



# The Gargoyle

## The Pastor's Musings

By Reverend Lee Ireland

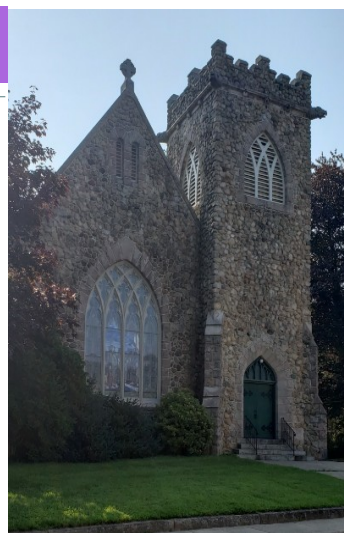
Lenten Greetings to you all,

We are now moving into our second week of Lent, and I am so grateful for those who came for the Ash Wednesday service and shared in the ritual to launch into the 40 days and 40 nights of prayer and meditation to prepare us for Holy Week's message and the Good Friday service leading into Easter morning. This month of March, I am quite curious to see what we will experience this year as we move more fully into each week's invitation to reflect, listen and see what God is sharing and calling us into "Being here as the Community of Faith in Groton" in 2023.

I'll probably surprise you as I start this by sharing that I just watched NOVA's new show: "New Eye on the Universe" during which the astrophysicists are captivated because they are collectively watching a large screen as they receive images via the new James Webb Space Telescope and receiving data that there might be water on specific planets. The excitement amongst the scientists was radiating from their faces.

For them, this was an amazing day of discovery for them -of New Beginnings and they were so excited because of all the years of research they had invested into creating the design of the telescope and computer technology which could do the exploratory data-gathering and was now bearing fruit. *They were celebrating that their work had NOT been in vain.* I heard one woman explain, "The Spectra filled us with 'the unexpected' .... we were seeing other elements on these planets that were unexpected: hydrogen and oxygen! Our observations were posing more questions than answers. We were so startled as the universe was turning on more lights than expected." *"We were unprepared for all that we were seeing!"* "We realized - our models were incorrect, and we now had to go into the work to change the models to match the observations we are seeing and the data we are receiving! ...We're discovering a new universe that is so awesome - so revolutionary. Not what we thought it was at all! We're just tapping into those discoveries and seeing things we never have seen before!" {aired on PBS on 2/22/23}

Listen to those words. A description of the Universe – created by the God we are seeking to understand more fully as we gather to worship each week and consider what Jesus was revealing through his short life on this earth. "The universe is not at all what we thought it was."  
(continued pg. 3)



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162 Monument St  
Groton, CT 06340  
[www.grotonucc.org](http://www.grotonucc.org)  
860-445-7409



David Bryte  
Alma Dougherty  
Gus Hagar  
Mary Healy  
Cathy Johnson  
Ellen Kerr  
Joshua Measimer  
Nancy Moffatt  
Henry Shepherd

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-continued

By Reverend Lee Ireland



*"We were unprepared for all that we were seeing!"* and they now have to go back to the drawing boards to try to figure out how to design models so they can share their new data with the rest of us. But it's not out of drudgery but because they're filled with awe and excitement to figure out how they can gain even more data to give them more understanding of all that is waiting for them to discover.

Consider what we're trying to do here at the Groton Congregational Church as we try to discern a new way of being together so we can help share with others our choice to explore our relationships with this God who is so much more than we can ever comprehend. And encourage one another as we walk as people of faith and not lost in these challenging days. *Let us not limit how we open up ourselves to that kind of exploration and discovery so we can hear the invitations that are just waiting for us to discover like these scientists in the world beyond this small earth.*

I know you may like to measure things in numerical numbers. But I want to help you to see – that how I measure how things are going and where to go in the future – is by the open dialogue that is happening here which reflects the deepening of the people here to trust one another and share in the open times - the truth as you are each seeing it. I'm not sensing any intentions to be critical or combative but constructive. I'm witnessing how people feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts to add to the growth and well-being of the congregation going forward and wanting to add constructive ideas to help strengthen the work of the Spirit among us. The balance is how to receive the new ideas....and not try to stay in the practiced old patterns that are comfortable. Knowing we need to change some things but not sure which ones nor how.

After the conversation on Feb 26, I've written out many things in the wee hours of this morning but will share those in other ways. I always seem to have lots of great thoughts come to me around 5 am when all else is quiet!

