

The Gargoyle

A publication of Groton Congregational Church



October 2020



MUSIC DIRECTOR

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

Sue Stottlemyer



October Birthdays

Sierra Bryte

Madeline Campbell

Nathan Detmer

Lois Dempsey

Liz Chappell

Cooper Johnson

MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH VISITOR

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

Thanks, Connie Stoddard



OCTOBER UPDATE

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

NOVEMBER 11TH – PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY

With the current COVID situation, we have not been able to traditionally welcome our Bridge Pastor, Rev Lee A. Ireland. Please plan on joining us for a meet and greet at our Zoom Coffee Hour at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday November 11th.

PASTOR'S MOMENT- OCTOBER

Greetings to you all,

We are going into the fall in this very different year!

Being people of faith who know that taking each day one step at a time is what matters. Giving thanks for the manna and water we receive as gifts for each day helps us to do so.

I know that many of you long to return to the sanctuary to be able to worship together and see each other ...a longing across the globe. I cannot answer why we must be dealing with this pandemic this long and with these restrictions, but we all know that it's painful to lose loved ones and if we can take measures to lessen the numbers lost within our community, we are taking the steps we can to do so. We offer our prayers of comfort to those who have lost loved ones and are grieving at this time. We offer extra prayers for our medical workers and first responders. We offer extra prayers for our teachers and children as they continue into the school year and the parents and all who make it possible for the schools to be safe this year. We all know this virus is very contagious, so we have to take extra steps and therefore, we give thanks for your patience. Hopefully, it won't be as long as the 40 years that the Israelites spent wandering in the desert with Moses before they could enter into the Promised Land. Interesting that the lectionary readings this fall are exactly about that experience! You'll notice in this passage below, which is the reading for Sept 27, that their faith was strongly tested and they were worried and quarreling because they couldn't 'fix' the problem. What we see is that human nature is human nature ...and we are invited into walking together and learning how to deepen our relationship with God; then we can care for one another which will spread out into our larger community and beyond. May we find it within ourselves to make that choice. You will also see that I've included the Irish Blessing I used at the end of the Sept 13 sermon: "May you have enough,"

17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

⁵ The LORD answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah^[a] and Meribah^[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

What we see here in this ancient story, is that when people get worried, then we don't necessarily get along with each other as we do when things are going smoothly. May we as a congregation, learn how to pause before we react and try to find a peaceful way and perhaps even creative new ways to travel through these challenging times.

There are many events coming up during the month of October and I ask you to look through the committee and board reports to be sure to mark those events on your own calendars. These help us to strengthen the ties that bind and help us keep the light of Christ shining brightly here in Groton for all to see - especially for those who are hungering for a sense of God's presence in their own lives and for healing. Thank you for the many ways in which you share of yourself. May God's peace and blessings be upon you as we go into the coming days as followers of the one named Jesus.

Respectfully,

Rev. Lee A. Ireland, Bridge Pastor
(pastor@grotoncongregational.org)

"May You Have Enough" Irish Blessing:

May you have . . .
enough happiness to keep you sweet,
enough trials to keep you strong,
enough sorrow to keep you human,
enough hope to keep you happy,
enough failure to keep you humble,
enough success to keep you eager,
enough wealth to meet your needs,
enough enthusiasm to look forward,
enough friends to give you comfort,
enough faith to banish depression,
enough determination to make each day
better than yesterday.

October 2020 Worship Watch
Rev. Lee Ireland

10/04/20 Communion Sunday

Sermon Title: "The Cornerstone"

Scriptures: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9; Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 3:4b-14
Psalm 19, 80:7-15; Matthew 21:33-46

10/11/20 Sunday Service

Sermon Title: "The Shepherd"

Scriptures: Exodus 32:1-14; Isaiah 25:1-9; Philippians 4:1-9;
Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23, Psalm 23; Matthew 22:1-14

10/18/20 Sunday Service

Sermon Title: "The Treasures of Darkness"

Scriptures: Exodus 33:12-33; Isaiah 45:1-7; Thessalonians 1:1-10;
Psalm 96:1-9, 10-13, Psalm 99; Matthew: 22:15-22

10/25/20 Sunday Worship

Sermon Title: "The Greatest Commandment"

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18;
Thessalonians 2:1-8; Psalm 1; 90:1-6, 13-17; Matthew 22:34-46

DEACON'S MESSAGE

Greetings again to all from the Board of Deacons as this extended season of distancing continues.

