

# The Gargoyle



FEBRUARY 2025



## Groton Congregational Church



You Are Always Welcome Here



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## Board of Deacons

February is known as the month of Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually on February 14. It originated as a Christian Feast Day honoring a martyr named Valentine, and through later folk traditions it has also become a significant cultural, religious and commercial celebration of romance and love throughout the world.

There are a number of martyrdom stories associated with various Saint Valentines connected to February 14, including an account of the imprisonment of Saint Valentine of Rome for ministering to Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire in the third century. According to one early tradition, Saint Valentine restored sight to the blind daughter of his jailer. Numerous later additions to the legend have better related it to the theme of love.

Another embellishment suggests that Saint Valentine performed clandestine Christian weddings for soldiers who were forbidden to marry. According to legend, in order "to remind these men of their vows and God's Love, Saint Valentine is said to have cut hearts from parchment", giving them to these soldiers, a possible origin of the widespread use of hearts on Saint Valentine's Day.

Saint Valentine also supposedly wore a purple amethyst ring, customarily worn on the hands of Christian bishops with an image of Cupid engraved in it, a recognizable symbol associated with love that was legal under the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers would recognize the ring and ask Saint Valentine to perform marriage for them. Probably due to this association with Saint Valentine, amethyst has become the birthstone of February, which is thought to attract love.

Now as we approach Saint Valentine's Day, may we all show our love for, and make both Jesus Christ and God our True Valentines.

Lewis Clark  
Deacon, GCC



# February Scripture Readings



Fourth Sunday  
after Epiphany

Jeremiah  
1:4-10

Psalm  
71:1-6

1 Corinthians  
13:1-13

Luke  
4:21-30

**Feb 02, 2025**

Fifth Sunday  
after Epiphany

Isaiah  
6:1-8, (9-13)

Psalm  
138

1 Corinthians  
15:1-11

Luke  
5:1-11

**Feb 09, 2025**

Sixth Sunday  
after Epiphany

Jeremiah  
17:5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians  
15:12-20

Luke  
6:17-26

**Feb 16, 2025**

Seventh Sunday  
after Epiphany

Genesis  
45:3-11,  
15

Psalm  
37:1-11,  
39-40

1 Corinthians  
15:35-38,  
42-50

Luke  
6:27-38

**Feb 23, 2025**



Those in the armed services and their families

Those recovering from illness

Those who are unemployed

Those who are in nursing homes or shut-ins



***Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans  
will be established. Proverbs 16:3***

A new year is upon us and the work of the church continues (actually, it never ends!).

A reminder of the procedures to follow when submitting requests to the Trustees for those areas that the Board oversees per the Bylaws:

(1) Send an email or written letter (this can be placed in the Trustee box outside of the church office) to the Trustees (current members are Cathy Johnson, Phyllis Meyer, Bonnie Geisler, Sue Blaisdell, Richard Stottlemeyer, Ingrid Measimer and Don Beatrice). Email addresses can be found in the Church Directory. Submitting in written form allows for documentation of the request – verbal requests leave open the possibility of error when further relaying to other members of the Board.

(2) In the subject line of the email or content of the letter, please indicate the group, committee name or individual that the request is coming from - who the “sponsor” is (e.g., Women’s Fellowship, Deacons, Missions, etc.).

(3) In the body of the email or letter, specifically describe what it is that is being sought (use of Dutton Hall for..., permission to raise funds and if so, which fund you’d like the proceeds to go to; use of outside property for..., etc.). Provide as much information as possible. Reminder that use of the sanctuary falls under the purview of the Deacons. If the event in the sanctuary involves collection of donations (other than our regular Sunday Service), a request needs to go through Trustees.

(4) State the date or time period at issue. If the request involves use of the building, check with the church office to see if there is anything on the calendar for that date.

(5) Permission to print the church’s QR code on any items other than those that have already been authorized (currently, on the laminated cards in the sanctuary pews and the Organ Repair Fund envelopes) must go through the Trustees.

(6) Requests and suggestions for the website must be submitted to [webmaster@grotoncongregational.org](mailto:webmaster@grotoncongregational.org). Please keep in mind that some photographs may

be deemed not suitable based on quality or applicable subject matter. Any individuals in the proposed photographs must have signed a media consent release form; these forms can be found on the table in the Midway and should be submitted to the office.

If the request is not of an urgent nature, the Trustees will address it at their next meeting (first Sunday of the month, after service, or as needed). If an immediate response is needed, please let us know and we will address accordingly. The next meeting of the Trustees is Sunday, March 2, 2025.

Thank you!