Do you remember - when you were planning to go on a vacation where you were going to be invited to see things you'd never been able to see before and dream of what you would discover? Perhaps going to Disney World for the first time? To the Mystic Aquarium for the first time. Being invited to go skiing or to the top of Mt Washington or to the Grand Canyon or wherever - and being stunned by nature and what you were witnessing. Realizing your world view was so limited before and now you just want to 'see' more! Believe it or not- we are those going on a journey together – right here in our sanctuary during the times of worship and at our gatherings.

On January 8, we sang the opening hymn, "This is a day of New Beginnings," by Brian Wren

*1 This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember, and move on,  
time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.*

*2 For by the life and death of Jesus, love's mighty Spirit, now as then,  
can make for us a world of difference as faith and hope are born again.*

*3 Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past, and leave behind our disappointment,  
guilt and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.*

*4 Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do. This is a day of new  
beginnings; our God is making all things new.*

{Words © 1983, 1987 Hope Publishing Company, 380 S Main Pl, Carol Stream, IL 60188}

We are those - moving into this new beginning. You've done previous ones before. *But this time it's different.* You've gone through a time of unsettledness with the loss of a pastor and some families. We've gone through a period of separation due to the Covid pandemic. We've re-opened the doors and are eager to go forward and discern how to revitalize this church's ministry with those who ARE here and not letting the fears that some feel stop us from believing that we CAN do this. {I heard a song the other day, "You can do this hard thing." Funny how those songs seem to come up at the right time.} (continued pg. 4)

## The Pastor's Musings-continued

By Reverend Lee Ireland

On February 26, many stayed for the second Brainstorming Session, with the grateful helpful leadership of Scott Beaupre who has done this work elsewhere. In this Gargoyle, you will see his summary (page 12) and the notes he gathered as people responded. Let's ponder and listen within for the next steps and gather again on **March 26th**.

For today, let's give thanks for all who have joined in this dialogue and are offering their gifts. Let's stay open to the leading of the Spirit. Let's come together for our worship services and see what the scriptures and hymn lyrics will say to us that reflect words that have guided people through the ages and many coming from the hearts of those who walked with Jesus or were changed by his presence in his many forms.

Peace and blessings to you all as we take our daily walk together through this year's Lenten Season,

Rev. Lee-Transitional Minister



## Stewardship

By Doris Pulaski



### Remembering and Honoring Loved Ones This Easter

In the past, we offered Easter lilies as a sign of love and remembrance for our loved ones at Easter.

This year, you can honor or remember loved ones by making a donation to purchase an Easter egg or a cross ornament for our Easter tree. Your ornament will have the name you have chosen on it.

Please use the Lily envelopes in your pew pocket to make your donation.

Your ornament will hang on the church's Easter tree in the Dutton Hall until Easter, when the tree will be moved to the sanctuary.

After Easter, the tree will be taken down. At that time, all donors will be given their ornaments to keep.

All donations will go to the general fund, unless you note otherwise.



## Deacons

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### Our Journey Together

#### A Message from the Board of Deacons

Greetings from the board of deacons!

We have been supporting Reverend Ireland with her plans for the upcoming Lent and Easter worship services which began on Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The Ash Wednesday service was very meaningful with ashes dispensed and Reverend Ireland offering personal prayers when requested.

As we continue through Lent, there will be a Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. The service will be one of readings, choral responses and the extinguishing of lights. This service was last offered in 1971 by Rev. Bob Bermudes.

Reverend Ireland is planning a Good Friday Service as well as an Easter Sunrise service at Fort Griswold. Our Lenten journey will be rich with meaning and contemplation.

As we continue through Lent and our journey remember what Reverend Ireland told us, we cannot walk someone else's faith journey for them. But, I believe that while we are all on our own personal faith journeys, we are also on a faith journey collectively as a congregation.

When we participate, whether it is in Bible study (Adult Faith Formation), community meals, choir, just listening or quietly sitting with someone, we each contribute to the collective faith journey of all, we offer our experiences and perspective and give to the greater whole of the community. Every person who walks through the church doors on Sunday morning contributes to my personal faith journey as well as the collective journey of the congregation. They give subtle enrichment just by being present and choosing to be with others in worship.

So, this Lent, we give thanks for your presence and the enrichment of our walk on this path of faith with you.

