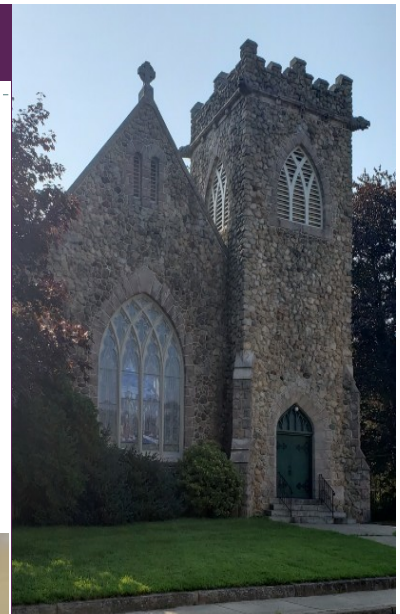




The Gargoyle



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Spring Greetings to you all,

As I write this, we are enjoying the tease of spring weather encouraging us as we approach the milder days on this earth.

The Season of Lent is now here, starting this next Wednesday, March 2, with the Ash Wednesday service at 7 PM. We invite you to join us and it is with joy that I welcome The Rev. Joan Cianci to the pulpit to offer the sermon, "Sign of the Season". Following the sermon, we will move into the Ritual of the Imposition of Ashes for those who wish to receive. We will then move into the 6 Sundays of the Lenten Worship Services and prepare ourselves for the annual walk through Holy Week.

Palm Sunday will start with the annual celebration and move into a remembrance of Jesus' last week. We hope you can join us for the moving Communion & Tenebrae Service on Maundy Thursday.

As a heads-up, for many years I have hosted a Good Friday Service, "The Seven Last Words of Christ," from 12-3 pm, because it has helped prepare me for Easter morning. This year, it will be on April 15 and I am already getting confirmations from several colleagues to take one of the "Words." Participants may come for the full three-hour service, or a part of it based on your scheduling. We will then gather again on Easter morning for the 10 am Easter Worship Service of Celebration, Thanksgiving and Rejoicing.

For this month, we will be moving into a time of hopefully returning to more 'normal' activities since the pandemic started. The masking regulations are being eased and yet we all know there is value in helping to keep one another safe and healthy. We will continue to do the hybrid services via our Facebook page, for those who wish to remain home. We continue to give thanks and pray for those who are in the medical world offering their time and talents to care for those who are ill, and we definitely pray for the ongoing research of the scientists to come up with improving treatment options for us all.

One of the best gifts we can do is to maintain our spiritual and emotional health through reflection, meditation and prayer. For those who are interested, we've ordered Lenten daily meditation books that are available in our Narthex. We are also offering weekly Bible Study and Prayer Times every Thursday at 11 AM. Currently, we are working with the 4 lectionary readings for each week that I use to guide my sermons and the creation of our worship services and hymn selections. Again, we are doing this as a hybrid experience – meaning you can come to the church and join us or attend via Zoom. Just contact Lisa in the office and we will make sure you have the zoom invitation.

As we go into this Lenten season, I offer this excerpt from JP Newell's incredible book, [Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality](#). (see page 5) In light of the challenges we are facing with the climate crisis as well, this provides a rather interesting insight to guide us with that as well. I would truly like to do a book study on this if there are enough who would be interested. Some of the women have already done a retreat with me on these teachings years ago up at Camp Wightman. Please let me know if you would like to join.

May these thoughts invite you into some fascinating reflections this Lent.

Peace and blessings to you all,

Rev. Lee



Happy Spring Greetings!

During the past month, I had been reflecting on what I would share with you in March, but, on February 14 – Valentine’s Day – I read the Our Daily Bread Ministries daily reflection and I knew immediately that I would share this with you. It is entitled “The Power of Love” written by Winn Collier. The scripture reference is from the Song of Songs 8:7 – “many waters cannot quench love.”

Two octogenarians, one from Germany and the other from Denmark, were an unlikely couple. They had each enjoyed sixty years of marriage before being widowed. Though living only fifteen minutes apart, their homes were in separate countries. Still, they fell in love, regularly cooking meals and spending time together. Sadly, in 2020, due to the coronavirus, the Danish government closed the border crossing. Undeterred, every day at 3:00 p.m., the two met at the border on a quiet country lane and, seated on their respective sides, shared a picnic. “We’re here because of love,” the man explained. Their love was stronger than borders, more powerful than a pandemic.

