

Groton Congregational Church

September. 2021



The Gargoyle





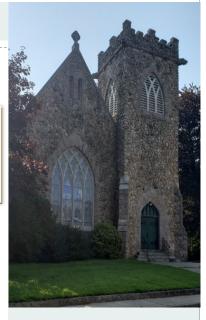
"See you in September."

I'm sure most of you have sung those words many times, found in the pop song by The Happenings that was first recorded in 1966. It sure has been a summer like none other. The chance to worship together in person and greet each other and give thanks for the joy of being there for each other; the highs and lows of the Covid cases; and the surprising arrival of Hurricane Henri on a Sunday morning which meant we couldn't worship together.

As we go into September, we do so with the hope of continuing our live worship services in the sanctuary as well as sharing the recorded services with you on Tuesday mornings. We are continuing to be vigilant during this time of the pandemic and pray that the booster shots will strengthen our immune systems so we can continue to be together and not narrow down our options again. At the moment, we are asking you to wear masks again when you come into our sanctuary. I continue to invite you into the prayers for our medical teams who are giving so generously and sacrificially of themselves to care for all who come into their care. I pray that people will choose to listen to the wisdom of the scientists and receive the vaccines so we can walk together protecting one another. I especially pray for the young children and their families who are returning to school without the ability to receive any vaccines yet. Having a granddaughter who is 11.75 years old, I am so aware of how precarious this is for the younger children. Lord, please hear our prayers! Keep our children safe. Help protect the teachers as well who are on the front line wanting to teach and care for them.

We have a joy to share in that for our Sunday School program, Rachel Candee, Anne Campbell, and Cindi Bryte are in the midst of discussions and planning how to do a "One-Room Classroom Style Sunday School" for children of all ages, starting on September 19: "Rally Day - Welcome Home, Sunday." (see pages 8-11) For any of the teenagers, we'd love to have you help out as assistants in the weekly classes. Please let one of us know if you can help. Many thanks!!!!

For the Adults, we will begin a Wednesday evening Bible Study/Book Study group again at 6:30 PM on September 15th. (con't pg. 2)



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Rally Day
- Sunday School Registration
- Craft Fair



PASTOR'S MUSINGS CON'T

I would enjoy starting with a study of the Gospel of John with a dialogue between Eugene Peterson's translation in "The Message" and the King James Version. You can access both of these on-line if you'd like. We will do this through the Zoom invitations following our Weekly Prayer Gatherings at 5:30 pm. Let's start with John I:).

I look forward to the ways in which we can walk together here as the Body of Christ in Groton and the larger community and continue to nurture our faith journeys in

these challenging days. I invite you to read the other articles by the various leaders within our congregation all who are grateful for this community of faith.

May God's peace and blessings be with us all,

Rev. Lee Anne Ireland

Upcoming Worship Services for September

Proper 18 (23) 15thSunday after Pentecost September 5, 2021 Sermon: "Ragtag Band of Disciples"	Proverbs 22:1- 2, 8-9, 22-23 Psalm 125	<u>Isaiah 35:4-7a</u> <u>Psalm 146</u>	<u>James 2:1-10,</u> (11-13), 14-17	Mark 7:24-37
Proper 19 (24) 16th Sunday after Pentecost September 12, 2021 Sermon: "Following Ain't Easy"	Proverbs 1:20- 33 Psalm 19	Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 116:1-9 or Wisdom of Solomon 7:26 -8:1	<u>James 3:1-12</u>	Mark 8:27-38
Proper 20 (25) 17th Sunday after Pentecost September 19, 2021 Sermon: "Welcome Children" Tentative date for Rally Day	<u>Proverbs</u> 31:10-31 <u>Psalm 1</u>	Wisdom of Solomon 1:16- 2:1, 12-22 or Jeremiah 11:18-20 Psalm 54	<u>James 3:13 -</u> <u>4:3, 7-8a</u>	Mark 9:30-37
Proper 21 (26) 18th Sunday after Pentecost September 26, 2021 Sermon: "Being Salty"	Esther 7:1-6, 9 -10; 9:20-22 Psalm 124	Numbers 11:4- 6, 10-16, 24- 29 Psalm 19:7-14	<u>James 5:13-20</u>	<u>Mark 9:38-50</u>



DEACON'S MESSAGE

Be Not Afraid

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was not a fan of fear. He said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." When he gave his Four Freedoms speech, he named Freedom From Fear as one of that quartet.

