



## **The Chimes**

September 2024 Edition

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### **From the Pastor's Desk:**

For about a month these words have been in my mind:  
*"...for whoever is not against us is for us."* (Mark 9:40)

These words of Jesus answer John's complaint about somebody "outside their circle" healing doing good in Jesus' name. I can picture Jesus frowning at John in wonder: "Why would you stop someone doing good?!! If they are helping, don't get in their way!" Then I think...the opposite would be true, wouldn't it? Jesus would say: "If someone is doing bad, get in their way."

As we look around us, I wonder where we could apply this same basic of faith. The answer: anywhere there is discord, distortion, destruction. Go there and get in the way. How each of us get in the way is up to us. And we know there is so much that needs our attention, personally and communally. So we look to Jesus who helps us know and do what is right, and he bases all he does and says on two commandments. Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

I hope Jesus' basics can be our guide in the days and weeks ahead as we pray for peace, as we make choices for leadership, as we consider our planet and as we choose to do good to others.

Blessings be upon you. *Sue*

# 2024 Justice Summit: Politics as an Act of Faith

September 14, 2024

Middletown, CT & Online



Southern  
New England  
Conference  
United Church of Christ



The Southern New England Conference's  
**Center for Transformational Leadership** presents the  
**3rd Annual Justice Summit:**

## **Politics as an Act of Faith.**

This day-long program will equip local church leaders, both lay and clergy, to engage with politics as people of faith. This Summit has something for everyone, including: a workshop for preachers; sessions on the challenges of engaging political conversations, especially in such a polarized time; and connection with faith-based justice leaders for practical opportunities to take your faith beyond the pews.

Go online at [sneucc.org](https://sneucc.org) and click on EVENTS to learn more and to register!!



# Choir Notes

## **CHOIR SEASON TO BEGIN - Come Join the Choir!**

It's choir season! Why not consider joining a choir and be a part of our vibrant music ministry. Our choirs sing and ring to God's glory. All are invited to be part of the music ministry.

Our choirs sing and ring a wide range of musical styles from baroque and classical to gospel and contemporary, all proclaiming the word of God. Your time and talents are always welcome.

If you are interested in joining one of the choirs, then we invite you to come and be a part of the music ministry and offer your gift of music to the glory of God.

**Senior Choir** – Our Senior Choir is open to adults who love to sing. We sing sacred music of all styles, with something for everyone. We rehearse weekly on **Thursdays from 6:00 - 7:00 pm in the Choir Room** and sing weekly during worship at church from September to June. We also sing at special services throughout the year. So come on down to the choir room **beginning Thursday, September 12th. You may join us at anytime of the year.**

**Youth Choir** – Our Youth Choir combines young people ages 7 through high school age. This choir sings once per month during worship from September to June and rehearses each **THURSDAY from 5:00-5:40 pm. in the Choir Room.** **We will begin on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>.**

We have had great groups of singers in the past who participated in many singing opportunities. God has truly

blessed these young voices and we invite more children and youth to become part of this great choir. We have had many former choir members continue in the field of music after graduation and are proud of that fact. Choristers learn the basics of music reading, vocal production and sing a variety of musical styles all proclaiming God's word.

Sign up at church for Youth Choir in September anytime or contact Mr. Noonan.

**Cherub Choir** - Our little cherubs ages 3 and up (along with our Youth Choir Scholars) make wonderful music two times per year singing at the **Sunday morning service, before the Christmas Eve service (December 22<sup>nd</sup> this year at the 10 AM service),** as well as at the **Easter Sunday service (April 20, 2025).** This choir is directed by Mrs. Thaxton and Mr. Noonan. Mrs. Thaxton will practice with the Cherub Choir, and parents too, after church on the three Sundays before they sing in worship. Just watch future issues of the **CHIMES** or check the bulletin for information as the dates get closer.

**Handbell Choir** - Our Handbell Choir, *The Village Ringers*, is an adult ringing group who have a great time making beautiful handbell music. This choir rings monthly at worship from September to May and rehearses each **Thursday from 7:15-8:30 PM in the Choir Room. We will begin on September 12<sup>th</sup>.** There are also opportunities to perform solo, duet and quartet ringing in our worship services.

We do not have any openings at this time but if you would like to be a substitute ringer, please contact Mike. Ringing experience is required. We ring at an intermediate level and **music reading is required.**

Please consider being part of the music ministry at church and join a choir. Membership is always open. Just contact Mike anytime throughout the year or stop by a rehearsal to listen. You are always welcome!

