

The Gargoyle

September 2025

A publication of Groton Congregational Church



Dear members and friends,

This is the time of the year when things begin to pick up. Vacations are over, children of all ages go back to school. And before we know it, all the holidays will be upon us!

I know that some of you have been away from church for the summer for various reasons (no judgement here!), but I hope the return to cooler and crisp weather and the routine of autumn will bring you back to worship on Sundays. We have missed those of you who have not been with us. As a reminder: no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are always welcome here.

I am currently taking a United Church of Christ polity and history class, which is required for me to receive dual standing in the UCC and the PCUSA. It is a very interesting class for me, but is taking up a great deal of my time. I am still, of course, available to you for any reason, if you want to talk about something serious or important, or just want to drink tea or coffee or grab lunch and chit-chat, let me know.

I want to share with you a prayer written by the Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin, who is the Executive Conference Minister of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. This is the conference in which our church holds membership. This is a beautiful and moving prayer, along with prayer suggestions, for the children of Gaza, who are facing famine and war and so much destruction.

A call to prayer

The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin

The cries of starving children in Gaza are not distant echoes, they are a piercing call to our conscience. History will remember how the powerful chose indifference, how policy and hatred conspired to turn bread into weapons and water into scarcity.

But history will also remember whether the Church lifted its voice or kept silent.

We cannot allow this moment to pass us by.

To claim Christ is to stand with the hungry,

to defend the innocent, to resist the machinery of death and destruction wherever it raises its hand.

We must pray.

We must lament.

And we must act with courage, with clarity, and with love that refuses to be silent.

Anything less is complicity.

(continued)

A prayer for the children of Gaza

by The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin

O God of the widow and the orphan,
God who heard Hagar's cry in the wilderness,
hear now the cries of the children whose bodies grow weak from hunger.
Break the grip of those who use food as a weapon, shatter the hands that sow destruction,
and stir Your Church from its slumber.
Do not let us be comfortable with silence,
but set our lips aflame with truth,
our hearts with courage,
and our lives with the work of peace.
Until every child can sleep with bread in their belly and hope in their future,
O God, let it be so. Ashe and Amen

Suggested active prayers

by The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin

*And if your spirit is aching, but you re unsure what to do:
Start with prayer that refuses to look away.
Speak aloud in your church, your community, your networks: Say this is wrong.
Call your representatives and demand an end to the blockade of food and aid.
Support humanitarian organizations getting food and medicine to children.
Silence and confusion will not feed the hungry.
Action, even imperfect action, can.*

I hope this beautiful prayer will challenge you and move you in the days and weeks ahead. I continue to pray for each and every one of you.

In Christ's Love,

Rev. Christine





Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? Ecclesiastes 4:11

With the warm weather we've had this summer, it's a bit difficult to think about cooler temperatures and the upcoming heating season, but deal with it we must.

Beginning in September, our monthly heating costs increase significantly. But we need to ensure our building remains warm, welcoming, and fully operational for worship, ministry, and community activities.

Recently the Trustees voted to again sign a yearly contract with Anderson Oil for fuel that heats our building. Also approved was paying \$300 to cap the per gallon price at \$3.14. We have for a number of years used Anderson Oil and gone with the price cap option, and both choices have benefited us from both a service and cost-wise basis. Based on past years, the projected installment payments will be approximately \$1,095 per month during the colder heating months.

As we approach the fall and look ahead to the upcoming heating season, this is an opportunity to remind ourselves that every pledge and every gift, no matter the size, matters. Faithful giving enables us to meet these needs, care for our space, and continue the good work we are called to do together.

If you've already made a pledge, thank you for your ongoing commitment. If you're considering a pledge or able to increase your support, now is a particularly meaningful time to do so.

Together, we can continue to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us and ensure our church remains a beacon of warmth, physically and spiritually, in the months ahead.

The Trustees' next scheduled meeting is on Sunday, October 5, 2025.