And that is no wonder. Fear allows other people to manipulate us. Fear is written in our very DNA, and causes us to pay sharp attention and take swift action when we detect a threat. Sometimes, that is a good thing, but unfortunately, the better response to many situations is found when we evaluate both the presumed threat and what we should do about it through the lens of sober reflection rather than of fear.

The Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, often cautions us to, "Be not afraid." Occurrences of the words "fear" or "afraid" are found in nearly every book of the Bible.

When the angels appear at Jesus's birth, bearing good news to the shepherds, they caution the shepherds not to be afraid. David says God is with us when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, so we need fear no evil

Indeed, when we read of people doing evil in the Bible, fear is often is often given as one of their motivations.

Fear often seizes us when we confront change and new situations. This is true in our church lives, as well as in our personal lives. In these difficult and changing times, may we all move into this coming season with confidence, knowing God is always with us, especially when we suffer fear.

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Sunday Worship Service

September 5th, 12th, 19th, & 26th

10:00am

Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study

September 1st, 8th,15th, 22nd, & 29th 5:30pm via Zoom

Handbells:

Thursdays-6:30pm

Sr. Choir:

Thursdays-7:30pm

MONTHLY MEETINGS

STEWARDSHIP: SEPTEMBER 5TH

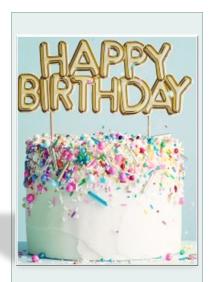
TRUSTEES: SEPTEMBER 7TH 5:30PM IN THE CHURCH

MISSIONS: INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE

WOMENS'
FELLOWSHIP:
SEPTEMBER 8TH
12:30PM
DUTTON HALL
AGENDA:
CRAFT FAIR DETAILS

CRAFTING: GROUP SEPTEMBER 14TH 10:00AM-12:00PM DUTTON HALL

SEARCH COMMITTEE: MONDAY EVENINGS VIA ZOOM



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Lawrence Bentley

Adam Blaisdell

Kylie Brooks

Lorraine Chappell

Mary Howard

Phillip Howard

Rachel Candee

Brian Shepherd

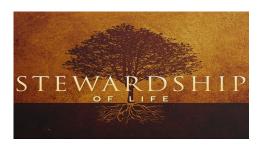
Connie Stoddard

Gavin Wall

Marilyn Wright

Emery Young III

STEWARDSHIP



"Changes"

Last month our guest supply preacher, John Carboni, centered his message around the concept of change: that is it constant and it is certain. And while that is true, he also reminded us that this (whatever the "this" is), too, shall pass. We know that change can occur in response to situations, or it can be intentional. How we respond and adapt to change is what matters.

No one has to be reminded that during the past year and a half, change has been, and will continue to be, constant. During that time, we, as a congregation, have responded to that change and have done so faithfully and positively. We figured out the logistics of continuing Sunday services (which included music!), community meals and outreach, and the operation of a church and did so when we weren't able to meet in person. This could not have happened without the sustained stewardship of all of you. For this, we thank you.

So: we're back to in-person gatherings, but even the circumstances of that are in the flux of change. Again, we respond to those changes, and we carry on – together, as the family of Groton Congregational Church.

Summer is coming to an end, but the needs of continued stewardship, is not.

Soon, it will be time for our annual stewardship campaign. We ask that you begin to faithfully consider how you can answer the call. If you are approached about serving on a committee, we hope you say "yes". If there's a particular committee that you're interested in, please let its members know. This, too, is a form stewardship (time, talent, treasures).

There's a song in the Pilgrim Hymnal called "Through All the Changing Scenes"; read and contemplate its first verse:

Through all the changing scenes of life, In trouble and in joy, The praises of my God shall still My heart and tongue employ.

May God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee, Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemyer Phyllis Meyer

A MESSAGE FROM BURT TURNER

Many thanks for your kind sentiments in cards, phone calls, and expressions of concern this summer. For sure, this has not been the easiest summer for Sally, me, or our wonderful children.

