



November 2024 Circuit Rider

First Congregational Church of Lebanon
588 Exeter Road ~ P.O. Box 125
Lebanon, CT 06249
www.lebanonfirstcong.org

“We seek to demonstrate God’s Spirit through worship, witness, and ministry to the needs of the people in the church and the community.”

Rev. Amie McCarthy

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Church Office Hours

Tuesday ~ 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday ~ 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

A Note from

Rev. Amie



The power of imagination can be both inspiring and daunting. As we collectively explore the limitless potential of our ministry, we are invigorated by the possibilities. This Stewardship season, we are embarking on a journey of shared vision, envisioning a future where FCCL can make a profound impact.

Over the next few weeks, we will embark on a journey of reflection and imagination. We will examine our current ministries and explore potential new avenues for service, guided by God's vision for our faith family.

October 13th We “Imagined Together: A World Made Whole.” Together, we explored our current response to climate change and God's call to steward creation, and imagined how we might expand our efforts in the future.

October 20th We “Imagined Together: Enough at Every Table.” Aware of the widespread food insecurity in Connecticut, we examined our faith family's current efforts to address this need. We also considered how God might be guiding us to deepen our commitment to alleviating hunger.

October 27th We “Imagined Together: A Sense of Wonder.” Looking to nature as a reflection of God's generosity, we can cultivate a mindset of abundance in our daily lives.

November 3rd We “Imagine Together: A Rested Church/Community.” Anxiety and Exhaustion may cause us to lose sight of God's still speaking voice working in, through and among us This week, let's explore ways to find rest in God and draw inspiration from Jesus' teachings, allowing us to renew our energy and fulfill our faith family's mission.

November 10th We “Imagine Together: Vitality.” “Vitality expresses a quality of life that is full, animated, and enduring, with the capacity for continual growth and development. The capacity for growth and renewal is essential to healthy and thriving relationships, vocations, and churches. Over time, and as we age — ourselves and the institutions we may serve — a kind of spiritual calcification can set in. We can get stuck and stagnant, not only resisting that which is new, but perhaps even fearing it (Imagine Together: Vitality UCC Stewardship series; exegesis: John 3:1-10, 7:45-52, 19:38-39; By Rev. Dr. S. Chapin Garner).” What ways do we imagine vitality being renewed within us, opening our faith family to live out God's call fully animated and enduring?

November 17th We “Imagine Together: Community of Belonging.” Stewardship is not only the act of collecting and discern how to distribute resources, but also how we interact with each other to build a sense of community that is both inclusive to those within the community as well as inviting to those seeking community. How do we imagine becoming more inclusive and inviting? What discernment might we engage that will prepare us to create that sense of communal belonging?

November 24th We “Imagine Together: A Sense of Awe.” While we often associate knowing God with the works of Jesus Christ, it's important to remember that prayer, wonder, and awe offer powerful avenues for experiencing God's presence in our lives. Through prayer and meditation, we can become attuned to the love and compassion shared in the world's broken places. These moments of awe and realization reveal the true essence of stewardship. How can we cultivate more space for these moments to inspire us to serve as stewards of God's creation?

I am excited to imagine along with all of you where this journey will lead. Stewardship, as we will discover together, is spiritual practice that opens us to God's love, grace, and compassion leading us to be God's presence in the broken spaces of our world. Imagine where this journey might lead us!

Amen and Peace,
Rev. Amie

Message from OUR CHURCH Moderator

Rally Sunday is over, and Rev. Amie has been with us for over a month. What a good time it is.

By the time you receive this Circuit Rider we most likely have discussed and voted on the Preliminary Budget for 2025. On November 24th it will be Stewardship Sunday. This is the time for the congregation to make a pledge to support the 2025 budget through their giving.

Hopefully the Halloween bash will be a success, and the kids that attend will be excited with the event.

Next on the calendar is Thanksgiving. Be thankful for all that we have and enjoy fellowship time together. The Winterfest Market and Christmas Tree Lighting will be held on the same day, December 7th. Because of this, the dinner normally held in the evening of the fair, will be held on another date (to be determined).

Can you believe it, the Advent session will be upon us soon and Christmas is just around the corner. Most will have parties and celebrations to go to during this time. Just don't forget about the biggest celebration of all, the birth of Christ. This infant child, lying in the manger, will change the world for ever.

See you in church.

Art Wallace – Moderator

"Be Active, Join In!"



2024
Annual
Reports

Board and committee reports are due by the end of November. If you would please e-mail them to the office (lebfirstcong@att.net), it would help tremendously.

Thank you!