Light and peace,  
Sue Blaisdell for the board of deacons  
Mary Alapa  
Chuck Barnum  
Anne Campbell  
Kevin Measimer  
Doris Pulaski  
Sally Turner

## Missions

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Thanks to all for the red wagon contributions for the ECDC children center. We will continue to ask for donations for them in March. They are looking for:

diapers and pull-ups sizes 4,5,6  
underwear and pants size 4 and 5  
hats and mittens



Also The Homeless Hospitality Center of New London is looking for men's socks underwear and T-shirts- white. The preferred size is extra large.

If there is a mission or need that you think Groton Congregational should support, please let us now. Now more than ever we want to share a light in the community. Future projects that we have been thinking about include heifer and Habitat for Humanity.

Thank you  
The missions committee  
**Next meeting March 19- 9am**

 **NEW LONDON Homeless Hospitality Center**



## Community Meals

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By Janice Kimball



Our program is slowly expanding its outreach to church and community members with excellent lunches served in Dutton Hall every Saturday from 12 noon to 1 PM. Home delivery is limited to Groton Congregational Church- affiliated shut-ins, due to Ledge Light Health District regulation, but all are welcome to come and eat. Donations are welcome but not required.

If you would like to make a food donation, please contact me or another volunteer. Thank you for your continued support.

Janice Kimball, for the volunteers, Community Meals



## Christian Education

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By Janice Kimball



Did you know, a supervised nursery option for young children is available during 10 AM worship hour every Sunday? Our child-friendly nursery room is staffed by attendant Sierra Bryte. For grade-school children and youth, we also offer an open-enrollment class, also at 10 AM Sundays. On **Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Palm Sunday**, the class will be suspended for that week to allow young people to stay upstairs for the Holy Week special music service.

Youth Director Rachel Candee continues the Youth Group meetings every Monday from 6 to 8 PM in the Youth Room. For further information, please contact Rachel or the church office.  
CE superintendent pro tem Janice Kimball



## Youth Group

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By Rachel Candee



Happy March!

It was so nice to have some snow so late in the season. I hope everyone enjoyed the time off from school.

In February, the youth group had a blast each week. From making Valentine's Day cards to watching movies like *Angels in the Outfield*, there was plenty of smiles, laughter, and fellowship.

For March, we will be **off on the 6th**, but then will meet each Monday. Hopefully with an outing including on the schedule. We are looking forward to the weather warming up and the sun staying out longer so we can start playing games outside!

Youth group meets on **Monday nights 6-8 pm** in the Youth Room. Youth in grades 6-12 are welcome.

Rachel Candee

## Women's Fellowship

By Sally Turner



Groton Congregational Church  
162 Monument Street  
Groton, CT

March 13, 2023  
5pm-6pm

**\$17 each**

**ORDER NOW**

860-445-7409  
or  
Sign-up after 10am  
Worship Service every  
Sunday through March  
12th

Phone Orders Taken  
until March 9th

**grab 'n GO!**

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

Get your tickets now. Just \$17.00/pp. Pick up between 5pm and 6pm on March 13th. Call the office during the week to place your order or sign up every Sunday after Worship. Phone orders taken until March 9th.

There will be no bake sales in March or April. In March we will be preparing vegetables for the Corned Beef dinner and in April the 2nd Sunday is Easter Sunday.

**Our next meeting will be March 8th at 12:30 pm**  
Sally Turner

## Craft Group

By Penny Sullivan

The crafters will meet after church on **March 19th** following worship. Everyone is welcome!  
Penny Sullivan



## Palm Sunday

By Sue Stottlemeyer



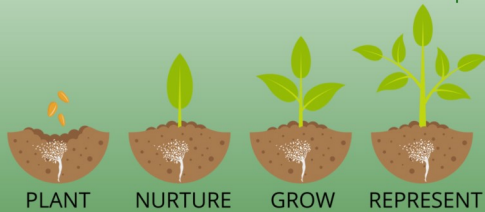
Join us a **10am on April 2<sup>nd</sup>** as we enter Holy Week through word and song. This service features the talents of the Groton Congregational Church Handbell and Senior Choirs.  
Sue Stottlemeyer



## Church Events

### Breakout Vision Development

March 26, 2023  
After Worship



This is a follow-up session to the Brainstorming Session which was held on February 26th.

Come and help shape the future of our beloved church.