The Song of Songs offers an impressive display of love’s invincible power. “Love is as strong as death,” Solomon insisted (8:6). None of us escapes death; it arrives with a steely finality we can’t break. And yet love, the writer said, “it is every bit as strong.” What’s more, love “burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame” (v. 6). Have you ever watched a fire exploding in feverish rage? Love—like fire—is impossible to contain. “Many waters cannot quench love.” Not even a raging river can sweep love away (v. 7).

Human love, whenever it’s selfless and true, offers reflections of these characteristics. However, only God’s love offers such potency, such limitless depths, such tenacious power. And here’s the stunner: God loves each of us with this unquenchable love.

What a message about LOVE and its power.

The next Deacon’s meeting will take place in Dutton Hall at 5:30pm on March 15.

With Peace and Love to one and all.

Chuck Barnum

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.

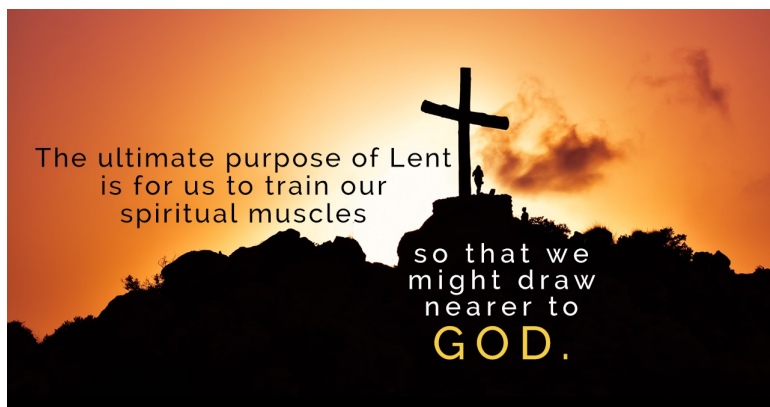


Sanctuary Flowers

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.





MARCH BIRTHDAYS

DAVID BRYTE

ALMA DOUGHERTY

GUS HAGAR

MARY HEALY

CATHY JOHNSON

ELLEN KERR

JOSHUA MEASIMER

NANCY MOFFAT

HENRY
SHEPHERD



If Someone Gives You A Seed....Plant It!

Stewardship comes in many forms of time, talent and treasures. It is about caring for each other and being a good steward of everything that God has entrusted to us.

That includes care for each other.

This month's message has a different twist to it, but it is rooted in stewardship, just the same. Thank you to Doris Pulaski for sharing the following experience and advice.

In the spirit of stewardship, I want to tell you about an unpleasant experience I had recently. I received a text from a friend which said, "I just received a Facebook message from you, but it did not sound like you at all. Did you send me a note?"

My heart rate doubled, as I feared I had been hacked. I thought I would have to change passwords on everything. I feared my computer security was breached, and that right then and there, that thieves had broken into my bank account and were draining it dry. I had a lot of other fears, too.

However, the problem was nothing of the kind. Some person had randomly copied ("cloned") my Instagram page, including my name, and sent Facebook Messenger notes from their fake account to my Instagram friends. There was no risk to me at all, except the risk of assisting some scammer to attack my friends, using my name to make them believe that advice they gave was from me.

Several friends of mine had had the same experience.

However, it is quite easy to stop this sort of attack, and even easier to limit your exposure. Just do a Search on Instagram and Facebook on your own name. If you see more than one copy of a picture of yourself next to your name, someone has cloned your account.



And here's all you have to do. Change your profile picture. Search again on your name. The clone account will not have your new picture. Click on the clone account. Chose the Report Option from the menu. For Instagram, it is in the upper right-hand corner. Then just answer that the account is fake, and the person they are pretending to be is "Me." Then hit submit.

Facebook works similarly.

These scammers can only use the information in your account that is public. You could make everything in your account private, but then that old high school chum you haven't heard from in years will never find you.

