



The Gargoyle



August, 2021

Founded in 1702 and located near historic Fort Griswold, we are an Open and Affirming Church where all are welcome.



The Groton Congregational Church
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A 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.

Sanctuary Flowers

Honor that special person or occasion with a floral donation to the Sanctuary. To do so, please contact Lisa at the church office if you would like to have your floral donation dedication printed in the bulletin and announced at worship. For more information, please contact Janice Kimball.



Leila Bencks

Levi Bencks

Carol Brown

Elizabeth Chirillo

Robert Funk

Marilyn Goodman

Julie Jordan

Joan Orkney

Kristen Powers

Sally Turner

Emily Turner

Wendy Walther



Weekly Meetings



Sunday Worship Service

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

10:00am

Services are simultaneously live streamed to the church Facebook page every Sunday at 10:00am. They are uploaded to the church YouTube page on the following Tuesday.



Wednesday Prayer Meeting

August 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

5:30pm via Zoom

Community Meals Grab n Go





Monthly Meetings

All meetings take place at Groton Congregational Church unless otherwise noted

Search Committee	Monday evenings via Zoom
Deacons	August 17th 5:30pm
Chair Meeting	August 17th 7:00pm
Trustees	August 1st 11:30am
Women's Fellowship	August 11th Noon at Schenecossett Beach Club



Worship Watch

Proper 13 (18) Tenth Sunday after Pentecost August 1, 2021 <i>Guest Preacher: Rev. Janice Kimball</i>	2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a Psalm 51:1-12	Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 Psalm 78:23-29	Ephesians 4:1-16	John 6:24-35
Proper 14 (19) Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost August 8, 2021 <i>Guest Preacher</i>	2 Samuel 1 8:5-9, 15, 31-33 Psalm 130	1 Kings 19:4-8 Psalm 34:1-8	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	John 6:35, 41-51
Proper 15 (20) Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost August 15, 2021 <i>Sermon: "The Wisdom of Solomon"</i>	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 Psalm 111	Proverbs 9:1-6 Psalm 34:9-14	Ephesians 5:15-20	John 6:51-58
Proper 16 (21) Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 22, 2021 <i>Sermon: "The armor of God"</i>	1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43 Psalm 84	Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 Psalm 34:15-22	Ephesians 6:10-20	John 6:56-69
Proper 17 (22) Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 29, 2021 <i>Guest Preacher</i>	Song of Solomon 2:8-13 Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9	Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 Psalm 15	James 1:17-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



Pastor's Moment

'Tis the beautiful month of August in 2021. A time of lazy, hazy summer days. I'll be taking several weeks off this month for some R&R and hope that you will have a chance to rest as well. It's been such a joy to be worshipping with so many of you in live services now for 2 months: to experience your presence and smiles, your laughter and the gift of singing together. Thank you! Your presence has been such a gift to me and I believe to all who have been present. Never lose sight of that :)

Believe it or not, I'm concluding my first year with you as your "Bridge Pastor" and making the transition into being your "Designated Term Pastor" - because there are a few specific activities I would like to focus on in this coming year. You will see within this newsletter the 5 Interim Goals ---which are joint activities for our ministry together. During this coming year, I see that we have such an opportunity to listen together for all that God is inviting us to hear for our new next steps. The unfolding of the vision of ministry here at GCC. It's not a matter of "waiting" for the next settled pastor to come and make it happen: God is walking with us all today - and helping to make this vision become reality each and every day. *Eleanor Roosevelt stated: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift. That is why they call it the present."*

I've read Kevin Measimer's Deacon's message for this Newsletter and I hope you will too! He's hearing something. I hope you will find some time to sit with him and listen and share what you are hearing inside. We will be having some Round Table conversations in the fall to help with our collective listening. I give thanks for your open hearts and minds but especially for the love and passion you have for this sacred space and community of faith. This sacred sanctuary is where so many have come in times of joy and sorrow - to be "With the Lord" - and offer their words of praise and thank you as well as their words of grief and supplication.

