First Congregational Church United Church of Christ 554 Main Street Portland, CT 06480-1104 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED Non-Profit ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT #574 Middletown, CT 06457







September 2019

The First Congregational Church 554 Main Street Portland, Connecticut 06480

The Reverend Jane E. Hawken Office (860) 342-3244 Cell phone 860 918-5415 Email jhawken@sbcglobal.net Office Email address first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net Web site www.firstchurchportlandct.org Please look us up on Facebook, The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION Ann Labby (860) 614-4826 labbyannm@gmail.com

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND ORGANIST Kasha Breau Cell (860) 983-6065

OFFICE MANAGER Margaret Stewart Office (860) 342-3244 Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

CHILDCARE PROVIDER Mary Clark

CHURCH SEXTON Ann Labby

NURSERY SCHOOL (860) 342-1111 lstchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com

MEMORIAL GARDEN SUPERINTENDENT Mike Wache

FELLOWSHIP HALL (860) 342-1111

THE BUILDING IS ACCESSIBLE. Assistive Hearing Devices available.

The church has two Automated External Defibrillators (AED). They are located by the sanctuary front door and by the exit door of Fellowship Hall.

Reminder: We return to our 10:00 a.m. worship time in the sanctuary on Sunday, September 8.

September 2019

- 9/1 Ecumenical Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Mass On The Grass Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland
- 9/8 Celebration Sunday!
 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Worship, Communion,
 Church School, Pass-It-On Food Cart
 Worship Assistant: Mike Enright
 Communion Presenters: Karen Rettich,
 Megan Ettlinger, Mike Enright, Cari Klick,
 Nancy Johnson
 Deacon: Connie Wache
 Coffee Hour: Christian Education
- 9/15 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School Worship Assistant: Mike Enright Deacon: Connie Wache Coffee Hour: Karen Rettich & Nancy Johnson
- 9/22 Bible Sunday 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal 10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School Worship Assistant: George Law Deacon: Karen Rettich Coffee Hour: Connie Wache & Sandy Baines
- 9/29 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School
 Worship Assistant: Mike Enright
 Deacon: Megan Ettlinger
 Coffee Hour: Jan Poet & Diane Burgess

September 2019 Gratitude Journal ~A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

- ~ All who provided refreshments for summer Coffee Hour.
- ~ Rev. Toni Smith, Faith Fraulino, Karen Rettich and Rev. John Hall for leading the worship services in August.
- ~ **Those who hosted** the summer refreshments table following worship.
- ~ **The Board of Deacons** for their help with participation in the summer Sunday worship services.
- ~ Grace Winakor for her Bible studies, worship assistance, and July sermon.
- ~ **Nancy Gondek and the Flower Committee** for planting and watering the brownstone planter in the back of the church.
- ~ **All who contributed** so generously to the "Feed and Read" supplies for the local children through the Portland Food Bank.
- ~ All who support the church in so many ways during the year!
- ~ **The Memorial Garden Committee and Superintendent Mike Wache** for all their work to maintain and oversee the Memorial Garden.
- ~ **The Board of Trustees** for their assistance with summer maintenance and floor care.

Flowers Needed for Sunday Services

Please consider dedicating flowers in honor of, in memory of, or in celebration of someone or something special. You can make a dedication by

contacting Brenda Rossignol, the Flower Committee representative for September, at 860 342-4761. You may also use the sign up poster in Fellowship Hall or by calling the church office.



The First Church Nursery School Honors Sarah Richards

Sarah Richards was recognized recently for her valuable volunteer service to the First Church Nursery School. The Nursery School Board celebrated Sarah's twenty-five years of dedicated service at the recent Staff Appreciation Dinner. We all say, "Thank you, Sarah, for your assistance and caring for our children since 1994."

Welcoming Statement

We, The First Congregational Church of Portland, Connecticut, are an Open and Affirming church. With God's grace, we continue to be a congregation that includes persons of every race, ethnicity, age, family configuration, marital status, mental and physical ability, economic status, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. All are welcome to share in the life, sacraments, missions, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our community of faith.

Pass-It-On Food Cart

On the first Sunday of every month we take a collection of non-perishable food items for the Portland Food Bank. Please bring any canned, packaged or bagged grocery item to donate to the food pantry.

School lunch season is upon us. Items to consider donating are individually packaged foods such as crackers or juice boxes that can fit in children's lunch boxes. Paper products, cleaning supplies and personal care items are also good choices.

