

The Gargoyle

Spring greetings to you all! It's May ☺

I greet you all on this day with the hopefulness that comes with the good news on Easter morning that "Christ has risen!"

But, also, with thanksgiving as we see the flowers rising from the earth after the winter cold and this roller coaster ride of the spring season. What a joy to see the varieties of flowers and shrubs decorating our landscapes! We see that new life comes, even after moments that seem dire and sad. What an incredible design of our Creator! As we see the outer world transformed visibly, it reminds us of what happens within our personal lives when we chose to turn to God and listen within for guidance and love; as well as in our collective life as a congregation. What a joy it was to see so many arrive on Easter morning and share in the beauty of the music and the invitations of the scriptures! What a joy to collectively celebrate the message that the choir sang as an anthem on Easter: "Death has lost its sting and love has prevailed!" What a call on our hearts and lives to hear again the details of when the disciples and Mary met the risen Christ. I pray that you, too, are experiencing the wonder of that resurrection news in your own life.

We are now in a transformative time in the life of this congregation, celebrating as we come out of the Covid restrictions, the cold winter season and worshipping together and participating in more other activities together. There is some good energy flowing here and opportunities to cultivate. It's been a joy to hear about the work of the outdoor gardening crew:) Then, what a sweet surprise we heard last Friday, when Bill Blaisdell shared the news about the incredibly generous bequest of Judith Peckham Holden! Stay tuned for ways in which the leaders will decide on how to use these funds wisely. We are all giving thanks for this generous gift and breathing a sigh of relief.

Looking toward the coming weeks, I'm mindful that locally, nationally, and globally there are many things happening that beg questions of our understanding of scripture and how to live out our faith. Therefore, I would like to offer a time for open conversations on Sunday mornings and invite any who would like to join us. We will start of May 15th around 11:40 am in Dutton Hall. During my vacation week after Easter, I had a chance to rest, but also visited with some people in 2 other congregations that I've served. It was fascinating to listen to them share of their current lives and, of course, about some of their concerns within their churches. But I was also thankful to sense how we're all walking together in light of the tragedy in Ukraine. We're all praying for peace and for the leaders to choose a path of reconciliation and non-violence as we go forward. We all talked about how important it is to help nurture the peace within our own lives, families, communities and pray so it can spread. On Easter, I offered the words, "Love one another as I have loved you," from John 20: 1-18. May we give thanks for the love we experience here at GCC and listen to see how God will lead us to keep the light of Christ shining brightly for all who are hungry and seeking the light. Thank you for your faithfulness and love.

Peace and blessings,
Rev. Lee Ireland



In This Issue

Stewards.....	4
Community Meals.....	6
Acting Treasurer.....	6
Women's Fellowship.....	8
Music.....	8
UCC.....	12
SNEC.....	13
Worship Watch.....	14
Calendar.....	15

Highlights

Birthdays.....	2
Sunrise Service.....	3
Church Gardening.....	5
Church Events.....	9
Community Events.....	11
Children in Church.....	18

OUR Faith



162 Monument St
Groton, CT 06340
www.grotonucc.org
860-445-7409



CARRIE DAVIS
LIZ FERNALD
CAROLYN HANOVER
MICHAEL HODGE
PHYLLIS MEYER
GRACE SOMERS
LAURA TURNER
STEVENTURNER

Sanctuary Flowers

Honor that special person or occasion with a floral donation to the Sanctuary.

To do so, please contact the church office if you would like to have your floral donation dedication printed in the bulletin and announced at worship.



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.

Easter Sunrise Service at Fort Griswold



Stewardship Message

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



May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you know peace.
May you know that
you are loved.

How is it that we are already approaching the month of May?? It's been said that time is relative – relative to where you are physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. How wonderful that we, as a family here at Groton Congregational, can travel the paths of our individual journeys together. We are truly rooted in love.

Thank you to all who donated to the various church funds this Easter Season. Thank you for your continued commitment to fulfill your pledges. We'll say it again: it's never too late to complete a pledge card; cards are available in Dutton Hall and in the church office.