The gift is that we're walking this path together now..and it's important to know we are doing it as equal partners listening to each other's hearts, minds and souls. We do so coming from our unique experiences, our different perspectives, and that as we share, we add to the beauty of the quilt that is being created here. It's not a matter of perfection...but rather being moved into moments of awe for all that is unfolding, even when we stumble and bump into each other and have disagreements. Think about the wonder of watching the flowers emerge each spring into summer and into the fall seasons, and how they grow in a variety of settings and still come through. Each is unique but adding to the wonder of this part of the world! A fun thought - Have you ever come upon some artists at a Sand Castle Competition such as the one up at Hampton Beach? You just stand in awe as you watch them create -out of nothing - such stunning pieces of art. True artists at work! The truth is - sand castles are short-lived, but I believe the human imaginations that created them love the challenge and look forward to the new opportunities to create, and are inspired in limitless ways throughout their lives as artists by the eternal Creator. It's awesome to think that that Creator is working through each one of us - sometimes in tangible ways but so many times through the intangible ways of the heart as we care for each other in ordinary moments. Don't look for the Hollywood momentsgo for the simple ones of sharing life. *"Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."* (Matthew 18:20)

We may be feeling stumped here at the moment by the challenges we face, but I have no doubt that there is more truth and light and wonder waiting to be revealed through all of you and those who are coming on Sundays into our sanctuary ...over this coming year and beyond. Let us put our love and trust in our loving Creator and that which is here and live into the wonder and beauty of the new life *each and every day*. Let us listen for the voice of love calling us forward and let the voices of fear melt away. How many times do we hear the words, "Do not be afraid," in the Bible? :)

May God's peace and blessings be with you all this day and into every new day,
Rev. Lee



Richard Rohr

Meeting the Lord in Imaginative Prayer

We at the Center often teach the transforming effects of silence and unknowing. It has been my personal practice for years. At the same time, one of the great gifts of Jesuit spirituality is to teach us how to draw closer to God through images, words, verbal prayer, our imaginations, and the Bible itself. Here is how writer and retreat leader Margaret Silf invites people into the riches of Ignatian contemplation:

The call to friendship with God invites us to allow our lives, with everything we most truly are, to become more closely linked to the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord and to everything he truly is. . . . One way to allow this closer linking to happen is to enter imaginatively into scenes from the earthly life of Jesus, in what is called *imaginative meditation* [or contemplation].

Choose a passage that seems to speak to you in some way—a favorite Gospel scene perhaps, or one of the healing miracles. If you don't know which passage to choose, just rest, relax, and ask God to guide you; then wait to see whether any particular scene or event comes to mind. . . .

WE'LL WORK WITH THE PASSAGE FROM MARK – THE FEEDING OF THE 5000 MARK 6: 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When you have chosen a passage, read it several times until it is familiar and you feel at home with it.

Now imagine that the event is happening here and now and that you are an active participant in it. Don't worry if you don't find it easy to imagine it vividly. . . . And don't worry about getting the facts right. You may well find that your scene doesn't take place in first century Palestine, but in Chicago rush-hour traffic, or that the desert tracts of the Good Samaritan story turn into the sidewalks in your neighborhood.

Ask God for what you desire—perhaps to meet God more closely or to feel God's touch upon your life.

Fill out the scene as much as you can by, for example, becoming aware of who is there, the surroundings, the sights, the smells, the tastes, the weather, and the feel of the place (peaceful or threatening). What role do you find yourself taking in the scene—for example, are you one of the disciples, a bystander, or the person being healed? Listen inwardly to what God is showing you through your role in the scene. . . .

Talk with the characters in the scene, especially to Jesus. Speak from your heart simply and honestly. Tell him what you fear, what you hope for, what troubles you. . . . Don't worry if your attention wanders. If you realize that this is happening, just bring yourself gently back to the scene for as long as you feel drawn to stay there.

There are two absolute rules: *Never moralize or judge yourself. Always respond from your heart and not from your head.*

Our purpose in prayer is not to defend or condemn ourselves or to come up with any kind of analysis or sermon, but simply to respond, from our inmost depths, to what God is sharing with us of God's own self.

Experience a version of this practice through video and sound.

Margaret Silf, *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* (Loyola Press: 1999), 152–153. Note: Minor edits made to incorporate gender-inclusive language.



