

JUNE 2023



Dear Friends,

A little more than a month ago, Rachael and I had occasion to visit Knoxville, Tennessee, for the 10th Anniversary of the Big Ears Music Festival. Our pattern had been to attend Jazz Fest in New Orleans every spring, but we felt like changing things up this year. A decade of repetition was making us restless. While Knoxville isn't comparable to New Orleans (what is?), the festival itself didn't disappoint. The festival gathers artists in the worlds of jazz, classical, electronic, pop, and global music who are consciously pushing the boundaries of their field, allowing them to share their latest projects, and to collaborate with a who's who cast of world class musicians (fully half of the performers had been awarded MacArthur "genius" grants from what I could tell). The only thing necessary to enjoy the festival was a spirit of curiosity, a willingness to get beyond simple likes and dislikes, in order to ask,

"what is the artist trying to convey in this performance?" The only ask from the festival organizers is that attendees show up with a sense of openness, ready to enlarge their sense of the world through experimental performances. For me, it was an intellectual and aesthetic feast, a kind of utopian education. Simply put, I reveled in the experience.

Big Ears played out against a wider social backdrop that was hard to ignore. While the festival took place, the Tennessee legislature signed into effect an anti-drag bill, making it illegal to perform in drag anywhere in the state. In effect, for those in the trans community, their very being has been rendered illegal, since the simple act of walking down the street can be construed as a drag performance. So I was moved when the brilliant jazz pianist, Vijay Iyer, took the stage for the first of many

appearances during the weekend. Before playing a note, Iyer stated that he believed trans lives were sacred, a belief, he noted, that evidently was not shared by Tennessee lawmakers. There were more than a few audience members who were conspicuously cross-dressed, and even a few performers took to the stage in drag. The whole festival felt like an oasis, where artists and intellectuals at the forefront of their respective disciplines stubbornly pushed back against a space whose walls seemed to be closing in around us all. That weekend, music and art felt positively heroic. Meanwhile, there were moments in which motorcycle riders, or oversized pickup trucks, would gun their engines to startle crowds waiting to get into various venues. It was hard to know if it was a direct response to the festival itself. But given the wider backdrop, it was hard to imagine otherwise.

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HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL

Ladies Who Stitch

Ladies Who Stitch will continue working thru June 12th - after which we will take a summer break. Our creations are available on Mondays from 10:00 - 2:00 while we work, on most Sundays after the church service, in the Partnership Store during the White Elephant Sale, and sometimes by special request. Some LWS creations are also consigned at the Woman's Exchange/Lyme Tree in the Big Y shopping center. The Partnership Store - which includes wonderful things from Haiti, Palestine, and Tribal Crafts as well as LWS handwork, offers guilt-free shopping since all proceeds go directly to the artisans and/or FCCOL programs and missions.

One of our recent activities has been to attach white elephant appliques to fifty new adjustable red aprons for White Elephant Sale workers. We are slowly replacing some of the older well-worn smaller aprons. Will you be one of those lucky



Some of our new members!

workers? We also provided a variety of potholders - many of them made from recycled jean denim - as gifts to the new FCCOL members.

Questions? Contact Eunice via email: eunicetaylor@me.com.

Eunice Taylor - Coordinator for Ladies Who Stitch

Witness Stones Old Lyme Installation Ceremony

Old Lyme Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library, 2 Library Lane, Old Lyme CT on Friday, June 2 at 10 am.

The community will gather on the lawn of the Old Lyme Library to celebrate the third installation of Witness Stones in Old Lyme commemorating the lives of enslaved and indentured African Americans and Native Americans who labored in the historic town of Lyme. To deepen this untold story, Witness Stones placed this year will honor George, Cornelia, Neptune, Phyllis, York, Jack Freeman, Hagar Jeffrey, and Prince Griswold Crosley. The program offers music, poetry, and words from community partners. Guest speakers include Connecticut's Poet Laureate Antoinette Brim-Bell; author, anthropologist, and "genealogist" Vicki Blue Sky Welch; and community historian and genealogist John Mills, as well as the Lyme-Old Lyme High School Select Singers. To learn more see www.witnesstonesoldlyme.org.

FCCOL Youth GROUP Saturday, June 3rd at 6 pm

Box Night is here! Saturday night June 3rd, our FCCOL Youth Group and friends (7th-12th graders) are invited to learn more about the issues confronting those who are homeless and looking for affordable housing. Program begins at 6:00pm with dinner and guests from the Homeless Hospitality Center along with preparing a service project. Our youth will sleep overnight on the church lawn in boxes or tents and share breakfast the next morning.

To participate, please contact Laura at lfitz.nager@gmail.com or 860-304-9096.

