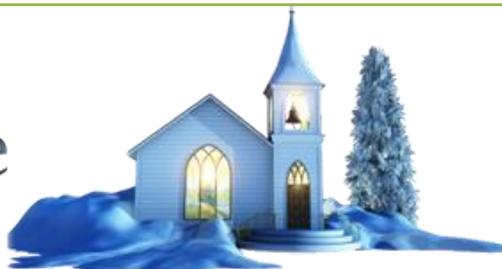


# The Gargoyle



*January, 2021*

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](http://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, please contact Connie Stoddard or [the church office](#).

All our Zoom meetings are open to Members and Friends of the Church. If you have not been receiving our weekly invitations to these Zoom Meetings, please [email the office](#).



Next meeting January 13, 2020 at 12:30pm in Dutton Hall. Topic: Fund Raising.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Augilar Carloandre 01/13

Joshua Bryte 01/11

Lannie Clark 01/18

Sonja Campbell 01/06

Marilee Dull 01/10

Courtney Myers 01/08

Donald Myers 01/22

Kevin Measimer 01/06

Sue Stottlemeyer 01/06

Abigail Tuck 01/05

Rose Mary Ward 01/09

Stacy Wright 01/24

# Worship Watch



January 3<sup>rd</sup>

Epiphany of the Lord & Communion  
A Light for the Gentiles

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12



January 10<sup>th</sup>

Baptism of the Lord  
What is The Holy Spirit?

Genesis: 1:1-5

Psalms 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11



January 17<sup>th</sup>

Second Sunday After the Epiphany  
For God Alone, My Soul Waits in Silence

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 John 1:43-51



January 24<sup>th</sup>

Third Sunday After the Epiphany  
Guest Reverend Mark Porizky

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

Psalms 62: 5-12

1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

Mark 1: 14-20



January 31<sup>st</sup>

Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany  
Knowledge Puffs Up, but Love Builds Up

Deuteronomy 18:1-20

Psalms 111

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

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# Weekly Events



## Sunday Worship Service

January: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>

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



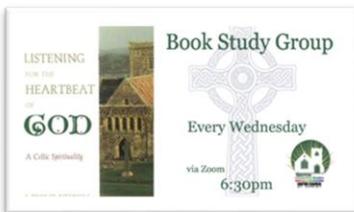
## Sunday Coffee Hour

January: 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>  
11:30am via Zoom



## Wednesday Prayer Meeting

January: 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>  
5:30pm via Zoom



## Wednesday Book Study

January: 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>  
6:30pm via Zoom



## Community Meals Grab n Go

Sundays Noon to 12:30pm

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# Pastor's Moment



## Happy New Year! Greetings to You All!

It is with a grateful heart that we have been able to share the Advent services and gather for a Christmas Eve service thanks to the gift of YouTube and Zoom. Can you imagine going through this pandemic without such gifts and being able to see one another to share some of our favorite carols and readings as well as coffee hours?

As we enter January and the New Year, we have much to do. I share with you a quote from Howard Thurman that helps me keep focused as we move out of the glow of Christmas into the wintry months:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among all,  
To make music in the heart.*

{Howard Thurman, from *The Mood of Christmas*, p. 23 Published and copyrighted by Friends United Press, 1985}

I'll share that we will also do so knowing that the Pastoral Search Committee is taking a short break, as they've not connected with any of the candidates at this time, but they are still doing the work of the congregation.

I plan to meet with them to listen and discern all that is here. I'm fully aware that there are pieces that we all need to continue to focus on to keep this congregation's ministry flowing and vital. Clearly - there are many who are serving on the boards and committees; but there are also many in our community who need our public services and missions as the pandemic continues and while we wait for the vaccines to be dispensed by stages. Your offerings of time, talents and treasures are well appreciated by our members and friends, but especially by people who are unemployed and striving to make ends meet, wanting to stay healthy and who are wondering how to survive these days.

As you pause one day in the near future, would you please take some time to write down the answer to the following questions and send it by email or regular mail to me, to Lisa in our office or to one of our church leaders:

### What are your hopes and wishes for this congregation now?

May we go into the new year, renewed by our time of worship; having holiday time with our families and friends in person, by phone, zoom or whatever way possible. The hope is that we will keep our hearts open for the ways in which God is speaking to each one of us knowing we each have unique gifts to offer. Gifts that we can weave together to make love and compassion more of a reality in this world.