Without going into the gory details, it started with heart problems so that a pacemaker was installed plus additional difficulties yet to be adequately addressed. Suffice it to say, II days of hospitalization and innumerable testing has yet to show what's going on. So, we're staying close to home and trying to play it "cool".

My beloved Sally has been with me all the way with her encouragement and dusting off her nursing skills. God has rewarded me almost 61 years ago with my beautiful bride and as time went on with 3 wonderful kids. What more could anyone ever want?

My favorite anthem has always been, "Thy way, not mine O, Lord" and there is no other sentiment I can think of. Again, many thanks for your prayers and concerns.

Burt



SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to meet as needed. We are looking to tweak our profile and meet with the new Area Conference minister as we move into fall to seek guidance on our next steps. Our profile remains active on the UCC page although we have not had any recent inquiries.

We are looking to fill vacancies on the committee as we move forward. Our usual meetings take place on Zoom on Monday evenings. Please contact Anne Campbell; acampbell1126@gmail.com if you are interested in serving or have any questions.

The committee is truly grateful for the support of the congregation and for Rev. Lee Ireland who continues to provide input into our process.

Blessings and Peace, Anne Campbell, committee chair Sue Stottlemeyer, Sally Turner, Linda Wagner, members Barbara Dutton, ex-officio member.





Lord

please bring healing and relief from this sickness for my friend. Restore their body to full health and strength, God, and allow their mental and emotional health to be restored as well. Jesus, You are the perfect healer and can heal with just a command from Your mouth, a touch of Your hand, and a thought in Your mind. There is none like You, God. Please provide the healing that only You can.

Amen.







AN INVITATION TO SHARE FOR 20-40 YEAR-OLDS



Rachel Candee and I would like to invite you to a Zoom Meeting on Monday, September 20th at 7PM with the hopes of doing some brainstorming, but especially listening to you and finding out how we can create opportunities for getting acquainted as well as ideas for events and programming for you.

I know that for many of you, the I0 AM worship service format is no longer speaking to you, and I want to hear your ideas. I was trained as a Spiritual Director at Mercy Center in Madison and have led spiritual formation classes for years and many retreats.

Having served as a Chaplain at Connecticut College, the women's prison, hospitals as well as in several churches with youth groups and teaching confirmation classes, I know that our "spiritual hunger" is real. We feel it and explore it on different avenues as we search to feed it in our early adult years. If that is true for you, please come and join us.

Let's talk about different ways in which we can get together - first for building community, but also for exploring ways to talk about our spiritual journeys

If you're interested, Rachel and I would love to hear from you. I hope you can join us on the Zoom Call on Sept 20th, but if you have a conflict and cannot and are interested, please contact us at our email addresses:

revlee4@gmail.com, youthgroupdirector@grotoncongregational.org.

Peace to you this day,

Rev. Lee Anne Ireland



THOSE WHO WATCH FOR THE MORNING

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in God's word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

Hey, Psalmist, I know that feeling. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. Solidarity, my friend.

Many of us have known that feeling, especially in these past 17 months. The feeling of working through the night. The feeling of keeping watch so that others might rest. The feeling of forsaking sleep because there is simply too much that must be done and no other time to do it.

The feeling of juggling work and family responsibilities in the midst of pandemic, caring for loved ones both young and aging, the constant 24/7 needs that are incongruent with the regular sleep schedule we know our bodies need.



"I need not wait until sunrise to encounter God's presence. God is with us in the wee hours, too ."

The exhaustion that comes from tending the wounds of the past, coping with the disruptions of the present, and adapting to the challenges of the future, all jumbled up together at once.

The feeling of lying awake in the wee hours, mind spinning with anxiety about Covid and anger about racial injustice, with despair about climate change and fear about gun violence, with worry for those who are ill and grief for those who have died.

The feeling of wishing the time would pass and it would just be morning already, and the feeling of wishing time would slow down so you might have a chance at some rest.

The feeling of aloneness when you are awake and it seems like the rest of the world is asleep.

Hey, Psalmist, I know that feeling. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. Solidarity, my friend.

