

The Gargoyle

November, 2020

Founded in 1702 and located near historic Fort Griswold, we are an Open and Affirming Church. While our Hearts and Minds are always open, our doors are temporarily closed due to the pandemic.



The Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument St.
Groton, CT 06340
860-445-7409
www.grotonucc.org

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Join Us On



MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH VISITOR

If you know of anyone in need of a phone call or a visit, contact Connie Stoddard or [the church office](#).

Editor's Note: The digital version of *The Gargoyle* (.pdf) is formatted to be read on your phone, laptop, tablet, or computer. All links contained within work. They will take you around this publication and to various websites.

November Birthdays

Ann Campbell 11/26

Sharon Giordano 11/20

Alex Hagar 11/21

Rebecca Johnson 11/09

Janice Kimball 11/17

Luke Lambert 11/04

Chris Lund 11/30

John Orkney 11/24

Lynette Potter 11/13

Kristin Powers 11/17

Kenneth Shinn 11/03

Jennifer Turner 11/09



Worship Watch



Nov 1st

All Saints Day

Joshua 3: 7-17; Ps 107: 1-7, 33-37; Micah 3: 5-12; Ps 43; 1 Thess 2: 9-13; Mt 23: 1-12

SERMON TITLE: “For All the Saints”



Nov 8th

Jos 24: 1-3a, 14-25; Ps 78: 1-7; Wisdom of Solomon 6: 12-16; or Amos 5: 18-24; 1 Thess 4: 13-18; Mt 25: 1-13

SERMON TITLE: “The Beginning of Wisdom”



Nov 15th

Stewardship Sunday

Judges 4: 1-7; Ps 123; Zeph. 1: 7, 12-18; Ps 90: 1-12; 1 Thess 5: 1-11; Mt 25: 14-30

SERMON TITLE: “Receiving and sharing God’s gifts”



Nov 22nd

Reign of Christ

Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24; Ps 100; Esp 1: 15-23; Mt 25: 31-46

SERMON TITLE: “Make a Joyful Noise”



Nov 29th

First Sunday of Advent

Isa 64: 1-9; Ps 80: 1-7, 17-19; 1 Cor 1: 3-9; Mark 13: 24-37

SERMON TITLE: “Keep Awake”



Weekly Meetings



Sunday Worship Service

November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th

While our doors are closed due to the pandemic, services are uploaded to our [YouTube Page](#) and [our website](#) on Friday evening.



Sunday Coffee Hour

11am via Zoom.

November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th



Wednesday Prayer & Book Study

5:30pm via Zoom.

November 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th



Community Meals Grab n Go

Sundays noon to 12:30pm

November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th

There will be **two special Zoom Meetings this month**, the first on November 4th at 11am and the second on November 5th at 7pm. If you have not been receiving our weekly invitations to these Zoom Meetings please [email the office](#).

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This Month's Events



Women's Fellowship Bake Sale!

November 15th from noon to 1pm in the church parking lot.

Items priced at \$1 to 5 please bring exact change.



Pledge Drive

November 15th from noon to 1pm in the church parking lot. Find out more on the [Stewardship page](#).



Adopt-a-Family Program

You can help individuals and families in Groton. Find out more about this program on the [Missions page](#).



Grammies Pajammies

The Missions Committee is holding its annual pajama drive. Details are on the [Missions page](#).

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Monthly Meetings



Women's Fellowship
Music
Deacons
Trustees

November 11th at 12:30 pm in Dutton Hall
November 16th at 10:00 am in Dutton Hall
November 17th at 5:00 pm via Zoom
November 2nd at 5:00 pm via Zoom

LEDYARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**RED SLEIGH
HARVEST BAZAAR**

