grade or higher, please let me know! I will be sending out emails soon with the schedule of meetings.

Rachel Measimer

Youth Group Director

MISSIONS MOMENT

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

We are looking for Church members to volunteer their time to put together afghans from a kit. Only minimal sewing skills are needed and all materials and instructions are supplied in the kit. We have 8 completed and about 15 more to be sewn together. If you are interested in making an afghan, contact the church for a kit. Once the pandemic is passed, these afghans will be collected and donated to a worthy cause.

Our Community “Drive-by Meals” program is growing! We are now serving 36 meals each week. For consistency, we make sure all 36 seems meals contain similar items. We are in need the following prepackaged items. If you can donate 36 of each item requested, it would be very helpful. If you can’t, please give what you can. **All donations are appreciated.** Gift cards to Stop & Shop, BJ’s, or Walmart are also appreciated.

Items needed (stores with the best prices are listed after the item):

Individual containers of microwavable macaroni and cheese (BJ’s)

Small cans of Vienna sausages (BJ’s)

Small containers of peanut butter (BJ’s, dollar stores)

Cans of Chef Boyardee pasta (Walmart, Stop & Shop)

Individual packages of cheese and crackers or peanut butter crackers (BJ’s, dollar stores)

Small containers of jelly (Ocean State Job Lot)

Cup o’ Noodle soup (BJ’s)

Granola bars (BJ’s)

Individual bags of pretzels, popcorn, or crackers

Boxes of saltines, 4 sleeves in a box (Aldi’s – we give one sleeve per bag so 9 boxes)

Cans of soup or chili

Bottled water

Please buy cans with pull tops. Many of our patrons do not have can openers.

If you would like to help distribute meals on a Saturday, please call Ellen, 860-303-3438, or Mary, 860-912-9532. We meet in the church parking lot at 11:45 a.m. and are finished by 12:30 p.m. Thank you for your help! Together we are making a difference for our vulnerable neighbors in these uncertain times.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Committee appreciates the efforts of our Director of Music, Sue Stottlemeyer, Dick Stottlemeyer, Burt and Sally Turner, Kathy Janacz, members of the choirs, volunteers young and mature, for their musical contributions to the online worship services this spring and summer lead by Rev. Joan Priest.

Thanks to all for keeping the Spirit of Christ moving among us.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Kimball, Chair

OUR PASTORAL SEARCH & CALL COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee has completed the profile for the new settled pastor selection, and it has been sent to Chuck Erickson, our area UCC Representative. He will review it and be in touch with any questions or additional information needed.

The Search Committee has worked for many weeks to complete this requirement and have become a very cohesive group. This is a major step in the process and we look forward to completing the next step.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Campbell

MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR

I would like to thank all of you who contributed to Pastor Joan's "Thank You" gift. We were able to donate in Pastor Joan's name to the P.E. O. in the amount of \$1,680. This is an organization which is very dear to Joan's heart!

Again, thanks to all!!

Dear Groton Congregational Church Members and Friends,

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve among you these past two plus years. Thank you for opening your hearts and your lives to me as we joined in a shared ministry together.

I want to thank you for your generous gift to PEO – a Philanthropic Educational Organization who supports women's education. There are chapters all over the country which meet on a regular basis to raise money, support one another, and further their own education through a variety of events. I have been a member of PEO for many years and it is one of the most important organizations I remain active in, because way back when I went to college and graduate school, I needed all the help I could yet. Loans, scholarships, and grants helped me each step of the way to obtaining my master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. To know that a donation has been made in my name from all of you, means so much to me. You have enabled someone like me to continue in their education toward a degree and career in which they would not have had the opportunity otherwise. Thank you.

You are a blessing,

Pastor Joan



SEPTEMBER 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Prayer Meeting Zoom-6:30 p.m.	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>6</u> Worship-on line Rev. Ireland	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> Women's Fellowship 10:00 a.m. -Zoom Book Club – 6:30 p.m. -Zoom	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>13</u> Worship-on-line Rev. Ireland	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> Missions Meeting- 5:30 p.m. Avery Point	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>20</u> Worship-on-line Rev. Ireland	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> Trustees Meeting 5:00 p.m. Dutton Hall Deacons Meeting 5:00 p.m. Zoom	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>27</u> Worship-on line. Rev. Ireland	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>			