Service will feature the talents of Groton Congregational Senior and Handbell Choirs

**April 2, 2023**  
**10am**

Enter Holy Week in Word & Song

Groton Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ

He is  
**RISEN**

Palm Sunday  
April 2nd 10am

Maundy Thursday  
April 6th 7pm

Good Friday  
April 7th noon-3pm

Easter Sunday  
Sunrise-Fort Griswold  
In church 10am



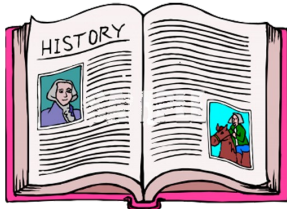
### Easter Tree



Honor your loved ones this year with an Easter decoration to adorn the church's Easter Tree. Use the Lily Envelope in the pews.

# Historical Notes

By Chuck Barnum, Deacon



What was the Groton Congregational Church doing 68 years ago? I was curious so I focused on the *Gargoyles* here in the historical files which were written in 1955. In the beginning of 1955, the Gargoyle was known as the "Letter" - how many remember that bit of trivia?

The following has been copied and quoted from the "Letter"  
1955 - January 16 - - - February 12. From the page "NOTES TO YOU":

The ANNUAL MEETING of the church is called for Wednesday evening, February 2, at 7:30 pm. This is the only chance we have usually, for all of us to get together, go over past actions, and plan for the future. The Congregational Church sets firm on the principle that it is the Congregation that is wholly responsible for its own welfare, under guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the wisdom and influence of every person in the parish is needed at this meeting to bring out of it, the best plans for 1955. Otherwise expect 1955 to be a rehash of 1954.

The Reverend Gordon Bailey of Mystic has given \$500.00 to our Endowment Fund in memory of his wife. Mr. Bailey is the only living minister who grew up in this Church. May his Gift work for the Master in the years ahead, as his life has during the past ninety.

Ancient custom in this Church sets aside the First Sunday in February as Family Sunday each year. The Family ought to observe the good practice of coming to Church all together.

All the work of the Groton Congregational Church is not restricted to Groton. About \$2,000 will go out from here to carry our religion to people in far places this year. A portion of that money will go to Maphumulo, Natal, South Africa, where Reka and Samuel Kaetzel minister in our name. Next Sunday we will distribute a personality sketch of them in Church. Then January 24th the Mission Committee is planning a Pot-Luck Supper for all families in the Church. We promise fun at the tables, and a program of interest so even your grade schoolers won't have time to squirm more than a couple of times. You will hear more about the Kaetzels then.

The Chairman and members of Nominating Committees have to have the Faith of our Fathers, the Hope of Abraham, the Perseverance of Moses, and the Patience of Job. When we started our work in September it looked like a gigantic task facing us, but all is well that ends well, and your Nominating Committee now greets you and sincerely thanks everyone of you who cooperated so beautifully with us, thus making it possible for us to fulfill our duty of lining up the officers and committees to serve our Church during this New Year. We hope you will all enjoy the tasks you have undertaken and that by serving faithfully and diligently you will not only be able to give much in furthering the good work of the Church, but will also reap bountifully from your good fellowship with those with whom you serve and share. Our very best wishes to each and all of you for this New Year of Service in His Name.

Your Nominating Committee  
Katheryn Simpson Clerk

The Kaetzels sent a letter to the Groton Congregational Church, dated December 30, 1954, sharing their challenges and experiences. The letter has been copied and insert here for all to read.

Wishing peace and blessings to all —  
Chuck Barnum  
Historian

AMERICAN BOARD MISSION

Maphumulo, Natal

South Africa

30 December 1954

Dear Friends:

It is a new experience for us to come back to our work. We did not know just what to expect on our return, but the introduction (which it has been) is an inspiring one.

These are some of the things that have happened to us: One Thursday a group of little boys came to the back door. When asked what they wanted, they announced "We are Cubs!" It was their day of meeting. Meanwhile, the women who have been leading Cubs and Guides (Girl Scouts) have asked that their weekly training and planning sessions start again. And the women who meet to sew, cook, and talk have also asked that their meetings be called.

The local church is showing increasing enthusiasm for building a new church building, which is noticeable after our absence of a year and a half. There is still the problem of rising building costs. We are now considering the suggestion provided by the firms here supplying pre-fabricated farm sheds; man-size Erector beams supporting a corrugated asbestos roof. Walls could even be made of the home-baked bricks of the present, original building. Where I came in, was to unpack my Meccano set and furnish a model with which to inspire the deacons and builders of the congregation. What we all realize is that a firm start like this will bring in the support of the half-convinced people of the community, which support is very much needed to complete the job.