Submitted in love,
Cathy Johnson
Chair, Board of Trustees





This month, we remember the members of this church and the other members of the greater Groton Community who fought at the brutal Battle of Groton Heights at Fort Griswold on September 6, 1781. Following the battle, 85 Americans were dead, five more were dying, and 36 were severely wounded. Families who still worship at our church lost many family members, most disastrously the Avery and the Perkins families. It is reported that all adult males of this church except Rev. Aaron Kinne and Deacon Morgan perished then.

This battle was the last battle of the Northern campaign of the Revolutionary War, but it is seldom spoken of outside of South Eastern Connecticut. But here, where it happened, it is always remembered.

The hatred the survivors had for the British and for Benedict Arnold, who led them, burned darkly.

Capt. Solomon Perkins, who was dreadfully wounded himself, died Nov. 4th 1809, in the 81st year of his age. He lost Simeon, his 22 year old son, at the battle, and recorded his anger on his gravestone:

**Ye British tyrants that have power,
and butchers wet with humane gore,
judgement must come and you
will be rewarded for your Cruelty.**

In New London, they are commemorating the Battle by burning Benedict Arnold in effigy again this year. He burned New London, and they still respond by burning him.

<https://www.flocktheatre.org/arnold2025>

"As part of the CONNECTICUT MARITIME HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Free to the public

- 7:30pm- The March of the Traitor
- Meet at Bank St Connection (next to the Social Bar & Kitchen)
- March down Bank St.
- Approx 8 pm- The Burning of the Traitor

However in Groton, there is always a service of remembrance at Fort Griswold. Our pastor and choir participate in honoring the sacrifice of those long ago patriots whose tombstones are to be found in Colonel Ledyard and Starr Burying Ground Cemeteries

Instead of commemorating the anger, bitterness, and grievance of the past against those who harmed us, we honor the dead. I think that is a more Christian way to do: after all, consider what we are told to do in Romans 12:14-21:

"14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;[c] never be conceited. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it[d] to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Remember this scripture applies to our divisive current days as well as to past grievances.

May we all be soldiers for peace and harmony.

Music Committee



Summer is winding down. It's "back to school time" and time to return to busier schedules, cooler weather, and more indoor activities. This is a reminder that choir practice and handbell choir practice begins Thursday, September 4 at 6:30 for bells and 7:30 for choir. Do you have a neighbor or friend who loves music but doesn't have a way to express it in a tangible way? Why not invite them to come to a practice session to see how much they might enjoy the time with other music lovers?

Our beloved organ is still in need of some repair work. A little more than a third of the approximately \$38,000 has been raised. Donations may be made any time simply by letting the treasurer know to apply any amount you choose to be deposited to the organ fund. We plan to hold some fundraising events this fall and winter and would welcome your ideas that would help us raise funds. If you have any suggestions for an event, please feel free to share it with Sue Stottlemeyer or any member of the music committee. Members are: Sally Turner, Janice Kimball, Joan Jordan, Steve Tavernier and Florence Barnum.

The Bell Choir and the Choir will return to rehearsals on Thursday, September 4.

The Bell Choir is always looking for new people to join them. Never played bells before? Not a problem. Most of the bell choir members never played bells before. They will teach you.

The Choir is also always looking for new members. They are a very friendly group and love welcoming new people. They sing a variety of types of music. There is something for everyone.

Bell Choir rehearsals are at Thursdays at 6:30 pm and the Choir rehearses Thursdays at 7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome.



Stewardship



Very soon our fall Stewardship campaign will begin. You will hear messages at church from volunteers, telling you about this year's campaign, about how much our church means to them, and how you can help the church in its mission.

And you will receive a letter from the Stewardship Committee, describing this year's campaign, with your pledge card enclosed.

So it is time to be thinking how much you would like to contribute, and how much you can afford to contribute.

When you choose to make your pledge, you will also choose how you will make your donations. If you would like traditional envelopes to put in the collection plate each Sunday, please check the box on the pledge card to request envelopes, and we will be sure you receive your envelopes.

