



Pastor's Gargoyle Article for June 2026

As the summer season approaches, life seems to slow down a bit. There's more time to go to the beach, to walk in a park, to swim in a pool, to travel somewhere you love or somewhere you've always wanted to go.

Even in the life of the church the rhythm slows down a bit. But there is still plenty going on that you won't want to miss. The most important thing is, of course, weekly worship. We never take a break from worshipping God. Every Sunday at 10:00am we gather together as the Body of Christ to worship the God who created us, who loves and saves us, and who supports and upholds us. I hope you will continue to join us during these "lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer!"

In July I will be holding a class for people interested in formally joining this congregation as members. This will be a time to explore what it means to be a member of the Groton Congregational Church, and by extension, the United Church of Christ. This class will be held on Sunday, July 12 and Sunday, July 19, after worship. We will meet for about an hour each week. You will want to attend both of these classes if at all possible. After the classes, if you decide that yes, membership is for you, then you will meet with our Deacons. After this meeting, you will then be formally received into membership during a worship service. So if you've been thinking about joining, please come with your questions, your doubts, your hopes, and take this time to discern whether membership is right for you at this time. If you've have any questions, please let me know. And if you plan to attend the classes, do let me know that as well.

Please do continue to let me know if you are in need of prayer, or have a spiritual concern that you would like to discuss with me. I am usually available by appointment to meet with you on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. I am in the office on Mondays and Thursdays for a few hours, but it is always better to make an appointment if you can. My time is flexible, but since I am part-time, appointments make for better planning on my end. Emergencies and urgent needs excepted, of course.

I hope that your summer is sunny and warm, with enough rain to cool things off from time to time. Blessings to you all. You are all in my prayers.

Rev. Christine





*"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." **Romans 8:28***

The work of the church (both literally and figuratively) continues. Many thanks to the Property Committee (Dick Stottlemeyer, Bill Blaisdell, Sue Blaisdell) for their attention to the never-ending maintenance and upkeep of our building.

The contract for the Lumos Experience (reported in last month's Gargoyle) has been signed. There will be two performances on July 25, 2026 (music of the Beatles performed by a string trio) and proceeds will go to the Organ Repair Fund. Lumos manages the ticket sales and marketing for this event, but we (Groton Congregational) will also be sharing information on various platforms.

A few more tweaks are needed to the updated Building Use and Fees document, but it is well on its way to completion.

The Trustees will not be meeting in June; their next meeting scheduled is July 12, 2026. If in the interim there are any time-sensitive or urgent issues, please let the Trustees know and they will address.

Submitted in love,

Cathy Johnson
Chair, Board of Trustees



"Friends of Silver Lake Formed"

Believe Silver Lake is important? Was your life transformed there? Is outdoor ministry essential in a time when Earth is in trouble?

Friends of Silver Lake, Inc. is a new nonprofit formed to unite the dispersed community that values Silver Lake and to work toward a vision of future ministry in line with its historic mission. Created just after the announcement of Silver Lake's closing in November, FOSL is moving with strength to continue this sacred legacy's ministry. It is a membership organization and we encourage you to join in this future-oriented ministry. Whether you were ever a camper or simply loved retreats, served as a volunteer or just know others whose lives were transformed there, we hope you'll go to <https://www.friendsofsilverlake.com> and click on "Stay connected" to learn more and join this important movement of the Holy Spirit!



Covenants

We perhaps don't talk or think about our covenants with God and each other as often as we should. I think this season following Pentecost is a good time to reflect on these covenants that are the foundation of our church.

As defined by *Merriam-Webster*, any covenant is "a formal, solemn, and binding agreement or promise between two or more parties." A religious covenant is "typically relational, based on mutual trust, and involves a deep, long-term commitment to a common goal." Both parties make solemn promises to each other.

There have been several covenants between God and humanity. Each new covenant redefines the relationship between God and his people. Religious scholars disagree about exactly how many times God made covenants, but several are well known to all of us.

God promised Noah that he would never use a flood to destroy the earth again and sealed his promise with the rainbow.

God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised to bless Abraham's descendants and provide them with the land of Canaan. In return, Abraham's descendants agree to "walk before God and be blameless".

God next made a covenant with Moses at Mount Sinai. God gave the Israelites the Torah (the Law). By accepting these commandments, the Israelites became a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The Israelites agreed to obey the law.

Then God promised David that the Messiah would come of his line.

The whole of the New Testament is often referred to as "The "New Covenant" (and if you turn to the fly leaf separating the Old from the New Testament in your pew Bible, "The New Covenant " is printed there.) Jesus fulfilled the covenants and promises God made to Abraham, Noah, Moses and David. In the new covenant, because of Jesus, we receive the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit to help us live our lives righteously, work with Jesus as he renews the world.