After our long absence we felt it necessary to visit all the churches in our area as soon as possible. Although we have had a sufficient number of Sundays since our return, only about two-thirds of them have been favorable enough to permit our going out to visit churches. This has been an unusual rainy season. In addition to our Sunday successes we did manage to plan one week-end visit around showers. We had sessions with the Scouts and Guides on Saturday. We met the Deacons and discussed the work of the church along the lines of a self-evaluation scale for rural churches of the Bantu Congregational Church in South Africa. On Sunday we had another session with Guides and conducted the Morning Worship. Weather of a more favorable kind would have allowed sessions with the women's groups as well.

Undoubtedly you have read about the radical changes in the educational system as it applies to Africans in the Union of South Africa. It is possible to read all sorts of judgements into the pronouncements and directives of officials. I should like to commend to you this thought; that in time of radical change there is uncertainty for everyone, and that does include the officials of the department. And, as you have heard me say, there are conscientious persons with deep Christian convictions, who are doing their best to bring out the good which is latent in these regulations. They all need our prayers.

Now about US. Carol enjoys her Calvert kindergarten course sent out from the U.S.A. She is also trying hard to learn Zulu, so that she can talk to Nonhlanhla, the daughter of our local pastor, when they are together. Marcia now has four teeth, but she is trying hard to show others. She seems to know a few words, which bear some resemblance to "Carol", "bye-bye", and "pawpaw" (her breakfast fruit).

We remember you all in our prayers, as we trust you remember us.

Sincerely

THE KAETZELS

Heka, Sam, Carol, and Marcia

# Brainstorming Session Summary

By Scott Beaupre

## Visioning Brainstorming Session held on 26 February 2023

Purpose and intent: To continue the conversation on the Congregations development of our Vision, Mission and Values which will lead us to a bright and joyous future, together.

Lead: Reverend Lee

Facilitator: Scott Beaupre

Members present: 37

### **Problem Statement/Question:**

**How can we speak truth to one another and trust ourselves to listen and hear one another?**

We opened with the reading the group reading of the Covenant of Intentionality dated 10 March 2019 and Peter 1-10, To the Elders and the Flock.

Facilitator Notes: In keeping with Spring, Easter, and Lent, we will consider our path forward as a renewal. We will Cultivate our congregation as you would the soil prior to planting, we need to nourish one another with Seeds of kindness, light and love. After the seeds are planted, we must then continue to care for each other which will allow for flowering and Growth of our Congregation through Light, Love and Spirit. As a Congregation, we will incrementally, slowly but deliberately make adjustments (or the dreaded word "Changes") throughout our church. Our path to accomplish this will be to have continued and open conversations with ALL Congregation members.

**The following are the words from each member which spoke during the session. We restated the Problem Question (above) in order to get the conversations going. We had 37 present and had about 90% participation one way or another (great response by ALL).**

### NOTES:

-We love the church because it is open to ALL

-Freedom of belonging

-Church history

-Members

-Issues plaguing the church

**\*Communication** has been the main concern and issue among many members. This creates a disconnect with committees, church leadership and Members. -

**Technology and social media** are not the only answer for communication issues it is mainly how we treat one another.

**-Control** by individuals over the most mundane things only creates a tug of war and drives people away from helping or supporting projects and/or events.

-Don't need Gate Keepers

-Don't take offense to help

-Family is felt throughout the Congregation but we don't always get along

-Be Open to Change and Adjustments

-New ideas are needed

-Need to Avoid frustrating Newcomers-

Communication needs improvement (How was not discussed and to be honest, it is NOT just one thing we can change it is a culture and atmospheric change which will only change with time).

- TRUST** of others needs to be nurtured
- Tone of how one speaks because it is not what is being said BUT how it is being said.
- Project deadlines need to be given and follow through needs to be communicated better
- We lack follow through
- LEADERSHIP** is lacking in most areas, projects and events get done just not very efficiently.

#### **-Expectations**

-Don't hold others to your own expectations because they will disappoint you or frustrate you when they don't meet them.

- How to get new members involved with committees.
- First, we need to create a plan for acquiring new members
- Intimidation through perceived control issues

-Time Commitments on committees may need to be shortened to be more attractive for others to commit.