The following people were remembered in our prayers:

Ann Hale, Steven Winakor, Joan Carr, Joel Maillet, Kacie Clark, Eddie Mugg, JoeAnn Jackson, Tom Fanning, Bianca Maillet, Dan Gorman, Nancy Hall, Mary Certo, Steve Hodge, Darlene Larson, Daniel McCarthy, Austin Zimmer, Tracy Johnston, Tim Fraulino, Steve Hall, Marge Tacey, Ralph Bonanno, Mark Vetrano, and the families and friends of Dr. Elizabeth Webb and Joanne Morariu

First Church Nursery School Openings

First Church Nursery School has openings for three and four year olds for the 2019-2020 school year. If you know of someone who has a child looking for a pre-school experience please have them call the school at 342-1111 and leave a message.

We are always adding names to our enrollment lists so please have your friends and neighbors give us a call to sign up a child for future classes.

September Birthdays

- 2 Virginia Quinn
- 2 Monique France
- 3 Alexis Steele
- 3 Karen Norton
- 3 Shawn Quinn
- 4 Melissa Charpentier
- 4 Nathan Jahnke
- 6 Tracy Ives
- 9 Alissa Brunk
- 10 Rebecca Coiteux
- 10 Steve Demarest
- 11 Kasha Breau
- 11 Blake Law
- 12 James Newsom
- 12 Kelly Boutin
- 13 Stephen Guild
- 13 Mathew Krukoski
- 14 Benjamin Sorrell
- 18 Keith Johnson
- 19 Zachary Hintz
- 19 Erin Hall
- 21 Erik Medvecky
- 21 Hannah Sroka
- 21 Nick Siena
- 21 Laura Winakor
- 21 Karl Faass
- 22 Jill Rankl
- 23 Mark Gange
- 23 Marielle Yohe
- 25 Olivia Norton
- 25 Russell Weeks
- 25 Edward Rutty
- 26 Kaylee Lastrina
- 27 William Perrotti
- 28 Robin Richardson
- 28 Jessica Carroll
- 29 Alex Gondek
- 29 Allison Russo
- 29 Judy Thompson
- 30 Madelyn Faass
- 30 John Rankl



WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE CHURCH?

It is our custom to receive new members in the fall and in the spring. Our next New Member Sunday will be on **November 3** during our 10:00 a.m. worship service. We will hold two classes in October for prospective members in order to get better acquainted with each other, our members, our church, our denomination, and our faith.

Our first informational/get acquainted meeting is on **Sunday**, **October 6 at 11:30**. Our second meeting focuses on our church's history and governing structure and will be held on **Sunday**, **October 20 at 11:30**. Childcare will be provided at both meetings.

Please speak to Rev. Hawken after September 8 if you would like to join or if you would like more information. Before that date you may e-mail the church at <u>first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net</u> or call the church office at 342-3244 and leave a message. Please respond by September 30, and also let us know if you need childcare.

Sunday Ushers Needed!

The Board of Deacons is looking for our church members and friends to **Usher** this fall. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall and we would love to see your name on it. We are so appreciative to those who fill in the blanks so we do not need to bother you with a phone call. Consider yourself blessed when you help out your church in this way.

THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS October 6 at 1:00 p.m.

On Sunday, October 6, you are invited to bring your pet/s to the field in back of the church for a time of thanksgiving and blessing. Pets will need to be on a leash or in a cage, crate or carrier.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

What is it? - The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a worldwide ecumenical movement of women's groups, gathering to pray and knit for those in need and those celebrating life's joys. As they create shawls for others, their handiwork becomes an expression of their love and of the loving care of the God who works through them.

Who does our group consist of? - It is a group comprised of church members and friends. It is open to all who enjoy knitting and fellowship.

When and where do they meet? - The women of our Prayer Shawl Ministry gather on Tuesday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. at the church, but please check with the church office if you plan to attend just in case the ladies have chosen an alternate knitting location or time.



MUSICAL NOTES

Make a Joyful Noise

Celebration Sunday is September 8. I would like to invite everyone to consider joining the choir, even for a temporary basis, "to sing to the Lord" on Sundays.