Severe Weather Cancellations

In the event of severe weather, please check for cancellations of Sunday morning worship services and church activities on WFSB TV Channel 3, church website, or you may contact any deacon.

Quilt Drawing

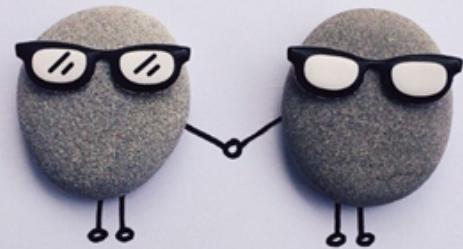
The Round Robin Crafters have been busy sewing two quilts. One of the quilts is on display in the Fellowship Hall. Tickets are three for \$5 and may be purchased either from a member of the Round Robin Crafters (Sandy Rose, Dawn Drum or Michelle Kersey) or at the Winter Market on December 7th. Drawing will be held on Sunday, December 8th, following the worship service. You do not need to be present to win.



Winter Market Crafters
November 2nd ~ 9:00 a.m.

Join us as we create items for our Winter Market! If you have some ideas you would like to share with the group, please bring them.

PASTOR AMIE IS
EXCITED TO



connect with you!

November Birthdays

3rd ~ Geri McCaw

5th ~ Ginette Boyce

6th ~ Dawn Drum

10th ~ Skip Kuzel

11th ~ Carla Dias

12th ~ Edna Pelto

14th ~ Alyssa Holmes

14th ~ Lily Barton Johnson

17th ~ Greg Hopkins

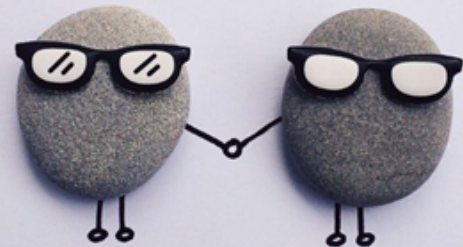
19th ~ Logan O'Hearn

24th ~ Deb Baisvert



Call, Text, or Email!

ANYTIME TO ARRANGE A MEETING



EMAIL:

PASTORLEBFIRSTCONG@GMAIL.COM

CALL OR TEXT:

508-272-6437

From The Director Of Christian Education & Faith Formation

Blessed Are The Peacemakers!

Peace is not an easy thing - to understand or to achieve, but the children of our congregation are certainly up to the task! Whether it's peace at home or in the world, our Children of God have practiced to help them bring Peace to the future! We identified what it means to find peace for each of us; sometimes that's spending a quiet moment with a book or sitting beside a gentle river (of lava). We tried different ways of meditation, deep breathing, and prayer to help us find peace within ourselves.

Next, we looked outside of ourselves to situations where we can bring peace and discovered one of the most important parts of bringing peace is **listening!** We practiced listening skills by learning more about each other, our church, and how God speaks to us in the quiet moments.

Finally, we learned about the **courage** it takes to be peacemakers. Through the story of Gandhi's Salt March, we learned that even a tiny grain of salt can shake an entire foundation and how even the smallest voice can make a ripple that can change the world!

It has been an absolute blessing kicking off this Sunday School Year with our growing Peacemakers!



Peacemaker's Prayer

Lord, help me to be a peacemaker.
Help me find peace in my own
heart and listen to others so I can
understand.

Help me have the courage to seek
peace all around me.





Winter Market

*First Congregational Church of Lebanon
588 Exeter Rd., Lebanon
Saturday, December 7, 2024
9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.*



BAKED GOODS

JEWELRY

GENERAL STORE

HANDMADE CRAFTS

QUILT RAFFLE

VENDORS

BASKET RAFFLE

HANDMADE TEXTILES

INSPIRED BY SOUTH AFRICA

Fall Cleanup

Saturday, November 16th - 9:00 a.m.

The Trustees are seeking able bodied members and friends to join us in the fall leaf cleanup of the church grounds. Please bring gloves and rakes to share in the fun! You won't be disappointed! Rain date is November 23rd.



Winter Market

Saturday, December 7th ~ 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Winter Market is fast approaching!! We have a small committee, but this is an 'All-Church' FUNdraising activity, and we need lots of help. Here are some of the ways to participate:

GENERAL STORE - it's harvest season. Do you can veggies, make pickles, jams or jellies; do any other wonderful thing to enjoy the harvest throughout the winter? Please consider donating a jar or two to the General Store at the fair.

GIFT BASKETS - our themed gift baskets were beautiful and a big hit last year. We will again ask boards and committees to donate a basket. In addition to their baskets our committee will make three additional baskets (**BACKYARD BIRDS, GLUTEN FREE GOODIES, AND ALL OCCASION GIFT WRAP**) with the help of donations from the church family. Donation boxes will be in the foyer. You are always welcome to make your own basket if you have a different theme you would like to do.

