

The Gargoyle

March 2025



Groton Congregational Church
You Are Always Welcome Here
162 Monument St. Groton, CT 06340



Dear Members and Friends of the Groton Congregational Church,

I want to begin by letting you know how blessed, excited, and grateful I am

feeling, having been called to be your 'settled pastor!' I am very much looking forward to being in ministry with you. I see the pastor as a partner and guide in ministry with the laity. You are what make this church 'the church.' Thank you for putting your trust in me.

And now, on to what's happening in my life and in the life of our congregation!

March 5 is Ash Wednesday, which begins the very important season of Lent, building up to our celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter. On Wednesday, March 5, there will be a service of worship for **Ash Wednesday at 7:00pm**. Please note that this service will be held in Dutton Hall, and will include the imposition of ashes, prayer, scripture, and music. This will be a meaningful way to begin the season of Lent, which focuses on penitence, and is a time to grow closer to God. I hope to see many of you there!

During Lent I will be leading a **Bible Study** for four weeks, using a study put together by Kate Bowler, called "The Hardest Part." Our study will meet in Dutton Hall on **Monday Mornings at 11:00am, including March 17th, 24th, 31st, and April 7th**. You are welcome to come to all the sessions or just some of them. Talk to me if you have questions. I encourage all of you who are free to attend, no matter the level of your Bible knowledge. Just bring your Bible, a notebook and pen, and an open mind and heart. See you there!

On a personal note, I am moving from East Lyme to Groton on Tuesday, March 18. I'd love your prayers and good thoughts for a smooth moving process!

I plan to be in my office in the church basement on Mondays, from 10:00am to 2:00pm, except when I am coordinating the Bible Study

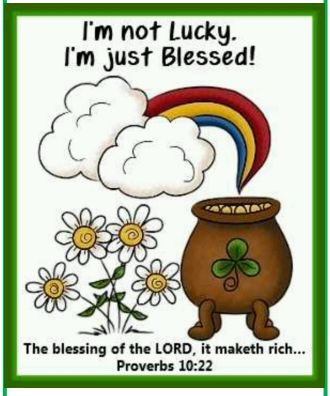
Continued Pg. 2

In This Issue

Board of Trustees.....	4
Board of Deacons.....	5
Community Meals.....	6
Stewardship.....	6
Missions	7
Women's Fellowship....	7
Historian.....	8
Music Committee.....	9
Stewardship.....	10
Calendar.....	13

Highlights

March Scriptures.....	3
Community Meals FAQ.....	10
Church Events.....	14



Pastor's Message Continued

in Dutton Hall, or if I am on vacation or study leave or have a church emergency. Feel free to stop by and say hello or call and make an appointment with me for another time if Monday doesn't work for you.

Since I am part-time (25 hours a week) this is the only definite day I will be in the office. But I expect to be at the church on other days and times as well; that needs to be flexible time when I can fit in sermon study and writing, as well as pastoral care duties, such as visiting shut-ins and those in the hospital. My normal days off will be Tuesdays and Fridays, so you won't see me on those days, and if you call me, I won't answer until the next day, unless it is an emergency, of course.

I hope all of this will give you an idea of what I will be doing in the first couple months or so that I am here. And all of this, of course, is subject to change, in consultation with the Deacons.

In Christ's Love,
Christine Caton


BIBLE STUDY



11AM MONDAYS
March 17th, 24th, 31st,
&
April 7th

in DUTTON HALL

You Are Welcome Here



GROTON
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
162 Monument St.,
Groton, CT

March Scripture Readings



Transfiguration Sunday March 02, 2025	Exodus 34:29-35	Psalm 99	2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)
Ash Wednesday March 05, 2025	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
First Sunday in Lent March 09, 2025	Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16	Romans 10:8b-13	Luke 4:1-13
Second Sunday in Lent March 16, 2025	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18	Psalm 27	Philippians 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)
Third Sunday in Lent March 23, 2025	Isaiah 55:1-9	Psalm 63:1-8	1 Corinthians 10:1-13	Luke 13:1-9
Fourth Sunday in Lent March 30, 2025	Joshua 5:9-12	Psalm 32	2 Corinthians 5:16-21	Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



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



Trustees News

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:2

This month's Trustees submission is one of spiritual encouragement. We hope that the following will speak to you as both an individual and as a member of our church family. As we continue to move forward into this still new year, may our journey together include hope, love and thoughtfulness as we work to meet the challenges and rewards of our faith.

Dear Lord,

As I begin this new day, I seek Your presence to go before me. Fill my heart with peace, my mind with clarity and my spirit with unwavering faith. No matter what lies ahead, I know that you are with me, guiding my steps and strengthening me through every challenge.

Help me walk in wisdom, patience, and faith. May my words be kind, my actions be led by love and my heart be aligned with Your will. Protect me and my loved ones, and let Your favor surround me like a shield. I trust that today will be filled with purpose and blessings.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

The foregoing is used with permission from "Successful Samuel," who posts daily prayers and inspiring Bible verses on Facebook.

The date of the next meeting of the Trustees has been changed to Sunday, March 9, 2025.

Thank you!

Submitted in love,

Cathy Johnson
Chair, Board of Trustees



GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
162 MONUMENT ST., GROTON, CT



Sponsored By
New London County
American Guild of
ORGANISTS

Brian Hoffman
Music by J.S. Bach



Performing on the Möller Pipe Organ

Sunday, March 23rd
6:30pm

This FREE concert honors our friend Dr. John Anthony and rededicates the Möller pipe organ.

A free will offering will be taken during this event to further benefit the repair and restoration of our beloved organ.

A 13" PROJECTION SCREEN AND NARRATION WILL ACCOMPANY THIS EVENT



LENT IS COMING What's your plan? What's our plan?

The month of March: "In like a lion, out like a lamb" is a weather folklore saying that describes the idea that March's weather starts rough and ends calm. With March being the start with our new settled pastor, I am sure we will have some rough patches and am hoping that any roughness quickly settles out to calm.

I am, however, hoping that we do not remain calm. March is the liturgical season of Lent: a time of forgiveness, reflection, sacrifice, and preparation.

Forgiveness: Jesus taught that forgiveness should be extended as often as needed, not just a set number of times. "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:22) Whether we are forgiving ourselves or someone else, we need to go through this process to learn and grow.

Reflection: We need to meditate on God's word, character, and actions; an exercise to examine ourselves – where we have been and how do we do better. "God's presence is a constant source of comfort and strength, guiding us through every challenge." (Joshua 1:9)

Sacrifice: In the Bible, sacrifice is the act of giving to God time, possessions, and energy. The purpose of sacrifice is to offer something of personal value to acknowledge guilt or to restore good relations with God. Perhaps instead of giving up that piece of chocolate or whatever tangible sacrifice we think is important, let's dig deeper. Perhaps we should turn towards the things that we often avoid. Let us fast from or give up the fear of the unknown and try something new.

Preparation: Preparation is the act of getting ready for a purpose, such as a test, duty, or divine encounter. "First things must come first. Spiritual preparation must precede physical activity." (Matthew 24:14) As we approach Easter, let us prepare to embrace meaningful traditions that support the message of Easter. Easter is my favorite Christian holiday with all the pomp and circumstance and rightfully so – the resurrection of Jesus Christ – a reminder of our victory over sin and a source of hope.

So as this powerful season reminds us of who we are and of new beginnings, let us move into a new church season with high energy, exuberant celebration, and never-ending hope for a fresh new day, every day. Let us not be calm; let it be known, "God's plans for us are full of hope and promise." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Thinking about a new rainbow to open the first meteorological month of spring?

We can't promise a pot of gold, but we at Community Meals can give you a warm blessing of nourishing food and congenial company!



Community Meals takes place on Saturday from Noon to 1PM in Dutton Hall. Our schedule for the month of March, barring emergencies, is as follows:

Saturday, March 1st

Saturday, March 8 NO COMMUNITY MEALS volunteer request and First weekend of Lent.

Saturday March 15th

Saturday March 22nd

Saturday March 29th

Come in from the cold winds, have a fresh, hot meal with us, and feel God's blessings of warmth and peace.

Thanks to all who give for Community Meals, all who work and pray for us, and thank you!

For the Community Meals volunteers, Janice Kimball



During this Lent and Easter, we will again be decorating an Easter tree with ornaments that honor people you might wish to commemorate.

Be on the lookout for donation envelopes that you can use to sponsor ornaments. They will be appearing soon in your pew pockets and on the table in the pass through to Dutton Hall.

Crosses and eggs will again be available. We have not yet chosen a third option.



The month of March Missions is continuing their project with the New London Homeless Hospital Center. They are still looking for backpacks, hats and mittens, ponchos, and umbrellas. Please leave your donations in the red wagon. Last month we took over two backpacks, 14 hats, 6 pairs of gloves 6 umbrellas, 7pairs of jeans and 8 fleece blankets.



We are also helping St. Vincent de Paul Place in Norwich and their effort to provide bus passes for community members who need transportation to doctors appointments, job interviews, work, and pick up prescriptions or groceries. A single bus pass is \$1.75 a full day is \$3.50 and a monthly pass is \$40.