Deacon's Moment

"Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up: do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

We can certainly use a new thing after the past year or so. What do you think it may be? God has blessed us in our lives through good and bad. In Isaiah chapter 43 God has the prophet remind the people how He brought them out of slavery in Egypt but then he tells them not to dwell on the past. He is about to bring about a new thing.

Be open to the Holy Spirit. A new thing is coming. What would you like it to be?

We have an opportunity to see something new grow here at Groton Congregational. Please join in bringing the possible new things God will bless us with. Be open to Jesus' words.

New life is coming. New relationships. New hope. New spirit.

God is doing a new thing out of the changes in the world and our lives. What will it be?

"Can you feel a brand-new day?" – The Wiz



Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will meet on August 11th at noon at the Schenecossett Beach Club.

Bring your own lunch or purchase lunch from the galley. Location is on Easter Point Rd., just before the entrance to UCONN at Avery Point. Please car pool as much as you can as the parking area is small. It is also appreciated if you park behind each other as much as possible. Please let me know if you are attending this meeting as I need a headcount. Thank you! Sally.



Stewardship Moment

"How Deep is Your Love?"

So: how deep is your love? What an interesting viewpoint Reverend Lee offered when she used this Bee Gees' song as a springboard to a recent Sunday message. You can literally take those lyrics and substitute "God" for "you":

I believe in you (God)
(God) You know the door to my very soul
(God) You're the light in my deepest, darkest hour
(God) You're my savior when I fall

It's about looking at things from a different perspective.

Hopefully you look at stewardship not merely from the perspective of money, but as stewardship of faith.

About two-thirds of Jesus' parables make reference to our use of financial resources. Jesus tells us that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. Our treasures and our hearts are at Groton Congregational.

We thank all who have so faithfully stewarded their gifts to the church in the many ways and amounts they are able and ask that you continue to do so.

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you." (Deuteronomy 16:17)

May God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,
Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemeyer, Phyllis Meyer



Fancy Tools

7/13/2021 - by: Emily McKenna - Church Innovation

When I think of the word innovation I often visualize a futuristic environment, complete with robot maids and flying cars. I imagine a place that makes life easier, faster, and more accessible. If we want to get to that place in time where everything runs smoothly and new ideas are plentiful, we need to find the latest and greatest tools to help us get there. Or do we?

In the church setting, I think we have a while before we have to worry about flying cars showing up in our sanctuaries. The tools we need to help us reach the church of the future are things we already have, that may need to be dusted off a bit.

Churches are making new paths for themselves and being bold in trying different ways of worship and work. Many leaders are searching for the perfect resources and partnerships to make, yet there is an underlying anxiety that persists in the wake of this time. It's easy for folks to have their guards up right now. But when we are not fully open to each other, we are not open to what God is calling us to do.

Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us to

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge the Lord,
and they will make straight your paths.

I believe that to trust in the Lord we also must put trust into one another. Making the choice to trust can be difficult, many of us are used to the core folks we interact with and widening our circles is something we've learned not to do in recent times. If we make the choice to trust when new people join your work for the church, innovation will arrive to us much faster. And if we struggle to trust with reckless abandon, it is likely time for us to listen and be listened to.

Trust, patience, and understanding are certainly not the fastest technologies or the latest reads, but they are indeed the tools we need to get us to the church of the future. If we keep our hearts open, it may not be long before those flying cars, after all.

About the Author

Emily is the Program Support Associate for the Discipleship and Justice & Witness Teams of the Southern New England Conference. Emily grew up in the Naugatuck Congregational Church UCC and at Silver Lake Conference Center, where she has served as ...

August Calendar

August 2021



The Groton Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Worship 10am Trustees 11:30am	2	3	4 Evening Prayer & Bible Study via Zoom 5:30pm	5	6	7 Groton Heights Open House Day 10am-3pm
8 Sunday Worship 10am	9	10	11 Women's Fellowship 1:00pm Evening Prayer & Bible Study via	12	13	14
15 Sunday Worship 10am	16	17 Deacons 5:30pm Chairs 7:00pm	18 Evening Prayer & Bible Study via Zoom 5:30pm	19	20	21
22 Sunday Worship 10am	23	24	25 Evening Prayer & Bible Study via Zoom 5:30pm	26	27	28
29 Sunday Worship 10am	30	31				