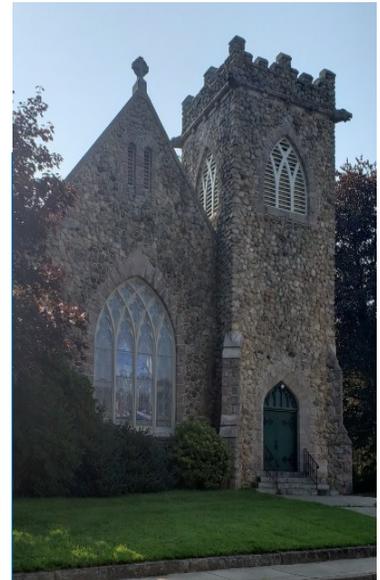


The Gargoyle

Groton Congregational Church

April 2022

CHRIST IS RISEN



In This Issue

Pastor.....	4
Deacons.....	5
Stewards.....	6
Easter Drive.....	7
Women's Fellowship.....	8
Community Meals.....	12
Worship Watch.....	14
Calendar.....	15

Highlights

Birthdays.....	2
Holy Week Schedule.....	3
Poetry by Chelan Harkin.....	9
Grab' n Go Dinner.....	10
SNEC.....	11
Children in Church.....	12
Ukrainian Refugee Update...	13



Open Hearts. Open Minds.
162 Monument St.
Groton, CT 06340
www.grotonucc.org



- CYNTHIA BRYTE
- AMANDA MAYERSOHN
- INGRID MEASIMER
- CAROL SHINN
- SALLY TURNER
- MARK WHALEN
- ROSILAND WOMMACK



SILVER LAKE
Conference Center

Open House 2022
April 15th

Silver Lake staff, counselors, and deans are ready to introduce you to camp!

Take a tour on foot or hop on the hayride. See the cabins and other buildings, find out where the Freds (bathrooms) are, and check out the ropes courses and the waterfront.

More Information at
www.silverlakect.org

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 in the church office. If you would like to have your floral donation dedication printed in the bulletin and announced at worship, please let her know.

For more information, please contact Janice Kimball.



Holy Week Schedule

He Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!
GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ

PALM SUNDAY APRIL 10TH 10AM	MAUNDY THURSDAY APRIL 14TH 7PM
GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 15TH NOON-3PM	EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 17TH 10AM

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE AT FORT GRISWOLD 6AM


162 MONUMENT ST.
GROTON, CT



Stand with Ukraine

The following organizations are accepting donations for Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia

www.ukrarcheparchy.us/donate

Knights of Columbus Ukraine Solidarity Fund

www.kofc.org/secure/en/donate/ukraine.html

Ukrainian Congress Committee of America

www.ucca.org

United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, Inc.

www.uuarc.org

United Church of Christ

www.ucc.org (link near the top of the page)

Reformed Church in Hungary

www.reformatus.hu/english

Church World Service

www.cwsglobal.org/

Doctors Without Borders

www.doctorswithoutborders.org (link at top of the page)

Pastors' Moment

By Reverend Lee Ireland



Spring Greetings, I think. I heard there was hail yesterday and few folks saw snowflakes. There sure is a cold wind blowing in off the ocean today!

As I write this, we are entering into the 5th week of Lent; soon, we will be celebrating Palm Sunday and entering the fulness of Holy Week. We are thankful that we can invite you into the sanctuary for the memorable Maundy Thursday Service and I'm pleased to share that six of my colleagues will be joining me on Good Friday to offer their meditations on "The Seven Last Words of Christ." Each year, this sacred week is a complex roller coaster ride of emotions. But I am always so moved by what my colleagues offer in their messages. It is a three-hour service, but you are welcome to come and leave as you have time.

With each succeeding year, as I work with the lectionary readings for our services, they call me into a deeper walk with God and all that is being revealed through Jesus and his interactions with his family members and religious leaders. I've grown to appreciate how he is trying to lead them into the liberating message of God's love and with the invitation that they've not yet grasped. I ponder how to engage all of you on your own journeys with this same invitation. I am taken by surprise as we go through each week and I come across a phrase or passage that I've read before, but this time I hear something new and more profound. There are also moments when the lyrics in the hymns almost take my breath away, as I realize what the author understood and expressed so well!