The New Testament is not the last word on Covenants in Congregational and UCC churches. Because each church is semi-independent, each church is likely to have its own foundational covenant. The Pilgrims had the Mayflower Compact. Groton Congregational has its original 1811 Covenant, a copy of which is in the inside cover of your hymnal.

Here it is reprinted in full, in case you have never chanced upon it:

The First Church of Christ, Congregational Groton, Connecticut

COVENANT. "Humbly hoping that we are subjects of the new birth of that faith in Christ, which works by love and purifies the heart, and of that repentance which is unto life; we avouch the Lord Jehovah to be our God, Jesus Christ the Son of God to be our Saviour and the Holy Ghost to be our Sanctifier.

Depending on Divine Grace for sanctification, consolation, and spiritual strength, and receiving the word of God, as the only rule of our faith and practice, we submit to the brotherly watch and discipline of this Church of Christ, and engage on our parts to comfort, assist, warn and reprove its members as becometh the faithful followers of Jesus.

We do now solemnly give up ourselves and all that we have unto God, promising that we will endeavor to walk as becometh the Gospel of Christ, that we may give no cause for others to speak evil of it on our account, but that the name of God may be glorified in us. Thus we engage.

Covenant adopted 18th of August, 1811

The congregation makes promises not only to God, but to each other.

Also, because we believe God is still speaking, and we are still listening, from time to time we too, publish new covenants. Groton Congregational published a new covenant on March 10, 2019.

Here is that March 10, 2019, covenant in full:

Covenant of Intentionality

We, the members of Groton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, covenant one with another and before God, to support one another and to build Christian relationships. We will always listen to the opinions and feelings of all persons, treating each person with respect and decency in all our relationships. Today and in the future, we commit to offering our support, our concerns, and our prayers for discernment in all aspects of our life together. We shall seek and offer forgiveness freely, not holding on to alienations, wounds, and past perceptions or transgressions. We shall seek to follow Christ's words, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Lk 6:32) To this covenant, we sign our intentions and affirmation on this day, the 10th day of March 2019.

It is a good idea to read through what we have promised at least once a year and recommit ourselves to those vows we made to God and to each other. We should evaluate whether we are living up to our promises, and consider how we can better keep them in our daily lives.

Doris Pulaski

MISSIONS

The Missions Committee is continuing to support Community Threads for the Groton Human Services. They are only accepting donations for the current season. Please leave your new or good condition clothing and accessories in either of the red wagons.

We are waiting to hear back on their summer food program for the children once they are out of school.

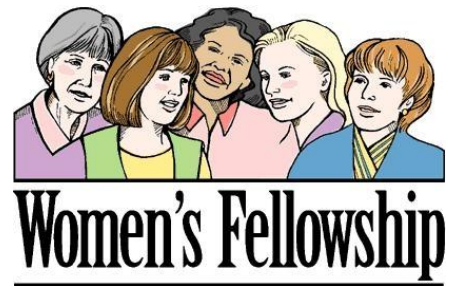
We are also now accepting donations of new T-shirts and socks for the Homeless Hospitality Center in New London, as well as individually wrapped snacks.

Please see James, Jean, Sadie or myself if you have any questions.

Thank you for your generosity so far.

Donald Beatrice, chair

Women's Fellowship will not hold meetings from June-August. Our Ladies night-out will be June 9th at the La Luna restaurant which is located in the Holiday Inn on Governor Winthrop Blvd., New London. We will meet at 6 p.m. Our meals will be ordered off the menu & they will provide individual checks. There is a sign up sheet on the midway bulletin board. Hope to see a large group there. It is a great chance to talk to everyone. Have a great summer. See you in September.



Sally Turner



HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Holiday Craft Bazaar for Women's Fellowship

We are beginning to gather our thoughts and ideas for the fall bazaar. Once the yard sale is over, we will start requesting specific donations for the bazaar.

If anyone is interested in crafting with us, please let Jean or Sadie know. If you have any questions, please come see us

Thank you,

Jean Young and Sadie Beatrice



Community Meals will be serving meals the first Saturday of the month during June, July, and August.

That is:

June 6th

July 4th

August 1st

We will also be serving on August 29th.

Our Mission Statement

"Living out the gospel of Matthew 25:35 by providing meals and building a welcoming community."

Matthew 25:35:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

Stewardship

Thanks to all who helped decorate our church for Easter and who helped us remember the loved ones they wanted to commemorate

This fund raiser earned \$265 for the General Fund and celebrated the lives of 25 beings important to our church members.

The other decorations for the tree and the large flower pot that we use every year are in the Craft Room downstairs in the church. Penny Sullivan has promised to provide new white branches for next year's tree!



Help to brighten Mary Alapa's day. Take time to drop a card or letter to her.

Mary Alapa

235 Lestertown Road Rm 116A

Groton, CT 06340

If you know anyone else that should be added to this list please contact the office.

Connecticut Open House Day is Coming!