As I write this, we have been continuing with prerecorded online worship services looking forward to the return to in person worship. Zoom meetings have continued, including weekly prayer services and book club.

Before we know it, we will be approaching the Christmas season. Praying we may all be back together before then. Alternate plans are being discussed.

Keep trusting the Lord in this season. May an effective and long-term vaccine for Covid-19 be available to all soon. May the economy and jobs be restored.

I pray we all have experienced some renewed spiritual focus. Mine always develops slowly but some seeds were planted. May this find you well.

In Jesus name,

Kevin Measimer

Chair, board of Deacons



Prayer Meeting/Book Study

Join in on Zoom, Wednesdays – Our Prayer Meeting starts at 5:30 and Book Study follows at 6:30.



Cancelled until further notice.



The next meeting of Women's Fellowship will be Wednesday, October 14th at 12:30 in Dutton Hall. No food allowed.



CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



COFFEE HOUR

Visit us on Zoom for our virtual coffee hour at 11:00 a.m. Click on the zoom link sent via email.



There will be no Sunday School until the church opens and it is deemed safe to resume classes in our Sunday School Room and our Nursery.



Youth Group has officially begun for the school year! Although I terribly miss meeting in person, I am so glad we have the option of meeting virtually. We will continue to meet virtually until it is safe to meet in person. During this time, it will be a great opportunity to get creative and find ways to have fun from a distance. I know God will guide this group and keep us connected.

Now that the season is changing (yay autumn!!), it feels like a wonderful time to start a new habit! I like to take the opportunity to start something new at the beginning of any month or season, not just the beginning of the year. The great thing about choosing to start a habit is that it can be anything! As long as it is a healthy and positive habit. I'd like to task anyone reading this to start a new habit for the month of October. Some ideas are reading the Bible every day, starting a journal, or taking a walk at least a couple times a week. For October, I want to plan to take long walks at least twice a week.

Remember that God is still near and carrying you. I encourage everyone to continue to work to keep a relationship with God. I often find that my life seems to go smoother or that I can better handle it when I am actively talking to God regularly.

Rachel Measimer

Youth Group Director

MISSIONS MOMENT

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

Thanks to everyone who volunteered to make an afghan. Last month, seven completed afghans were donated to **Safe Futures** women's shelter in New London.

While it may seem to be far in the future, Christmas is just over two months away! We are starting our drive for Groton Human Services' **Adopt-a-Family** program, which helps individuals and families in Groton who are facing financial difficulties or unforeseen hardships. To maintain contact-free interactions during the pandemic, the agency requests donations of gift cards to stores, like Walmart, Stop & Shop, Target, Amazon, Big Y and Aldi's. Donations can be dropped off at the church. Please place the cards in an envelope with "Adopt-a-Family" clearly written on the front. Envelopes can be placed in the church's mail slot by **Sunday, November 29**.

Our **Community "Drive-by Meals" Program** continues to grow! We are now serving 40 meals each week. We are in need of the following prepackaged items. If you can donate 40 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 welcome.

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.

Beth Chirillo, Chair

(missions@grotonucc.org)

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

"The building may be closed, but the church is not"

This unofficial church slogan continues as our leadership team moves forward with planning on how to safely re-open our physical doors. What has not changed is that we continue to be stewards of the gifts that have been given to each of us.

Over the past year (and what a year it's been!), the Stewardship Committee has tried to convey the message that stewardship is not just a "season" but rather a way of being. A sharing of each person's time, talent, and treasures. October is traditionally the time that our church focuses on a stewardship campaign. We are asked to contemplate and prayerfully consider in what ways and to what extent we can return a portion of what each of us has received and in doing so, we thank God for all His blessings.

Your Stewardship Committee anticipates using the UCC Stewardship Campaign 2020 theme of "Beloved, Love: Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7)."

Please know that your giving makes a difference in people's lives. Thank you for continuing with your pledges and donations by the whatever means works best for you.

We leave you with a few quotes to reflect upon that speak to the act of giving:

"You can give without having faith, but you can't have faith without giving" (Charles Kuchenbrod, Executive Associate Conference Minister, SNEUCC)

"May the needs be seen and met, and may the giving fit the need" (Reverend Lee Ireland)

"Giving is an act of faith" (Pastor Dwight Dutton)

Amen.