It is better to check whether there are others with your name and face periodically, so you can nip this annoyance in the bud. Also check your Friends list. You may find you have several people with the same name. Block the clones, and tell your friends they have been cloned. They may not know.

My friend was a steward for me - she warned me of my problem. I am trying to pay that favor forward to all of you, so you need not fear when a friend tells you they received an odd message from you.

As to stewardship in the traditional sense, thank you for your pledges to Groton Congregational Church and for fulfilling them. If you've needed to wait to contemplate a pledge amount or if it has slipped your mind to submit one, it's never too late.

God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,

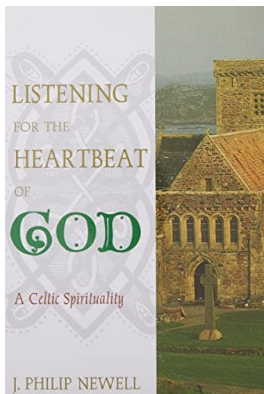
Cathy Johnson

Sue Stottlemeyer

Phyllis Meyer

Doris Pulaski

Excerpt--Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality



Excerpts from Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality, JP Newell

“The grace of salvation received through the Church is given not to replace our nature but to release what is most fundamental in all people, although bound by the oppression of sin and wrongdoing. This indicates a relationship between the Church and the world very different from the Augustinian model. Rather than accentuating the distinctions between them, the ministry of the Church is to liberate and free the goodness of God that is already at the very heart of all life, yearning, as St. Paul would say, for its release.

The Church becomes liberator rather than custodian of salvation. It provides the key that gives access to the treasure of God’s life instead of being the source of that richness; the treasure is already present, though hidden, waiting to be unlocked, in every person. (18-19)

Around the same time, c 430, St. Patrick, who was probably originally of the Ninianic Church, began his mission to Ireland. It is in the early Irish mission that we see a fuller emergence of some of the main distinguishing features of Celtic spirituality, including an awareness of the goodness of creation and a sense of the company of heaven’s presence among us on earth. What comes across again and again in the prayers and art of the early Irish Church is this intertwining of the spiritual and the material, heaven and earth, time and eternity. Although the famous ‘Breastplate’ hymn attributed to St. Patrick probably dates from a later period and was not actually written by him, its themes reflect the major characteristics of Celtic Christianity. In the third verse of the hymn, the grace of the elements are invoked in a way that suggests that the spiritual exists within the matter of creation and that God’s healing and restoring powers are to be found in the goodness of the earth. ...in the tradition of St. Patrick there is an awareness that all created things carry within them the grace and goodness of God. ...within creation there is something of the presence of the uncreated, that is God. (24-25) There is not in the Celtic way of seeing a great gap between heaven and earth. Rather the two are seen as inseparably intertwined.(26)

(32) St. John’s vision of God as the Life of the world had led this mission to look for the grace of God *within* as well as beyond creation. The concept of listening for the heartbeat of God within all things, ourselves, one another and the whole of creation was a feature of the spirituality of the Celtic mission that now began to be displaced.

(34) John Scotus Eriugena taught that Christ moves among us in two shoes, as it were, one shoe being that of creation, the other that of the Scriptures, and stressed the need to be as alert and attentive to Christ moving among us in creation as we are to the voice of Christ in Scriptures. ...The world is a visible manifestation of God....(35) To know the Creator, we need only look at the things he has created. The way to learn about God, Eriugena believed, is ‘through the letters of Scripture and through the species of creation.’

(36) ...goodness is not simply a feature of life but gives rise to life. Evil is opposed to existence; whereas goodness is creative, evil is destructive. Eriugena insisted that nothing in nature is evil in itself. That is, we and all creation bear within us, however covered over it may be, the essential goodness of God. If we become evil, we are acting contrary to our essential nature. Eriugena’s spirituality led him not to look away from life but further within; he believed that when we look within ourselves, and within all that exists, we will find darknesses and evil, but deeper still, the goodness of God.