If you prefer to use BillPay, Zelle, or PayPal to make your donations, but are not sure how to do that, we will be glad to help you set that up.

Of course, you can always mail checks to:

Groton Congregational Church
162 Monument Street
Groton, CT 06340

Thank you for all you do to help our church survive and flourish,

Doris Pulaski, Stewardship Committee





Community Meals will be serving every Saturday in the month of September.

September 6 - pork slices cooked with apples and gravy, served with mashed potatoes, and salad

September 13 - baked turkey over homemade stuffing, with glazed carrots and salad

September 20 - TBD

September 27 - TBD

Because of cuts in federal support for food pantries which support meal programs like ours, we are already seeing a decrease in the amount of groceries we receive from United Way.

And the cost of food at the grocery stores has been going up weekly.

In times like these, we are especially grateful for donations of food, money, and volunteers' time to help us provide tasty meals to all who are our guests at Community Meals.

This week we particularly need regular coffee, apple juice, or other juice.

In thanks, here is our baker's recipe for:

Molasses Sugar Cookies

Heat oven to 375 ° F.

3/4 cup shortening

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup molasses

1 egg

2 tsp. baking soda

2 cup sifted flour

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1 tsp. cinnamon*

1/2 tsp. salt

Melt shortening in a 3 quart or larger pan on low heat. Let cool. Add sugar, molasses, and egg. Beat well. Sift flour with baking soda, spices, and salt and add these dry ingredients to the first mixture.

Chill.

Form into balls one inch in diameter, roll the balls in granulated sugar, and place on a greased cookie sheet two inches apart.

4 Bake at 375°F for 8-10 minutes.

* If you like, 1/2 tsp. cloves can be included with the flour mixture.

Thanks to all of you for your support!

Yours in Christ,

The Community Meals Team



On Sunday, September 7, at 6 pm, there will be a Candlelight Remembrance Ceremony at Fort Griswold. It is to remember and honor those who were injured and died at the Fort during the Battle of Groton Heights. Quite a few members of our church were involved in the battle – most were killed. Our choir will be singing for the event and Rev Christine will be part of the ceremonies.



Did you know that you can watch our worship services online?

On Sundays, we live stream the service at 10 am on Facebook.

On Mondays, the service is posted to YouTube. You can watch previous service on YouTube at well.



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

At a recent memorial service the following resources about suicide were shared , This is an important topic that people are afraid to talk about and afraid to get help.

There are a number of resources for suicide prevention. This is one group. Another group this church has supported is To Write Love on Her Arms.

If you or someone you know needs help, please reach out. If you need help with dealing with the lost, please reach out.

RESOURCES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST SOMEONE TO SUICIDE



RESOURCES FOR THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING



OUR MISSION

**To Save Lives and Bring Hope
to those affected by suicide.**

**CONTACT US/FIND YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER/WALKS
NEAR YOU:
www.afsp.org**



**RESOURCES TO START & CONTINUE A
#REALCONVO ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.
SCAN BELOW TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN
TALK AWAY THE DARK**



SEPTEMBER 2025




SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 	2	3	4 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Choir	5	6 12n Community Meals
7 10a Worship 11:15a Stewardship 6 pm Fort Griswold Battle of Groton Heights Ceremony	8 6p Deacons	9	10	11 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Choir	12	13 12n Community Meals
14 10a Worship 11:30a Church Council	15	16	17	18 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Choir	19	20 12n Community Meals
21 10a Worship 11:15a Missions	22	23  Gargoyle Deadline	24	25 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Choir	26	27 12n Community Meals
28 10a Worship 11:15 Music	29	30				



Groton Congregational Church

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 10 am
Stay for Coffee Hour After Worship

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 the tradition of caring, comfort, and support for all those within the Groton Congregational Church family.

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pastor@grotoncongregational.org

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday