

# The Gargoyle

## The Pastor's Musings

By Reverend Lee Ireland

Greeting to You All!

"Summertime and the living is easy"... so the song goes.

I give thanks for the countless ways in which you as individuals and as a congregation have worked hard this year, and I'm sure all of you are now thankful we are going into summertime, and I hope for most of you it will mean the easing of life's pace. Perhaps you will have the joy of pausing and enjoying the sound of listening to the tides ebbing and flowing or diving into them and enjoying the chance to swim. They are a visible sign of the rhythms of life and the reminder to not just strengthen our muscles to do the work in our lives as we do the things we might have to do and/or love, and strengthen our minds to stay sharp and actively engaged in life, *but also* remembering the gift that comes with the resting in-between. I hope you will find several of those moments this summer. Jesus knew the value of the resting and called his disciples into including that in their lives – as we read how he took time away to pray... and to rest and listen within.

In one of those times in her life, Mary Oliver wrote the beautiful poem below:

### **The Summer Day by Mary Oliver**

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean--  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down--  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
**Tell me, what is it you plan to do**  
**With your one wild and precious life?**

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Groton  
Congregational  
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- Ian Ambrose
- Nancy Barnhart
- Sarah Blaisdell
- Berta Cadorette
- Danielle Chirillo
- Leslie Christie
- Megan Clabby
- Harriette Fulton
- Bonnie Giesler
- Alexandra Orkney

## The Pastor’s Musings-continued

By Reverend Lee Ireland

As you move into the summer days and hear the creative musings in your heart, mind, and spirit, I hope you will be moved into perhaps writing poetry, creating a hymn, writing music, sculpting something out of wood or clay, painting in some form, creating a crossword puzzle for others to try, or creating something that brings you great joy. **If so, would you be willing to bring one of your creations to share at Coffee Hour on July 23?** It would be fun to see these creations. If not, please come and see and enjoy.

Most of us are familiar with the words in Ecclesiastes 3: *“To everything there is a season...”* A neat season is transitioning for me. At the end of July and through August, I will be waiting to hear some long-awaited good news and that a season is changing when my daughter will give birth to her first child on August 3 or sooner. I’ll be taking off the last week of July and all of August as vacation time to be there to welcome this little one and help them during her recovery time, delight in the wonder of life anew, and find new ways to play and rest a bit as well.

While I’m gone, the Deacons have made arrangements for some interesting guest preachers/speakers to lead the worship services.

7/30	Kevin Measimer
8/6 and 13th	Rev Joan Cianci
8/20	Charity Dell
8/27	Chuck Barnum

As I move into this summer, I hear the invitation to ponder the abundant gifts of this community of faith here in Groton - the body of Christ - as we walk together in all of God’s ways, just as we are - revealing more about God to each other in ways we may not have acknowledged before.

In my sermon on June 25, I shared how I was given the question “Who is welcoming whom?” with those words we say at the beginning of our services each week. I invite you to ponder those whom you know and those who are new to our church community. Those who come bringing into our midst new creations of God we’ve not yet experienced, who come with their hearts and minds and stories to share, from whom we can learn much. Sometimes, the foreigners in our midst can help us open our minds and hearts in unexpected moments that take us by surprise and make us move into moments of joy and celebration we never expected to experience. Just think of those times when you were overcome with emotions as we offer the Sacrament of Baptism and, then, I or another pastor, walks the child around the sanctuary, and we all sing the touching words in the hymn: “I was there to hear your Borne Cry.” I know tears flow from the overwhelming sense of love and memory.

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## The Pastor's Musings-continued

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By Reverend Lee Ireland

This day let's encourage one another to give thanks for all we've experienced and received together and as we walk together and see all that is here and choose awe. Let's move into the invitation each day that is new, but knowing it is built on the foundation of all those who have been a part of this congregation and offered their love, sweat and tears to keep this congregation thriving. Let us listen for the God who is still-speaking - and teasing us to see, feel and hear what each person is sharing - so our love **can** expand, and deepen our wells of compassion and the wonders of life. And help us help each other in the times of struggle or grief. Let us give thanks this day and every day as we walk together and follow the leading of "Lord of the Dance"

Blessings this day and every day,  
Rev Lee



## Deacons

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By Mary Alapa

### Amazing Grace

It's 2:40 am and I am trying to put together an essay for the July Gargoyle. I have some help from Carole King's beautiful music to inspire my efforts. She is a great example of using whatever talent you have to inspire those we encounter. We should keep those thoughts in mind, when we can, to bring peace and joy to all our brothers and sisters. The world can be harsh to all. Who needs to heap more on those we care for? It's our job to bring peace and joy to everyone we can. Wouldn't it be better to work in harmony together in an effort to find solutions to our needs? If we could do this we would be closer to God's grace.