If you would like to help this effort, please give cash or check made out to St. Vincent de Paul place with “make a difference” in the memo to one of the mission committee members.

Thank you so much for your support
Beth, Don, Penny, Jill, and Anne



Women's Fellowship is in the planning stage for the **Yard Sale** scheduled for **May 3rd from 9-2**. There will be more information coming with drop-off times.

Our bake sale for this month was cancelled because of the snow storm. Our next bake sale will be **March 9th**. Again we thank all who bake & purchase. Your support is deeply appreciated.

Sally Turner

Puritan Churches in Time of Winter



*Our Church
History*

We think of the church as relatively unchanging, but of course, it isn't. When people say, "We have always done this, it is seldom accurate.

For one thing, church services used to be much longer than they are now.

Our forefathers had Biblical precedent for very long services indeed. Jesus himself continued to talk through dinner times, leading to the miracle of the loaves and fishes (and perhaps providing the example for after church coffee hours).

Such a case is described in Mark 8:1–9 where Jesus said:

Mark 8:3 "If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way—and some of them have come from a great distance."

The Puritans indeed sat through very long services. The tithingman man (also called the beadle) stood near the pulpit and turned an hour glass to mark the length of sermons, which were often two to three hours or even longer.

People so often fell asleep in church that the beadle also had the job to rouse sleeping parishioners. He had a rod with feathers or fox tails on one end, used to tickle sleepers awake. The other end of the rod had a ball on it, to be used to bonk the head of people (such as rowdy children) who disturbed the service.

Another difference from today's churches: The Puritan churches were totally unheated.

On particularly cold Sundays, women brought little foot-stoves to church. These stoves were metal boxes which stood on legs and were filled with hot coals twice a Sunday, first in the morning at home, and a second time during the day's service from the hearth of a house near the church, termed "a noon-house."

In some churches, even these foot warmers were banned, because of the risk of fire.

One would think the introduction of wood stoves in churches would have been welcomed, but they were not.

The metal stove was invented in 1642 in Lynn, Massachusetts, but we do not hear of any church installing an iron stove until the Hadley church had an iron stove put in their meeting-house in 1734.

Other churches were not quick to follow. Many Puritans thought stoves were a defiance of God's managing of the weather.

The "Evening Post" of January 25, 1783, contained a poem of which these four lines show the attitude of the anti stove factions:

"Extinct the sacred fire of love,
Our zeal grown cold and dead,
In the house of God we fix a stove
To warm us in their stead."

Stoves were very controversial in our own church. Mother Bailey of War of 1812 fame objected to the first stove in the Groton Congregational meetinghouse and refused to enter the church after an "ungodly" stove was installed.

The debate on whether to install a stove in Litchfield, CT has even been termed a Great Stove War.

When I might think our service is running a bit long, I remember to be grateful that it is much shorter than those of the Puritans, and there is no beadle to bonk me on the head or tickle my nose if I drift off. I am especially thankful that the sanctuary is toasty warm.

<https://www.bibliovault.org/BV.book.epl?ISBN=9781880684054>

<https://newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/the-puritanical-controversy-over-the-meetinghouse-stove/>

Doris Pulaski, Historian



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.





COMMUNITYMEALS

Community Meals FAQ

From time to time, people have had some questions about how Community Meals operates. We will try to answer some of those questions here.

1. Who does Community Meals serve?

We serve anyone at all who comes to the church on any Saturday during our serving hours of 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. . If meals will not be served on a given Saturday, that will be announced both in the Gargoyle and in church the previous Sunday, if possible. If there is an unscheduled cancellation (like for snow), a notice will be posted on the door to Dutton Hall. Just as at a Groton Congregational Church service, whoever you are, you are welcome here.

2. Do you serve takeout meals?

We deliver takeout meals to church members who are shut-ins or who are ill and request meals. We are not authorized to deliver take out meals to the non-church community.

3. Who certifies Community Meals to serve food?

Ledge Light Health District. They inspect our kitchen periodically and verify that we are in compliance with all their health standards. They also verify that our kitchen manager has taken the required courses and passed the required tests. Our current kitchen manager is Janice Kimball, and her certificate is current. Her documentation is on display in our kitchen where Ledge Light can review it at any time.

4. Why church members only for delivery?

We are not a certified food delivery service to deliver to the general public. Churches are allowed to serve their own members food, even if it is not prepared in a non- Ledge Light District certified kitchen. The case is similar for delivering food. For example, Ledge Light does not forbid churches to have bake sales of home-prepared treats, but Community Meals could not serve the same treats to the general public.