Submitted in love,

Cathy Johnson

Chair, Board of Trustees



## NAN'S CALLING TO STEWARDSHIP

Nan K. was asked by her church to lead a special campaign to pay off the remaining debt on the sanctuary. She consented and made this statement at a worship service:

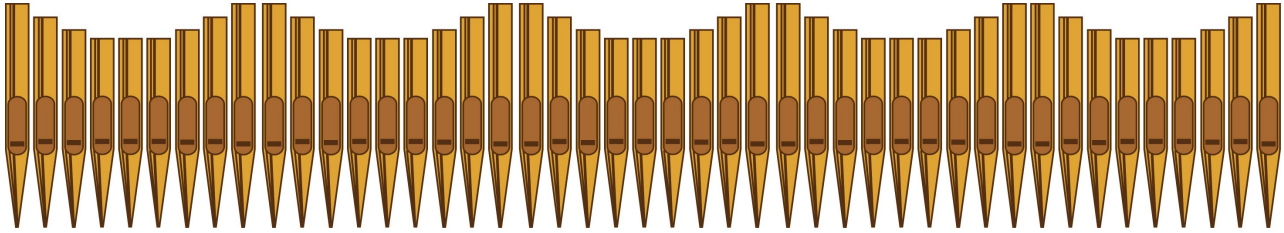
"Stewardship is realizing that our relationship with money is very much connected to our relationship to God. When our relationship to money becomes the stewardship of God's gifts, then our decisions and actions are tied to our understanding of God's will for our life. When we discern the purpose for our life on Earth, then we look for the signs, the opportunities, the coincidences that show us the path to that purpose.

"I want you to know that this is not just a campaign to pay off our debts (although it will). It is about building a community of faith. If one of our members came to me today and offered to pay off the entire debt, I wouldn't feel this campaign was a success.

"This is about strengthening our church community with everyone giving to their own ability. I'll feel the campaign is successful when 100 percent of our membership participates."

Are you participating? You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

## Organ Repairs Begin!



On January thirteenth Foley-Baker, Inc. began the extensive work on our Möller organ. The company was founded in 1968 and provides pipe organ restoration, repair, and tuning nationwide. One of their major projects is Washington's National Cathedral organ.

The following pictures are of our organ in various stages of disassembly. The two gentlemen who came to do the tear-out, Mike and Tom, were knowledgeable and very amenable to answering the many questions that were asked.

It is expected to take approximately two weeks to fix the removed parts, reinstall them and tune the organ.



Organ with the top and roll cover removed

Organ with one side panel removed  
~ North side of the sanctuary



Organ with pedal board removed. We thought we might have to cut part of the carpet out but they figured/wiggled it out. Note the wooden floor beneath the carpet.

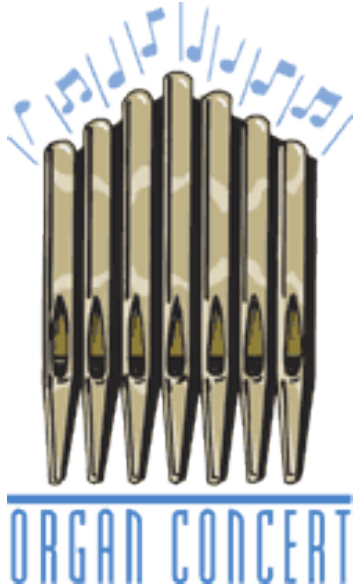
The organ's Möller Opus number.

Organ builders use opus numbers to identify their organs and their place in their chronology.

The work "opus" is Latin for "work".



## Music Committee



**NEW LONDON  
AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS EVENT  
SUNDAY MARCH 23, 2025 AT 6:30 PM**

**EXTRAVAGANZA!  
PERFORMED BY BRIAN HOFFMAN  
MUSIC BY J. S. BACH, THE MÖLLER PIPE ORGAN,  
A 13" PROJECTION SCREEN AND NARRATION**

**THE CONCERT WILL HONOR OUR FRIEND  
DR. JOHN ANTHONY AND REDEDICATE THE  
NEWLY REFURBISHED MÖLLER PIPE ORGAN.**

**A FREE WILL OFFERING WILL BENEFIT THE ORGAN REPAIR FUND AT  
GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.**



The Bell Choir will be taking a brief hiatus during the month of February due to travel plans of several members. Rehearsals will resume in early March.

If you are interested in becoming a ringer, please speak with Sue Stottlemyer.





## ANNUAL MEETING

At the Annual Meeting on Sunday January 19<sup>th</sup> a lively group of 26 members enjoyed a well appointed luncheon prepared by Don and Sadie Beatrice, Sue Blaisdell and contributions from Cathy Johnson and Sue Stottlemyer. Our compliments to all for the delectable table you set for us.

The members in attendance voted on a new budget for 2025. The total amount of expenditures budgeted are \$158,891. In order to meet our financial obligations we will be forced to draw-down our Investments portfolio by nearly \$53,661.

The members in attendance also voted to accept the proposed committee slate for 2025. Thank you to all who said “yes” to the Nominating Coordinator.

Respectfully,

Sue Blaisdell, Clerk of the Church



The first Church Council meeting of 2025 took place on January 25, 2025 immediately after the Annual Committee Workshop.