Groton  
Congregational  
Church



### June Meetings

- Trustees  
July 11th  
6pm
- Deacons  
July 10th  
5:30pm
- Council  
July 10th  
7pm
- Missions  
July 16th  
9am

### Sanctuary Flowers



Honor that special  
person or occasion  
with a floral donation  
to the Sanctuary.  
Contact the church  
office  
860-445-7409 .

## Spiritual Formation Invitation

By Rev. Lee Ireland

During the summer months, our Monday morning Bible Study group will be taking a vacation and it will start up again in September.

Some of us enjoy the time of fellowship and in particular, Jack Shackles, would love to take this open time to explore some of the various spiritual resources and practices to help us deepen in our walk with God. He suggested a focus on some Spirituality Practices which sounds like a great idea to me.

Therefore, we invite those who are free on Monday mornings at 11 to join us in person or by Zoom for the following opportunities. Zoom invitations will be sent out during July. I personally will be taking a vacation during August.

Peace,  
Rev. Lee

July 3 - I (Rev. Lee) will offer a program on Centering Prayer and the Lectio Divina Practices.

July 10 - Rev. Jack will offer a program entitled "Spirituality in Action".

July 17 - Lydia Blacker, who has training in Spirituality as well, will offer a program entitled, "Allow the Spirit to Grow Your Faith."

On July 24 - I would like to offer a time of "Listening to our Dreams." Since this is one many enjoy attending, but work during the day, I will also offer it again at 6:30 PM. Come and have fun learning about the symbolism within our dreams that come to help us along on our journeys of life - some that are easy to understand and others that are hilarious or mysterious.

## Christian Education

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By Janice Kimball, pro tem superintendent

We were glad to be a part of the Church Council's Open and Affirming church picnic on June 25<sup>th</sup>, following a service of worship and celebration led by transitional minister Rev. Lee Ireland. Thanks to all the cooks and bakers who brought excellent food, and contributors of equipment, LGBTQ flags, and monetary support for the cookout and games. No matter what the weather brings, our folks came through with splendid grace, God bless you all!

Please watch this and future issues for announcements of special classes on spirituality during the summer months, and for future opportunities for multi-generational faith exploration and fun!!!

Janice Kimball, pro tem superintendent



## Women's Fellowship

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By Sally Turner

Women's Fellowship Ladies Night Out on June 6th was attended by 24 ladies. We certainly made a joyous noise. Everyone seems to enjoy being together and sharing meals.

There will be no meeting in July.

The August meeting will be on the 8/09/23 at 12 noon at the Shennecossett Beach Club.

Members attending need to let Sally Turner know ahead as the beach requires their names.

Contact Sally Turner: [turnersally@ymail.com](mailto:turnersally@ymail.com) or by phone 869-326-1071.

## A Brief Word of Appreciation

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By Janice Kimball

Janice Kimball would like to extend from her students many thanks for the support and help we received for the June 17<sup>th</sup> piano recital! We had a great time with the fourteen students who performed and the wonderful goodies we shared after the program, with approximately fifty family members and friends in the audience. Special acknowledgements are due to our Board of Trustees and the Music Committee. We look forward to future programs, especially our traditional holiday music extravaganza at the end of 2023!



## Let Us Join Together in Prayer

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By Kevin Measimer

This prayer was offered during the June 25th Worship Service.

Gracious and loving God, we come before you today with hearts filled with gratitude and concern. We thank you for the progress and advances made for the LGBTQ+ community since the historic Stonewall riots. We acknowledge the resilience, courage, and advocacy that has led to greater acceptance and recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We are grateful for the steps taken toward equality and justice, and we pray for continued progress and inclusivity in all areas of society.

Yet, Lord, we also lift up our concerns to you. We are troubled by the increasing demonization and marginalization of the LGBTQ+ community in certain political and social spheres. We ask for your guidance and wisdom as we navigate these challenging times. Help us to be instruments of love, understanding, and acceptance, standing against hate and discrimination in all its forms. Grant us the strength to advocate for laws and policies that protect the rights and well-being of every person, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Additionally, Heavenly Father, we bring before you the rising tide of antisemitism that we witness in our world. We grieve the pain and fear experienced by our Jewish brothers and sisters due to acts of hatred and violence. May we actively work to combat antisemitism in all its manifestations, fostering an environment of respect, tolerance, and solidarity. Help us to stand firmly against the forces of bigotry and prejudice, recognizing that every person is created in your image and deserving of dignity and respect.

Lord, we also acknowledge the destructive nature of white nationalism and racial supremacy. We pray for an end to ideologies that divide and dehumanize, for the healing of deep-seated divisions, and for the dismantling of systems that perpetuate injustice. Grant us the courage to confront and challenge racism in all its forms, both within ourselves and in society, as we strive for true equality and unity among all races and ethnicities.