I feel that this year, it is beneficial to read and hear again the details of these stories even more so - after all the worries and concerns we've had in dealing with the realities of Covid, the limitations of the past 2 years and how we are living with it now. We need to hear these stories again as our hearts are broken with the daily news of the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, the frustration of our powerlessness to stop it, and our desire to figure out how to help. I think one of our key choices is to pray for God's love, grace, and light to break through the tensions and dark moments so that peace can be negotiated, and the people of Ukraine can return to their hometowns - though many will return to rubble and need to rebuild.

I know I'm a dreamer, but I trust there is a path to peace that is possible for all. Jesus lived through times of tumult yet, through his death and resurrection, revealed the way for us to choose love and find the path to peace...but we must choose it.

I just read this reflection this morning with a profound message about how we can face the challenges of this day with a powerful insight from Jesus' story:

CAC teacher James Finley shares how Jesus is a model of how to say Yes in the midst of our deepest fear:

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus sweat blood because he was afraid [Luke 22:44]. It is possible that he was infinitely more afraid than we could ever be. But the difference is: Jesus was not afraid of being afraid, because he knew it was just fear. . . . We are afraid of fear because we believe that it has the power to name who we are, and it fills us with shame.

Jesus invites us to discover that our fear is woven into God's own life, whose life is mysteriously woven into all the scary things that can and do happen to us as human beings together on this earth. This is liberation from fear in the midst of a fearful situation. {3/29/22 CAC Meditation}

As we go into the last weeks of this year's Lenten season leading to Holy Week, may we hear the invitation to surrender our fears into God's love and see what we can experience together as the disciples in 2022. We have each new day to discover all that is here waiting for us to experience and share with love.

Blessings, Rev. Lee

Deacons

By Sue Blaisdell

“I love dieting and exercise so much that I gave it up for Lent.”



Lent started on March 2nd this year and like every other year I did not contemplate what I should be giving up. As a former Catholic, I avoid the traditional notion that I need to give up something I love as a sign of sacrifice and as a test of my self-discipline. Giving something up for Lent it is supposed to be spiritually motivated and to me, giving up chocolate or wine for Lent doesn't seem very spiritually motivated.

Some years ago, I began the practice of trying to work on something in my character that I thought needed attention. Impatience, judgementalism, cynicism are all traits that I have, and I always thought needed some improvement so each year I would choose one of those traits to work on.

I remember one year Reverend Dutton and I were discussing giving up something for Lent and I mentioned that I was not giving anything up but rather, I was going to work on my impatience. You see, I get easily frustrated and short when things take too long, or someone doesn't "get right on it".

I would pray and meditate and ask God for His guidance to help me be less impatient with others. Well, as Lent wore on, I thought I was doing quite well. I would pause and listen carefully to those around me and try to wait patiently for them to conclude what they were doing or saying. I could feel myself soften towards them and appreciate them as my brothers and sisters and all their many facets. I thought I was becoming less critical of how long it took someone to say or do something.

As I recall, one day very close to Easter, Reverend Dutton and I were in the office working on the Gargoyle and I grew frustrated and impatient with the lack of responses and the tardiness of some of the articles that were being submitted. Reverend Dutton came into the office smiling and quietly asked, "How is that patience thing working for you this Lent?" Oh, we had a good laugh! And it was then that I realized that while I was trying to work on my lack of patience, God had given me something I didn't realize I needed, tolerance. I hadn't noticed until that moment that what I had thought was impatience was really intolerance. I had become more accepting of other people's gifts and how they shared them.

I still don't give up anything for Lent but every year I am in awe at what God has given me instead. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ so that I may live in Him forever.

Love, Light, and Peace.