Thank you!!! For being a part of this congregation and helping us make a beautiful tapestry.

Blessings,

Rev. Lee Anne Ireland

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# Deacon's Message



## New Beginnings 2021

It is my pleasure to serve on the Board of Deacons here at Groton Congregational Church. It is not my first time serving in a Deacon's role. I came to Groton from across the river where I had been a member of First Church of New London, also a Congregational Ministry and was there beginning in 1991. This experience in these ministries has guided me and I am proud to serve with churches so committed to the Good News of God's love.

As I am writing this, I feel the Hope. I welcome the chance we all have to rejoice in a New Beginning. The past year was aptly numbered 2020. It gave everyone new vision of life interrupted. We've had to scramble to make all kinds of changes and adjustments to the realities of life with a very dangerous virus in our midst.

I know many of those around us have suffered all kinds of loss. But opportunities for growth have abounded. Going into 2021 we have the assurance of developed vaccines that will lessen this scourge we've been living with and bring us back together again. My greatest hope will be found in what we all will have learned about the preciousness of each of us. The ability to care with the intensity we have learned to protect ourselves, and those we love, expanded to all we greet. My desire is to look more caringly at those we meet.

Mary Alapa

December 10, 2020

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# Music Moment

A multitude of appreciation goes to our director of music, Sue Stottlemyer, and to Dick Stottlemyer, our videographer. All the extra work they have done to direct, record, and sort, is truly appreciated. They have received our choirs and volunteers of all ages in music of praise to God, assisting Rev. Lee Ireland and the deacons, in the year 2020!

We thank as well those who have assisted in opening church archives so that music from our full choirs could be incorporated in the worship services, plus those who have given time and talents to perform new music for worship.

We look forward to continuing to serve God in ways that care for the safety of our members and friends, throughout 2021.

Wishing all a healthy and spiritually vital new year,

Janice Kimball

Chair-Music Committee

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# Mission's Moment

## **January Missions Update**

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

Many thanks to everyone who helped make our annual **Grammies Jammies** program a success. All the tags were taken, and 30 pairs of pajamas were delivered to the Groton Early Childhood Development Center. The children will wear their new pajamas to school for Cocoa and Jammies Day on January 15.

Missions was also able to donate \$250 and two gift certificates to the **Adopt-a-Family** program, which helps individuals and families in Groton who are facing financial difficulties or unforeseen hardships.

The **Community “Drive-by Meals” Program** still needs your help! We are looking for a church member who is willing to help Ellen Kerr hand out lunches one Saturday each month from 11:45-12:30. 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

**Wishing all of you love, happiness and many blessings in this New Year!**

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# Stewardship Message

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

By the time you read this, it will likely be 2021. Happy New Year!! We remain hopeful that at some time during 2021 we can again gather in person in the physical church building.

We're all in the midst of this challenging time with the pandemic and we're going in many different circles and don't have the Sunday morning worship services to reconnect and ground ourselves. Perhaps you've forgotten about the pledge card, but we are hopeful that you will return one in order to create an anticipated balanced budget for the coming year and in doing so, continue the ministry that we have all valued at Groton Congregational.

If you submit your pledge electronically and have not completed a 2021 pledge card, please do so, as the information contained on the card is needed. If you've misplaced your pledge packet, please call the office and another one can be sent. Additionally, if you'd like to speak with any member of the Stewardship Committee or Reverend Lee, call or email us (contact information is on our website portal) and we'd be happy to do so.

We remain a people of faith in the midst of many unknowns. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is a confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Your Stewardship Committee,

Cathy Johnson  
Sue Stottlemeyer  
Phyllis Meyer

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## Reflection: Of Murphy and Mary – and Hope

Scripture: Luke 1:46b-55 (NRSV)

And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Rev. [Erick Olsen](#)



Mr. Murphy was my high school Western Civilizations teacher. He held our attention and our hearts for many reasons, one of them: his half-joking declaration that, though he was in his mid-40s when he said it, he still wasn't quite sure what he wanted to be when he grew up

We chuckled when he said it, partly because it was a strange confession for an adult, and it made us a little nervous that this icon admitted to some imperfection. In hindsight, I think it struck me and stuck with me because it opened a door for me and my classmates as an invitation into a future of unending exploration, intellectual curiosity, and becoming. He was being honest about the fact that he had not arrived, that he was not yet fully formed, and he was spreading a hope (a word you'll see much in what follows) that we humans keep learning and growing, never abandoning the adventure of the journey of life.