We are in the process of organizing activities at the church for CT Open House Day, on June 13, 2026. We plan to be open from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



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. If you have any ideas about how to make this a better event, we'd love to hear them!

Cathy Johnson has promised to lend us historical items from her collection again this year, for which we are very grateful. Sue Stottlemeyer will demonstrate our organ to visitors again this year.

We plan to give visitors a copy of our booklet about the church's history, bottles of water, and flags. We have coloring pages and word finds for any little kids who come.

We plan to supply a quick lunch for volunteers- either grinders or pizza, chips, and drinks.

Doris Pulaski



Three cheers for our choirs and choir director for doing an awesome job since their formal start in September. We all appreciate their dedication, talent, and commitment. Now it is time for the summer break and a "pick-up choir". No formal weekly practices, but anyone who would like to sing with the choir is invited to come in at 9:30 on Sunday morning for a short warm up session prior to the service.

Donations large and small toward the organ repair fund are always welcome.

Connecticut's Open House Day is scheduled for June 13th. The Church will be open from 10:00 to 2:00 and Sue will be demonstrating the organ for anyone interested. Just stop by anytime.

Don't forget the ringing of church bells all over the country on July 4th to celebrate 250 years of America.



Sue will be playing our tower bells and everyone is welcome to listen to the joyous sound.



June is Pride Month

June is Pride Month throughout the world, but it had its start in the United States. After the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 in New York City, communities throughout the country started commemorating the event with parades and other activities. It was officially recognized as a pride month in the United States by President Bill Clinton in 1999, the 20th anniversary of the riots.

The United Church of Christ has a long history of advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion and has a number of firsts, including the ordination of an openly gay minister (1972) and being the first mainline Protestant denomination to formally affirm marriage equality (2005). Many are familiar with the open and affirming (ONA) movement which fostered and promoted welcoming congregations. Not every UCC congregation has an ONA designation, and many congregations had interesting journeys as they worked through the ONA process. The beauty of the UCC is that much is left to the individual congregations and their processes, the UCC does not dictate. *

When we (Thomas and I) moved to New London in 2023, one of our first challenges was to find a new home church. My search first started with the internet, and I visited web sites of churches in the area, looking at information about their music programs, activities, and services. I also looked to see if the church had an ONA designation. My next step was to visit the churches to see in person what each church was about. The GCC members were welcoming, there was music, there were activities, and there was the ONA designation. And now I am making my first contribution to the church newsletter.

This June Pride is happening in an interesting context. This Federal administration, and many states and local communities, are taking steps to exclude transgender people from our lives. There are calls to roll back the 2015 marriage equality ruling of the Supreme Court and leave such decisions to the individual states. Universities and schools have been directed to eliminate courses and degrees which address LGBTQ+ topics (along with other inclusionary initiatives). There is at least one state that is eliminating pride month. Symbols of the gay movement are being removed, and the Stonewall National Historic Site was prohibited from flying pride flags (they flew them anyway).

I have appreciated very much the efforts the GCC has made to welcome all people and to recognize such events as Pride month. Last summer, I loved taking pictures of the light pole with all the pride flags flying on it, knowing that such an activity could bring some challenges to us. I fear that we will face more challenges as the national landscape changes and members of our community are subjected to initiatives which devalue them and threaten them. And I know the GCC members will continue to love all of their neighbors and support their LGBTQ+ “family members”.

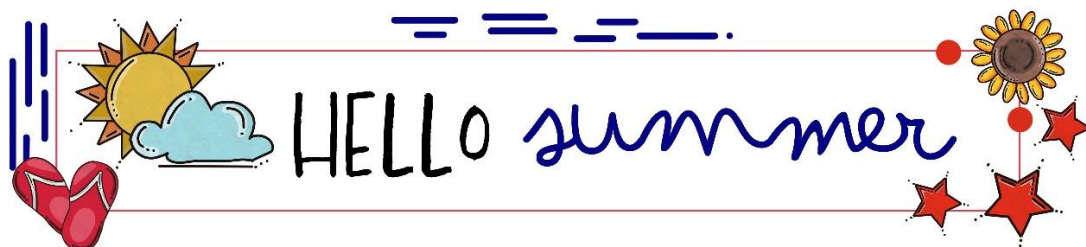
Michael Wiseman



**Groton Congregational became an Open and Affirming Church in February 2018*



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 12 pm Community Meals
7 10a Worship	8	9 Ladies Night Out 6 pm La Luna, NL	10	11	12	 13 10 am – 2 pm
14 10a Worship 11:15a Trustees	14 6 pm Deacons	16	17	18	19	20 11 am Service for Brian Thomson
21 10a Worship	22	23  Gargoyle Deadline	24	25	26	27 Wedding
28 10a Worship 11:15a Stewardship 11:15a 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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Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday
9 am to 2 pm