Saturday, 7 November
11:00 - 2:00

* DECORATIONS * BAKED GOODS * HAND CRAFTS *
* PIES * HEART ORNAMENTS * GIFT BASKETS *
* COOKIE BUFFET *

OUTDOORS AT THE FARMERS MARKET PAVILION
MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIRED

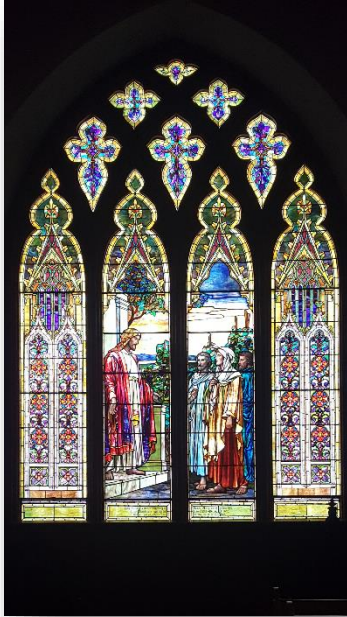
728 COLONEL LEDYARD HWY
AT LEDYARD CENTER

RED SLEIGH BAZAAR
LEDYARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
NOVEMBER 7TH 11AM-2PM

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Pastor's Moment

November 2020



Here we are - entering into the month of November during this most unusual year of 2020, when nothing is the same and for many, life has been flipped upside down by the pandemic and the loss of loved ones or jobs.

And yet, as a community of faith, we know we've been through challenging days before and can continue to walk together with faith, hope and love as those who have heard the words of Jesus and the call to our hearts and minds to love and serve as his disciples in this world. Perhaps we are in a time when as never before some of Jesus's words and teachings have a deeper message for us and click in ways that take us by surprise and we find ourselves saying, "I can't believe I didn't hear that before." Words in hymns frequently take us by surprise as they did in the one we sang a few weeks ago: "You Have Called Me" (Chalice, #455).

I submit this as the Pastor of this congregation, fully aware that our lives will be impacted by the national election on Nov 3, when we will see the results of our national election for two very different presidential candidates and agendas. We're all citizens of the US and know that our choices as Christians, matter.

When we arrive at November 4, the key question for me is still: "Who are we?" in God's eyes? We've traveled many different paths on our own journeys to arrive at this day when we are collectively the Groton Congregational Church. Despite those various paths, I believe we have all been created in the image of God and have come into this world with unique gifts to share as we can. So, for today I'll also ask: What is our invitation now? As a community of faith, this congregation has provided a beacon of hope and love for over 300 years. We share what we hear as we do our ministry each day: being the context in which everyone can grow and blossom as the unique beings that they are and share those gifts; no matter your role on whatever board, committee or as a 'pewee'. Jesus came and walked among the common every day person to teach

each one that they ARE a beloved child of God and trying to help them learn the ways of love and forgiveness - *so they CAN grow more fully within their hearts and souls and serve with greater love.*

Those words are the basis of my guiding vision. I am always pondering: How can I be in your presence and offer my leadership, not for my sake, but to be a guide and encourager for all of you to see and know your own light within so you will seek the direct relationship with God? On this day, I invite you to ponder for yourselves how you define love and what you hope we can do *together as the body of Christ* here in Groton beyond Nov 3.

Much is happening this month. On Nov 1, we will toll the bell for the Saints of this church who have passed away since last All Saints' Day. On Nov 8, we will be Naming the Veterans who have served our country. On Nov 15, the Stewardship Committee invites you to do a Drive-by Offering of your 2021 pledges with the invitation to see what goodies the Women's Fellowship is offering at their Bake Sale. Then, we know that Thanksgiving Day is coming. Many will still be able to gather with family members while some of us will find ways to do so by Zoom. For what are you grateful this year?

Please note that on the last Sunday of the month, we begin this year's Season of Advent - the season of waiting and preparation for the arrival of the Christ child into the manger scene again. Stay tuned for details on how we will celebrate the season this year with the weekly Advent Readings.

With all of this in my heart and mind, I wish you peace and blessings,

Rev. Lee A. Ireland

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Deacon's Message



**"We must be ready to allow ourselves
to be interrupted by God."**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The newly elected board of deacons met for the first time via Zoom on October 27th. Our meeting served to help center the board both organizationally and spiritually.