The meeting dates of the council, committee chairs and their meeting dates and times, as well as SRT Team representatives were established.

Doris Pulaski was voted back on to the Stewardship Committee as well.

Below are the Chairs of the various Committees and their meeting times:

Trustees—Cathy Johnson, Chair ~ First Sunday after worship

Deacons—James Kerrigan, Chair ~ Second Monday @ 6:00 PM

Stewardship—Doris Pulaski, Chair ~ Fourth Sunday after worship

Missions—Beth Chirillo, Chair ~ 3rd Sunday @ 9:00 AM

Music—Janice Kimball, Chair ~ 4th Sunday

Church Council Meeting dates: March 16th, June 15th, September 14th all at 11:30 AM

## **Missions Committee**



It is the new year and the first Missions project is with the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. They are looking for backpacks, hats and mittens, ponchos and umbrellas. Please leave your donations in the red wagon.

The Missions Committee is also helping St. Vincent De Paul Place in Norwich in their effort to provide bus passes for community members who need transportation to doctor's appointments, job interviews, work, and to pick up prescriptions or groceries.

A single-ride bus pass is \$1.75; a full-day pass is \$3.50 and a monthly pass is \$40.

If you would like to help this effort, please give cash or a check made out to St. Vincent de Paul Place with "Make a Difference" in the memo to one of the Mission Committee members.

The Child And Family agency has sent a heartfelt "Thank You" for the Grammys Jamie's. Pictures of the children wearing their new pajamas and reading books on Hot Chocolate Day are posted on the Midway Bulletin Board. It is a joy to see the happiness this mission brings to local children.

Thank you,

Beth Chirillo

Committee Members: Don Beatrice, Anne Campbell, Jill Martin, Penny Sullivan

## **Stewardship Committee**

Please use the QR code to make donations to any one of our church funds and programs listed below. Donations are always greatly appreciated.

Choose from: Community Meals, Deacons Fund, General Fund, Memorial Fund, Memorial Scholarship Fund, Organ Repair Fund, and/or the Restoration Fund.

In the "Notes" section please type the fund or program to which you are donating. Thank you.



## Reflections



**Love is patient,  
Love is kind.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4

As we enter February, our thoughts turn to love. Of the romantic kind with St Valentine's Day. We know though that love isn't about chocolate, flowers, and sentimental cards and gifts.

Romantic love, familial love, and brotherly love are equally important.

We learn that Jesus taught us to love God and love our neighbor. Let us extend that love to persons known and unknown, friend and enemy alike.

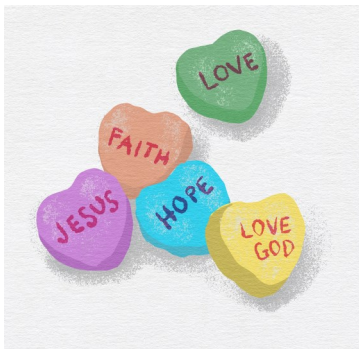
Peace and love to all. In Jesus' name. Amen

- Kevin M

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful." - 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

"Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." -1 John 4:20

### **BEYOND CANDY HEARTS AND ROSES**



The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as “Dr. Love” for writing about the topic, said, “Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a lis-

tening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine’s Day is as good a reminder as any.

## Community Meals



Heartfelt thanks from all of us to the folks who have come forward with monetary and food donations for our Saturday meals, and have done their best to come in and help out! We can always use more help, however you can, and we love to see all of you as our guests whenever you can. We have a fund balance of approximately \$2,000.00 and serve, with delivered meals to church family shut-ins, 25 to 35 people each Saturday.

The Community Meals schedule for each Saturday in February is as follows:

February 1st Dutton Hall, Groton Congregational Church, 12-1 PM Menu TBA

February 8th Dutton Hall 12-1 PM, a Sweetheart Feast!

February 15th no meals served, family holiday for our volunteers

February 22nd Dutton Hall, 12-1 PM a Revolutionary Era repast! in honor of Washington's birthday!

With continued appreciation and prayers for peace for all,  
Janice Kimball, for the volunteers



## Women's Fellowship

### *Women's Fellowship*

Women's Fellowship met on January 8th. We are still in the planning stage for the future. We will meet again on Feb. 12th. The bake sale will be on Feb.9th. All women are welcome to join us.

Sally

# FEBRUARY

2025

						1 Community Meals Noon-1pm
2 Worship Service 10am Rev. Caton	3	4	5	6 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	7	8 Community Meals Noon-1pm
9 Worship Service 10am Rev. Caton	10	11 Deacons 6pm	12 Women's Fellowship	13 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	14	15 NO Community Meals
16 Worship Service 10am Rev. Caton	17	18	19	20 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	21	22 Community Meals Noon-1pm
23 Worship Service 10am Rev. Caton	24	25	26	27 Handbells 6:30pm Choir 7:30pm	28	

## 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.

### 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. We embrace the belief that no matter who, no matter what, no matter where you are on life's journey, you are invited and 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**