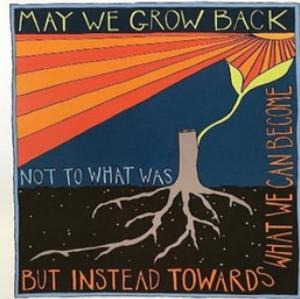
Refocus for Lent

- Give up complaining — focus on gratitude.
- Give up harsh judgments — think kind thoughts.
- Give up worry — trust God to provide.
- Give up discouragement — be full of hope.
- Give up bitterness — turn to forgiveness.
- Give up hatred — return good for evil.
- Give up anger — be more patient.
- Give up pettiness — become mature.
- Give up jealousy — pray for trust.
- Give up gossiping — control your tongue.
- Give up sin — turn to virtue.
- Give up giving up — persevere.

—Author unknown

Stewardship

By Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemeyer, Phyllis Meyer, & Doris Pulaski



So, here we are in the season of Lent: a time of reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter. Though the recent weather may indicate otherwise, Spring has arrived and we patiently await what will burst forth from planted seeds that have developed sturdy roots. "In the bulb, there is a flower, in the seed, an apple tree." We are rooted in love.

As we await what to see what will be, we give what we can so we may continue caring for each other and the church here at Groton Congregational. Thank you for your continued support in the form of your time, talents and treasures. It is never too late to submit a formal pledge; cards are available in Dutton Hall.

Included in this issue of the Gargoyle is information on how you can celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ this Easter. (see page 7) We hope you will consider this special way of offering up the names of loved ones on the most holy day of Christian life.

Looking to the future: the Stewardship Committee is working towards conducting a daily raffle to be held in September, the proceeds of which will go towards our building/maintenance/restoration fund. You may recall that this has been done in past years, to great success. Stay tuned for information on specifics and how you might be able to help!

God's blessings be upon you.
Your Stewardship Committee



Waterford High Tag Sale
April 10th
8am-2pm

Tag sale to support the WHS Class of 2022 Safe Graduation Party. Items for sale will include clothing, toys, books, housewares, and sporting equipment.

20 Rope Ferry Rd.
Waterford, CT

RED WAGON FOOD DRIVE

Benefits Groton Social Services



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



The Annual Ocean Beach Mile-Long Tag & Craft Sale

SATURDAY, MAY 14TH 2022

AIN DATE - Saturday May 21st 2022

Find unique items from our amazing local Vendors! Browse the handmade crafts, vintage finds and refurbished items all while enjoying a wonderful day by the sparkling sea!

More Information
www.saveoceanbeach.org

Easter Drive



FROM THE STEWARSHIP COMMITTEE

Honor Loved One this Easter by
MAKING A DONATION TO ONE OF THE CHURCH FUNDS
Loved ones and donors will be recognized in the Easter Sunday Church Bulletin.

How to Donate

Envelopes for donations will be available in the church pews and at the church entryways. *

Make checks payable to: Groton Congregational Church.

Be sure to indicate the desired fund along with the name(s) of the person being honored and the name(s) of the donor.

Put the envelope in the offering plate during Sunday Worship Service.

Last day to donate is April 13th.

CHOICE OF FUNDS

Restoration
General
Memorial
Memorial Scholarship
Community Meals
Deacons

*Use of the provided envelope is not required (but helpful!). Donations can also be mailed to the church – be sure to provide the information outlined above and write “ATTN: STEWARDSHIP” on the outside of the envelope.



Registration Opens April 5, 2022



\$175.00 per golfer. Sponsorship Opportunities Available.

Visit www.silverlakect.org/golf for all the details including COVID vaccine requirements.

Women's Fellowship

By Sally Turner

The Corned Beef Dinner was a huge success. Thank you all for your support in all the many ways it took to make this event so successful. The joy and love that comes from this effort takes my breath away.

We are happy to announce that Women's Fellowship will be holding a **Yard Sale** on **May 21, 2022**. This will be an indoor-outdoor sale. We are currently seeking donations. Please see below.



April 3, 2022
After Worship

 **Women's Fellowship Yard Sale** 
May 21st 9am-3pm

GET RID OF YOUR STUFF

The following gently used items are **WANTED**:

Glassware, vintage items, books, CDs, collectibles, oddities, housewares, jewelry, toys, occasion cards, and puzzles.