And hey, Psalmist, because I know that you know that feeling, too, I am especially grateful for another thing you know, recorded just a couple pages after this one in my Bible.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"

even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you." (Psalm 139:11-12)

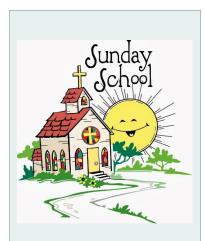
Thanks, Psalmist, for reminding me that even as I watch and wait and pray for the morning, I need not wait until sunrise to encounter God's presence. God is with us in the wee hours, too. In darkness and in light, in the night and in the day, from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn—God is in it all. Every moment and every movement, every shadow and every brightness, every tossing-and-turning worry and even the occasional good night's sleep, God is there.

Thanks, Psalmist. Thanks, God.

The Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer is the President of the Southern New England Conference and the Senior Minister of United Church on the Green, New Haven CT.

PRAYER

Holy One, be with us in our nights and in our days. Help us to trust in your presence; help us to hope in your steadfast love. And maybe help us find some rest, too. Amen.



Begins on September 19th! Please fill out the Registration Form on pages 9 and 10 to enroll your child.



YOUTH GROUP

With summer coming to a close, the upcoming year is being planned out! I am hoping to go back to regular meetings while still being aware of the rising Covid numbers. I am hopeful that many youth will return and that we will be able to hang out playing games and eating snacks. As I am writing this, I have a survey out to our youth and families on when they would like to have youth group. At the moment, the day and time of meeting are still to be determined.

If you have any interest in volunteering as a second adult at youth group meetings, please let me know!

Rachel Candee
youthgroupdirector@grotoncongregational.org

MISSIONS

As we move into fall the Missions Committee is gearing up to provide support to projects that will help spread our love and care into the community and world.

Upcoming projects include:

New London Community Meal Center

The New London Community Meal Center has been helping people since 1985 and now asks for your assistance in continuing their mission to feed the hungry, they are having difficult time in fulfilling our 4th and 5th Friday commitment at the Meal Center. It is a two hour time period. Jean DeGrooth is in charge of the program. Interested members can email her directly: j.degrooth@gmail.com. You can find out more

j.degrooth@gmail.com. You can find out more about the New London Community Meal Center by visiting their website https://
nlcommunitymealcenter.org/

World Vision Knit for Kids is in urgent need of knitted caps for school-aged children as well as knit blankets. **Knitforkids.org** has a variety of patterns to choose from.

Neighbors in Need Offering/ World Communion: Sunday October 3, 2021

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

Mark your calendars for the

Mystic Area Ecumenical Council (MAEC) CROP Hunger Walk: Ending Hunger, One Step at a Time Sunday, October 17th

The 2021 Hunger Wallk is vitally important as many people in the U.S. and around the world continue to struggle with the coronavirus pandemic and its rippling effects. The UN estimates that 130 million more people could be at risk of starvation, and half a billion people pushed into poverty. (con't pg. 11)

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

Child's Information (please pri	nt)		
Today's Data		Child's DOB:	
Today's Date:		Cilia's DOB.	
Child's First Name:			
Cilia 3 i list Name.			
Child's Last Name:			
ering 5 East Harrier			
Child's Street			
Address:			
Child's Town & Zip			
Code:			
Child's Home			
Phone #:		Child's Grade Level:	
Please list any allergies, medicat	tions, or special instructions /concerns:		
Please tell us about the child's religious experiences outside of this church:			
		(

SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM CONTINUED

Parent/Legal Guardian Information (please print)				
First Name:				
Last Name:				
Cell Phone	Work Phone			
Email:				
Relationship to Child:				
Street Address:				
Town & Zip Code:				
Emergency Contact:	Name: Cell Phone #: Home Phone#: Relationship to child:			
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian:				



Sunday, September 19th is Rally Sunday! Join us after church for some fun! We'll have games for the kids and adults, sandwiches, and the traditional Sunday Sundaes. Get ready to come home!

There will be registration forms for Sunday School and Youth Group.

CE is looking for volunteers to help with Sunday School and planning. If you are interested, there will be a sign up sheet at Rally Sunday, or you can email Miss Rachel at youthgroupdirector@grotoncongregational.org.



MISSIONS (CON'T)

Those are devastating numbers, and each of them represents a real person. We care ... and our participation in this year's Walk would help push back on this unacceptable, yet looming, reality. We have has participated in this walk in the past, it is an ideal opportunity to fellowship among caring individuals, help others and fellowship with local churches. https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/mysticct More details to follow.