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

Your Stewardship Committee,

Cathy Johnson

Sue Stottlemeyer

Phyllis Meyer

MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Committee had a lively, positive sharing at the September 19th meeting about music at the church with our Director, Sue Stottlemeyer.

Anyone interested in volunteering to play percussion or string instruments for music in worship is invited to contact Sue Stottlemeyer at the church.

The next meeting of the Music Committee will be on Monday October 19th at 10:00 a.m. in Dutton Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Kimball, Chair

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Your Nominating Committee, Janice Maranda, Bonnie Giesler and Rosalind Wommack, have been busy for the past few weeks attempting to fill Committee Positions for our church. The slate will be voted on at the October Church Council Meeting.

Several spots still remain to be filled, but we are hopeful that a full slate will be presented to the Council.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments regarding committees or positions, I am happy to take call or emails.

Janice Maranda, Chair

OUR PASTORAL SEARCH & CALL COMMITTEE

Your Pastoral Search Committee continues to meet on a regular basis.

We have submitted the Church's profile to the SNEC, and it is posted on their website. The committee will review any inquiries to assess compatibility with what our needs are, determined by the "All Search Survey" which was conducted this summer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Campbell

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Executive Conference Minister Candidate Announced



The Rev. Darrell Goodwin – a pastor with experience in higher education and in varied ministry settings of the United Church of Christ – will be presented to Annual Meeting voters as the candidate to serve as the Southern New England Conference’s first Executive Conference Minister.

The Rev. Darrell Goodwin – a pastor with experience in higher education and in varied ministry settings of the United Church of Christ – will be presented to Annual Meeting voters as the candidate to serve as the Southern New England Conference’s first Executive Conference Minister. Rev. Goodwin currently serves the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences as an Associate Conference Minister, offering care and support to the pastors and churches in the Nebraska Conference and supporting the work of search and call across the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences. He is also the Program Director of the Pension Boards’ Faith and Personal Finance Initiative, a project funded by a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment’s National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. In this role, he administers a five-year program of financial education and wellness for UCC authorized ministers from historically underrepresented groups.

Goodwin has served as Pastor and Founder of Liberation United Church of Christ in Seattle, Senior Pastor of the Everett United Church of Christ in Washington, and Chaplain Intern at VA Puget Sound Health Systems. Before full-time ministry, he served in several positions in Jesuit higher education, including Assistant Director of Student Life for Judicial Affairs, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs, Acting Director of Multicultural Affairs, Assistant Dean of Students, Associate Dean of Students, and Dean of Students.

“The search committee relied on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making this selection. We worked long and tirelessly past our bedtimes and during our vacations to commit to ensuring that we were asking the necessary questions and the hard questions,” said Chontell Nelson Washington, chair of the search committee. “We even checked in on his fun factor to make sure that he could fit in with the sense of joy that exists within the SNEUCC.”

The role of Executive Conference Minister is different from a traditional Conference Minister in the denomination – it is seen as being more akin to a University President, with the responsibility for running day-to-day operations lying elsewhere.

The job description calls for the new Executive Conference Minister to be "the standard bearer for our core vision, mission and identity" and to serve as chief vision keeper, communicator and strategist, as well as the chief philanthropy officer and the public face of the Conference in the media and public square. The Executive will also serve as liaison to national settings of the denomination and in ecumenical and interfaith circles. If affirmed by Annual Meeting, Rev. Goodwin would start in his role Jan. 1, 2021.

"My desire to serve the people of the Southern New England Conference is inspired by your boldness to form a new conference with a mission and vision toward the marginalized," he said. "I hope to bring my commitment to justice which has been curated by the Holy Spirit, my love of God's people, and administrative gifts to propel this vision forward. This role is not a job, but rather a call to fulfill my purpose and honor my ancestors who could never have realized a role of this magnitude in a uniting and united church."