PLEASE NO CLOTHES OR ELECTRONICS

Drop off your items at the church
May 17th-20th from 9AM to 3PM



Church Events

Corned Beef Dinner—March 14, 2022



Chelan Harkin-Poetry

WOW

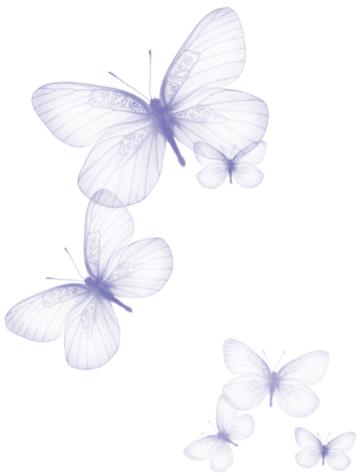
Each day before our surroundings
become flat with familiarity
and the shapes of our lives click into place,
dimensionless and average as Tetris cubes,
before hunger knocks from our bellies
like a cantankerous old man
and the duties of the day stack up like dishes
and the architecture of our basic needs
commissions all thought
to construct the 4-door sedan of safety,
before gravity clings to our skin
like a cumbersome parasite
and the coloured dust of dreams
sweeps itself obscure in the vacuum of reason,
each morning before we wrestle the world
and our hearts into the shape of our brains,
look around and say, "Wow!"
Feed yourself fire.
Scoop up the day entire
like a planet-sized bouquet of marvel
sent by the Universe directly into your arms
and say "Wow!"
Break yourself down
into the basic components of primitive awe
and let the crescendo of each moment
carbonate every capillary
and say, "Wow!"

THE WORST THING

The worst thing we ever did
was put God in the sky
out of reach pulling the divinity
from the leaf,
sifting out the holy from our bones,
insisting God isn't bursting dazzlement
through everything we've made
a hard commitment to see as ordinary,
stripping the sacred from everywhere
to put in a cloud man elsewhere,
prying closeness from your heart.

The worst thing we ever did
was take the dance and the song
out of prayer
made it sit up straight
and cross its legs
removed it of rejoicing
wiped clean its hip sway,
its questions,
its ecstatic yowl,
its tears.

The worst thing we ever did is pretend
God isn't the easiest thing
in this Universe
available to every soul
in every breath.



OUR GREAT COCOON

Suffering is our great cocoon.
Your budding wings
might not be ready for you
to fully emerge
in your lifetime.

But tending to this sacred process
of no longer repressing
or projecting your sorrow
but letting it transform you
as it's intended
is still profoundly noble
and meaningful work.

Stay strong, dear one.
Whether or not you taste the sky
you are building the future
of humanity's wings.

Whom Do You Serve

2/28/2022 - by: Lee A. Ireland - Starting With Scripture

Scripture: Luke 4:1-13 (NRSV)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."'

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."'

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you",

and

"On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."'

Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Reflection: Whom Do You Serve?

This day, if someone were to ask you to come and work for them, to pack up your belongings and follow: would you go? If Jesus asked, would you follow?

Can you describe to someone - this God whom you say you serve? Have you spent time actually trying to describe God on paper?

As a pastor for over 25 years, I've realized we're all guilty of making God into our own images to serve our purposes ...until ...our world collapses through some kind of event; be it medical, a broken relationship, tragedies, or more currently through the isolation due to Covid.... and we find we're in a time where the world we've been taught collides with the world we are living....and the old teachings fall apart and God seems like a fantasy.

It's fascinating, that after Jesus was baptized and "Full of the Holy Spirit," he was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights, where he was tempted by the devil and concluded with "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." After which the devil left.

I've never had 40 straight days and nights like that, but I have had quiet times. I know the demons I've faced and being asked, "Who is God?" and asking others that question to help them unpack their understanding.

What sent me to seminary finally, was watching the movie, "Sophie's Choice." My heart was destroyed as I watched and realized what Sophie was being asked; for my young daughter and son were asleep upstairs. I knew I had to go study and be a person who would try to counter that way of interpreting God's Call.

We're living in a time, when it's really important to ask again: Whom do you serve?