The Stewardship Committee is excited to be planning **a month-long raffle** that will be held during the month of **September**. Money raised from this event will go into the building fund for the maintenance and restoration of our historical “home” here at Groton Congregational.

We are looking for your help with donations to make the raffle a success. The following are just a few suggestions:

- If you own or have connections with a local business, we would love to have gift cards!
- Season tickets to the theater or sporting event were a big hit.
- People love to travel, if you own a second or get-away home, a donation of a weekend's time would be wonderful.
- Donations of your time, talent, and skill are always welcome such as giving piano lessons, like Janice Kimball (Janice will again be donating piano lessons; thank you, Janice!).

To help the process, Stewardship has developed an informational letter for you to give to prospective donors. This will explain the process to them and aid in ensuring we do not duplicate the businesses and individuals who are contacted. Please get in touch with a member of your Stewardship Committee to obtain letters so this process flows smoothly.

We will be asking for help in selling tickets!

Remember our puzzle table in Dutton Hall! Collectively, we will get that puzzle completed....We're glad to see people taking and returning puzzles and hope that you are enjoying them at home. Someone called this the “puzzle bank” and that seems to fit (no pun intended)!

May 29 is our next “5 for 5” Sunday! If you are able, please put an extra \$5 (or any amount) in the collection plate on that Sunday. Thank you for supporting this fun play on words.

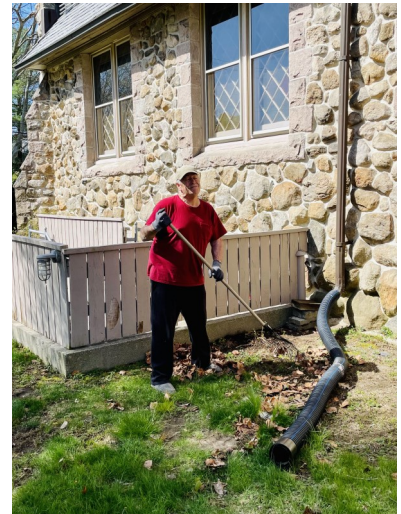
God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,

Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemeyer, Phyllis Meyer, Doris Pulaski

Tending The Church Gardens & Grounds

Pictures by Melissa Beaupre



Community Meals

By Janice Kimball

Many thanks to all who contributed food ,gifts, and funds for the Community Meals grab and go bag lunch distribution, which did successfully begin on March 26 and has continued to circulate over 40 meals each week to people desiring help in area group homes, sheltered housing, and other circumstances. We could not have continued without the support of the Missions Committee and several volunteers who have contributed their time to this labor of love in Christ's name. God bless you!!!

We will be needing more volunteers this spring and summer to assemble the bag meals. Please call or text me at 860-235-0494 and I will get back to you. All single-serving donations of nonperishable food items, juice boxes, and bottled water are welcome to be placed in the blue box in Dutton Hall. With gratitude and best wishes
Janice Kimball

From the Acting Treasurer

By Bill Blaisdell

Dear Friends,

This is a short note to acknowledge the generosity of a deceased former member of our congregation.

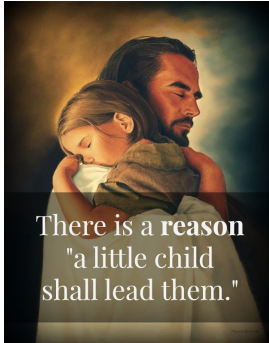
Last week our church received a distribution from the Judith Peckham Holden Trust. Judy grew up in this church and the Peckham family was very active and supportive of all aspects of church life. The amount of this distribution was \$50,000. When the final accounting of her trust and IRA is completed there will be a bit more to come.

Please remember Judy's family in your prayers for comfort as she has passed away and also in prayers of thanks that she developed such devotion and sense of stewardship to the Lord and our congregation.

There has not been time to make decisions for the use of this bequest. It sounds like a really large sum of money and for an individual it is, but it is barely a third of what it takes annually for normal church operations and certain special projects could deplete it quickly. I mention this because I think I am required to do so by some sort of unwritten church treasurer credo. That credo also reminds me to urge all of us to continue doing what we can to support the operations, missions, and community service of Groton Congregational Church in any way we are able. Judith Peckham Holden has provided all of us with a great example.