We are living in unprecedented times and many of us struggle with the uncertainty that they bring. We, as a board, pray for all our church family and our global family as well, and that there will be a vaccine soon that will enable us to return to some normalcy.

Stewardship Sunday is November 15th and we hope that, even during these difficult times all will prayerfully consider our church's mission within our community to serve one another and give accordingly.

Around the corner from Stewardship Sunday, Advent begins. November 29th is the first Sunday of Advent, a time of preparation for the coming of the Christ child. The deacons will be focusing on how we can bring some familiar traditions to you and some creative

ways for participation. We will be working with and supporting Reverend Lee as she envisions our path through the upcoming high liturgical seasons.

The board needs additional deacons. We appeal to the members of our congregation to prayerfully consider answering the call to serve. We would welcome the presence of some gentlemen on the board to complement our discernments. The journey will be challenging at times but will also be an enlightening and fulfilling experience.

If there are any concerns, suggestions or just the need to reach out, please contact any of the board. We are here to serve you and with you as we walk this path together.

Light, peace, and love,

Sue Blaisdell, Chair
Ellen Kerr, Vice Chair
Mary Alapa
Kevin Measimer
Doris Pulaski
Wendy Walther

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Grammies Jammies—Pajama Drive

In conjunction with The Childhood Development Center, we are holding our drive from October 28th through December 4th. There is a trifold stand with gender/size tags outside Dutton Hall Monday-Friday 9am to 1pm. Please come by and grab a tag. When you're ready to donate your warm PJs, please leave them in the gray box on the stoop. PJs will be blessed by Reverend Ireland on December 13th before being donated.

If you cannot make it to the Church during those hours, but wish to participate in this wonderful program, PJs are needed as follows:

Gender	Size	Quantity Needed
Girls	3	3
Girls	4	2
Girls	5	1
Girls	6	3
Boys	24 months	1
Boys	3	1
Boys	5	5
Boys	6	4

For your convenience you can shop online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [Walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com), [Marshalls.com](https://www.marshalls.com) or any of your favorite retailers and have the PJs shipped directly to the Church!



Adopt A Family Drive

Many families in our area 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](#), [ShopRite.com](#) [Big Y](#) and Aldi's. You may also or go to the [gift card section of Amazon](#) to choose from a plethora of stores and amounts.

Please leave gift cards in the mail slot.

Alternatively, you can go to any of your favorite stores online and have these gift cards mailed or emailed directly to the Church. If you choose email please, have them sent to office@grotoncongregational.org. The secretary will receive them and print them out for distribution.

Program ends November 29th. This program is in conjunction with Groton Human Services and helps many local Groton families.



Community Meals

The **Community “Drive-by Meals” Program** needs your help! Due to family and work obligations, Mary Howard is stepping down from the program. We are looking for church members who are willing to help Ellen Kerr shop for and hand out lunches. Volunteer shoppers will be given a list of items and will be reimbursed. Grocery items should be dropped off to Ellen by Thursday evening.

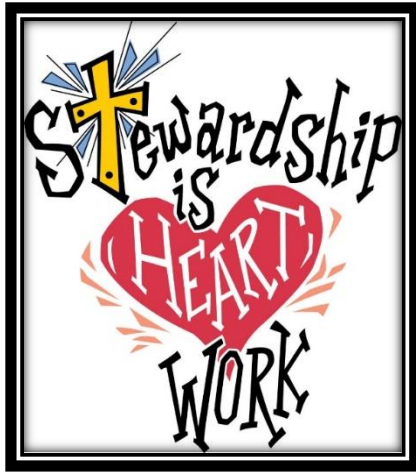
Volunteers who are handing out lunches must be at the church from 11:45-12:30 on Saturday. We are hoping to find two volunteer shoppers and four distributors, who will commit to help one day each month. If you are interested, please call Ellen, 860-303-3438, or the church office, 860-445-7409. Together we are making a difference for our vulnerable neighbors!