Community Meals

By Janice Kimball



Community Meals will continue each Saturday in the church parking lot from 12 noon to 12:30 PM. Donations of nonperishable food items are very welcome. Those who would like to volunteer to purchase food or assemble bag lunches should contact Janice Kimball at 860-235-0494.



Music Committee

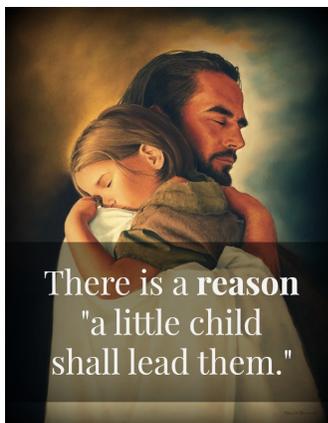
Next Meeting—May 15, 2022 after Worship Service.

Crafting Group



Next Meeting—April 26, 2022 1pm. Brain storming session for all those interested in crafting items and helping with this year's Holiday Bazaar. .

Children in Church



Jesus' Dad's Name

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?"
One child answered, "Mary."
The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?"
A little kid said, "Verge."
Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?"
The kid said, "Well, you know, they are always talking about Verge n' Mary."

3-year-old Reese:

"Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen."

A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

An Update on Ukrainian Refugees in Poland

3/16/2022 - by: [Kazimierz Bem](#) - [Justice and Witness](#)

[Kaz J. Bem](#)

The Rev. Kazimierz Bem is the Pastor of the First Church in Marlborough (Congregational).

The following is a letter from the Rev. Kazimierz Bem, pastor of the First Church in Marlborough, MA, and a native of Poland. A dozen churches sent contributions through First Church to help refugees from the war in the Ukraine. ([More here.](#))

Thank you for all your help, prayers and very generous donations. I just want to give you an update on your donations and the work you and your selfless love (charity) have enabled. Your generosity and compassion have been overwhelming! By the grace of God so far over 12 UCC congregations have contributed to our fundraising efforts from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and Maine.

Since the war in Ukraine began 20 days ago over 3 million refugees have fled the country, the overwhelming majority (1,8 million) to Poland. To put this in perspective: that is the size of the Polish capital, Warsaw. Smaller numbers of refugees have made their way to Romania (463k), Moldova (344k), Hungary (273k) and Slovakia (222k). (The United Church of Christ is working with the ACT Alliance and the Hungarian Reformed Church - [that appeal is here.](#))

Your help is so much appreciated & so very much necessary. In the past 20 days we have wired \$9000 to the Lutheran Diakonia in Poland, which works through the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the country providing aid to Ukraine (where access is still safe and possible) and to the 1.8 million refugees in Poland, mainly women and children. Aid is given to people regardless of their denominational allegiance (or lack thereof). Over half of the Reformed and Lutheran congregations in Poland (140) have taken in refugees and housed them. Most of the others have organized relief and collected goods.

So far, via Diakonia, your money has supported (amongst other things):

Convoys of humanitarian aid to Lutsk and Javorów (the last where the Russians bombed and killed a number of soldiers and US military personnel last week)

The Lutheran & Reformed congregation in Kracow, which has created a shelter for 36-40 people, with another in the works. Refugees are given clean clothes and warm meals as well as basic legal aid.

St. Mathew's Lutheran congregation in Łódź, which has taken in 18 people (3 families) and is providing them with necessary legal and psychological aid.

The Reformed congregation in Łódź has taken in 6 refugees and more are on the way. One woman learned after the first night of being taken in that her 20-year-old son was killed by the Russian army during the fighting.

Diakonia is passing humanitarian aid to Ukraine - Kiev and Kharkiv (both cities are being bombed as we speak).

Even though Polish and Ukrainian are Slavic languages, they are using different dialects and are quite distinct, so translators are needed. School books and supplies are also needed for children who are now being enrolled in Polish schools - remember: over 50% of the refugees are children under 15! Next week the Lutheran and Reformed congregations in Lodz will organize free legal aid to all refugees in Poland's second largest city.