He regarded grace not as opposed to nature but as co-operating with it, restoring it or releasing its essential goodness. He taught that what has been lost is not the light that is within all life, for, as St. John says, the darkness has not overcome it. Rather, what has been lost, says Eriugena, is the ‘true beholding of the light from the inner eyes.’ Grace is given to heal that inner sight, to open our eyes again to the goodness that is deep within us, for God is within us. The grace of Christ restores us to our original simplicity. Everything that is divided is reunited. (37)



FEED THE HUNGRY

any Saturday from 10 AM to 12:30 PM.

Your good will and prayers, with the encouragement of our Missions Committee, make a difference!
Janice Kimball

The Community Meals "grab 'n go" lunches will resume weekly distribution in the parking lot of Groton Congregational Church, beginning **Saturday, March 26th**. The time of distribution will be 12 noon to 12:30 PM.

Donations of the following items will be accepted at the church: bottled water, juice boxes/packs, peanut or cheese cracker packs, canned soups or pasta, ramen, bag snacks, packaged cookies, (with fresh fruit such as oranges, bananas, and apples later in March), paper bags, and heavy cardboard boxes for distribution. Items will be stored, and lunches assembled in the church basement. There will also be a donation box upstairs in the church for your gifts- thank you!

Monetary donations may also be made at worship through the brown envelopes (please mark for Community Meals) found in the sanctuary pews. We have seed money but wish to sustain this effort for the good of the wider community, and your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

Please call or text Janice Kimball at 860-235-0494 if you would like to volunteer



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee meets as needed to review any profiles which are sent to us.

We had received one profile last month, but the interested individual was looking for full-time position.

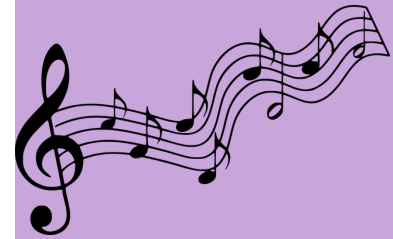
Your continued prayers are appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Anne Campbell



Women's Fellowship will meet in Dutton Hall on **March 9th at 12:30 p.m.** to finalize plans for the upcoming Grab-n-Go Dinner. Bring your lunch. The meeting starts at 1:00 p.m.

Volunteers for vegetable peeling for this delicious event are very welcome! Peeling will start after church on March 13th. Bring your own peeler.



Handbell Choir

Will meet on
March 3rd in the Sanctuary for practice at 6:30pm

Choir Rehearsals

Will resume on March 3rd
at 7:30pm in the Sanctuary



March 14, 2022
5pm-6pm

\$16 each

ORDER NOW

860-445-7409
or
Sign-up after 10am
Worship Service every
Sunday through March
13th

Phone Orders Taken
until March 10th

Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument Street
Groton, CT

MENU:
Corned beef, cabbage,
potatoes, carrots, onions,
and parsnips.
Irish Soda bread
and shamrock sugar cookies
added upon request.



MARCH WORSHIP SERVICES

Lent Year C	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Ash Wednesday March 2, 2022 Sermon: "Sign of the Season"	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or <i>Isaiah 58:1-12</i>	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
First Sunday in Lent March 6, 2022 Sermon: "Whom Do You Serve"	Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16	Romans 10:8b-13	Luke 4:1-13
Second Sunday in Lent March 13, 2022 Sermon: "Wait Upon the Lord"	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18	Psalm 27	Philippians 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35 or <i>Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)</i>
Third Sunday in Lent March 20, 2022 Sermon: "Patience"	Isaiah 55:1-9	Psalm 63:1-8	1 Corinthians 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9
Fourth Sunday in Lent March 27, 2022 Sermon: "The Prodigal Son"	Joshua 5:9-12	Psalm 32	2 Corinthians 5:16-21	Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



Drop off your donations of non-perishable food & household items after
Sunday Worship or between 9am and 1pm Monday-Friday

March 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Ash  Wednesday	3 Prayer & Bible Study 11am	4	5
6 Worship Service 10am New Members Reception	7 Search Committee	8 Deacons 5pm Leadership 7pm	9 Women's Fellowship 12:30pm	10 Prayer & Bible Study 11am	11	12
13 Trustees Worship Service 10am	14 Search Committee Grab-n-Go Dinner	15	16	17 Prayer & Bible Study 11am	18	19
20 Missions 9am Worship Service 10am	21 Search Committee	22	23	24 Prayer & Bible Study 11am	25	26
27 Stewardship Worship Service 10am	28 Search Committee	29	30	31 Prayer & Bible Study 11am		



Let today be the
day you give up
who you've been
for you who can
become.