Choir rehearsal starts Thursday, September 5 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. and Sundays at 9:00 a.m. I hope you will join us in September to try it or for the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. Kasha

"Fall for Youth" Music Concert

Mark your calendars for a special musical event featuring three talented local teens! Join us on Friday, September 20th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for a coffee house style evening filled with music from Emily Hope of Glastonbury and the Bend in the River Band with teen members Clara & Evan Guilmette of Portland. Cost will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth and will be taken at the door. There is a max cap of \$20 per family. The musicians will have CDs available for purchase. Refreshments will be provided! A portion of the proceeds will be donated to a music fund that the musicians have chosen. We hope to see you there!

Help Needed for Sunday Coffee Hour

What would Sunday worship be without the opportunity to greet one another over a cup of coffee and snack or two? Coffee hour is the extension of our worship service and a time to



enjoy fellowship. We need your help to keep this time honored tradition going and we have tried to make it as simple as possible by providing the coffee, creamers, children's juice and snack. All you need to do is set up, make the coffee, clean up, and provide some kind of refreshment if you wish. Won't you please consider helping in this way. Look for the poster in the fellowship hall to add your name to the list.

Missing something?

There is a variety of plates, platters, and bowls left from various church events on a table in the fellowship hall. Please claim your items by September 15th or they will be recycled to Goodwill. Thank you!

Support The MS Society!



As she has done since 2003, church member Suzanne Roberts will once again be cycling in the annual MS Bike Ride this September in New Bern, NC. Suzanne will be biking to raise money and awareness of MS

(multiple sclerosis is a disease Suzanne was diagnosed with in 2003.)

This year her team will include Dave Thompson along with their support/cheerleaders Deb Hunt, Judy Thompson and several others.

You can help Suzanne raise money for this incredible event by purchasing raffle tickets for your chance to win a week or weekend at an oceanfront beach house on Topsail Island, NC. You can purchase a raffle ticket or donate to her directly at bikemsnewbern.org (click donate, search Suzanne Roberts) or by mailing a check to her made payable to The MS Society at 104 Isinglass Hill Rd., Portland. Raffle tickets are \$25.00/week and \$10.00/weekend. All proceeds go to the MS Society!!!

Thank you in advance for your prayers and support to make this another incredible event!

Free Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance Classes Second Session to Begin

Tai Ji Quan Moving for Better Balance is a research-based program to improve strength, mobility, balance and daily function and prevent falls in older adults (65 or older) and people with balance difficulties. Modified traditional Tai Ji movements are used but no prior experience with Tai Ji is needed. Individuals must be able to stand. Individuals with Parkinson's are encouraged to participate.

Classes began Monday, July 22, and meet in Fellowship Hall every Monday and Wednesday from 10:45-11:45 a.m. There are 24 classes in all. There is no fee for the course as it is a grant funded program. Contact Sandy Rovelli at 860-888-4049 (cell/work) if you are interested in joining the class.

All Women Invited!



SAYING GRACE DATE: Monday, September 16 TIME: 6:00 p.m. TYPE: Potluck/Board Meeting

Giving thanks to God for a meal has a long history, stretching all the way back to early biblical times. In the book of Deuteronomy 8:10 God said, "You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you." Even Jesus engaged in such a practice, as we are reminded of this at the Last Supper, "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19

While the word "grace" is most often tied to the definition of "unmerited divine assistance given to humans," it is historically connected to "giving thanks" to God before or after a meal. In a certain sense, this is not surprising as the food we eat is often given to us through no effort of our own. Food is a great gift that sustains us and keeps us alive and God is the ultimate creator of it all, providing everything that we eat.

You are invited to join us as we come together to eat the delicious food you will prepare for our annual potluck dinner and meeting. Bring your favorite hot dish or salad and beverage and dessert will be provided. If you like, we would ask that you also bring your favorite mealtime grace to share.

Our food can be seen as a "grace," and so it is fitting that we call giving thanks to God for it "saying grace." Please come and share food, fellowship and grace as we give thanks for our time together.

God's Amazing Grace

This is our Women's Fellowship's theme for this year and we invite all women to join us as we celebrate God's grace in very special ways.

Program booklets will be available beginning September 1!

300th ANNIVERSARY NEWS!