The home delivery part of our program is part of the fulfillment of the church's commitment to support our members who cannot attend church through Parish Visitation. The whole Parish Visitation project is managed by the Deacons.

5. How can I request a meal to be delivered?

Speak with, call, or text either Doris Pulaski or Janice Kimball.

6. How is Community Meals funded?

We are supported by donations of money, food, and the time of volunteers.

We receive a monthly donation of food from the United Way Food District.

Donations of cans and fruit often appear in the kitchen from anonymous donors.

Church members often donate through the small, brown envelopes in the pew pockets, or by using the QR code sheet stored in the pew pockets, and indicating the donation is for Community Meals and not the General Fund. We also have received checks that specify they are a Community Meals donation in the mail to the church.

Diners, staff, and the general public donate money in the Community Meals box.

Sometimes staff members buy food as a donation.

We don't run without donations and hope you will help.

7. How is the money managed?

All Community Meals money is managed by the church Treasurer, Bill Blaisdell. He makes sure all Community Meals monetary donations are posted to the church's Community Meals account. When staff buy food, we submit our grocery store receipts to Bill, and after he reviews the submission, he writes a check from that fund to the person submitting the request.

When money is taken from the donation box, at least two staff members count it together, and submit it, with the total value, to Bill Blaisdell.

Any requests about the state of the fund have to be made to Bill Blaisdell, as he is the only one who knows the whole picture.

We count on him to tell us what we have left in the fund to spend each week.

8. How is the food supply managed?

Staff manage the food supply. Food is stored in the kitchen, in the downstairs freezer, and on the downstairs shelves. We periodically review expiration dates on cans and packages and dispose of expired items. We write the "date opened" on items, as required by health regulations.

9. Why have Community Meals at all?

Community Meals fills a need for people who have trouble affording a good meal, but it serves other purposes as well.

Community Meals is a church community outreach and visibility project. Even though we have been in Groton since 1702, we often meet people who are surprised to find out the church exists, and intends to be active in the general community.

Community Meals fills the need for meals on Saturday. Other programs only serve Monday through Friday.

Community Meals fills the need of lonely people for a social experience.

Community Meals fills the need of people who can't cook very well for a tasty, nourishing meal.

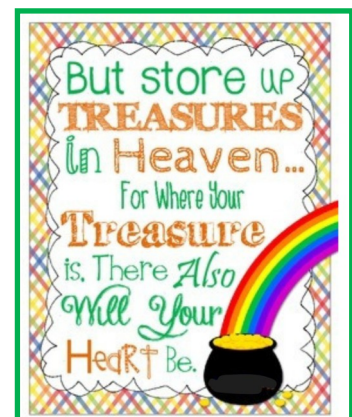
Community Meals provides an entry level for people who want to become more involved with the work of the church. We are happy to have you volunteer for whatever commitment you are willing to make for however frequently or infrequently you want to make it.

Community Meals helps us fulfill Christ's injunction that we feed the hungry. Christ himself provided the best wine at a wedding. He fed all of the 5,000 equally. He told the story of the Prodigal Son who received a feast from his father, despite having not really earned one. And so we serve all who come. We serve them the best food we can make with what we have.

We have found it a very rewarding activity and invite you to join us, either as a diner, donor, or as staff.

It is only thanks to you all that we can continue to serve

Doris Pulaski



March 5, 2025
7PM

ASH WEDNESDAY

GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

162 Monument St.,
Groton, CT

You Are Welcome Here

Women's Fellowship

BAKE SALE

March 9th

YARD SALE

MAY 3, 2025
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

GROTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
162 MONUMENT ST.
GROTON, CT

SAVE THE DATE

SHORELINE RINGERS

Saturday, May 17th
7PM

Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument St.
Groton, CT 06340

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

A free will offering will be taken to benefit the music program.



March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Community Meals Noon-1PM
2 Worship Service 10AM Trustees 11:15AM	3	4	5 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 7PM	6 Handbells 6:30PM Choir 7:30PM	7	8 <i>NO</i> Community Meals
9 <i>Lent Begins</i> Worship Service 10AM	10 Deacons 6PM	11	12 Women's Fellowship NOON	13 Handbells 6:30PM Choir	14	15 Community Meals Noon-1PM
16 Worship Service 10AM Council Meeting 11:30AM	17 Bible Study 11AM	18	19	20 Handbells 6:30PM Choir 7:30PM	21	22 Community Meals Noon-1PM
23 Worship Service 10AM Music Stewardship	24 Bible Study 11AM	25	26	27 Handbells 6:30PM Choir 7:30PM	28	29 Community Meals Noon-1PM
30 Worship Service 10AM 5 for 5 Sunday	31 Bible Study 11AM					

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**