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Stewardship Message



“The building may be closed but the Church is not.”



We continue, as a congregation family, to keep our ministry active in whatever ways we can, given the current global and local situations that are keeping us physically apart. God is in the midst of us.

Pledging allows us to continue the ministry of the church. We believe that the goal of our stewardship ministry is to help us and others grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of time, talents and finances that God has entrusted to us.

By the time you read this, you should have received a stewardship letter, pledge card and return envelope. As stated in the letter, we will be collecting the pledge cards on Sunday, November 15, outside the church, via social distancing, starting at 12:00 noon. While we won't be in close physical contact, what a joy it will be to see one another! The Women's Fellowship will be holding a bake sale on the same day, same location and time – look for a reminder slip with your stewardship letter.

And those pledge cards? Maybe think of them as “faith commitment cards”, for they are a material expression of intentional giving – a means to develop a plan, live the plan and establish a pattern of giving.

If for some reason your letter has not arrived, please call the church and one can and will be mailed to you (860-445-7409).

- Thank you to those who have participated in our “Stewardship Spotlight” during October and November. We have enjoyed learning and sharing things about each other.

- Thank you for your continued pledges and donations, given by whatever method works best for you.
- Thank you to those that have accepted the invitation to serve on various committees and boards.

“May what we offer be a blessing to others as they have blessed us.” (Rev. Lee)


God’s blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,
Cathy Johnson
Sue Stottlemeyer
Phyllis Meyer

EVERYTHING BUT THE TURKEY FOOD DRIVE

OCTOBER 19 BOXED POTATOES	NOVEMBER 4 BOXED OATMEAL
OCTOBER 20 CANNED YAMS	NOVEMBER 5 CANNED SOUPS
OCTOBER 21 BOXED STUFFING	NOVEMBER 6 CANNED TUNA
OCTOBER 22 CRANBERRY SAUCE	NOVEMBER 9 BOXED QUICK BREAD
OCTOBER 23 CANNED GRAVY	NOVEMBER 10 PASTA
OCTOBER 26 CREAM OF MUSHROOM SOUP	NOVEMBER 12 DESSERT MIXES
OCTOBER 27 CANNED GREEN BEANS	NOVEMBER 13 CANNED FRUIT
OCTOBER 28 CAKE MIX	NOVEMBER 16 MACARONI & CHEESE
OCTOBER 29 RICE	NOVEMBER 17 SPAGHETTI SAUCE
OCTOBER 30 BISCUIT MIX	NOVEMBER 18 TURKEY/CHICKEN BROTH
NOVEMBER 2 PEANUT BUTTER	NOVEMBER 19 CONDENSED/EVAPORATED MILK
NOVEMBER 3 COFFEE/TEA	NOVEMBER 20 BOXED CRACKERS

Items can be dropped off DAILY to the center from 9am-4pm (Tuesday's until 6pm)
Food items will be boxed and distributed to Grasso Gardens and Pequot Village on Tuesday, November 24th. Questions? Call The Groton Senior Center 860-441-6785



Groton Senior Center—Everything But The Turkey Food Drive

October 19th– November 19th. The image shows what items are being collected each day. This was just a fun play on an Advent calendar. Please donate whatever you can whenever you can.

Food items can be dropped off Monday – Friday from 9am-4pm. Tuesdays until 6pm. Place items in the box outside the main entrance.

On November 24th, the Senior Center will deliver donations to Grasso Gardens and Pequot Village Senior Housing Complexes for distribution.

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Just a brief reminder, that volunteers for music for worship services are welcome! Please contact Director of Music, Sue Stottlemeyer, at the church if you are interested. There are a variety of opportunities, and music styles, open for your participation. We thank all the volunteers, with choir and handbell choir members, who have contributed to the worship recordings!