**-No politics in Church.** We can watch politics on TV 24 hours a day and don't need it in church. We want to feel lighter and filled with spirit when we leave after a sermon.

-Church is viewed from outside as an Older Congregation  
 -Change for institutions like a church go through a 100year cycle or Generational Cycle and we are in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> cycle currently  
*{When Rev. Lee responded – “that may be the historical review but that doesn't mean that will happen here...the way it's always been doesn't mean it's true here.” Those present gave a strong response – “right on! Yeah.” From which Rev. Lee knew ....the desire is strong to stay committed to this work and not let that fear stop us from facing what is here and find the way forward together.}*

- We need to have an “Invite a Friend” Sunday
- We are Missing young member.
- Don't pin all our ailments on not having young members

**-Nurture the roots and foundation of this Congregation and new members will come when, we are better prepared and ready for them.**

#### **-Capitalize on what we do best**

- Community Meals   -Yard Sale   -Fundraising
- Crafts   -Community Support

**-Pause** and postpone anything action which is not fully supported

#### **-QTIP (Quit Taking It Personally)**

- How has the Revelation Church become the fastest growing church in the area? (hold 6 Sermons and are usually full)
- How can we get the word out
- Social Media and other resources
- Volunteers can be selective but need to know about what projects and events are upcoming.

**-Leadership Structure gives impression of being fractured**

**-We have 179 members BUT typically only see up to 40 regularly**

**-How can we reach out to the 130 members that are not actively involved**

**\*Next Session will be after Sunday Sermon on 26 March 2023 The focus will be on Breakout Groups and Vision Development**

## Letting It Sink In

2/13/2023 - by: Erick R. Olsen - Starting With Scripture

The Rev. Erick R. Olsen has served as Pastor of Church of Christ Congregational, Norfolk, CT, since 2003. In addition to being active in the Litchfield North Association and in the wider church, he enjoys running, coffee, bouldering, reading, and time with his wife Tina and their children, Elias, Ellie, and Olivia (and their dog Zoe).

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9 (NRSV)

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

### Reflection: Letting It Sink In

Why would Jesus do this? Why bother to deliver an exhilarating, life-changing experience like the Transfiguration – and then insist that the disciples not tell anyone?

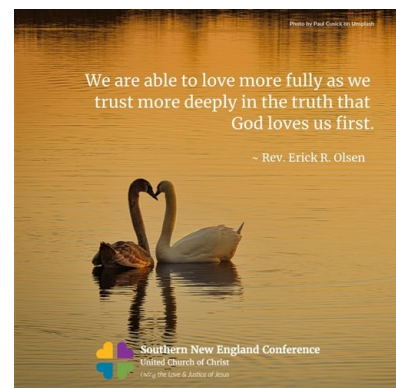
As he maddeningly does in a few other Gospel stories, Jesus seeks to prevent word about him from spreading. Why? Wouldn't – doesn't – the Word in the Flesh want us to share the power of God's love incarnate?

Perhaps the key to this conundrum lies in the fact that we are told to wait until the Son of Man rises from the dead. We are instructed to wait for Easter, to wait through Lent.

Between now and the Resurrection, we are invited to use these weeks to think about God's love as it is revealed to us through this Transfiguration story. This is not an invitation to secrecy – but rather a chance for us to internalize God's awesomeness and God's love for us, time to let it really sink in.

We are invited to contemplate or prayerfully consider this teaching in order to claim it for ourselves and make it our own. Sharing comes later. We are able to love more fully as we trust more deeply in the truth that God loves us first. We own the gift in order to give well.

The gift that we receive is love – as is made clear in the first part of this Transfiguration story. We are told that Christ's clothing becomes dazzling white beyond any bleaching possible on earth. This seems weirdly like a commercial until we pause and consider that it may be a kind of antidote to advertising that makes us feel lacking. Here we are reminded that God is in the business of restoring us in a way beyond any product.





No matter who we are we are welcome here, called into reconciliation. As much as any such Gospel story is about the specialness of Christ – this Good News is also about Christ pointing to God and to what God does for and through us.

In our story, Peter wants to build memorials and make three markers: one for Jesus, one for Moses, one for Elijah. This fits how we deal with memorable events, right?

