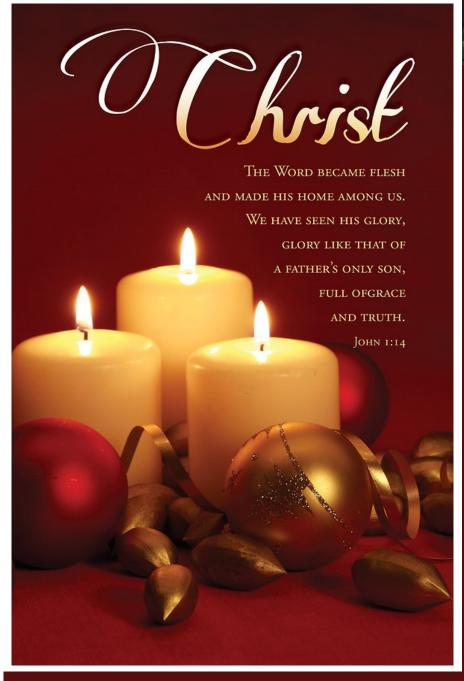


December. 2022



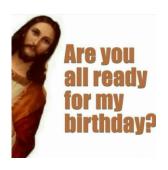
# The Gargoyle





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**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS** 

**SUE BLAISDELL** 

**ANJA BROOKS** 

**PETER CHAPPELL** 

**BRETT GULLICKSON** 

**JAMES KERRIGAN** 

**WAYNE SCHAFER** 

**HAZEL SHEPHERD** 

**PAUL SHINN** 

**BETTE THOMSON** 

**ANNE VENDITTI** 

**JILL WILSON** 

#### **Sanctuary Flowers**

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

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







If you know of anyone in need of a phone call or a visit, please contact the church office at the number above.



### The Pastor's Musings

By Reverend Lee Ireland

Holiday Greetings to you all,



During December, as we enter into Advent and prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ this year, I wonder - what will touch us anew and open our hearts to the deeper love? I imagine many of you have watched that movie that was made locally, "The 12 Days of Christmas" with Kelsey Grammer. It was fun to see the local spots that many of us travel past each day or frequently. But the message was strong in this movie as it has been in others such was "It's a Wonderful Life," and in the Scrooge variations: "Can you get past your striving for success and acclamations to realize that the greatest gift cannot be bought or sold?" Jesus came at a time when people were stuck on how to feel accepted by God and trying hard to fulfill the Jewish Law. He came, as we all have been taught, in an unusual way, to a humble young girl delivering her firstborn child in a stable amongst the animals and not in a sterilized hospital room with trained medical staff. I can't imagine that now having been raised at this time in history. But what we've learned and are still learning — is he came to teach us how to "love one another." How hard it has been to learn that lesson down through the ages!

We hope you will come and join us this Advent Season and be stirred by the words of scripture and the annual favorite carols – to sense God's presence more closely in your own life and find ways to open your heart to that invitation of love. May we not have to go through those '12 days of Christmas' and try to 'figure it out', but then again, maybe we will have a God/Santa like the one Kelsey encounters, and perhaps we will be celebrating Christmas with a whole new joy this year.

Yes, we will be having a worship service on **Christmas Morning.** I know many of you are traveling or want to be home with your families, but for me, it seems right to be present together to celebrate Jesus' birth. We invite you to come in casual wear as we join in the singing of Christmas Carols and the sharing of a Christmas story or play. Stay Tuned.

Leading up to that Special Morning, I would like to offer a neat time of Spiritual Meditation and Reflection on Wednesday, **December 14th from 7-8:30 PM.** I have discovered that many of the famous artists have created beautiful pieces of art to portray moments along the journey of Mary and Joseph and the Christmas season. I hope you can join us for some warm refreshments and goodies and music in Dutton Hall.

On Wednesday, December 21st at 7 PM, we will host a Blue Christmas Service for those who are dealing with some grief or sadness during this holy season.

Then on Saturday, **December 24th, at 7 PM,** we hope you can please join us for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

In this month, may we especially pray that our messages of peace, love, hope and joy are not just fancy words we say, but that we embody them in our lives. We have seen too many tragic choices made by some wounded souls in our country in 2022. May our prayers and actions ripple out beyond our sanctuary walls and homes to touch the lives of those who are broken hearted and in need of knowing that someone cares. Sometimes a simple action of kindness can take someone by surprise and help them make a choice for love as well.