On Saturday, Goodwin met via Zoom with the Board of Directors, who unanimously voted to bring his candidacy before the [Sept. 26 online Annual Meeting](#). His selection by a search committee came as the result of an unconventional search process that went on during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The search committee relied on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making this selection. We worked long and tirelessly past our bedtimes and during our vacations to commit to ensuring that we were asking the necessary questions and the hard questions," said Chontell Nelson Washington, chair of the search committee. "We even checked in on his fun factor to make sure that he could fit in with the sense of joy that exists within the SNEUCC." "With every interaction we sought for integrity, capability, preparedness and yes... the presence of the Holy Spirit. We knew that the SNEUCC has a mission and we dug deep for the indicators of our candidate to be able to do the traditional thing as well as a new thing. At the end of our time, we agreed that Rev. Darrell Goodwin is the person to lead us into the future as a conference. He has experience, passion, and knowledge about the importance of relationships, partnerships, the UCC, and the Creator." The role of Executive Conference Minister is different from a traditional Conference Minister in the denomination – it is seen as being more akin to a University President, with the responsibility for running day-to-day operations lying elsewhere. The job description calls for the new Executive Conference Minister to be "the standard bearer for our core vision, mission and identity" and to serve as chief vision keeper, communicator and strategist, as well as the chief philanthropy officer and the public face of the Conference in the media and public square. The Executive will also serve as liaison to national settings of the denomination and in ecumenical and interfaith circles.

Below is the invitation to the 2020 SNEUCC Annual Meeting, with links to registration and delegate materials. **Please forward this email to each of your church's delegates at your earliest convenience.** Thank you!

Announcing the
FIRST ANNUAL MEETING
of the
Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, Inc

Saturday September 26, 2020
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Remote Meeting using the Zoom webinar platform

Welcome to the Southern New England Conference Annual Meeting!

The pandemic may keep us from gathering in person, but it is no impediment to the Holy Spirit.

Our Annual Meeting will be woven through with vibrant worship. We will gather in small groups focused on shared ministry interests. And we will hear from the Search Committee about their grace-filled journey as we welcome, affirm, and celebrate our first Executive Conference Minister.

Come and be a part of this formative moment!

Business to be Conducted:

- **Adoption of Behavioral Covenant and Rules of Procedure for the meeting**
- **Action on the Nomination of Directors and Officers**
- **Action on the Nomination of the Executive Conference Minister**
- **Release of Executive Conference Minister Search Committee**

Our Worship Theme will be Jeremiah 31:31-34, **[THE DAYS ARE SURELY COMING...](#)**

Registration for the Annual Meeting is available on line [here](#). The deadline for those who wish to participate in the Networking Breakout Groups is **September 18th**.

If you are new to on-line meetings, do not fear! You will have an opportunity to attend a practice Zoom session, and technical help will be available during the meeting. It is possible to attend a Zoom meeting by computer, tablet, smartphone, or to listen in by dialing in on any kind of phone.

Zoom Practice Sessions will be held at the following times. **You must register for a practice session** in order to receive the Zoom link to attend it. Please register at your chosen link below.

Sunday, Sept 20, 1-2 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qnwKb6AsT_aN-bZ24gJHvQ

Monday, Sept. 21, 7-8 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0xbMZJJcRHi_xjW5wCbRsQ

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7-8 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-5xw182cQqqg_zr7ZXg9hQ

In response to much feedback about our commitment to environmental justice, **Delegate Materials will be distributed electronically this year.** There will be no automatic paper mailing of materials to any church or registrant. Those who need paper materials are invited to request them when they register – see the Accessibility section of the Registration form. In order to receive paper materials, you must register and request them no later than **September 15th.**

A **Speakout** is a 60-second opportunity for a delegate to address the Annual Meeting on a topic of their choice. As an adaptation to our remote format, **Speakout opportunities will be assigned by lottery, and all Speakouts must be recorded and submitted in advance.** More information may be found SNEC website.

Further information and delegate materials are at the SNEC website. Additional materials will be added in the coming weeks.

We hope to see you on the 26th!

Mr. Ian Tosh, Moderator
For the Annual Meeting Planning Team

OCTOBER 2020



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>4</u> Worship-on line Rev. Ireland	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> Women's Fellowship 12:30 Prayer Meeting/Book Study - Zoom 5:30 p.m.	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>11</u> Worship-on-line Rev. Ireland	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> Trustees Meeting 5:00 p.m. Dutton Hall	<u>14</u> Women's Fellowship 12:30 Dutton Hall Prayer Meeting/Book Study - Zoom 5:30 p.m.	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>18</u> Worship-on-line Rev. Ireland Council Meeting	<u>19</u> Music Committee 10:00 am Dutton Hall	<u>20</u> Deacons Meeting 5:00 p.m. Zoom	<u>21</u> Prayer Meeting/Book Study - Zoom 5:30 p.m.	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30
<u>25</u> Worship-on line. Rev. Ireland	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> Prayer Meeting/Book Study - Zoom 5:30 p.m.	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> Community Meals Grab & Go 12:00-12:30