***“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.” – Psalm 100:1***



## ***IMAGINE Together!***

***Our Stewardship Theme for the Year is “Imagine Together.”***

Imaging our success as a congregation will help us to come together as we try to understand why we should participate in deepening our faith life and faithfully pledging in supporting next year’s budget.

Just imagine the impact on our congregation – our church family: Imagine how your personal tithes and pledges will make a difference in our efforts to reach out, welcome, and serve our community.

It is not difficult to be a good steward, because stewardship is about faith and excitement in being a cheerful giver.

How do Christian Stewards GIVE? First, through prayer, talk to God, and understand that your giving is for God. Your love is for Jesus, too. Giving, tithing and pledging is also about sharing together: It’s about unity, because we are one body in Christ, and each of us has gifts to share.

So, reflecting on our common spirituality, you will realize that all the good we do together is about giving and sharing in the best ways that we can.

It is wise to give and pledge what you can.

“Who is wise and understanding among you?

Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom.”

## *What Matters for September: Being More Responsible!*

Fall is a time to turn ... turning to a new season, a new time of year. Time for school, or college, new groups, new friends and a new outlook on life. We will all have opportunities to learn, grow in heart and mind and spirit, and to be open to seeing the world around us. We expect our young people to try harder, study more and get smarter.

Why not us adults? Driving better, learning better, taking part, avoiding waste, caring for the earth: Drivers need to be more responsible to drive safely, to plan for time and to care about others. I think we all agree.

We need to listen and learn when we have opportunities by choosing news stations that have fewer adds and less biased commentary. Reading publications that broaden our understanding of news topics. Be awake to sermons and lyrics of hymns in church, and read "The Village Chimes" newsletter. Spend less time with social media that does not filter out inappropriate memes and untruths.

Become aware of government and the public servants we trust to be leaders – participate where we might to support good decisions.

Mostly, all of us need to do better to take care of our earth. Of course, that's a whole lecture ... But, we need to drive less and use less plastic, prepare for a future using less fossil fuel, recycle, reuse, upcycle, and buy more thoughtfully so as not to have so much waste.

We should at least be trying to improve as more responsible folks, having hope in our future and that of our children.

*"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness."  
(Desmond Tutu)*



## ***Take the Climate Hope Voter Pledge***

*Please Consider that a vote for Climate Hope is a commitment to vote one's values,*

Members of UCC churches throughout the country are being invited to join others in making an act of hope for present and future generations. Our faith desires more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

A Way to Act on our values is by voting. When it comes to the climate crisis, our government is the primary way we can collectively act on the scale, scope, and speed necessary to meet this moment.

**Make climate hope "contagious" by taking a blank pledge card with you! Invite others to scan the QR code on the card with their smartphone to take the pledge as well.**

There is no limit to how many people you can invite to take the pledge. We will have cards available in church or you can go to UCC.org

<https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/efam/environmental-justice-ministries/take-the-climate-hope-voter-pledge/>

So take the time now to help us spread climate hope by taking the pledge and making a plan to help others take the pledge as well. Our planet thanks you.

**Habitat for Humanity of Eastern CT**  
**Congregational Church of North**  
**Stonington!**

*Congratulations to our congregation – each of us.*

*We are covenant partners with Habitat of Eastern CT*

We have accepted a great opportunity to do exciting work, working side by side with friends and neighbors in Eastern CT.

We are part of Habitat's new Faith Challenge as we join with many area churches to form our new Coalition of Faith.

Working together: each congregation will have representatives as part of this new partnership. We are looking for you to step up and move out to become a member of our new group. Julie Evans and Pastor Sue can share more information.

As part of being in the Faith Coalition, we need to raise funds.

This month we will be seeking your donations – Please use the green envelopes and make out checks to CCNS with Memo: Habitat for Humanity of Eastern CT OR HFHECT.

When you show how much you care, you will do great things!



<http://www.habitatct.org/>



# Worship as Celebration

In the coming months we hope to have some additions to our opportunities for worship.

Please mark the date of **October 6<sup>th</sup>** for an **Animals in our Lives Sunday**. We will remember St. Francis of Assisi, offer a **Blessing of Animals**, and our **Youth Choir** will sing for the first time this Fall.

This will also be a special day as YOUR thoughts make up the sermon! The theme will be **“Animals In Our Lives”**. Please send 100 to 150 words to Pastor Sue ([pastorsuel@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorsuel@yahoo.com)) so the “sermon” can be crafted ahead of time. You are invited to read your own submission that day or another lay reader will offer it.