In these troubled times, Lord, we turn to you as our source of strength, hope, and guidance. Inspire us to be instruments of your peace, love, and reconciliation in the world. Help us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves. In his holy name, we pray. Amen.

# Life is Crazy Good

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Scripture: Jeremiah 20:13 (NRSV)

*Sing to the Lord;  
praise the Lord!  
For he has delivered the life of the needy  
from the hands of evildoers*

## **Reflection: Life Is Crazy Good**

Life is Crazy Good! Yup! It is! And I use that saying a LOT! I am a firm believer that each and every day is a gift and it is so very important to start each day with a great big “Thank you God!” Now that is easy of course when things are going your way. And we all know that some days are much better than others.

People often say to me, “How can you always be so upbeat?” Well, of course, they don’t see me always but I do maintain a very positive outlook on life. One of my secrets is to absolutely treasure the days that are fabulous; the days that feel perfect.

I have had the most outstanding few weeks recently. All sorts of good things were rolled into a very brief timeline. I was officially granted the status of Member in Discernment to which I have been working for quite some time. I had my first opportunity to preach in a church other than my own. I had three tremendous trips to visit family and friends. Our youngest daughter got engaged, graduated nursing school with a perfect 4.0, and got hired in a highly rated hospital. Our oldest son announced he and his wife are expecting a baby in the late fall. And, to top it all off, my favorite childhood pop-star announced a concert date near my hometown and yes, I scored tickets. WOW! There’s a lot of CRAZY good in my life.

Many mornings begin for me with writing in a journal. I have been very busy lately recording lots of great things. I find recording these wonderful events important. Why? It’s always great to keep track of the good stuff. That way on the days that are not so fabulous; when life throws you a curve ball and you feel nothing is going your way, you can look back on these special happenings. You can embrace the good.

We all know there are rough days. Embracing the good stuff totally helps with the days that aren’t crazy good...those days that are just CRAZY!

Go out today and take some time to appreciate what you have. It might be a life changing event such as an engagement, graduation, or new baby. It might be something small like a gentle rain after a long bout of heat or the arrival of a new flower blooming in your yard. In any case, there is always something that deserves a thank you.

Did you wake up from sleep today? Say thank you.

Are you able to eat today? Say thank you.

Do you have a roof over your head? Say thank you.

Are the birds chirping outside? Say thank you.

**Author:** Patti MacLennan is a member of the Pilgrim Church of Duxbury UCC. She recently retired as an elementary educator and is currently a Member In Discernment in the Southern New England Conference.



# Worship Watch

## July Worship Services

**Proper 8 (13)**  
Fifth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
**July 2, 2023**

Genesis 22:1-14, Psalm 13, Jeremiah 28:5-9, Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18  
Romans 6:12-23, Matthew 10:40-42

**Proper 9 (14)**  
Sixth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
**July 9, 2023**

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Psalm 45:10-17 *or*  
*Song of Solomon 2:8-13, Zechariah 9:9-12, Psalm 145:8-14, Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30*

**Proper 10 (15)**  
Seventh Sunday  
after Pentecost  
**July 16, 2023**

Genesis 25:19-34, Psalm 119:105-112, Romans 8:1-11, Isaiah 55:10-13  
Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

**Proper 11 (16)**  
Eighth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
**July 23, 2023**

Genesis 28:10-19a, Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24, Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19  
*or Isaiah 44:6-8, Psalm 86:11-17, Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43*

**Proper 12 (17)**  
Ninth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
**July 30, 2023**

Genesis 29:15-28, Psalm 105:1-11, 45b *or Psalm 128, 1 Kings 3:5-12,*  
Psalm 119:129-136, Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



# Community Meals

By Janice Kimball



During July and August, Community Meals volunteers will pack and distribute summer bag lunches to distribute each Saturday from noon to 12:30 PM (please note time change) in the church parking lot. These meals will include fresh fruit and/or vegetables. Please do contact me or the church office if you would like to donate food for these meals, as we have specific needs for each week. Thanks for your generosity and God bless you!!!

Janice Kimball, for the volunteers, Community Meals



# July 2023



Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

						1
2 Pick-up Choir 9:30am  Worship Service 10am	3 Spirituality Meeting 11am	4 Office Closed  	5	6	7	8
9 Pick-up Choir 9:30am  Worship Service 10am	10 Spirituality Meeting 11am  Deacons 5:30pm  Council 7pm	11 Trustees 6pm	12	13	14	15
16 Pick-up Choir 9:30am  Worship Service	17 Spirituality Meeting 11am	18	19	20	21	22
23 Pick-up Choir 9:30am  Worship Service 10am	24 Spirituality Meeting 11am	25	26	27	28	29
30 Pick-up Choir 9:30am  Worship Service 10am	31					

**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.



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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 worshipers 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**

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

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