Who do you want to be when you're older? What do you hope your church will be like? Your wider community? Our nation? Our world? Questions like these – and their answers – flow out of the prophetic vein of our tradition. Prophets give us pause with their lucid assessments of our plights, and they give us purpose with their incisive sense of our potential.

Mary as prophetess in the Magnificat above names the plight of our days with holy candor, a lucid assessment of how the proud, powerful and rich are living out of balance with God's shalom vision. This critique comes hand-in-hand with promises of potential: the hungry will be have their daily bread, the lowly will know their value and integrity as beloved, and those who had been on top will get a taste of their own medicine.

It is again an affirming thing to have an icon profess to being lowly and incomplete, blessing we who hear with permission to recognize our own flawed humanity. And yet Mary also gives us hope as one lowly lifted and as one empowered to remind us of how God works in general – and particularly through and for the oppressed.

I am a few years older than Mr. Murphy was when he was my teacher, and I'm proud that I still don't know – at least with anything like stiff certitude – who I want to be when I grow up. I do know that I don't want to be counted among those who climbed high by stepping on (read: crushing) others, who blustered pridefully rather than listening with genuine curiosity and empathy, or who gleefully supported systems wherein some kept getting richer at the expense of those already hungry.

I hope I grow beyond my impatience, quick judgement, irritability before morning coffee, prideful love of good seats and status, ability to hold a grudge, and more. Of course, I also hope that I'm not just craftily figuring out ways to make others think I've shed these tendencies. Looking to Mary, who like every good prophet points me to God, I hope that someday my soul will even somewhat magnify the Lord. Or, in the words of Isaiah in another of this week's texts, I hope to be something like an "oak of righteousness," a "planting of the Lord" bearing not just glory to God but also fruit for the hungry and oppressed. Imagine: If more of our lives more of the time played like the Magnificat, like a song of (yes) hope in celebration of God's goodness and mercy, what would it mean for our communities, for the nation, for the world.

## PRAYER

I hope I am not done yet, Lord. At least, I hope that you're not yet done with me and our world. Keep alive in me the hope for brighter days and better ways for me to magnify your grace even a little. Amen.

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# January 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 	2 National: Buffet Day
3 Sunday Service After Worship Coffee Hour 11:30am	4 National: Spaghetti Day	5 Trustees Meting 5 PM via Zoom meeting:	6 Day of Epiphany Zoom Prayer Meeting 5:30pm Zoom Book Study 6:30pm	7 National: Old Rock Day	8 National: Bubble Bath Day	9 National: Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
10 Sunday Service After Worship Coffee Hour 11:30am	11 National: Step in a Puddle & Splash Your Friends Day	12 National: Pharmacists Day	13 Women's Fellowship 12:30pm Dutton Hall Zoom Prayer Meeting 5:30pm Zoom Book Study 6:30pm	14 National: Dress Up Your Pet Day	15 National: Bagel Day	16 National: Appreciate A Dragon Day
17 Sunday Service After Worship Coffee Hour 11:30am	18 Martin Luther King Day	19 Deacons Meeting 5:30 PM via Zoom	20 Zoom Prayer Meeting 5:30pm Zoom Book Study 6:30pm	21 National: Hugging Day	22 National: Blonde Brownie Day	23 National: Pie Day
24 Sunday Service After Worship Coffee Hour 11:30am	25 National: Opposite Day	26 National: Spouses Day	27 Zoom Prayer Meeting 5:30pm Zoom Book Study 6:30pm	28 National: Kazoo Day	29 National: Puzzle Day	30 National: Seed Swap Day
31 Sunday Service After Worship Coffee Hour 11:30am						

- Reverend Ireland will be on vacation January 11-18th