

THE BELFRY CHIMES

**Summer Worship
9:30 a.m.**

**During the summer,
Sunday morning
worship services will be
a bit shorter (45-50
minutes), beginning at
9:30 a.m.**

**Children's Activities
will be provided.**

**"Simply Summer
Coffee Hour" will
follow the service in
Fellowship Hall.**

**Dress comfortably for
summer weather.**

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

Matthew 18:20

WE are Called to Care

Summer is a difficult time for some children in our community who experience food insecurity when school is not in session. The children at Chatham Court will receive bagged lunches Monday-Thursday (courtesy of Sarah's On Main) and a pizza lunch on Fridays. However, the children are often without substantial food over the weekend.

Our church will provide three Saturday cooked breakfasts for 50 children and 20 accompanying adults. (June 29, July 20 and August 10) Thank you for the wonderful response for the June 29 breakfast!

For July 20, eggs, American cheese slices, grapes, and cans of Juicy Juice are needed.

For August 10, boxes of French toast sticks, packages of turkey sausage links, fresh peaches and gallons of whole milk are needed.

On the weeks that we are not cooking breakfast, we will prepare a nutritious "grab and go" bagged breakfast that will be distributed to the children on Fridays. The bagged breakfasts are being made possible by generous donations from the Women's Fellowship as well as some church members. Thank you!

There is a donation **sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall for the cooked breakfast dates, as well as reminders in *The Weekly Word***. Please call either **Beth Gould-Ruitto (860-543-9280)** or **Faith Fraulino (860-836-5765)**, if you have questions or would like to make a **donation**. A monetary donation is always appreciated, and checks may be made payable to the church, with the notation "Saturday breakfast" on the memo line.

Thank you for whatever assistance you are able to give and special thanks to Beth and Faith for leading this important effort.

"The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped."
Proverbs 11:23

A Message from Pastor Barry McCarthy

My Friends in Christ,

Are you ready for summer?

Hopefully, it will be a time for rest and relaxation, though no doubt busyness will also be present. No matter the season of our year or life, there is often a constant yearning for a closer walk with God. That is perhaps the biggest challenge of our spiritual lives---How do we pay attention to God?

I would like to share with you one of the classic spiritual exercises first taught by Ignatius of Loyola in the 1500s which I find personally to be quite helpful. The exercise is called "*The Examination*" and it is a wonderful way to carve some "God Time" out of our demanding days.

A DAILY EXAMINATION OF GRACE

(Adapted by Kent Ira Groff from "*The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*")

Paying attention at the beginning or end of the day.

Find a quiet restful place and invite the Christ, the Light of the world, to walk with you as you recall in your mind the past twenty-four hours, gently sifting through events and encounters.

1. GIFT: Give thanks for the day's gift(s). *Celebrate God's empowering love at a time or times during that period.*

2. STRUGGLE: Notice times when you struggled to be loved, or loving to someone else. *Note some unrest in your soul, something unresolved. Celebrate God's undefeated love and hear God say to you: "I know that and I love you." "You are my beloved."*

3. INVITATION: Ask God, "What grace do I need to name and claim to be more whole, in this new day?" *Allow a word or phrase – an image or metaphor – to come to mind. Begin to repeat it, slowly, in rhythm to your breathing, or visualize it if it is an image. (Silence)... Imagine you are looking at a movie of your future life and seeing how that phrase or image might be lived out.*

Finish with a line of a poem, a scripture, or a hymn verse that comes to mind. Try following this grace-revealing exercise on a daily basis and you will hopefully find that closer walk with the Lord you seek.

Blessings of Christ,

Pastor Barry

PS Don't forget, summer worship in our sanctuary at 9:30 AM starting June 30.

“Simply Summer” Coffee Hour

Summer Worship Services begin at 9:30, and we will gather for “Simply Summer Coffee Hour” by 10:15 or so. This is the perfect opportunity to host a relaxed fellowship gathering by setting up the table before worship, providing a pitcher or two of cool drinks and putting out some munchies in baskets. You can provide the refreshments or use the crackers and snacks that are located in the metal cabinet in the kitchen. Please sign up to choose a date when you are available to help or contact Diane Burgess at dianemayburgess@gmail.com.