Bless you all,
Bill Blaisdell

Children in Church



After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you."

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer for several evenings at bedtime. She would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us from E-mail."

One particular four-year-old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."



Garden boxes at
Groton
Congregational
Church

Women's Fellowship

By Sally Turner

Women's Fellowship will meet **Wednesday May 11th in Dutton Hall at 12:30 p.m.** Bring your lunch. We will be finalizing plans for the May 21st Delightful Treasures Sale. A bake sale will be part of this event.

Our monthly bake sale will occur on May 1st after worship service..

We are planning a **Ladies Night Out for June.**
All ladies are welcome. Watch for details in the near future.



Music Message

By Janice Kimball

We are thankful for the abundance of music that graced our worship on Holy Week in April our adult choir on Palm Sunday; director of music Sue Stottlemeyer and Douglas Reed for the organ music on Good Friday, Marc Frucht for leading the music at the Easter Sunrise service, and the adult and handbell choirs also on Easter Sunday 10 AM worship services. May God bless all our professionals and volunteers!

The Shoreline Ringers will be performing a concert of handbell choir music here at Groton Congregational Church on **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15 at 7 PM.** The Shoreline Ringers is a professional handbell music ensemble. We thank all who are underwriting this fun and inspirational event, which is open and free to all.

A Strawberry Social will follow the performance.

The Music Committee will be meeting following 10 AM worship on Sunday, May 15th.

Upcoming Church Events

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



Watch for details in the
June Gargoyle

Ladies' Night Out



YARD SALE

Unique & Vintage Items

May 21st 9am-3pm
Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument St., Groton, CT



SHORELINE RINGERS

GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH PRESENTS

The Shoreline Ringers

A FREE Concert for the Whole Family

JUNE 15, 2022 | 7PM TO 8PM
162 MONUMENT ST. GROTON, CT



Strawberry Social to Follow at 8pm

Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument St., Groton, CT

Strawberry Social

\$5.00 per shortcake

**June 15, 2022
8pm**

Enjoy the music of The Shoreline Ringers at 7pm



Community Events

The Mystic & Noank Library



Virtual Program:

RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE SCENARIOS

Join us with Olena Lennon, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Political Science and National Security at the University of New Haven, and Eastern Ukraine native, for a follow up on her last talk about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the state of the war changes daily, Olena's talk will summarize recent developments so far, present lessons the war poses, and project what may occur in the future as this war unfolds. The session will close with a question and answer session with audience members.

Thursday
May 5
6:00 PM

Register
Here



Red Wagon Food Drive

Bring in your donations of
goods every Sunday and help
us help others!

Benefits
Groton Social Services

Community Events



**The Annual Ocean Beach
Mile-Long Tag & Craft Sale**

SATURDAY, MAY 14TH 2022

RAIN 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

Women's Yoga and Music
Spirit Retreat

May
13-15

Join us for the
entire weekend,
or just for the
day Saturday,
May 14

SILVER LAKE
Camp & Retreat Center www.SilverLakeCT.org/CampSessions

**SILVER
LAKE**
Conference Center

OPEN HOUSE

May 15, 2022

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.

Register at silverlakect.org

May 15th 7am

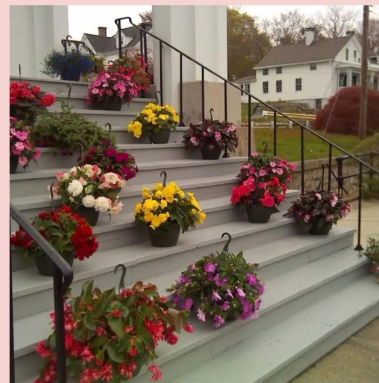
Hartford HealthCare

mystic
HALF MARATHON
& 10K

Starts at Olde Mistick Village

Mother's Day Flower Sale

Union Baptist Church, Mystic CT



Fundraiser for Ukraine
May 6th & 7th
9am-3pm

Into the Mystic-Dualism

By John Dorhauer

I grew up with heavy doses of Thomistic influence, which is to say a world framed in the dualistic tension between the material world and the spiritual world. In that world, we attach not just definition and characteristics to matter and spirit, but value and judgment.

