

First Congregational Church of Portland, CT



Celebrating 300 Years!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Read All About Our 300th Anniversary Year!

On behalf of the 300th Anniversary Committee, I welcome you to this section of the Belfry Chimes, devoted to the anniversary year and the upcoming events and activities that the committee has planned for this fall. We do hope you will read through all of the details that we are providing at this time and don't forget to save this section for future reference. We may not have been as visible as we would have liked during this pandemic time period, but we have been fulfilling our mission to plan and carry out a memorable celebration. Thank you for supporting our efforts. This fall we invite you to join us as we continue to celebrate the spirit of The First Congregational Church that has existed for 300 years. Together let our light shine in celebrating our rich history just as the "Son" continues to shine down on this church – past, present, and future – as pictured on our logo above.



Front: Gail Bergan, Diane Burgess, Nancy Johnson, Phyllis Clark, Marcie Clark, Jane Hawken
Back: Ann Labby, Kelle Young, Mary Pont, Sarah Richards, Melissa Vibberts

May God's blessings be with you today and always,

Nancy Johnson

Chair of the 300th Anniversary Committee

SAVE THESE DATES!

Saturday, September 18	6:00 p.m.	Center Cemetery Tour –
Saturday, October 23	10:00 a.m.	Time Capsule Burial Ceremony at church
Sunday, October 24	10:00 a.m.	300th Anniversary Worship Service Celebration followed by a catered reception by Farrell's in fellowship hall
Monday, October 25	7:00 p.m.	Special Commemorative Service of the day of our founding, held in the Memorial Garden
Sunday, November 21	7:00 p.m.	Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at church

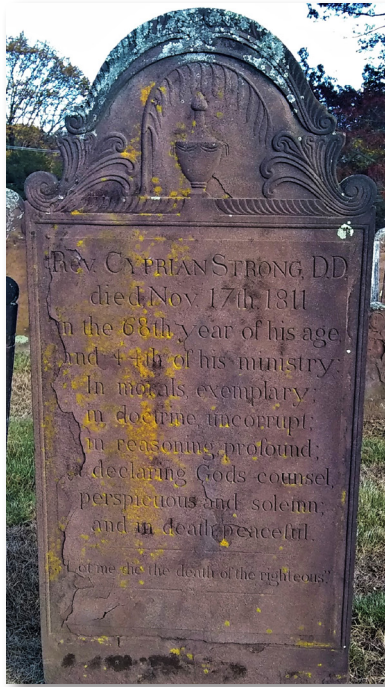
Center Cemetery Tour

Saturday, September 18, 2021 • 6:00-7:30 p.m.

We invite you to discover some of Portland's early history as you enjoy a self-guided tour of the grounds of Center Cemetery on Bartlett St. Ext. First established in 1767, there are three of our former ministers who have headstones there and whose dedication to The First Congregational Church spanned beyond the first century of our 300-year history!

You can enjoy your walk of the grounds as you take in the view of the western sunset and the almost-full "Corn Moon" rising in the east. Using our pamphlet as a guide, you will also encounter some of our 300th Anniversary Committee members serving as docents with a story or two to tell. Children of all ages can get involved in a special scavenger hunt with a prize for all participants.

One of the stones you will find on your tour is pictured above and belongs to our 3rd minister, the Rev. Cyprian Strong, who served the church for 44 years



from August 19, 1767 until his death on November 17, 1811. You will discover more about his life, family, and dedication to his ministry at his gravesite. Other early Portland residents who will be highlighted include the Rev. Moses Bartlett, the Rev. Hervey Talcott who was our longest serving minister at 45 years, Deacon David Sage and his son David, Amos Pelton who met with a rather unfortunate demise, Gen. Seth Overton and his wife Mehitable who lived in the house which is now the Portland Historical Society, and Obadiah, Phillip and Sylvester Gildersleeve of local ship-building notoriety.

Please join us as we take you back in history. Park along Fairway Drive or inside the cemetery off the roadway and dress for the weather. Rain date will be Sunday, September 19th at the same time. Bring a lantern or flashlight if you desire, but weather permitting, we should enjoy some twilight as you partake of some cider and cookies at the end the tour.



130 and Counting!

Back in March, the committee invited you to join us in celebrating the spirit by spreading kindness to all. Kindness is one of God's gifts of the spirit and we are called to unwrap that gift and use it to inspire others. You were given hearts to write down the kindness you provided and asked to bring them back to the church so we could add them to our kindness board in the fellowship hall.

Our goal is 300 by the end of this year! There is no limit to how many acts of kindness you can provide. Hearts are available at church or you can email your act to Diane at dianeburgess@gmail.com. She will then make a heart out for you. Please join us as we celebrate the spirit of First Congregational Church in this way during this historic 300th anniversary year!

"If we live by the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit."
Galatians 5:25



FOR SALE!

This book is still available for your reading pleasure. It's filled with 300 years of history and pictures. It contains two parts – (I) the history up to 1971 written by Al LeShane for the 250th Anniversary Year, and (II) eight sections recording the history of significant areas of our church life. It also includes a list of the ministers since the church's founding, a list of the original founding members, information on the portraits of our third minister, the Rev. Cyprian Strong and his third wife Abigail Strong, and an historical chronology. The cost of this book is \$20.00.