A Word of Thanks for Your Kindness

From Diane Burgess: Thank you to all who supported the dedicated Red Cross Blood Drive this past Friday. We appreciate those who set up and cleaned up, all who donated a pint of lifesaving blood, and those who assisted with registering donors and making and serving refreshments. **The Jahnke family is so grateful for your participation in honor of Aiden.**

From Nancy Johnson: A sincere thank you to all who sent best wishes my way during my recent surgery. Your kind words, cards, phone calls, texts, flowers, surprise visits, and goodies were so very much appreciated. Your generosity and compassion have made a significant impact with my recovery and I feel so blessed by the sharing of your love. Your thoughtfulness continues to bring a smile to my face and warmth to my heart.

From Joe Aresco: Thank you to all who have expressed willingness to serve on one of the newly forming Ministry Teams. The new leadership and governance structure will transition into place over the coming months. The first step in this transition is to get all team members together on July 8 to review the roles and responsibilities of the teams, and to address immediate items such as choosing team leaders and establishing meeting schedules. There are still openings on the teams, so if you are interested in serving, please reach out to Sharon Kandro, Diane Burgess or me. The four teams are Spiritual Life, Engagement, Christian Action, and Resources.

2024-2025 CONFIRMATION CLASS FORMING

Beginning in September 2024, a Confirmation Program will be offered for students in grades 9 through 11. The program runs until June 2025, when students will be confirmed and become members of the church. To express interest or for information please contact the church office at 860-342-3244 or send an email to office@firstchurchportlandct.org.

Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler!

Or as they say in Louisiana- "Let the good times roll!"

Second Annual Mardi Gras Fest

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Although summer is just beginning, February will be here before we know it! While you are out and about this summer, you may want to think about what basket you'll donate to the Basket Raffle. It's never too early to start picking up a few things! How about a Camping Basket, or a Beach Basket? Maybe a basket full of different holiday paper goods, or it's the perfect time to pick up on sale items for a USA Celebration Basket – the ideas are endless... And so are the summer days! **Enjoy our summer in New England** (Hey-there's another basket idea!)

Some Love for our Parking Lot

You may have noticed, especially with the rain over the winter, that the cracks in our parking lot have enlarged. Many people have commented about the soil washing up into the lot during heavy rains. If left untreated this will accelerate the deterioration of the parking lot. We have contracted to have the cracks sealed and the parking spaces re-striped. The cost of the contract is \$4,500. Unfortunately, we were not planning on this for this year's budget. Accordingly, we are requesting a special offering to help defray the cost the repairs. If the spirit moves you participate in giving our parking lot some love, kindly note Parking Lot on your check or online contribution.



Greetings from Your Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to be very busy in anticipation of finding our next settled pastor. We have received two (2) additional clergy profiles in the month of June. Our committee reviews them and determines next steps for each of the candidates.

This brings us to a total of ten (10) received thus far. We are moving in the right direction and will continue to keep you apprised of the current status in our process. Please continue to support us with your prayers. Stay tuned!

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

Membership Directory Update

It's not too late to get your photo taken for the Church Directory, which we want to have ready when the new minister arrives. Photos are being taken each Sunday during July, from 10:15-11:00 a.m. in the Conference Room across from the office. If that schedule doesn't work for you, call Jeannette Hodge at 860-342-4093 or email jeannetehodge@gmail.com. We will find a time that works for you!

Summer Calendar of Events

Weekly Events:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Sunday 9:00 a.m. | Choir Rehearsal |
| Sunday 9:30 a.m. | Worship Service |
| Sunday 7:00 p.m. | Alanon Meeting |
| Second Monday evening | NA Service Meeting |
| Wednesday 7:00 p.m. | Living Clean Meeting |
| Third Thursday evening | NA Hospitals and Institutions Regional Meeting |

Summer Meetings and Events:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Monday, July 8, 6:30 p.m. | Ministry Team Organizational Meeting |
| Sunday, July 14 | Sending Forth Coffee Hour in Honor of Laura and David Winakor (moving to Maine) |
| Saturday, July 20 | Chatham Court Breakfast |
| Saturday, August 10 | Chatham Court Breakfast |
- Ministry Team Meeting Schedules will appear in *The Weekly Word* following July 8 meeting.

May 3, 2025 - Goods and Service Auction for NEXT YEAR is being planned, led by Joe and Angela Aresco.

The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

United Church of Christ

554 Main Street, Portland, CT 06480, 860-342-3244

Email: office@firstchurchportlandct.org

Website: www.firstchurchportlandct.org

Facebook: The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

YouTube Channel: First Church of Portland, CT

Rev. Dr. Barry McCarthy, Intentional Interim Pasto