**Advent begins Sunday December 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Come on the **Advent Pilgrimage** with us:

-in worship with the themes of Hoping, Waiting, Fearing and Preparing.

-in community at our **Bazaar December 7<sup>th</sup>**

-in Joy at the **Shoreline Ringers Concert** here at 4 pm **December 8<sup>th</sup>.**



Dear Congregational Church of No. Stonington,

As summer comes to a close, our students like so many around the world are preparing to go back to school. In Haiti school will be delayed until October because State exams were held late (August) and results are not yet published. This means that students who took exams for 9<sup>th</sup> grade do not yet know if they can move on to NS1, and NS4 students do not yet know if they can go on to college. However, some of our college students will begin this month, including Lokita who starts her 5<sup>th</sup> and final year at the American University of the Caribbean. Exciting stuff!

On a more serious note, our back to school budget is exceptionally high this year. With the gang violence in Haiti spreading, fewer goods are available throughout Haiti, but especially in the south where roads and ports are controlled by the gangs. School shoes that cost 500-1000 gourdes in the past now cost 3500, with similar increases in prices of everything from notebooks, pens to backpacks. Our schools also need additional desks, chairs and repairs to blackboards.

We are proud of our schools and ever more proud of our students. We strive to offer quality education and

continue to have a higher student success rate at State exams than other schools in our area. But, we need your help to continue. If you are able to help with back to school in any way, we will ensure that your dollars go far and directly to the education of our children. Any donation is a gift of hope and is so appreciated by us all.

With gratitude,

Elisabeth



# *Our Annual Christmas Bazaar:*

*Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024*

*9 am - 1pm*

*Gourmet Luncheon 11:30 am - 1 pm*

*Congregational Church of North Stonington, UCC*

*PLEASE PLAN NOW - it's fun to be involved!*

*And Thank You!*

1. *Every church committee is invited to make a theme basket for the basket auction; and have it ready to display on December 1<sup>st</sup>.*
2. **Make cookies** for the boxes we sell and small baked desserts for the Luncheon Tea Trays.  
Bake at Home or here on a Cookie Baking Days.
3. Join the crew to prepare and serve **the luncheon**; also set up and clean up. (Patty Danley)
4. **Greens Baskets** - Collect Baskets for arrangements - come to a workshop the week of December 2 (Mary Bliven)
5. **Plan Other Baked Goods** - Breads, special candy, cookies and cupcakes, Preserved foods (Sue Pianka)
6. **Pies** - Help to prepare and bake (Julie Clow)
7. **Mission Booth** - (Julie Evans)
8. **Kris Shabunia will have tables of handmade gifts**

## *Thanks a Heap!*

### Thanks to...

- All who participated in Summer Music by singing or playing an instrument, sharing your gifts of music during worship for our summer services. We had a wonderful variety of music all summer from singers, flute, piano, to handbell soloists! Such a blessing!
- Steve Gadaree, Lauren Rockwell, Michelle Macina, Duane Hartley, Mobbie Larson, Alice Robbins for their special music this summer.
- Mike Noonan, Margaret Leonard, and Pastor Sue for the wonderful youth pipe organ building event on August 14, sponsored by the New London County Chapter American Guild of Organists.
- Kevin, Mike, and Gretchen Noonan for cleaning the gutters on the Hewitt Hall building.
- Mike Noonan for continued weed whacking of the church grounds, installing the AC units in Hewitt Hall, and maintaining the church informational sign at the street.
- Every family that has been purchasing school items from the list for Church World Service.
- All who donated foods and contributions for The Pawcatuck Neighbor Center.
- Paul Ames, who mows faithfully.
- The Cemetery Committee for recent work on the road in the cemetery.
- Pat Danley, Sharon Roode and Mary Bliven and all their assistants in making pies; those who sell pies at market, those who make and bake, and the women, youth and children who fold and label boxes on Saturdays. Also, Helen Evans has begun washing the dishes using her dishwasher skills.
- All of the committees who worked through the summer.
- Margaret Leonard for planning the new CE church school activities.
- Anne Nelson for her herculean work in the gardens.
- Brian Hager, Jamie Towle-Weicksel, Mark Leonard, & Julie Clow for upgrading our worship streaming service.
- Our benevolent donor who completed our Sanctuary Restoration payment!
- All our Ushers and Deacons.
- All who serve on committees and boards, and the Church Council.
- All who worship and share fellowship with us.