I wish you peace and love this day and I look forward to our times of worshipping together – in person and in spirit in many ways.

Thank you and many blessings,

Rev. Lee A. Ireland

Transitional Pastor

#### Deacons

#### By Kevin Measimer



While we celebrate Christmas in December, details in the nativity account indicate Jesus' birth occurring in another part of the year. The tradition comes from a custom involving one of the Roman gods. Placing the story around the time of the winter solstice connects to the hours of daylight starting to increase. From out of the darkness comes the promise of light. The darkness of earthly struggles is pierced by the light of God in the person of Jesus. The story is full of imagery people in the ancient world would recognize. Jesus is born in a lowly state but is presented in his origin story in a way those hearing it then would see comparing him to the "gods" the rulers in the ancient world were treated as being. We know he is King of Kings.

May the light of Christ brighten and bless your lives.

Please join us for our Christmas services. Christmas Eve at 7pm and Christmas day at 10am.

Kevin Measimer for the Board of Deacons





### Stewardship



Thank you to all who have turned in 2023 pledge cards as you support your family at Groton Congregational Church. You have embraced the theme of "From Bread to Cup to Faith and Giving." Currently, 33 pledging units have been made. It is never too late to submit a pledge. Additional cards are available in Dutton Hall or one can be mailed by calling the church office.

The Advent season is upon us. We light the candles of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace and contemplate their meanings. On Christmas Sunday, the Christ Candle will be lit to remind us of the light that Jesus brings to the world.

Please consider honoring a loved one this Christmas by making a donation to one of the church funds: Restoration, General, Memorial, Memorial Scholarship, Community Meals, Deacons. A list of loved ones and donors will be included in the December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Orders of Service. Envelopes are available in the back of the sanctuary, at the side entrance of the church and in Dutton Hall. Please be sure to include the name(s) of the loved one(s), the donor(s) and the fund(s). Checks should be made payable to Groton Congregational Church in any desired amount. Deadline to submit is December 18, 2022.

God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,

Cathy Johnson, Sue Stottlemyer, Phyllis Meyer, Doris Pulaski, Melissa Beaupre

### Music Committee

By Janice Kimball

"O Come, Let Us Adore Him", by Robert Lau, is the cantata to be featured at worship on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, sung by our Adult Choir as led by our Director of Music, Sue Stottlemyer. The musical offering includes many familiar carols and a few surprises! Our Handbell Choir will also perform at the worship service on December 11<sup>th</sup> and at the 7 PM Christmas Eve service on Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.

The next Music Committee meeting will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, **January 15th, 2023** immediately following the 10 AM worship service. All are welcome to "sit in" and share!

Wishing everyone a Spirit-blessed, musical Christmas,

Janice Kimball, chair



### **Christian Education**

By Janice Kimball

We have been blessed to offer here at Groton Congregational Church both a supervised nursery, with attendant Sierra Bryte, and Sunday school for school-age young folks, during the 10 AM worship hour on Sundays. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday school class will remain in worship to enjoy the Christmas cantata; likewise, the Christmas Day service on Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM will be for all ages and students will remain in the sanctuary. Please also note Rev. Ireland's adult classes of Bible Study and prayer Mondays at 11 AM (also offered on Zoom) and Youth Group led by Rachel Candee meets on Monday nights from 6 to 8 PM.

Thanks to all who participate in and support Christian nurture and growth at Groton Congregational Church! Have a blessed Christmas!

Janice Kimball, superintendent pro tem



### Remembering People

By Generous Thoughts



Remembering People

11/21/2022 - by: Generous Thoughts

Have you ever heard the story about the time Fred Rogers--"Mr. Rogers" -- spoke at a National Press Club luncheon? I read about it in a sermon by Thomas Long years ago and searched for it recently to share with you. I think it could be helpful as we prepare to share a Christmas Fund appeal with our churches.

Here's Thomas Long recounting the story:

"When Fred Rogers stood up to speak, he said that he knew the room was filled with many of the best reporters in the nation, men and women who had achieved much. Rogers then took out a pocket watch and announced that he was going to keep two minutes of silence, and he invited everybody in the room to remember people in their past—parents, teachers, coaches, friends, and others—who had made it possible for them to accomplish so much. And then Mister Rogers stood there, looked at his watch and saying nothing.

