

May 2025

The Gargoyle

A publication of Groton Congregational Church



Dear members and friends,



Christ is Risen! We have come into the joyous Easter season and into Spring as well, after a long Lenten season, and what always seems like a long winter. We can rejoice in the love that God shows us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and through each other.

Our Lenten Bible Study has concluded, with a great group of people joining me on Monday mornings. The next Bible Study will be held at 6:00pm in Dutton Hall on the following Mondays: June 2, June 16, June 23, and July 7. Please feel free to bring your dinner with you. We will be looking at the Book of the Revelation of John, which is the very last book of the Bible in the New Testament. The Revelation of John is highly symbolic, and has been open to all kinds of interpretations over the years. I hope to help unpack this book a bit, so that we can all better understand it. Please come to any or all of these weeks of study!

I will be taking some vacation, from May 1st through May 15th. If you have a pastoral care emergency or any need during this time, please contact a member of the Board of Deacons. Our Deacons are: James Kerrigan (moderator), Chuck Barnum, Sally Turner, Sadie Beatrice, Jean Young, and Lew Clark. I plan to spend most of my vacation in Washington, DC and in New York City.

I wish you the joys of this season of Easter (which on the Church calendar goes until Pentecost Sunday, which is on June 8 this year.) You are all always in my prayers.

Blessings,

Christine

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Highlights

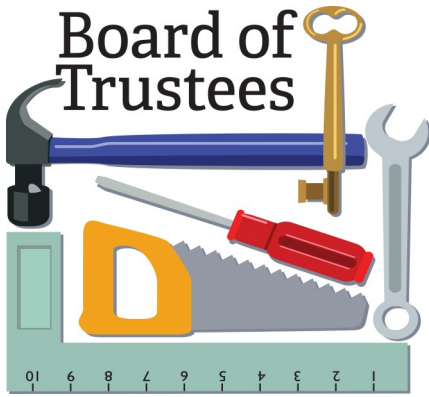
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The Rev. Christine Caton will be on vacation from May 1st through May 15th.

If you have a pastoral care emergency or any other need during this time please contact a member of the Board of Deacons: James Kerrigan (chair), Chuck Barnum, Sadie Beatrice, Jean Young, Sally Turner, Lew Clark, and Doris Pulaski





As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11

In May 2024 issue of the Gargoyle, the Trustees relayed the procedures to follow when seeking permission to “do” something that falls under the purview of the Board, per our Bylaws: “...the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of its financial affairs.”

As a year has gone by, it seems appropriate to again share those procedures.

The following contain excerpts from the May 2024 article as well as updates to said procedures. As we continue on our journey, we continually learn.

First: we encourage members of the various church committees and boards (as well as all church members) to have copies available at their meetings, copies of the Bylaws and Procedures Guidelines for reference purposes. They come in handy for planning events that you or your group may want to sponsor or have general operational questions or need clarification.

When submitting a request to the Trustees, the following procedures should be followed:

- (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, Richard Stottlemeyer, Sue Blaisdell, Ingrid Measimer and Donald Beatrice). Email addresses can be found in the Church Directory.
- (2) In the subject line, please indicate the group or committee name that the request comes from (e.g., Historian, Women’s Fellowship, Deacons, Missions, etc.).
- (3) In the body of the email or letter, describe what it is that is being sought (use of Dutton Hall, permission to raise funds and for whom, use of outside property, etc.). Provide as much information as possible. Provide the who, what, where, when and how. Does your event require a permit from the City? Use of the sanctuary falls under the purview of the Deacons.
- (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. 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, the Trustees will address accordingly.

Regarding placement of signs on the church lawn: it came to our attention a few years ago that as we are located in the historic district of the City, there is a zoning ordinance regarding the length of time that we can have signs on our lawn (size is also a factor). If a church committee would like to advertise

an event (or promote some type of church-related matter) by use of signs on our lawn, they must first seek permission from the Trustees, using the procedure described above. Once approved, the sign(s) *must* be taken down within a 24-hour period.