Along with this, though, in the story's very next breath – we hear the voice that we assume is from God – saying what we've been waiting to hear: "I love this child of God. Listen to him."

We are beloved in Christ – and our call is to hear what he says. Suppose we took time this Lent to hear with new ears:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Love one another as I have loved you.

Central to the Transfiguration story and key to our understanding of it is this proclamation that Christ is beloved, or as it says in the Message, he is marked by God's love. We as members of his body are beloved and marked in this same way.

Maybe all we do this Lent is focus on this: looking within to rediscover our beloved nature. We don't of course do this to feel privileged or better-than. Our call is to own this beloved identity enough so that we're willing to follow Jesus fully through to Easter. I will be thinking about that for these next few weeks.

#### **PRAYER**

Bless me this Lent, Lord, with quiet time to listen for the truth that I am loved. Transfigure us with love enough to share in ways that heal and help. Amen.



**Erick R. Olsen**

pastor of the Church of Christ, Congregational, in Norfolk, CT

### **Seed Starting w/ Master Gardner Patricia Mandell Bill Memorial Library**



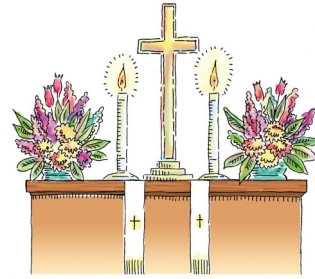
**March 11, 2023 1pm**

**Register Now for this Free Class**

**860-445-0392**

# Worship Watch

## March Worship Services



## Worship Schedule

<b>Second Sunday in Lent</b> March 5, 2023 <i>"Not by works, but faith"</i>	<u>Genesis 12:1-4a</u>	<u>Psalm 121</u>	<u>Romans 4:1-5, 13-17</u>	<u>John 3:1-17</u> <b>or</b> <u>Matthew 17:1-9</u>
<b>Third Sunday in Lent</b> March 12, 2023 <i>"Suffering to hope"</i>	<u>Exodus 17:1-7</u>	<u>Psalm 95</u>	<u>Romans 5:1-11</u>	<u>John 4:5-42</u>
<b>Fourth Sunday in Lent</b> March 19, 2023 <i>"Are we seeing right?"</i> Rev. Jack Shackles- Guest Pastor	<u>1 Samuel 16:1-13</u>	<u>Psalm 23</u>	<u>Ephesians 5:8-14</u>	<u>John 9:1-41</u>
<b>Fifth Sunday in Lent</b> March 26, 2023 <i>"Unbind him"</i>	<u>Ezekiel 37:1-14</u>	<u>Psalm 130</u>	<u>Romans 8:6-11</u>	<u>John 11:1-45</u>

NEW Book Study Begins February 6, 2023  
The course explores biblical people, events, ideas and places through reading, reflection, discussion, creative expression and discovery.

**KERYGMA**  
**DISCOVERING**  
 the BIBLE A New Generation

Study Group Meets  
 Mondays 11am  
 in-person & via Zoom

Price per book  
 \$30.00 or what you can afford

RESOURCE BOOK

the KERYGMA program Buy One

See Rev. Lee or contact the church office to sign up.

## NEW BOOK STUDY

Takes place during the weekly Monday Morning Prayer & Bible Study meeting at 11am. Come in-person or join via Zoom.

# March 2023



**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

			<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Community Meals Noon-1pm
<i>5</i> -Worship Service 10am	<i>6</i> -Prayer & Bible Study 11am  Trustees 6pm  Youth Group 6pm-8pm	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Community Meals Noon-1pm
<i>12</i> -Worship Service 10am	<i>13</i> -Prayer & Bible Study 11am  Grab-n-Go Dinner  Youth Group 6pm-8pm	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i> Deacons 6pm Council 7pm	<i>16</i> Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	<i>17</i> 	<i>18</i> Community Meals Noon-1pm
<i>19</i> -Worship Service 10am  Missions 9am  Craft Group 11am	<i>20</i> -Prayer & Bible Study 11am  Youth Group 6pm-8pm	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> Community Meals Noon-1pm
<i>26</i> -Worship Service 10am  Vision Development Meeting 11:30am	<i>27</i> -Prayer & Bible Study 11am  Youth Group 6pm-8pm	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	<i>31</i>	

### 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](http://www.grotonucc.org)  
[office@grotoncongregational.org](mailto: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.**  
**Stay for After Worship Coffee Hour**



PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

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