To all members of the Senior Choir

Thank you for your wonderful singing at FCCOL this season! You have worked so hard and your singing has really enhanced our services. It's very much appreciated.

Now, to everyone reading this; It's Your Turn!! This summer we will be holding three Summer Sings, or better known as "Turn up to FCCOL at 9:30am and rehearse for the 10:00am service, yes, it feels like the seat of your pants singing, but oh, what fun we'll have" Sundays! These will take place on June 11, July 9 and August 13. Please mark your calendars! I hope many of you will join us!





WELCOME TO THE CHURCH

We then, as members of this Church, gladly welcome you to take part with us in the hopes, the labors, and the joys of the Church of Christ. We promise to walk with you in love and sympathy, to join with you in the ministries of grace to neighbors near and far, and to promote, as far as in us lies, your growth in the life of faith.

This morning we are pleased to welcome as new members:

Kyle Borton
 Sarah Borton
 Mary-Gardner Coppola
 Caitlin Doonan
 Maryann Furlong
 Kim Gilhool
 Frank Gilhool
 Jill Hartenstein
 Simphiwe Mbele
 Elizabeth McLaughlin
 Gayle Miller
 Carl Miller
 Linlin Mu
 Betsy Sandberg
 Bill Sandberg

Summer Mornings: Writing at the Well

Wednesdays 10-11 in the Library
 June 14th, 21, 28th July 5th, 12th, 26th.

"A good journal entry—like a good song, or sketch, or photograph—ought to break up the habitual and lift away the film that forms over the eye, the finger, the tongue, the heart. A good journal entry ought to be a love letter to the world." —Anthony Doerr

Join us as we write summer pages on Wednesday mornings this summer. Using informal writing prompts, participants will give voice to memories and the stories that make up our lives. Bring a notebook and a fast writing pen. No writing experience necessary...just a willingness to pay attention. Iced lemonade included. Facilitated by Laura.

Juneteenth Celebration of Jazz & Poetry

The Side Door Jazz Club, located at 85 Lyme St, Old Lyme CT on Saturday, June 17 at 2 pm.

In honor of Juneteenth—a federal holiday that commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans—the celebration will take place on the lawn of The Side Door at the Old Lyme Inn.

The event features a quartet led by New Haven jazz legend Jesse Hameen II and new work by Connecticut poets Marilyn Nelson, Kate Rushin, Rhonda Ward, and Antoinette Brim-Bell, who in 2021 created a tribute in verse to those enslaved in historic Lyme. The jazz quartet features the inspirational percussionist Jesse Hameen II; Rodney Jones, guitar; Zwelakhe Bell Le Pere, bass; and Xavier McGeorge, piano. The event has received generous support from The Side Door Jazz Club.

Make Music Day

Make Music Day in celebration of the Summer Solstice is just around the corner. Join us on Wednesday, June 21st from 5-7 pm on our church lawn and along Lyme Street to hear some fantastic bands and singers!

Thursday Mornings at the Beach!

Join us at White Sands Beach from 10-12 am on Thursdays starting June 22nd, 29th - July 6th, 20th, 27th. Meet at the rainbow umbrella with your pail and any beach friends.

Meet at church parking lot at 9:45 am to carpool if you don't have an OL beach sticker. Email Laura at lfitz.nager@gmail.com.

Grief and Loss Group

Monthly group for those who have lost a loved one and those who continue with the challenges of caregiving. Next meetings will be Wednesday June 28th and July 26th 5:30-6:30 pm in Hoag Parlor. Co-facilitated by Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager and Mary McGannon Kollman.

Memorial

Stephen Hoag
 Dwight Bartholomew

Memorial Service for Earl Peters will be held in the Meetinghouse on Saturday June 10th at 11am. Although Earl died several months ago, this will be the day his entire family will gather to honor his life. All are invited.