"The room grew quiet, and as the seconds ticked away and before Fred Rogers tucked away his watch, one could hear all around the room people sniffling as they were moved by the memories of those who had made sacrifices on their behalf and who had given them many gifts." (Thomas G. Long, *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*, p. 110).

Mr. Rogers call to remember was a gift to everyone in attendance. The tears shed were of gratitude for the memories. We often focus only on the good our generosity will accomplish out in the world. Our gifts truly make a difference. But these gifts also have an impact on us; to make a gift touches our heart too.

What do you think about inviting the folks in the pew to remember the pastors, choir directors, other lay church workers, and their families who meant so much to them over the years? I propose that a simple invitation to remember the church leaders who taught, mentored, inspired, and loved us during our toughest times, our formative years, and our seasons of celebration may be the best invitation to giving to the Christmas Fund.

I believe that fundraising is an opportunity to draw closer to people in a truly heartfelt way. When you invite folks to give, you are inviting them into a deeper relationship with you and the mission of your church. How we spend our money is probably the best evidence of where our hearts are, of what we value the most. Whenever you make a fundraising appeal for a worthy cause, you are helping make great things happen. You are also allowing folks to feel the impact of their own generosity and gratitude.

We can do this when promoting the Christmas Fund, the next special mission offering in the UCC. Donations to the Christmas Fund provide hope from the church through financial relief to pastors, lay workers, and their families. Begin your promotion by giving people the space to remember their spiritual mentors can be a simple and effective way to ask for support. A minute or two of grateful silence to recall the church leaders whose abundant love helped us get here this Sunday morning may be the best appeal to the Christmas Fund we can make.

Whenever you fundraise, consider how a treasured memory can lead us to be overwhelmed with joy.

By Rev. Dr. Paul L. Ramsey, Philanthropy Officer, the Pension Boards, United Church of Christ

PS: You can learn more about the Christmas Fund at www.Christmasfund.org



Generous Thoughts is a collaborative effort of UCC stewardship, generosity, fundraising, and development professionals to provide our conferences and congregations with infor-

### Women's Fellowship

By Sally Turner



Women's Fellowship had a spectacular Holiday Fair. We can't thank the many who worked so hard creating the beautiful items that were sold enough. Thank you to all who contributed in the plethora of ways to make for such a successful day. We are so blessed to have so many wonderful people who care about our church activities'

On December 14th our meeting will begin at 12 noon with a **pot luck** luncheon and followed by a **Yankee Swap**. All women of the church are welcome. If you want to be part of the Yankee Swap you will need to bring a wrapped Christmas gift that costs \$10 or less. We will have a brief meeting as well. Hope to see many of you there. Merry Christmas.

Sally Turner



### **Community Meals**

By Janice Kimball

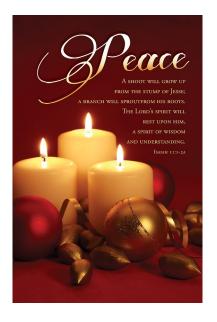


Come share the food, the fun, and the experience of a sit-down meal with our neighbors! This month, we will serve a **hot meal** on **December 3rd and 17th** (a Christmas feast!) and **lighter fare** on December **10th and 31st**. Because we are giving our volunteers a day off on December 24, we will provide for all in attendance a special treat on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Donations are welcome but not required. If you need a meal delivered to you, please contact as soon as possible the church office or Janice Kimball (860-235-0494).

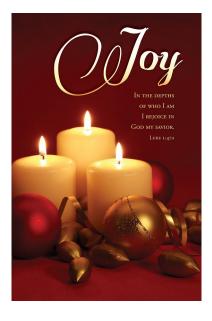
For more information on volunteer opportunities and donations, please see or contact Janice. Thanks again and a joyful holiday season to all!