What is in the future? Shelters (like the ones in Krakow and Łódź) will continue to operate as the war shows no signs of deescalating; both congregations in Łódź are planning language workshops for women and day-care and kindergarten solutions so that they can find employment and become independent. People who took in refugees for a week or two will tire - and so there is a pressing need to find them affordable, safe and dignified accommodation for the long run. Plans are being made for summer retreats for refugee children with language and psychological support, as well as how to prepare them for the next school year if need be.

Thank you for all your past - and continued support. If you can - please consider making a donation via the link below - Faithstreet has agreed to reimburse us \$300 in Credit Card fees marked "Ukraine Relief." Please consider making an appeal to your congregations. God bless you for all your support so far.

<https://www.faithstreet.com/church/first-church-in-marlborough-ucc-marlborough-ma/giving>

Please don't forget to pray for peace tonight and tomorrow.



Shelter for Ukrainian refugees at the Lutheran & Reformed congregation in Kracow.



Worship Watch

April Church Services



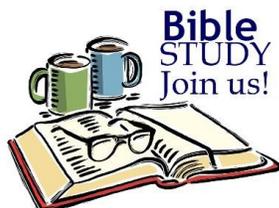
Fifth Sunday in Lent April 3, 2022 Sermon: "Transformed lives" Communion Sunday	Isaiah 43:16-21	Psalm 126	Philippians 3:4b-14	John 12:1-8
Palm Sunday April 10, 2022 Sixth Sunday in Lent Sermon: "Ride On"		Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29		Luke 1 9:28-40
Maundy Thursday April 14, 2022 -7 PM Holy Thursday Special Service	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17 31b-35
Good Friday Ecumenical Service 12-3 PM April 15, 2022 "The Seven Last Words of Christ" Special Service		Psalm 22		
Easter April 17, 2022 Sunrise Service 6 AM Fort Griswold Sanctuary -10 AM Sermon: "The Voice"	*Acts 10:34-43 or <i>Isaiah</i> 65:17-25	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	1 Corinthians 1 5:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43	John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12
Second Sunday of Easter April 24, 2022 Guest Preacher: Rev. Mark Porizky	*Acts 5:27-32	Psalm 118:14-29 or <i>Psalm 150</i>	Revelation 1:4-8	John 20:19-31

April 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Worship Service 10am Bake Sale	4 Pastoral Search Cmte. Via Zoom	5 Trustees-pm	6	7 Prayer & Bible Study 11am	8	9
10 Palm Sunday Worship Service 10am	11 Pastoral Search Cmte. Via Zoom	12 Deacons 5:30pm	13 Women's Fellowship 12:30pm Dutton Hall	14 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Maundy Thursday Service 7pm	15 Good Friday Ecumenical Service 12-3pm	16
17 Missions 9am Easter Worship Sunrise -6am In church -10am	18 Pastoral Search Cmte. Via Zoom	19	20	21 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells-6:30pm Choir-7:30pm	22	23
24 Stewardship Worship Service 10am Rev. Mark Porizky	25 Pastoral Search Cmte. Via Zoom	26 Crafting Group 1pm	27	28 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells-6:30pm Choir-7:30pm	29	30

Thursday Mornings 11am



**Bible
STUDY**
Join us!

In person or via Zoom

Additional Meetings:

**After Worship Coffee Hour—
Every Sunday after Worship**



For God so loved the world
that he gave
his only Son,

that whoever believes in him
shall not perish
but have eternal life

Jn 3:16

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

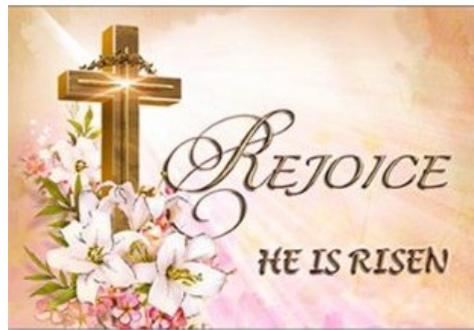
860-445-7409
www.grotonucc.org
office@grotoncongregational.org

Bring Your Family to Our Family.

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

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