Planning for the 300th anniversary of the church which will be celebrated in 2021 is going well. The committee met on July 23rd and accomplished quite a bit at that meeting. We are presently working on writing a history of the last fifty years in order to update the last history book written in 1971 by Al LeShane. We have secured Quarry Ridge Restaurant for our gala celebration which will be the afternoon of October 24, 2021. We have also begun the interview process of longtime members and would like to include all of you in this endeavor. Below is a list of questions for you to ponder. Answer all or just a few, but we truly would like to have your thoughts. At your convenience send them to FCCP300th@gmail.com or bring them to church and place them in the designated box outside the

church office. Thank you in advance for your help and look for our Anniversary Bulletin Board which will be up in the fellowship hall this September!

Nancy Johnson & Kelle Young, Co-Chairs

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- 1) What are some of your First Church related memories?
- 2) What have been some of the best times for you at the First Congregational Church of Portland?
- 3) If any, what would you consider to be the challenging times during the life of the church?
- 4) What do you see as the major changes that have taken place over the years while you were a member?
- 5) What are your remembrances of the music at church?
- 6) What do you recall about Christian Education?
- 7) What memories do you have related to Missions and/or Ecumenical Involvement?
- 8) What do you recall about past anniversary celebrations?
- 9) What would you like to see happen during the celebration of our 300th anniversary in 2021?
- 10) Please tell us one or two of your fondest memories that you carry with you of First Church?
- 11) Are there any other areas of your time at First Congregational Church that you would like to share?



FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS	Memorial Garden
Thank you!	There is nothing more rewarding than to see people
The Board of Deacons would like to thank the	enjoying our beautiful Memorial Garden. If you
following people who provided enjoyable and	haven't done so, please treat yourself to some time to
inspiring messages to the congregation this summer:	appreciate the quiet wonder of this picturesque space.
7/21 Grace Winakor	
7/28 Kristin and Jaxon Medvecky	The Memorial Garden Committee is presently taking
8/4 Toni Smith	orders for personalized pavers. We do need a
8/11 Faith Fraulino	minimum order to be able to add another walkway.
8/18 Karen Rettich	Please consider adding a paver to be included in this
8/25 John Hall	meaningful legacy to our church.
Summer Refreshment Thank You!	Order forms are available in Fellowship Hall
Volunteers-You did it once again! The Board of	or contact the church office. Deadline to order
Deacons would like to thank these people for	
providing light refreshments following our summer	is September 1 st to be included in the
worship services:	targeted fall installation.
June 30 - Solveig and Victor Bonanno	Capes of Courage Workshop
July 7 - Nancy Johnson	There will be a workshop to assemble kits for the
14 - Faith and Jeff Fraulino	Capes of Courage project on Monday, September
21 - Megan and Pete Ettlinger	23 at 7:00 p.m. in the upstairs classroom of the office
28 - Mike Enright	wing. We have fun and wonderful fabrics to
August 5 - Jan Poet	coordinate for the capes. We are always in need of
11 - Mike and Sam Klick	those to help with sewing, too! If interested please
VOLUNTEERS AGE 55+ ARE NEEDED AS READING TUTORS FOR GRADES K-4 The Community Renewal Team's (CRT) Retired Senior & Volunteer Program (RSVP) is now seeking volunteers age 55+ to serve in the signature program, READs, for the 2019-20 school year. One hour of volunteering per week will help children develop better reading skills and foster a life-long love of reading. The program in Portland will be held at Valley View School and Gildersleeve School. Contact Theresa Strong, RSVP Manager to learn more. Email: strongt@crtct.org /	
Cell: (860) 519-3484 Progressive Dinner	
The next progressive dinner will be held on Saturday, October 5. A sign-up sheet will be posted in Fellow- ship Hall on September 8. We will all meet at one home for appetizers, then travel in small groups to host homes for dinner. After dinner, we will meet in Fellowship Hall for dessert. This is a wonderful opportunity for fun and fellowship. Childcare will be	BACK TO SCHOOL

Baptism Dalton Matthew Morehouse, son of Matthew and Jordan Morehouse, was baptized on July 28. We ask the Lord to bless Dalton and his parents.

Christian Education News Ann Labby's e-mail address: labbyannm@gmail.com

I hope everyone had a wonderful and restful Summer.

Church School Teachers Needed

We are in need of Church School Teachers and helpers in the infant/toddler room. If you have hesitated about participating because you don't want to miss Service each week, our teaching schedule will solve that problem (one Sunday a month commitment). If you are afraid that you won't know what to do we can help you with that too (training provided) If each family that has a child in Church School volunteered, we would have enough teachers for two years. Think about helping. We also need helpers each Sunday in the Infant/Toddler room. Call Ann Labby at 860-614-4826 or e-mail me at <u>labbyannm@gmail.com</u>for more information. "Sign Up" poster is in Fellowship Hall.