The material is fleeting, earthly, and though not void of beauty – and rather quite because of that beauty – deceptively appealing because of its immediacy, knowability, touchability, and acquirability.

The spiritual is permanent, heavenly, and though of eternal worth often neglected in a world where instant gratification displaces for the impatient and the thirsty those things that come only through the disciplines of

sacrifice, discernment, and delayed gratification.

Matter decays. It eventually dies.

Spirit lingers. It lives forever.

Matter attracts.

Spirit alludes.

Matter is detected.

Spirit intuited.

Those who settle for material gain are viewed by the more spiritually inclined as sinful, depraved, lustful, carnal, and prone to give in to the snares of the tempter.

Those who seek spiritual enlightenment are seen as noble, pious, holy, and focused on the eternal. They are willing to sacrifice the immediacy of gratification with the discipline of contemplation; the allure of acquisition with the patience of intuition; the certainty of possession with the art of cogitation.

It has taken me a while, but I don't know that I inhabit that world anymore. I am sure that I don't want to. In that world, the things that bring pleasure are viewed at best as acceptable if they ameliorate sorrow or pain – at worst as distractions from if not outright inhibitors of the more enlightened state of spiritual growth. Those with lower ambitions or with insufficient maturity could opt for the material if it made them happy – but they would

always be seen as settling for something lower than what God offered through spiritual wholeness.

One could

empathize with them – but not lower oneself to become one of them.

Because of that, anything that brought me joy or gratification made me feel guilty, made me think I had bargained part of my salvation for the mere baubles of earthly gain or pleasure. I would feel good, then feel bad for feeling good.

Here's the thing, though. My spirit can be healed by things that satisfy my body. My bodily pleasure can deepen my experience of spiritual enlightenment. A good song can settle my soul. A good meal can ease the pains that erode my spiritual health. The kiss of my beloved can erase the burdens of a long, hard, soul-sucking day at work.

I am much more of a monist today than a dualist. I am learning to enjoy life without worrying about whether or not the extravagance I just afforded myself, the material things that brought me moments of pleasure, are going to distract me from spiritual growth. I experience material joy as a pathway to rather than a distraction from the sacred on this, our journey Into the Mystic.

John Dorhauer is the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.



SNEC

Understanding Stress and Trauma in Self and Church Community

We are all living with the reality of uncertainty at this moment in time. Our world as we knew it has been turned upside down by the pandemic, social injustice, health inequity, social injustice, racism, economic uncertainty and violence in our communities, our nation, and the world.

While some people have been thriving during the pandemic, many have experienced traumatic events such as the loss of loved ones, parents, children, spouses, jobs, socialization, and educational opportunity. These realities have left many challenged by high stress, burnout, and trauma that over time impact mental health and well-being.

Clergy and lay leaders are not immune to the effects of high stress events. While striving to care for the flock, care of self is sometimes neglected, and boundaries may get blurred.

Parents, children, and all individuals are impacted. Research on mental health and COVID-19 reported by [Mental Health America](#) demonstrates the increasing mental health concerns and the need for additional support to prevent future mental health conditions as a result of trauma, especially for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color individuals, families and communities.

Recognizing and understanding the impact of trauma, the symptoms of high stress, and knowing the resources available can promote post-traumatic growth. To start this conversation, it is important to understand the meaning of trauma, or high stress, and the impact on our collective bodies. Then we can engage in post-traumatic growth. Rev. Fred Meade will get us started in this conversation.

Rev. Fred Meade* writes that the word "trauma" is now somewhat of a buzz word. "The idea of trauma to oneself is something deeply personal and for many it is difficult to talk about because it is often a personal as well as a very painful experience. Earlier life traumas may exist in our unconscious without us even realizing it, these traumas may affect our daily life decisions," he said.