## **September Birthdays...**

- 1**      **Melissa Rockwell**
- 4**      **Austin Grey, Donna Pelish**
- 5**      **Sean Boldt, Charles Grey**
- 6**      **Rachel Rossier**
- 9**      **Anthony Remsbecker**
- 10**     **Emma Ames**
- 12**     **Duane Witter**
- 14**     **Christopher McCord, Emma Stock**
- 16**     **Debbie Janda**
- 18**     **Bryan Kimball**
- 22**     **Julie Clow, Matthew Sander**
- 23**     **Cinda Spavins**
- 25**     **Irene Donald, Patty Henderson, Jeff Pearson**
- 27**     **Rachel Beam**
- 28**     **Joy Lautzenheiser**
- 30**     **Kris Halleck**



## **... and Anniversaries**

- 1**      **Ben and Michelle Young**
- 2**      **Steve and Kim Gadaree**
- 9**      **Brian and Denise Hager**
- 12**     **Art and Julie Armstrong**
- 19**     **Kevin and Susan Ames**
- 28**     **Charles and Linda Grey**

If we have missed your special day(s) or if there are corrections to be made, please notify the church office at 860-535-0379.



# Money Matter\$

Jan 1 – July 31, 2024

Income

Budget

General Pledges	72,402.92	66,403.17
General Giving	11,822.14	19,326.00
Building Fund	4,230.00	----
Sanctuary Ceiling "repayment"	<b>18,680.00</b>	Repaid!
Light the Steeple	205.00	----
Cemetery Fund	1,240.00	----
Use of Building	680.00	1,290.00
Memorial Funds	7,700.76	----
CWS Tools	195.00	----
PNC	265.76	----
Habitat for Humanity	118.00	

*In italics...unchanged from previous month.*

Please give thanks to God for the generosity that has allowed us to "repay" ourselves for the cost of the **Sanctuary & Ceiling Restoration** that we had planned to take 3 years to reimburse our invested funds. It was done with gifts small and large in 2!!

Also, included above are areas we continually donate or support, such as Church World Service, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, and our covenant partner, Habitat for Humanity of Eastern CT. Thank you for your considerate gifts.

# Worship Watch - September 2024

## Congregational Church of North Stonington



Worship at 10 a.m. & streaming online.

Church School at 10:15 Office Hours Mon-Thurs 9 to 1.

**1st - Communion Sunday** – we receive the Lord’s Supper by coming forward. Sermon, **“Cleaning Up”** **Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23** and **James 1:17-27**. Our lessons address our nature and faith.

**8th “We All Deserve Blessing”** **Mark 7:24-37** and **James 2:1-10, 14-17**. An “outsider” seeks healing from Jesus; and we are told not to play favorites but welcome all.

**15th - “Not Just Sticks and Stones”** **Mark 8:27-38** and **James 3:1-12**. The gospel brings Jesus’ rebuke of Peter and challenge to us to take up our cross. The letter to James instructs about words having power...to hurt or to heal.

Welcome back our Senior Choir. NoSto Market

**22nd - “Simple Gifts, Simple Wisdom”** lessons from **Mark 9:30-37** and **James 3:13 - 4:3**. Jesus welcomes the children; we are to be as children.

Senior Choir

**28th - “ Clearing the Path”**

**Mark 9:38-50** and **James 5:13-20**. The texts guide us to be guides for others, and to be savers of others, as well.

Senior Choir

**September Mission: Habitat for Humanity**

**Partnership** We are a Covenant Congregation with Habitat and any means of support to our local affiliate is welcome!



# Worship Volunteers

	Ushers	Deacon	Altar Flowers	Lay Reader	Communion	Comments
1-Sep	Steve Gadaree Matthew Sander	Dave McCord	<b>Open Date</b>	<b>Open Date</b>	Dave McCord Kathi Thaxton	
8-Sep	Joe Serwinski Kris Serwinski	Karen Doble	<b>Boldt</b>	<b>Open Date</b>		
15-Sep	Gretchen Noonan Kevin Noonan	Evelyn Bamford	<b>Open Date</b>	<b>Open Date</b>		
22-Sep	Pat Danley Monica Eppinger	Pat Danley	<b>Open Date</b>	<b>Open Date</b>		
29-Sep	Paul Ames Julie Clow	Elizabeth Witter	<b>Boldt</b>	Sherri Boldt		