Candle Lighter Training

On Sunday, September 22nd at 11:30 a.m., there will be candle lighter training. Students 1st grade and above should attend training. Each week a student lights the candles for the worship service. This training prepares students so that each one can take his or her turn with confidence by knowing the procedure. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Labby. Selected names will be listed each month in the Belfry Chimes. If you would like your child to continue or be added to the list please e-mail me at labbyannm@gmail.com.

Introduction to the Bible

On Sunday, September 15th at 11:30 a.m. we invite all students in third grade and above (if you haven't yet received your Bible) to a mini Bible Study. At this Bible Study, the students will learn how to use their Bibles. A letter will go out to families with all the details. If you have any questions, please call the church office. The students will be presented their new Bibles on Sunday, September 22nd during worship.

Christian Education Calendar

- September 8 Celebration Sunday, Church School begins, Potluck Luncheon following worship. September 15 – Student Bible Class 11:30 – 12:30 September 22 – Bible Sunday, students are
- presented with their Bibles September 22 – Bell ringing/Candle lighting training 11:30 a.m.

Included in this edition of the Belfry Chimes is a Church School registration form. They are also available in Fellowship Hall. **EVERY** child attending Church School must fill out a **new form each year**. We will only order curriculum for registered students. After you have filled it out, you may mail it to the church, place it in the offering plate, or drop it off at the church office.

Celebration Sunday! September 8th at 10:00 a.m.

Church school begins on September 8th. The Opening Ceremony theme will be "Loving God, Loving Neighbor." Each student will receive in the mail a cut out person. On their person they should write or draw about someone they helped over the summer. They should bring it to worship on Celebration Sunday, September 8 and we will present these "Loving Neighbors" during Church School. These "Loving Neighbors" can also be picked up at the church office after September 2 if you don't receive one in the mail. An all church potluck luncheon will follow the service.

Celebration Sunday Sunday, September 8th

Everyone is Invited to a Potluck Luncheon following the worship service. Bring your favorite dish or item to share with everyone. The Christian Education Board will supply the desserts and beverages.

Youth Group Activities Grades 5 – 12

Adult leaders are needed to help with these groups. If you would like to help with any of the youth group activities or have suggestions for activities please contact Ann Labby at labbyannm@gmail.com

Candle Lighters/Bell Ringers for September

September 8 Hazel Ettlinger

September 15 Lily Otero

September 22 Abby & Emma France

September 29 Piper Rettich

If your child cannot do this please contact Ann Labby at labbyannm@gmail.com

Church School Registration Forms



Dear Friends,

In differing regions of the country and in varying denominations, many churches find ways to mark the first Sunday back to worship after the summer months. This special Sunday, which usually includes the start-up of Church School, goes by many names including Homecoming Sunday, Rally Day, Welcoming Sunday, and Promotion Sunday (as in promoting students to the next grade in Church School.)

This year, at the First Congregational Church of Portland, we are calling September 8: *Celebration Sunday!* On that day when we return to our 10:00 a.m. worship time, our celebration will be observed in many ways.

- We'll bring back "Pray It Forward" as requested by the Church School students. For the fortunate person or family who is selected during the service, they will receive \$50 to go out and do some good in the world and report back to the congregation a couple weeks later.
- We'll have the Sacrament of Communion where ALL are welcome at the table. "All" includes children, which is why we have the sacrament early in the service so that they can partake of the Lord's Supper before they head to Church School.

We'll enjoy the music of the Choir, and new members are always welcome to join! Come to the choir rehearsal on Thursday, September 5 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in order to practice for Sunday morning. A second rehearsal is held on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. Speak with Kasha if you are interested in singing or would like more information.

- We'll hear a sermon by yours truly (enough said!)
- We'll have a potluck lunch in Fellowship Hall immediately after worship. Bring a dish to share if you can or just come and enjoy the meal and the fellowship!
- We'll have a PowerPoint during the lunch highlighting some of the outreach programs of the past year such as "God's Work ~ Our Hands" and "Summer Reading and Feeding."
- We'll have an uplifting, joyful Sunday, but it won't be a true celebration without **YOU!** So plan on attending the worship service and the lunch, and be part of *Celebration Sunday!*

Yours in celebratory anticipation,