

THE BELFRY CHIMES

**Please Join Us for
Worship As We
Celebrate The
Resurrection!**

**Easter Morning
March 31, 2024.
7:00, Gazebo
10:00, Sanctuary**

**April Services
Sundays, 10:00 a.m.
April 7
April 14
April 21
April 28**

**On Easter Sunday,
plants from the flower
dedication may be
picked up following the
10:00 service.**

*"Whoever wishes to be my
follower must deny his very self,
take up the cross each day, and
follow in my steps."*

Luke 9:23

A Message from Pastor Barry McCarthy

People of the Resurrection,

"Alleluia!"

Celebrate the Resurrection. It is Easter!

Unlike the Christmas season, which seems to start much too early and ends abruptly on December 26 when the carols stop playing on the radio, Easter comes only after the Lenten walk to the Cross. Our reflective passage through Holy Week enables us to more truly and fully appreciate the joy that emanates from an open tomb on a morning long ago and in each moment of our lives today.

Paralleling the beginning of spring's new life, we breathe fresh air and consider the eternal breath of life promised to us in the Easter miracle.

Believing in Jesus, the Risen Christ is more magnificent than the crocus or daffodils popping through the thawed ground. Heralding beauty and marvels, which seemed unimaginable just days earlier, is part of God's mystery and continuing gift. As the warmth of spring continues to open up the joys of nature, be constantly attuned to the One who came to give us life beyond our greatest imaginings.

Joyous Easter greetings! *"Alleluia!"*

In Christ,



Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me. Matthew 25: 37-40

MISSIONS BOARD SPONSORS APRIL OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE OTHERS

Dinner at St Vincent de Paul, April 7

On April 7 we will serve a dinner of ham, peas, scalloped potatoes, coleslaw, rolls and dessert. If you would like to donate food, there is a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall. If you are providing something that needs to be hot, please drop it off at the church at 4:00 p.m. on April 7. Serving and clean up at SVDP is from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions or would like to serve, please contact Sally Irons, sallyirons@aol.com or 860-539-4372.

God's Work ~ Our Hands

We are excited to announce that God's Work~Our Hands has been scheduled for Sunday, May 19 so that we can again have the opportunity to be the church in our community in place of worship in the sanctuary that morning. In order for this to be as wonderful as it was in the past, we will need MANY volunteers.

We already have six work sites for individuals that need yard work and are again planning to have groups that sing at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center, deliver flowers to ill or shut in members of our community and sew for Dress a Girl. In weeks to come, there will be a special Mission Moment during the worship service, sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall and distribution of t-shirts for those that need them. Get excited, bring your talents and we will have a great time doing God's work!!

SMILE IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

It's been 7 years since we last published a church directory! It is important that we have an updated directory when our new minister joins us, and we've decided to "create our own" rather than contracting with a vendor. The April schedule for "photo shoot sittings" is listed below. Appointments are not necessary; just walk in with a smile on your face and Louise Wright will be ready with the camera! If you are unable to come to the church, we will come to you! Just contact Jeannette Hodge at 860-342-4093.

Wednesday, April 3	1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 7	8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 11	6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 14	8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Week of April 15	Home photos, TBD
Sunday, April 28	8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m., 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

News for Children and Youth

Easter Sunday: On March 31, Easter Sunday, the children will begin worship with their families, and following the Children’s Message, will then be dismissed to the Fellowship Hall where they will have an Easter Egg Hunt, crafts, games, and prizes.

Church School and Infant/Toddler Care will be available each Sunday in April. School-aged children will begin upstairs with their families and will be brought downstairs for church school after the Children’s Message. Infants/toddlers can be dropped off in Fellowship Hall before the service or at any point during the service. Teachers and helpers are needed for Church School. There is a signup sheet in Fellowship Hall, or you can email Mary Clark at maryeclark13@outlook.com if you would like to help.

Bibles will be presented to third graders on Sunday, April 28. The class to introduce students to the use of the Bible will be held on Sunday, April 21. If your child is in the third grade or older has not yet received a Bible and you have not yet gotten an email from Mary about this, please contact her at the email address above.

By-Laws Revision Committee To Hold Evening Gathering To Solicit Feedback April 3, 6:30 p.m.

The By-Laws Revision Committee has met several times over the fall and winter and has completed a draft of proposed changes. The committee hosted one informational gathering on March 3, and will hold another on April 3 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Come to learn more and lend your voice to these changes. *At Coffee Hour following the 10:00 Easter service, copies of the proposed by-law changes will be available for review prior to the April 3 gathering.*

Mark Your Calendar: Annual Spring Clean-up April 13

Now that it is spring, it is time to “put a shine” on the church grounds. Saturday, April 13 at 9:00 a.m. we will gather for our annual spring cleanup. No volunteers are turned away. There are always many small jobs to perform to ready the grounds for summer. Bring a rake and smile and we’ll keep you busy for a couple of hours. In case of inclement weather, spring cleanup will be held the following weekend, April 20.

ALL Are Encouraged to Attend the April Church Council Meeting

by Joe Aresco, President

The April church council meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall, following worship on April 14. The meeting will begin at approximately 11:15 a.m. The church council is the church’s governing body, and meetings are open to all church members. We thought that perhaps a Sunday morning would be a convenient time for some to attend, who might not be inclined to come to an evening meeting. Please feel free to stop by coffee hour and then join the church council for all or some of the meeting.