Janice Kimball, volunteer, Community Meals

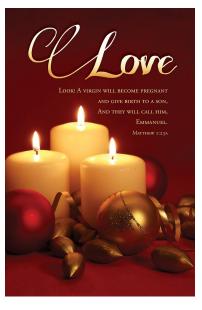
### **Advent Services**



Sunday, December 4th 10am



Sunday, December 11th 10am

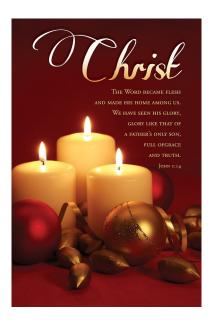


Sunday, December 18th 10am





Wednesday, December 21st 7pm



Saturday, December 24<sup>h</sup> 7pm

### Christmas Poems

#### Little Tree

Little tree little silent Christmas tree you are so little you are more like a flower who found you in the green forest and were you very sorry to come away? see i will comfort you because you smell so sweetly i will kiss your cool bark and hug you safe and tight just as your mother would, only don't be afraid look the spangles that sleep all the year in a dark box dreaming of being taken out and allowed to shine, the balls the chains red and gold the fluffy threads, put up your little arms and i'll give them all to you to hold every finger shall have its ring and there won't be a single place dark or unhappy then when you're guite dressed you'll stand in the window for everyone to see and how they'll stare! oh but you'll be very proud and my little sister and i will take hands and looking up at our beautiful tree we'll dance and sing "Noel Noel" -E.E. Cummings

#### **Christmas Bells**

I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good-will to men! - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

#### The Joy Of Giving

Somehow, not only for Christmas, But all the long year through, The joy that you give to others Is the joy that comes back to you; And the more you spend in blessing The poor and lonely and sad, The more of your heart's possessing Returns to make you glad. - John Greenleaf Whittier

#### The Holy Night

We sate among the stalls at Bethlehem; The dumb kine from their fodder turning them, Softened their horned faces To almost human gazes Toward the newly Born: The simple shepherds from the star-lit brooks Brought their visionary looks, As yet in their astonied hearing rung The strange sweet angel-tongue: The magi of the East, in sandals worn, Knelt reverent, sweeping round, With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground, The incense, myrrh, and gold These baby hands were impotent to hold: So let all earthlies and celestials wait Upon thy royal state. Sleep, sleep, my kingly One! -Elizabeth-Barrett-Browning

#### Jesus Is The Reason

In Bethlehem, God gave to us The source of Christmas joy; A star shown on a miracle: The virgin birth of a boy. He was born both God and man, A Savior for us all, The way to get to our heavenly home, If we just heed His call. So as we shop and spend and wrap And enjoy the Christmas season, Let's keep in mind the sacred truth: Jesus is the reason. Joanna Fuchs

#### Let Every Day Be Christmas

Christmas is forever, not for just one day, for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf. The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

- Norman Wesley Brooks

### A Note from the Acting Treasurer

#### By Bill Blaisdell



The members of the Stewardship Committee deserve thanks for their successful efforts. The results of their campaign to date have shown an improvement over the last two years.

It is encouraging to see that almost all of those who have made 2023 pledges to date have been able to maintain or even increase their level of giving over 2022. New pledges have also been made. The total of the new pledges and the increases by those who had pledged for 2022 is over \$8,000. If this level of improvement continues, we will come close to covering increased expenses in the coming year.

The church budget, considering salaries, building maintenance, support to the community, etc., is experiencing even more pressures than our personal budgets. Please keep this in mind as you consider fulfilling your pledges and even making additional donations by way of the little brown envelopes in the pews or by giving an extra five dollars when there is a fifth Sunday in a month – the "5 for 5" gift.

The annual report, published in January, will present full details of our financial condition.

#### **Nominating Committee**

The list of open positions on our boards and committees is posted on the Midway bulletin board. Please give serious thought to filling some of those available spots. There are way too many empty positions.



**Nominations are Open-** We hope you will consider signing up in the Midway to serve on one of the committees. At this time, there are several vacancies which gives you a plethora of opportunities to find the best fit for your talents and skills

Do you have a background in Accounting/Bookkeeping or Business Management? The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer positions are open as well as spots on the Board of Trustees.

Do you enjoy tinkering, fixing things, or have a background in Property Management? There are open positions on the Property Committee.

Do you love history and genealogy? The Historian position may be perfect for you.

Are you a very organized type of person? Perhaps the Church Clerk position would be a good fit for you.

Do you love helping others? Spots on the Missions Committee are open.

Perhaps you have experience in fund-raising? Join the Stewardship Committee.

These and other opportunities are just waiting for you.

### PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS, BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2023

<u>Moderator</u>	~ <u>Ingrid Measime</u>	<u>er</u> (25)	<u>Treasurer</u>	~	(23)
Asst. Moderator	~	(25)	Asst. Treasurer(s) ~		(23)
<u>Clerk</u>	~	(23)	<u>Historian</u>	~	(23)
Board of Trustees (3 year)		Board of Deacons (3 year)		Nominating Committee	(3 year)
<u>Lew Clark</u>	(23)	Mary Alapa	(23)		(24)
James Kerrigan C	(23)	Chuck Barnum	(23)*		(25)
Marilyn Wright	(23)	Sue Blaisdell C	(23)*		(25)
Ed Magown	(24)*	Sally Turner	(23)*		
	(24)	Anne Campbell	(23)*	SNEC Conference Deleg	ates (2 year)
	(25)		(24)		(25)
	(25)	<u>Doris Pulaski</u>	(25)*		(25)
Property Committee (2 year)		Memorial Fund (2 year)		Ushering Committee	(2 year)
Sue Stottlemyer	(24)*	Carolyn Hanover	(23)	Roz Womack	(23)*
	(24)	Marilyn Wright	(23)		(24)
	(25)		(25)		(25)
	(25)				(25)
Christian Education	(2 year)	Stewardship Committee	(2 year)	Missions Committee (2	year)
Janice Kimball	(23)*	Phyllis Meyer	(23)	Beth Chirillo	(23)*
Jill Martin	(24)*	<u>Doris Pulaski</u>	(24)	Penny Sullivan	(24)*
	(24)	Sue Stottlemyer	(24)*		(24)
	(25)	Melissa Beaupre	(25)*		(25)
	(25)		(25)		(25)
		Music Committee (2 ye	ear)		
		Janice Kimball C	(23)		
		Sally Turner	(23)		
			(24)		
			(24)		
			(25)		

### **Local Events**





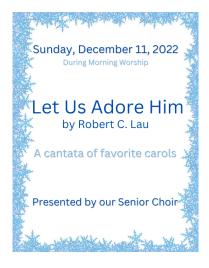








### **Church Events**









### Worship Watch

### December Worship Services

				190
First Sunday of Advent November 27, 2022 Sermon "The Light Shines in the Darkness"	<u>Isaiah 2:1-5</u>	Psalm 122	Romans 13:11- 14	Matthew 24:36- 44
Second Sunday of Advent December 4, 2022 Sermon: "Images of Peace"	<u>Isaiah 11:1-10</u>	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19	Romans 15:4- 13	Matthew 3:1-12
Third Sunday of Advent December 11, 2022 CANTATA	<u>Isaiah 35:1-10</u>	Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55	<u>James 5:7-10</u>	Matthew 11:2- 11
Fourth Sunday of Advent December 18, 2022 Sermon: "Setting the prisoners free"	<u>Isaiah 7:10-16</u>	<u>Psalm 80:1-7,</u> <u>17-19</u>	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18- 25
Blue Christmas Service December 21, 2022 7pm				
Christmas Eve Nativity of the Lord - December 24 2022 7pm Sermon: "Let us Go to Bethlehem""	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
Christmas Day Nativity of the Lord - December 25, 2022 Sermon: "Joy to the World"	<u>Isaiah 52:7-10</u>	Psalm 98	Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)	John 1:1-14

<u>Bible Study</u> – On Monday mornings at 11 AM, we've been gathering in person and/or via Zoom to create a community of people studying the lectionary biblical readings for the coming Sunday. If you're interested, we hope you can join us and share in the conversations in which we laugh and engage in learning from one another. I personally love listening to other people's insights and wisdom I had never heard before each week. Such a joy! —Reverend Lee



## December 2022



					* 2	** *
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Worship Service 10am	5 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Youth Group 6pm-8pm	6 Deacons 6pm	7	3 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	9	10 Community Meals Noon- 1pm
11 Cantata Worship Service 10am	12 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Youth Group 6pm-8pm	13	14 Women's Fellowship Noon-Pot Luck & Yankee Swap Spiritual Meditation & Reflection 7:00pm-8:30pm	3 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	16	17 Holiday Music Extravaganza 3pm-Dutton Hall Community Meals Noon- 1pm
18 Worship Service 10am	19 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Youth Group 6pm-8pm	20	21 Blue Christmas 7pm	3 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	23	24 Community Meals Noon- 1pm  Christmas Eve Service 7pm
25 Christmas Day	26 Prayer & Bible Study 11am Youth Group 6pm-8pm	27	28	3 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	30	31 Community Meals Noon- 1pm New Year's Eve

#### **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

Mailing Address Line 1 Mailing Address Line 2 Mailing Address Line 3

Mailing Address Line 4

Mailing Address Line 5