Blessed **Ash Wednesday**

Planting a Lenten Garden

Here's what you need to plant in your garden:

Three rows of Squash:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash criticism
3. Squash indifference

Seven rows of Peas:

1. Prayer
2. Penance
3. Perseverance
4. Politeness
5. Preparedness
6. Purity
7. Patience

Seven Heads of Lettuce:

1. Let us be unselfish and loyal
2. Let us be charitable
3. Let us search the scriptures
4. Let us not be weary in well doing
5. Let us be obedient
6. Let us be truthful
7. Let us love one another

No garden is complete without Turnips:

1. Turn up for daily Mass and weekly Eucharistic Adoration
2. Turn up for prayer and Bible study
3. Turn up with a smile, even when things are difficult
4. Turn up with determination to do your best in God's service

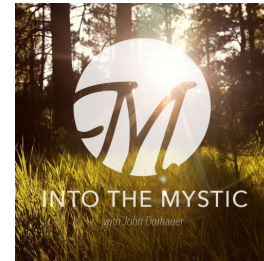
Conclude with Thyme:

thyme with God. thyme for fun, thyme for rest,

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

There will be much fruit in the garden because you reap what you sow!





Messing with Time

by [John Dorhauer](#) | published on Jan 31, 2022 ucc.org

In 1959, back home from a tour of Europe and Asia, Dave Brubeck and his band recorded the album “Time Out.” It messed with time. It threw out the convention of recording music in either 4/4 time or 3/4 time, in which respectively there were four and three beats to each measure.

While in Turkey, Dave heard street musicians playing traditional folk music in an odd 9/8 time signature. He was enchanted by it and returned home to record “Time Out” – an entire album in which time was messed with, at least time as understood by western ears listening to popular music.

One of the great serendipities of that effort is a drum solo on the piece entitled “Take Five.” The song, composed by their sax player Paul Desmond, was written in order to feature the brilliance of the band’s drummer Joe Morello. The entire song is a masterpiece. Written in 5/4 time, it became quite a sensation, rising to number two on the Billboard charts. And sure enough, Joe’s solo is a piece of art worth checking out on their YouTube video.

I write about that song here only to reflect for a moment on what disrupting expectations can do to enhance our worldview and deepen our lived experiences.

There is nothing wrong with familiarity of form. Our lives can be made safe and comfortable when certain things come at us in ways we can expect, appreciate, and anticipate. But art, good art, often seeks to question the familiar – either as a statement about how it has lost its value and impact or as a way of saying it is time to open new horizons and explore new possibilities.

We can reach a level of arrogance where what is familiar to us casts doubt and derision on cultures and peoples who have adopted different forms and patterns. It is one thing to recognize differences in a way that leads to appreciation, and quite another to recognize it and call it an aberration, an evil, or a disgrace. Colonialism kind of embedded that way of thinking into our American patterns and lifestyles.

Which is why I not only love when artists like Dave Brubeck intentionally disrupt us with new beauty that expands our thinking and dissolves our arrogance, I actually seek out art with that intent.

There is an impulse in our culture that wants to censor the avant-garde, silence those exploring the limits of our current horizons, or deride art that breaches conventional boundaries.

Americans have begun burning books.

We are passing laws that criminalize race consciousness and forbid opening up the deleted histories that tell us about how white power came to be.

We are censoring and silencing the voices of artists called to speak new truths.

As a still-listening audience to a still-speaking God, we should resist this with every fiber of our being.

Let the artists among us mess with our understandings of time, of place, of power, of self, of consciousness. Put it all on the table and show us new light and new life. Let there be new pathways to truth, exploring new avenues to awakenings within us that speak differently about the sacred and the profane and how we value them all on this, our journey Into the Mystic.

Listen to the “Into the Mystic” Podcast [here](#)



The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, author and theologian, currently serves as ninth General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

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, Groton Congregational Church, an Open & Affirming 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

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