“Property”, as used in the Bylaws, comes in many forms, not just the physical. Property includes the church’s website and Facebook Page (social media). These are, in essence, a virtual door to our church and contribute to a first and lasting impression. We want to be sure we are following all legal and media rules.

A year ago, the Trustees appointed Sue Blaisdell as our website administrator. Due to the volume of requests and suggestions being made, a new email address has been established through which inquiries, suggestions and photographs can be sent: webmaster@grotoncongregational.org (please do not use Sue’s personal email address for website-related matters). 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. Any requests for updates that are outside of necessary and custom revisions should be forwarded to the Trustees for consideration.

It is important that all content uploaded to the website be in keeping with the image that we want to present as a faith-based community.

If you go to the church’s website (grotonucc.org) you’ll see, in the upper, right-hand corner, a “Give” button. When that button is clicked on, a viewer will be directed to a page where they can donate using PayPal or with a debit or credit card and, once an amount and method of payment is inserted, the donor will be given the option of submitting a note/directive of where (what fund) they would like their donation to be applied to. Additionally, QR Card Codes are located in the pew pockets in the sanctuary.

While a few months away, June is a Five on Five month: five Sundays in the month! Thank you to Jill Martin for bringing the Five on Five initiative to our church some years ago. Anyone making an extra donation can put it in the collection plate or use the pew envelopes if you’d like it to go to a designated fund. If money in the collection plate is not somehow marked for a specific fund, then it will go into the General Fund – there is no other way for the Treasurer to know the donor’s intent.

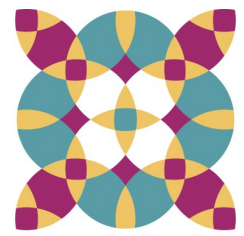
Recently the Trustees updated the policy regarding distribution of keys to the church. The policy is included in this issue of the Gargoyle. Please review. The Property Committee Chair is Dick Stottlemeyer.

The Trustees’ next scheduled meeting is on Sunday, May 4, 2025.

Submitted in love,

Cathy Johnson

Faith Moving Us Forward



DEACONS

The reading of chapter 20 in the Gospel of John is probably familiar to most people. It's the passage that made "Doubting Thomas" a household term. It's evening on the first Easter Sunday and Jesus appears to the disciples-- except for Thomas, who wasn't there at the time. When the disciples tell Thomas they've seen Jesus, he says, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger in the wounds left by the nails, and put my hand into his side, I won't believe." The next week, Jesus shows up again, and accommodates Thomas. Scripture does not mention Thomas actually touching the wounds as he had said.

While researching various resources, I found some interesting spin on this passage. Some praise Thomas for his doubt and I found this (no credits given, unfortunately): "Doubt is like wind in the sails of faith. It pushes us forward." An interesting thought.

Actually, doubt and faith are polar opposites. Jesus tells Thomas in John 20:27, "No more disbelief. Believe! (CEB)" The NRSV translates it, "Do not doubt but believe" The NIV goes with, "Stop doubting and believe," and the ESV with, "Do not disbelieve, but believe."

The original language seems to bear this out. The Greek word translated *believe* is an adjective, *pistos* (πιστος). The word translated *disbelief* is also an adjective, *apistos* (απιστος). (Retaining adjectives in the translation would result in less natural English: "Don't be disbelieving, be believing.") The prefix α- in Greek, like a- in English, usually expresses negation or absence.

So how is it that Jesus tells Thomas to stop doing something, yet some modern commentators cheer Thomas on when he does it? It may be because we probably see ourselves in Thomas. Doubting is human nature-- it's normal. And we want some kind of assurance that *we're* normal. Nevertheless, normal isn't always a good thing. The American Heritage Dictionary defines normal as, "Conforming with, adhering to, or constituting a norm, standard, pattern, level, or type; typical." But, when it comes to matters of faith, I don't want to be normal or even typical. I want to be extraordinary -- unconventional even. In the Bible, when Jesus commended people for having great faith, it wasn't because they achieved the norm -- it's because they far exceeded it!