We will also need nice baskets/containers, clear wrap, and pretty ribbons to do them up, so if you have some to spare. Please drop all items off at the church by November 24th.

Thank you for helping our committee make this year's fair a huge success.





Your generosity in ‘fleecing’ the sheep has made it possible for our church to purchase three sheep for Heifer Project.

Your generosity doesn’t stop there. The collection for Hurricane Relief, both Helene and Milton, has enabled our congregation to send \$868.00 to the UCC to aid in the recovery.

The Board will again be providing a bag lunch for the Willimantic Community Meal on Wednesday, October 30th. Besides a sandwich, we also include fruit, granola bars, chips, and bar cookies. We will be assembling the bags at 2:00pm on the 30th. Any help is appreciated. We also need fruit (bananas, clementines) and bar cookies. If you can provide these, please have them at the church by noon on the 30th. Thank you.

Last year we were able to contribute six boxes of items to the Willimantic No Freeze Shelter. We will continue to collect items again this year. A box is in the foyer for this purpose. Following is a list of needed items. Homelessness isn’t always a choice, but we can choose to help.

Winter Needs

- Disinfectant Wipes
- 55 Gallon Trash Bags
- Toilet Paper
- Conditioner
- Razors
- Tweezers

- Disinfectant Spray
- Tissues
- Deodorant
- Soap
- First Aid Supplies
- Combs & Brushes

- Hand Soap
- Paper Towels
- Shampoo
- Lotion
- Nail Clippers



Clothing (men’s & women’s, med-xxl).

- Sweatshirts
- Thermals
- Rain Ponchos

- T-Shirts
- Underwear
- Sweatpants

- Hand/Foot Warmers
- Waterproof Gloves
- Ear Buds/Headphones

Advent Bible Study:

“The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of The Grinch”

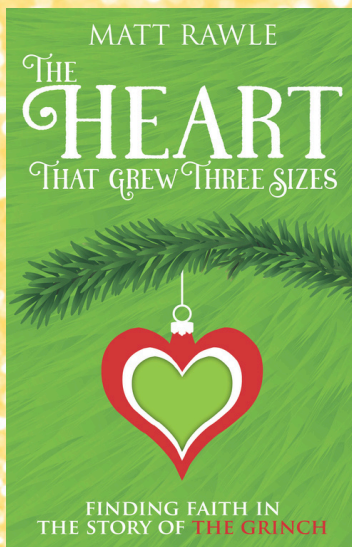
By Matt Rawle

“Whether you’ve read the original Dr. Seuss’s How the Grinch Stole Christmas! As a bedtime story, gathered the family together to watch the television special, or hit the theatres for one of the movie adaptations, you know how this story never seems to leave our imagination. Maybe it makes you think about the commercialism of Christmas. Or maybe it makes you think about yourself (The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch, Bible Study Leaders guide, p 7).”

In this Bible study, author Matt Rawle guides us through a fresh examination of the classic Christmas story. He invites us to rediscover the Advent season in innovative and thought-provoking ways. Through the lens of The Grinch, we’ll delve into the realms of literature, art, and entertainment to explore how God's redemptive story is woven into our lives and the world around us.

This four-week Bible study series will commence on Tuesday, November 26th. Sessions will be held in person at 9:30 AM and via Zoom at 7:00 PM each Tuesday through December 17th. If you plan to attend the Zoom Advent Bible Study, please email the church office so we can add you to the Zoom link email.

- November 26th: Session One: When Everything Goes Wrong**
- December 3rd: Session Two: When Christmas Isn’t Christmas**
 - December 10th: Session Three: When Light Shines**
 - December 17th: Session Four: When Joy Is Our Song**



WE'VE GOT GOALS!

AS OUR CONGREGATION CONTINUES TO DISCERN HOW MINISTRY WILL EVOLVE IN THE COMING YEARS, BEGINNING IN FEBRUARY, WE WILL BEGIN TO TAKE WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT OUR CONGREGATION THROUGHOUT THE IMAGINE STEWARDSHIP SERIES AND BEGIN TO INTEGRATE THOSE IDEAS INTO MEETING THE GOALS THE CHURCH HOPES TOGETHER TO REACH DURING PASTOR AMIE'S TIME AS ITS DESIGNATED TERM MINISTER.