Wildflower Walk With Beau and Kasha April 13, 9:30 a.m.

On April 13, Beau Doherty and Kasha Breau will lead a wildflower walk to view ephemerals. The group will leave the church at 9:30 a.m. The group may have to travel to the Durham area but the quarry will be Bloodroot, Trout Lilly and Dutchman's Breeches. The walkers may see Red Trillium as well.

*"All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
'Twas God that made them all"*
Bill Staines

ATTENTION: COFFEE LOVERS!!

GUIDED COFFEE TASTING WITH BRIAN LABBY

Join Brian Labby in a special guided coffee tasting, where participants will discover the intricacies of specialty coffee, explore the process that coffee takes in order to go from bean to cup, and learn about the knowledge and talent that coffee roasters use when designing coffee blends.

This guided coffee experience will take place on Sunday, April 21 from 11:30-12:30 after worship, in the Fellowship Hall. The program will feature a small lecture followed by a guided coffee tasting and food pairing, and will conclude with an open Q+A and open discussion. Please RSVP for attendance if interested to labbybrian246@gmail.com.

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Search Committee Update

Greetings from your Search Committee. We are pleased that the church profile is up and ready for viewing by potential candidates. You can also view the profile by following this link. <http://oppsearch.ucc.org/id/6087>. Or you can ask a member of the committee to get you a copy. We continue with our work in finding a settled pastor. We appreciate your prayers and the faith you have put in us.

Search Committee Members: Elaine Law and Beth Gould-Ruitto, co-chairs; Mary Clark, Beau Doherty, Jeffrey Fraulino, Cari Klick, Michael Klick, Rob Lentz, Kristin Medvecky, Karen Rettich, and Louise Wright



**SNE Women's Connection
SPRING GATHERING
Hosted By Our Women's Fellowship
Saturday, April 27, 2024
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Our Women's Fellowship has been asked to host the annual SNE Women's Connection Spring Gathering. This gathering will focus on mental health and supporting the Becoming WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) initiative of the SNEUCC. The program will feature speakers, workshops including assembling kits for Church World Service, and a marketplace that gives you the opportunity to purchase items made by women from other churches. Approximately 60 – 80 women will be here from CT, MA, and RI.

Two ways all women can participate in this big event!

One! Help will be needed to set-up, bake, clean-up and work that day. Kitchen help is especially needed as we are providing a light breakfast snack when women arrive and we are providing a catered luncheon to follow. A sign-up sheet will be available in the fellowship hall beginning April 7. For questions or concerns, speak with Diane Burgess.

Two! We hope that there will be some women who will want to attend the gathering. For that you will need to fill out a registration form along with a \$35 registration fee by **April 17** and send it to the group's treasurer, Martha Lape. If you would like to be reimbursed for this fee by the Women's Fellowship, please contact our Treasurer, Linda Cunningham. Registration forms can be found on the Women's Fellowship bulletin board or email Nancy Johnson at nlj1952@comcast.net to receive one.

What is it about? The role of the Church in Mental Health Care and Ministry

Participants will gain knowledge about basic mental health and explore the variety of roles the church can play to create awareness and reduce the stigma of mental health challenges.



Who is the Guest Speaker? Rev. Dr. Ciarán Osborn

Rev. Dr. Ciarán is an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the United Church of Christ. His academic and vocational work sits at the intersection of mental health conditions and the Christian faith. He focuses his attention on the dignity and flourishing of marginalized people, particularly those with mental health conditions and intersectional identities. He has experience as both a local church pastor and Chaplain working in trauma and drug/alcohol recovery. He is a graduate of both Andover Newton Theological School and the Pacific School of Religion. He shares his life with his family, four children, and a menagerie of pets, just outside of Boston.

Following a catered luncheon, the day will end with an inspirational worship service in our sanctuary. We hope to be well represented by the women of our church so please consider taking part in this spring gathering. It is a place where we will celebrate God's presence among us.

Game Night

Saturday, April 20, 2024

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Portland
554 Main Street

Fun, Fellowship, Snacks, Door Prizes



Assorted games for all ages will be available, and you are welcome to bring your favorite game to share



Hoping to see you there!



Calendar of Events

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Matthew 18: 20

WEEKLY GATHERINGS:

Sunday 10:00 a.m.	Worship Service
Sunday 7:00 p.m.	Alanon Meeting
Second Monday evening	NA Service Meeting
Tuesday, 1:00 p.m.	Prayer Shawl Ministry
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	Living Clean Meeting
Third Thursday evening	NA Hospitals and Institutions Regional Meeting
Thursday 6:30 p.m.	Choir Practice

APRIL MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

April 3, 6:30 p.m.	By-Laws Committee Presentation
April 7	St. Vincent de Paul Dinner
April 10, 6:00 p.m.	Deacons
April 13, 9:00 a.m.	Spring Clean-Up
April 13, 9:30 a.m.	Wildflower Walk
April 14, 11:15 a.m.	Church Council Meeting
April 16, 7:00 p.m.	Membership Committee, Zoom
April 16-23	Pastor Barry Vacation
April 20, 9:00 a.m.	Spring CleanUp Rain Date
April 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m.	Intergenerational Game Night
April 21, 11:15 a.m.	Bible Class for Third Graders
April 24, 7:00 p.m.	Facilities Board
April 27, 9:00 a.m.	SNE Women's Spring Gathering
April 28	Bible Presentation to Third Graders

The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

United Church of Christ

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