I don't want to judge or be too hard on Thomas, but believing something only when you see it isn't a very high level of faith. In fact, when considered in light of what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:7, ("We live by faith and not by sight"), it could be argued that it's not really faith at all. Think about it. Isn't it easy to believe something once you've seen it, just like it's easy to love people who love you?

But, no one should feel an overwhelming sense of guilt for having doubts. Doubt can be a useful thing. And what's nice about faith is that we can get more of it. So rather than looking at doubt as "wind in the sails of faith," perhaps we should look at it as a kind of spiritual resistance training. Everyone should be honest about their doubts, but they shouldn't be content to hang on to those doubts and never move beyond them.

As God sent Jesus, God sends us this day.

Peace be with each of you during this Easter time.

Chuck Barnum, Deacon

This year on Trans Visibility Day the church displayed our flag holder with Trans Flags to share with the community

Groton Congregational is an Open and Affirming Church.



Celebrate Our Heritage

Church Open House Day is Coming!

We are in the process of organizing activities at the church for CT Open House Day, June 14, 2025. Please contact Doris Pulaski if you would like to help us organize or would like to help us tell visitors about our historic church on CT Open House Day.

We plan to have items to hand out to visitors, including a history of the church, and coloring pages for children. There will be musical performances from Janice Kimball and Sue Stottlemeyer throughout the day.

As part of the preparation for the Open House, the history booklet is being updated.

Doris Pulaski

Church Historian

Easter Tree

Thanks to all who made our Easter Tree a reality, especially Penny Sullivan, who assembled the tree, and all the donors listed below.

Please spend a moment reading their names and prayerfully remember the names of those who they chose to honor.

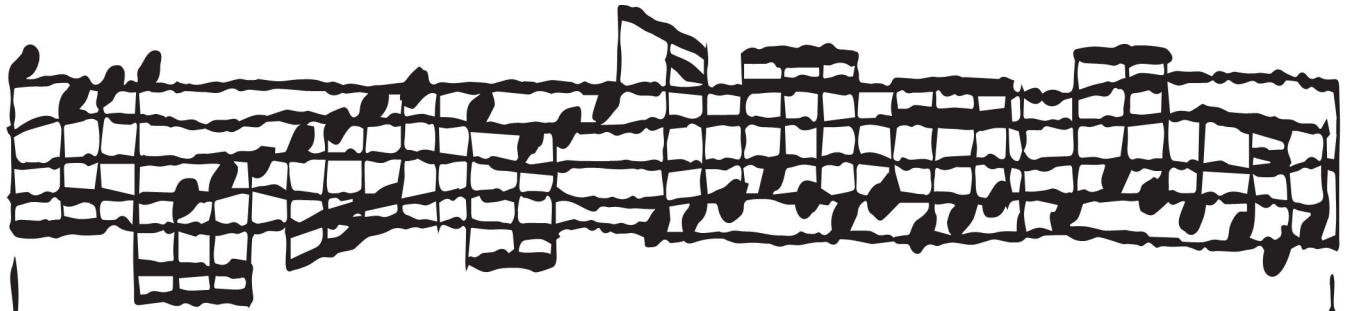


Donors

Sally Turner
Constance Stoddard
Constance Stoddard
Penny & Bill Sullivan
Doris Pulaski
Christine Caton
Christine Caton
Christine Caton
Lannie & Lew Clark
Lannie & Lew Clark
Lannie & Lew Clark
Lannie Clark
Lew Clark
Janice Kimball
Richard & Sue Stottlemeyer
Beverly Stagg
Phyllis Meyer
Alma Dougherty
Anonymous

Honorees

Burt Turner
Charlotte Stoddard
Harold Stoddard
Shane Sullivan
William C. Spicer, Jr.
Blanche & Les Caton
Blanche & Le Burton Beebe
Ida and Irving Caton
Milo
Fudd
Ollie
Lew Clark
Lannie Clark
Kimball & Whipple Families
Thankful for Our Church
Helen & Angelo Fontanella
Fred Meyer
Jim Dougherty
GCC Pastors



Music Committee

Our choir and bell ringers under the direction of Sue Stottlemeyer's direction gave an awesome presentation on Easter morning. Thank you for such a joyful and uplifting program!