We are also happy to offer a beautiful 300th Anniversary pewter ornament designed by our very own church member and resident artist Kearen Enright. She has captured a picture of the church as it looks in its present state. The ornament was made at the Woodbury Pewter Factory and the cost is \$12.00. Contact Nancy Johnson to purchase these items. They will also be sold on Sundays after worship.





Nancy Johnsons shows us where the time capsule will be buried.

Time Capsule Ceremony

Saturday, October 23, 2021 • 10:00 a.m.

The 300th Anniversary Committee would like to invite you to attend a special ceremony for the dedication and burial of its Heritage Time Capsule to be held at the church on the Saturday of our celebratory weekend. The items that we place in this capsule will give future generations a glimpse of what life was like in Portland during this historic 300th anniversary year and will ensure a legacy for years to come. The burial area will be marked by a plaque attached to a piece of historic brownstone. The stone is being donated by Quarry View with our sincerest appreciation to Darlene Rice and Dean Soucy. A sampling of what we plan to place in the capsule will be on display after worship during coffee hour on October 10th and 17th. Refreshments of pastries, doughnuts, coffee and juice will be provided following the ceremony. Hope to see you there!

Worship Service and Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, October 24, 2021

"And you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given to you..."

Deuteronomy 26:11

Worship Service

The 300th Anniversary Committee cordially invites you to this very special worship service of re-dedication, welcoming back some of our former ministers, members, and friends. Present that day will be the Rev. Dwight Juliani (1973 – 1990) and David and Nancy Clapp Channing, children of the Rev. Edward T. Clapp (1941 – 1973.) Messages will be shared from the Rev. George Haskins (1991 – 1995) and others. Our pastor, the Rev. Jane Hawken, will give the sermon titled, "Commemorating the Past, Celebrating the Present, Creating the Future." We will also recognize our longtime members of 50+ years, honoring them for their years of faithful service to the church.

Upon entering church, you will have the opportunity to sign a refinished finial that once adorned the top of our steeple. The worship will include music, litanies, children's message given by Rev. Juliani, prayers, presentation of a quilt made by the church school children and more. We will look forward to praising God together on this memorable occasion. *Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian Love!*

**October 25, 2021 –
Happy 300th Anniversary
First Congregational Church!**

On this day of the founding of our church three hundred years ago, we invite you to join us for a short, meditative Commemorative Service in the Memorial Garden where the names of our 29 original members are engraved on the first 8 rows of paver bricks. This will be held at 7:00 p.m.

Celebration Luncheon

After service, join us for a catered luncheon by Farrell's Restaurant in the fellowship hall. Celebrate with friends old and new as we reflect on our church's history. **Reservations required, as seating is limited!**



300th Anniversary Celebration of
First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

Luncheon Menu

ENTRÉES

Chicken & Broccoli with Alfredo Sauce

Assorted Wraps:

Turkey, Chicken Caesar & Vegetarian

Macaroni & Cheese

Penne ala Vodka

GARDEN SALAD

DESSERT

SURPRISE!

There will be a take home surprise or two as a remembrance of this special time.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!

COST: Adults - \$20.00 • Children 12 and under - \$10.00
Please make your reservation by sending your check made payable to
First Congregational Church

DEADLINE: Sunday, October 10th

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Sunday, November 21, 2021 • 7:00 p.m.

This year, Americans will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the first Pilgrim Thanksgiving feast. They landed in New England in 1620, but it was a year later after the local Wampanoag tribe befriended and taught them how to harvest food and fish, that they decided to gather with their new neighbors for a bountiful fall feast in 1621. Therefore, on our 300th anniversary, we plan to gather with our Portland neighbors to celebrate and give thanks to God for our many blessings. Refreshments and an historical display will follow the service. We hope you will be able to join us.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Psalm 118:



Precious Memories!

The anniversary committee would like your memories. It matters not if you have been here for 50 years, 5 years or 5 months. We would love for you to answer as many of our "Questions to Ponder" (below) as you would like. We hope to use these responses in a special way during our celebration weekend. Please send your memories to the church, place them in the locked mailbox outside the Nursery School door or email them to Nancy Johnson at nlj1952@comcast.net. We truly will appreciate your help!

Did You Know?

The committee wishes to share a few things of interest that you may not have heard about.

- The church has received two framed paintings of the church painted in the 1950's by then active member and artist Doris Hall. They are special gifts indeed!
- The Vintage Sale we planned to have this year is postponed to 2022. Items are still being collected. Contact Nancy Johnson to do so.
- Upon cleaning the church basement this summer Linda Cunningham found many historical treasures. The most precious is the original copy in booklet form of the sermon delivered at the funeral of the Rev. Hervey Talcott in 1866. Rev. Talcott served the church for 45 years. Thank you, Linda!
- Linda Mains from the Donegal Presbyterian Church of Mount Joy, PA contacted the church this summer asking permission to use the words that Nancy Johnson wrote for the Ring Your Bells hymn used at our January 3rd worship service. Permission granted and Nancy feels honored by the request and thrilled to share what she created with another church that is celebrating a 300th anniversary this year.

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 while you were there?
- 4) What do you see as the major changes that took 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) Please tell us one or two of your fondest memories that you carry with you of First Church?
- 10) Are there any other areas of your time at First Congregational Church that you would like to share?