"It is important to know the difference between a **normal reaction** to a difficult moment and an **abnormal reaction** to a difficult experience. As a disaster chaplain, I have spoken to hundreds of people on the worst days of their lives. I know what deep grief looks like after someone has lost a loved one, a home or a job. Those emotions alone can be overwhelming. Those emotions are a normal reaction to a difficult event."

We now know that about 80% of Americans polled after natural disasters will recover on their own without any mental health interventions. Another 10 percent will have Post Traumatic Stress and another 10% will end up with PTSD if the stress symptoms continue after 30 days. They will need to talk to a licensed mental therapist with a trauma informed care background. Not all licensed therapists have this background.

If one has a trauma experience, it is important to see if your current daily behavior is any different than it was before you were traumatized. It is important to look at the five areas that stress plays out in our lives which are body, mind, emotions, behaviors, or relationships and lastly your spirituality. Asking oneself if any of those areas have changed since the trauma occurred may be a key to understanding how deeply you were affected by your trauma experience.

Knowing ahead of time how you can help yourself can be a vital tool for growth in healing. For example, for the body: "What helps you to work out stress?... going for a walk? Yoga? Eating healthy? A healthy sleep schedule? All these ideas and more can help get people back on track. We all need to ask what we need to do when stress plays a significant part in our lives in any of those five areas. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that everyone's health routine for combatting stress is different. What works for one may not work for someone else.

The Health and Wellness Team, Center for Transformational Leadership, Area Conference Ministers, and the Disaster Ministries Team are collaborating to offer a series of programs to address the ways a church community might respond to one another, the congregation, and the community through a trauma informed lens.

The first virtual workshop on this topic will be held May 19 from 12 noon – 1:30 PM, entitled [A Community Response to Tragedy: One Link at a Time](#). The workshop will be presented by Kathleen Zagata, the Health Minister at Winchester, MA. She is clinical nurse specialist in Community Mental Health and a Marion Woodman Body-Soul Rhythms trained leader. For 12 years during the Iraq War, she facilitated a group for families of deployed soldiers and veterans. Currently, she provides wellness counseling for those facing health and lifestyle challenges.

Worship Watch

May Church Services

Third Sunday of Easter May 1, 2022

Sermon: "Under Construction: Surrendering to Let God's Will Lead"

*Acts 9:1-6, (7-20) Psalm 30 Revelation 5:11-14 John 21:1-19



Fourth Sunday of Easter May 8, 2022

Sermon: "Feed My Sheep"

*Acts 9:36-43 Psalm 23 Revelation 7:9-17 John 10:22-30



Fifth Sunday of Easter May 15, 2022

Sermon: "The Alpha and The Omega"

*Acts 11:1-18 Psalm 148 Revelation 21:1-6 John 13:31-35



Sixth Sunday of Easter May 22, 2022

Sermon: "Rise and Walk"

*Acts 16:9-15 Psalm 67 Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5 John 14:23-29 or
John 5:1-9



Seventh Sunday of Easter May 29, 2022

Sermon: "The River of Life"

*Acts 16:16-34 Psalm 97 Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21 John 17:20-26

May 2022

Additional Meetings:

After Worship Coffee Hour—Every Sunday after Worship
Pastoral Search—Monday evenings as the need arises

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sunday Worship 10am Bake Sale 11am	2	3 Trustees	4	5 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	6	7
8 Sunday Worship 10am	9	10 Deacons 5:30pm Leadership 7pm	11 Women's Fellowship 12:30pm Dutton Hall	12 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	13	14
15 Missions 9am Sunday Worship 10am Music Cmte. 11am Open Conver- sation 11:40am	16	17 Yard Sale Drop Off 9am-3pm	18 Yard Sale Drop Off 9am-3pm	19 Yard Sale Drop Off 9am-3pm Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	20 Yard Sale Drop Off 9am-3pm	21 Yard Sale 9am-3pm
22 Sunday Worship 10am Stewardship 11:30am	23	24	25	26 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	27	28
29 Sunday Worship 10am	30	31		Prayer & Bible Study 11am Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm		

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.

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.



162 Monument Street
Groton, CT 06340

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

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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