C

CHURCH GROWTH

- DEVELOP A RESEARCH TEAM TO EXPLORE VITAL CHURCHES
- INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MISSION INSITE TOOL
- PLAN NEW YOUTH ACTIVITIES
- REVITALIZE THE OUTREACH PROGRAM TO THE COMMUNITY AND NEW RESIDENTS
- ENHANCE EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

IN COLLABORATION WITH CONGREGATION, THE DTP WILL DEVELOP GROUPS TO ADDRESS THE ITEMIZED TASKS AND DEVELOP PLANS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

YEAR 1: TEAMS HAVE BEEN FORMED AND MET

YEAR 2-4: MONTHLY UPDATES ON PROGRESS OF TEAM PLAN AND ACTIONS (INCLUDING ACTIVITIES, VISITATIONS, AND EVENTS)



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SPIRITUAL AND LEADERSHIP

- DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAITY
- DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A CONSISTENT PROGRAM FOR NURTURING THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEMBERS/PARTICIPANTS

IN COLLABORATION WITH DEACONS, THE DTP WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AS IDENTIFIED

- YEAR 1-2: CREATE AND HOLD ANNUAL PROGRAMS FOR NEW AND ANY MEMBERS TO ATTEND. DEVELOP STRUCTURE/CONTENT TO INCLUDE INTRODUCTION TO CONGREGATIONALISM, HISTORY AND POLITY, INTRO TO UCC, MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH.
- YEAR 1-4, HOLD QUARTERLY STUDY GROUPS FOR SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION AT VARIOUS TIMES AND DAYS TO BROADEN REACH OF PROGRAM. GUIDE EXPANSION TO INCLUDE VARIOUS MEMBERS AS STUDY GUIDE FACILITATORS
- YEAR 1-3: EXPLORE AND ESTABLISH WORSHIP TEAMS FOR FORMULATING SPECIFIC SERVICES THROUGHOUT LITURGICAL YEAR (INCLUDES RE-VITALIZING CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP)
- YEAR 2-4, WHETHER AT CHURCH OR OTHER LOCATIONS, PROVIDE WORSHIP WORKSHOPS FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS RELATED TO PREVIOUS GOAL DEVELOPING WORSHIP TEAMS

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ADDRESS FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE FUTURE

THE DTP WILL COLLABORATE WITH THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

- YEAR 1: PROPOSE 2-3 NEW FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES
- YEAR 2: EXPLORE 2-3 GRANT FUNDING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT CHURCH MINISTRIES
- YEAR 3: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE PAID RENTAL OF CHURCH FACILITIES
- YEAR 1-4: DEVELOP A PLEDGE FOCUSED PROGRAM WITH GOAL TO INCREASE PLEDGE UNITS BY A MINIMUM OF 10% BY END OF YEAR 3
- YEAR 3-4: DEVELOP AND PRESENT A PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM INCLUDING ESTATE PLANNING AND CHARITABLE GIVING
- YEAR 1-4: DEVELOP A PLEDGE FOCUSED PROGRAM WITH GOAL TO INCREASE PLEDGE UNITS BY A MINIMUM OF 10% BY END OF YEAR 3
- YEAR 3-4: DEVELOP AND PRESENT A PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM INCLUDING ESTATE PLANNING AND CHARITABLE GIVING

Fall Back

Don't forget to turn your clocks back on Sunday, November 3rd!



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D

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH
PASTORS AND
CONGREGATIONS OF UCC
CHURCHES IN NEIGHBORING
TOWNS

EXPLORE SHARING
RESOURCES WITH UCC
CHURCHES IN
NEIGHBORING TOWNS TO
BENEFIT AND ENHANCE
THE MINISTRIES OF EACH
OF THE CHURCHES BY
OPTIMIZING THE USE OF
BEST GIFTS

IN COLLABORATION WITH
COUNCIL, DEACONS AND
OTHER PASTORS, THE DTP
AND CONGREGATIONS OF
NEIGHBORING UCC
CHURCHES

- YEAR 1: EXPLORE POSSIBLE CHURCHES AND MAKE CONTACT
- YEAR 2: ENGAGE IN AT LEAST ONE EVENT WITH ANOTHER CHURCH (MAY INCLUDE PULPIT SWAP, SOCIAL EVENT, MISSION/SERVICE OPPORTUNITY)
- YEAR 3-4: EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF SHARED RESOURCES

Stewardship Potluck Luncheon November 24th

Everyone is invited to the Stewardship Potluck Luncheon following church on November 24th. We should all take this opportunity to celebrate this important event in the life of our church. The Stewardship Committee does not take this undertaking lightly and understands the challenges this budget represents. Needless to say, all pledges count and are greatly appreciated for the growth of our church.

*You're
invited*