The committee is looking for volunteers to serve on the committee. Missions meetings are on the third Sunday of the month, or otherwise convenient times.

Respectfully submitted, Anne Campbell, Beth Cirillo, Chair, Penny Sullivan member



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.

REFLECTIONS

Thought for the Day

We must not be afraid to admit to ourselves and to others that we are not perfect but rather embrace our perfect imperfections, our flaws, and our weaknesses. If we do not do this, it is nearly impossible achieve the levels of humility, fearlessness, and honesty that lead us to our best selves. If we want to live happily in this world then it is imperative that we be entirely honest with somebody about who we are.

It is only after we have done this, and we have withheld nothing, that we can look into the eyes of the world to see its true beauty, awe, and splendor.

Prayer Challenge

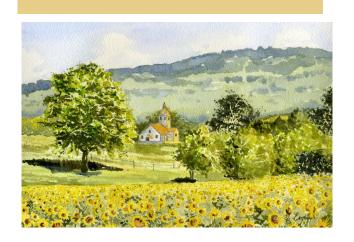
Ask God to give you the humility to acknowledge where you've treated others with disregard so you can confess your faults and have your relationships restored.

Questions for Thoughtful Growth

Sit quietly and think of a time when you accidentally—or perhaps with full purpose—said or did something that caused another person distress. If you corrected your course quickly; how? If you did not; what can you do to avoid such future situations? How can you make amends to the person you hurt?



September 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Prayer Meeting 5:30pm via Zoom	Handbells 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Worship Service 10am Stew- ardship	Labor Day	Trustees 5:30pm	Women's Fellowship 12:30pm Prayer Meeting 5:30pm via Zoom Handbells 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Worship Service 10am	Search Commit- tee	Crafting 10:00am Dutton Hall	Prayer Meeting 5:30pm via Zoom	Handbells 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Worship Service 10am Rally Day	Search Commit- tee		Prayer Meeting 5:30pm via Zoom	Handbells 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm		
26	27	28	29	30		
Worship Service 10am	Search Commit- tee		Prayer Meeting 5:30pm via Zoom	Handbells 6:30pm Senior Choir 7:30pm		



Local Events

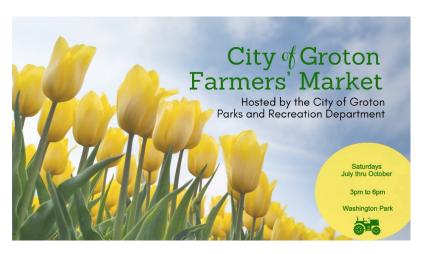




Bank Street Breakout Fall Cruise
September 19th 1pm-5pm

Pre-1973 hot rods, muscle cars, custom jobs
& more







Local Events









CHAPCO W RAPPY PAWS ZenZu 25000

LURE COURSE: \$5 PER DOG - BEER & WINE TENT: \$10

Our Vision

To continue our three-hundred year tradition of spiritual presence and service to the community

To live and grow in the spirit of Jesus Christ

To share our time, talents and resources in support of community and other missions, through which Jesus Christ might be made known to others

To welcome into the Groton Congregational Church family all those who share our love of Jesus Christ and our mission of community service.

To continue a tradition of caring, comfort and support for all those within the Groton Congregational Church family.



162 Monument Street Groton, CT 06340 860-445-7409 www,grotonucc.org office@grotoncongregational.org

Bring Your Family to Our Family. We are here to celebrate Jesus Christ with you.

Located near historic Fort Griswold, by the banks of the Thames River, The Groton Congregational Church welcomes you with open hearts, minds, and arms. We offer a warm and progressive environment for worshippers from all walks of life. Our motto is; *No matter who you are or where you are Life's Journey you are always welcome here.*

If you want to know the love of God and the wonderful plans God has in store for you, come and celebrate the love of Jesus with us through the spoken word and the joy of music.

Sunday Worship begins at 10am.

PLEASE PLACE STAMP HERE

Mailing Address Line 1 Mailing Address Line 2 Mailing Address Line 3 Mailing Address Line 4 Mailing Address Line 5