Janice Kimball, Music Chair



October has been a fun month for Youth Group. We are trying new ways to play games while having virtual meetings. I wanted to make Halloween special for all the kids. I delivered Halloween goodie bags to them dressed up as a hot dog! It was wonderful to see the kids and get to chat with them for a few minutes.

We will continue to meet virtually through November. I look forward to continuing Youth Group meetings each week and keeping a safe place for our youth to come each week.

As we go into colder weather, I encourage everyone to practice finding something each day that brings them joy. It can definitely be difficult to stay positive and keep spirits up in a normal year during this time, but it is especially difficult this year. Practice patience and gratefulness. And remember that God is a good, good father.

Blessings,
Rachel Measimer
Youth Group Director

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Nominating Committee

NOTES FROM THE MODERATOR



I want to thank all of you who made the voting on the Organizational meeting a success. The vote on the slate of nominees was 40 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. So, the vote was unanimous. We have learned that we have to be fluid and ready to adjust to the situations.

Our next challenge is to set up committees and elect a chairperson, a secretary and, if necessary, a member to the SRT committee. Only the Deacons, Trustees, Christian Education, and the Music Committee need a member for the SRT. You can all do this via a Zoom meeting, which can be set up for you by Lisa, our church secretary. This will take some coordination within each committee, so please help this process by stepping up to the plate and calling Lisa.

With COVID numbers continuing to rise in our area, it is in the best interest of all that we continue to operate virtually. Our prayers should be that we all stay focused in our behaviors so that the numbers may go down and we can finally worship together.

Stay safe, Stay well. Barbara

**OPEN TRAILS: Saturday,
November 14th from 7:30 to 4 pm**
I-Park428
Hopyard Road
East Haddam, CT 06423
**Saturday, November 14th 7:30 am to 4 pm
for strolling, hiking, and exploring.**
Reservations REQUIRED. For additional
information, email <mailto:events@i-park.org>
or call 860-873-2468.



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Pastoral Search Committee Report

Your pastoral search committee continues to meet weekly via online Zoom meetings as we continue our search for a settled pastor.

To date we have had four profiles submitted to us since we posted the position on the [UCC Ministry Opportunities](#) website at the end of August.

We begin and end each meeting with a prayer for discernment, grace, and guidance. We prayerfully consider each of the profiles we receive, asking for guidance to find the right fit for us as a congregation.

We appreciate your thoughts and prayers as we continue our mission.

Gratefully yours,

Anne Campbell, Chair

Sue Stottlemeyer

Bill Sullivan

Sally Turner

Linda Wagner

Jack Zuliani

Barbara Dutton, ex-officio

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From the Southern New England Conference Blog

Just Breathe: Weaving Together the Creation Narrative and Communities of Color

by Katherine Schofield, Old South Church

On October 11, Old South Church in Boston hosted **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond,**



Founding Pastor of New Roots AME Church, as she preached powerfully on the intersections of the climate crisis, racism and health disparities in our nation. Rev. White-Hammond is an advocate for ecological and social justice, youth engagement, and Spirit-filled organizing. Using an intersectional lens in her ecological work, she challenges people to see the connections between racism, economic justice and climate change. Focusing on the concept of the breath (*ruah* - the breath of God) Rev. White-Hammond's sermon, "Just Breathe", weaves together the creation narrative, statistics on asthma among communities of color, the stories of Eric and Erica Garner, and a call to action to move away from polluting energy sources and our habits of overconsumption.

"In 2015 Black people were 20% more likely to have asthma than their white counterparts. Latino children were twice as likely to die from asthma as white

children. In China Asthma is the leading cause of hospitalization for children. And a recent study found that exposure to pollution was one of the key reasons that Black and Latino communities were so disproportionately affected by Covid-19. Who knew that environmental racism was a pre-existing condition.

"To maintain our global consumption companies and municipalities make an economic assessment that pollution can be concentrated in low income communities and communities of color, like the one that Eric Garner lived in, We make a decision that these communities don't matter, and that these people, like Eric Garner, find themselves literally unable to breathe.