On March 23rd many of us enjoyed the Bach Extravaganza performed on our Moeller Pipe Organ by Brian Hoffman in memory of Dr John P. Anthony. The second part of the program offered images of earth taken from space set to music by Bach which was awesome! A free will offering of approximately \$2,000 was collected and donated to our ongoing Organ Repair Fund.

We are now looking forward to presenting a program by the Shoreline Ringers on Saturday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. they always give an excellent performance enjoyed by people of all ages. A free will offering will be taken that will go to the organ repair fund. We remind everyone that the Organ does need more expensive repair work. Refreshments will be available after the concert. We encourage everyone to attend this entertaining evening.

Music Committee



As the saying goes, April showers bring May flowers. Our cold and wet Spring this year is sure to result in all kinds of flowers.

In Luke 12:27, Jesus says: "Consider how the flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these."

Isaiah 40:7-8 reminds us: "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of God endures forever."

As we navigate through our earthly lives, may we trust in God and bloom as flowers in his garden.

Peace,

Kevin Measimer



Bible Readings for May 2025

4 May **Third Sunday of Easter**

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30; Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19

11 May **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

18 May **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

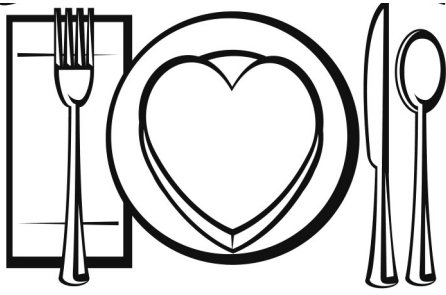
Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; **Revelation 21:1-6;** John 13:31-35

25 May **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Rev. 21:10, 22-22:5; John 14:23-29 or *John 5:1-9*

29 May **Ascension Day**

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47 or *Psalm 93;* Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53



Community Meals

Community Meals serves all who come. We hope you will join us for a meal on Saturdays, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please remember community meals is supported entirely by donations.

There is a collection box in our fellowship hall.

You may donate by using a pew pocket envelope, checking the community meals option, and placing your envelope in the Sunday collection plate.

You can also donate by going to the church website, choosing the Give option, and putting "Community Meals" in the Optional Note field.

If you would like to help cook, serve, or clean up, please contact either Doris Pulaski or Janice Kimball

We look forward to serving you.

Community Meals Schedule

April 26 - ham & scalloped potatoes, vegetable, salad, dessert

May 3 - Community Meals Cancelled Due to Church Yard Sale

May 10 - TBA

May 17 - Enchilada casserole, salad, dessert

May 24 - Picnic barbecue, if weather permits

May 31 - TBA





Memorial Day

Word Search



- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| AMERICAN | HONOR |
| ANTHEM | MAY |
| CEMETERY | MEMORIAL |
| CEREMONY | OBSERVANCE |
| COMMEMORATE | PATRIOTIC |
| DECORATION | REMEMBRANCE |
| FALLEN | SACRIFICE |
| FLAGS | SALUTE |
| FLOWERS | SERVICE |
| FREEDOM | SOLDIERS |
| GRAVE | TAPS |
| HALF MAST | VETERANS |
| HEROES | WAR |
| HOLIDAY | |

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir	2	3 9a - 2p Yard Sale
4 10a Worship 11:15a Trustees	5	6	7	8 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir	9	10
11 10a Worship	12 6p Deacons	13	14	15 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir	16	17 7p Shoreline Ringers
18 9a Missions 10a Worship	19	20	21	22 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir	23	24
25 10a Worship 11:15a Music Stewardship	26	27	28	29	30	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.

162 Monument Street
Groton, CT 06340

860-445-7409

www.grotonucc.org

office@grotoncongregational.org

Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
9 am to 2 pm



Bring Your Family to Our Family.

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.

THE REVEREND CHRISTINE CATON

Sunday Worship begins at 10am.

Stay for Coffee Hour After Worship