"In January 2016 Erica Garner wrote an Op Ed piece titled, 'Black Lives like my Father's Should Matter'. In it she said, 'If our lives really mattered we'd have equal access to decent jobs, good schools and affordable housing. If our lives mattered in this country we'd have equal access to clean air, clean water and real investment in black neighborhoods. If Black lives mattered in America, those who routinely brutalize us

wouldn't be the ones paid with our tax dollars to keep us safe.

"As Climate change exacerbates the effects of pollution we are at a crucial time in human history. The decisions we make now will determine whether or not our children will be able to breathe into the future

If we want to honor God's creation, if we want to save our species we must change. It is time to change in our energy policy away from polluting energy sources and towards creation powered sources like wind and solar. It is time to stop thinking of healthcare as a privilege and ensure that all God's children have access....

"Getting humans, and especially Americans, to shift away from consumption will literally require an act of God. I look at what is happening in the world and I think, 'We need a rushing wind, to come in and disrupt things to blow some things over and whisk away the covers, to expose some hidden problems.' I don't know about you, but I want the Spirit to come in and fill me up. I want her to give me the ability to walk and not get weary, to run and not faint."



58 PANDEMIC PRAYERS

May we all survive to another birthday.

May we greet the sun each morning and rejoice in being alive.

May we breathe the miracle of fresh air.

May we honor every moment as a chance to begin anew.

May we root our faith in richer soil than worry.

May we let separation knit us close.

May we see faces besides our own in the mirror.

May we recognize all people as kin.

May we cherish them as much as ourselves.

May we stay home to keep them safe.

May we nurture the body that houses our soul.

May we have adequate shelter, food, water, medicine, and rest.

May we share freely from our abundance.

May we resist the temptation to hoard.

May we ask for help without hesitation or shame.

May we draw comfort from the company of animals, flowers, and trees.

May we befriend the sounds of silence.

May we welcome the intimacies of solitude.

May we dive to the depths of our being and bring up blessings we didn't know we had.

May we be sanctuary for one another.

May we refuse to dwell in the blindness of denial, indifference, or contempt.
May we tame our temper and carry no grudge.
May we empathize even with those we dislike.
May we gift one another with radical attention.
May we listen to one another as if lives depend on it.
May we speak as if our voice will be the last sound ever heard.
May we explore how to touch without touching, how to hold without holding.
May we not be embarrassed by tears and trembling.
May we learn from our children the joy of unstructured time and the solace of routines.
May we reassure our children about the monsters beneath their beds.
May we create new rituals of togetherness.
May we laugh from our bellies.
May we cultivate wonder.
May we help our society to do better than it has done.
May we examine problems from all angles and talk straight as lines.
May we base decisions on collective wisdom rather than contagious fear.
May we invest our trust in those who are experts, not those who pretend.
May we value health over wealth.
May we dedicate our daily work both to those we love and to the common good.
May we sustain those workers whose invisible labor sustains us all.
May we protect those who put themselves at risk to protect us.
May we transform the impossible into the doable.
May we inquire into the welfare of strangers.
May we stand up for those who are scapegoated and targeted by hate.
May we sing porch to porch until all the world is our neighbor.
May we drop expectations of how hard or long this road will be.
May we pace ourselves as we go.
May we each shoulder more of the load so that nobody stumbles beneath it.
May we prepare ourselves for the unknown.
May we follow the light of our brightest prayers.
May we live together into better versions of ourselves.
May we plant the seeds of a new world in what remains of the old one.
May we remember in the dark hours that we're not alone.
May we let no one die forsaken, in pain, or untouched by kindness.
May we grieve the lost, though we cannot gather.
May we do right by their memory.
May we not waste a minute of the precious time they should have had.
May we love one another as we would be loved.
May our children survive us all.

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The Groton Congregational Church Wishes You and Yours A Very Happy



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