2023 WHITE ELEPHANT SALE—DONATIONS

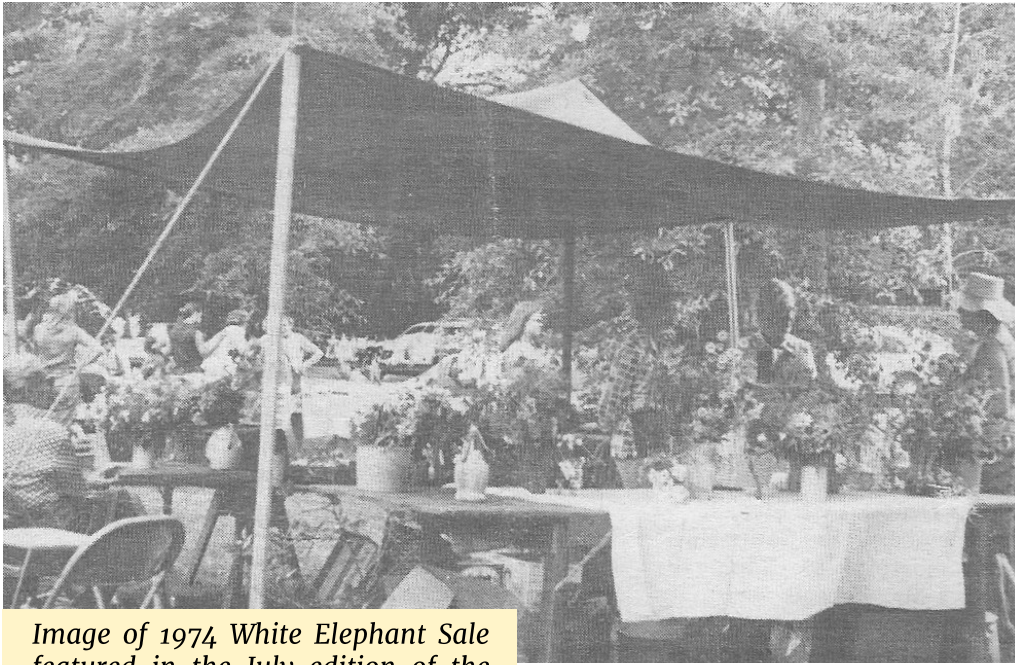


Image of 1974 White Elephant Sale featured in the July edition of the Olde Lyme Gazette titled "A Bargain Hunters' Paradise."

Intake – Again we are keeping intake to only 6 days 9-2 and NO nights. Please bring your items to the church beginning Thursday **June 29th** – **July 1st**, and from **July 5th** -> **7th**. See calendar in the newsletter. The side driveway will be closed except for intake hours.

Quality of Donations – We are being more selective each year. We have to be able to sell the item in two days [9 hrs total], give to one of our many recycle groups or discard. By insisting on clean salable items we can reduce the sorting, handling and disposal of damaged or broken items. As always we are grateful for your donations, and sorting them in advance really helps.

Donating Large Furniture for the White Elephant Sale [July 14th and 15th]

We are LIMITING the amount of large furniture that we will accept this year. We are **NOT** planning any pickup service due to manpower scheduling and conflicts, but may do some if truck available. If you do have a piece to donate and are wondering whether we will accept, please call the office 434-8686 anytime night or day and hit the WES call back line - leave a message with all the particulars. We will contact you to discuss your large furniture donation.

The emphasis is on clean, **QUALITY** items. — **NO sofa beds, stuffed couches/chairs, dining room sets or particle board furniture.**

We CAN NOT accept:

Dirty or Broken Items or Junk	Gas cans with Gas or kerosene
Appliances (Large):	Guns, Knives, Weapons
Air Conditioners	Magazines, Newspapers
Refrigerators, freezers & Stoves	Mattresses or Box Springs
Washers & Dryers	Paint
Bike helmets [used - safety concerns]	Phones
Books: Technical or Textbooks, Encyclopedias	Rugs [used]
Car Seats - safety liability	Scanners
Cribs used - safety liability	Stereo equipment, Speakers
Chemicals	Skis - old style downhill
Computers, monitors & software	Stuffed animals [used]
Furniture - stuffed sofa/chairs or sofa beds	Tires
Furniture - particle board	Treadmills
Furniture - Dining Room sets	TVs [all styles]
Lamps [floor or table]	
Luggage [old hard sided]	


We GLADLY Accept [Quality Please!!!!]

Antiques, Fine China, Silver Appliances, Small (Working) Art, Sculpture, Posters, Frames Baskets Bedding, Linens Boats, Canoes, Kayaks Bicycles, Tricycles Books: Children's', Non-Fiction, Fiction Christmas & Holiday decorations Clothes: Children's, Men's, Women's Clothes: Fine, Fashion Clothes: Vintage, Costume, and Accessories Collections Curtains, Drapes	DVD's (Family Content) Furniture [Not on the 'can not accept' list] [call church office if a question 434-8686] Gifts, Sundries, Knickknacks Jewelry: Costume & Fine Kitchen Items (Appliances, Dishes, Cookware) Luggage [soft sided or Steamer trunks only] Musical Instruments Plants, Containers Shoes Skis [downhill ones must be "shape" style] Sporting Goods [good condition] Tools (House & Garden) Toys and New Stuffed Animals
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JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
18	19	20	21	22 Pre SET-UP INSIDE [hang signs move tables, etc]	23 Pre SET-UP INSIDE [milk crates, tubs, etc]	24 SET-UP INSIDE [9:00 am – 12:00]
25	26	27	28	29 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00	30 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00 Workers Lunch	1 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00

JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3 CLOSED Sort & Price	4 HOLIDAY 	5 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00	6 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00	7 INTAKE 9:00 – 2:00 Workers Lunch	8 CLOSED Sort & Price
9	10 CLOSED Sort & Price for sale. Move art to Narthax Clean up and Finalize inside setup	11 During Day Big Tens & Sport Goods 5-7 pm Outside tables, Plant, Baked Good, Coffee Tents Go up	12 CLOSED Sort & Price Finalize any remaining outside Set-up	13 SET-UP OUTSIDE 8 AM ->> Workers Lunch	14 SALE 9:00 – 2:00	15 SALE 8:00 – 12:00 CLEANUP & Snacks 12:00 ->>

ON THE ENVIRONMENT

How Green Is Your Crustacean?

Millions of lobsters harvested from the shores of Maine and Nova Scotia are shipped all over the country and abroad. What is the environmental impact of this industry? In a recent issue of *DownEast* magazine, Will Gruneward summarized the results of a study that addressed this question. The Maine-based company, Luke's Lobster, ships lobsters to eighteen of its restaurants across the country. The company, in partnership with the non profit Island Institute, a sustainability-focused consulting firm, concluded that, on average, 2.89 lbs. (volume: about a cubic yard) of greenhouse gases are released to the atmosphere per lb. of lobster. This covers all aspects from ocean to plate. A 2018 publication in the journal, *Science*, concluded that Luke's Lobster was actually more eco-friendly than most of its competition, mainly because they do not use air freight. Nevertheless, Luke's Lobster is trying to reduce their



carbon footprint by installing solar generators at wharfs and developing plans to switch to hybrid and electric motor powered fishing boats. Meanwhile, the Gulf of Maine is warming quickly and as that occurs, lobsters will continue to migrate to cooler waters north of Maine. This puts that extremely important domestic industry in jeopardy.

As the world come to grips with climate change, an accelerating threat, individuals and businesses are reviewing their actions. Apps, for instance, are available for people to measure the carbon foot-

print of the foods they consume. Meanwhile, it seems to make sense to deal with extreme eco-unfriendliness. Lots of lobsters are shipped abroad (along with the heavy ice that keeps them alive) and that should be ended. For instance, Asians should eat mostly local and Americans the same (except for specific items, e.g., imported tea, which is lightweight). Complicated, but this is part of the future.

For the environmental committee, Donald Gonci

BOARD OF MISSIONS



On a beautiful May morning Emily Fisher and I visited the Lyme/Old Lyme Food Share Garden at Town Woods Park. We were both impressed with the number of volunteers and their willingness to give part of their Saturday morning to the upkeep of the garden. Emily cast her practiced eye approvingly on all the goings on.

The Lyme–Old Lyme Food Share Garden's goal is to provide fresh produce to help alleviate food insecurities and support healthy nutrition to families in Lyme, Old Lyme, and the surrounding communities.

*First workday of 2023 growing season.
Credit: www.lolfoodsharegarden.org*

They harvested 2,500 pounds of produce last year. Half went directly to the food pantry & meal site at our church and half went to the Gemma E. Moran Food Center in New London. They hope through expansion of the initial garden and using the greenhouse down at the Middle School to double the output this year.

Your Board of Missions decided that this was a worthy local organization to support. We sent them \$500 last year and \$500 again this year.

Charlie Hosley, for the Board of Missions

DEAR FRIENDS, CONTINUED

Big Ears might be read as a metaphor for democracy in this moment. But it might just as well be read as a statement of theological principles for the church, any church, including our own. Have big ears. Have big eyes. Have big minds. Have big hearts. Don't shut down because you can't understand something, or because it seems strange. Don't wall yourself in behind received truths. Stay open! Stay receptive to new ideas, to new configurations of culture, to new theologies, liturgies, rituals, and practices. Stay open to new ways of being human. Just...stay open! Such a theology would be in keeping with the Jesus we find in the Gospels, who argues that the Spirit blows wherever it will (and not only in the precincts we think it ought to), that in his Father's house, there are many rooms (and not just a single one, as many would argue). This is the Jesus who troubles his hometown when he announces that he intends to work outside the boundaries of their understanding, the Jesus who takes his place among those at the periphery of his own culture. All of the arguments that Jesus engages in with the Pharisees and Sadducees can be read as ways of saying: Open up! Enlarge your hearts, your minds, your eyes, your ears. Keep them big!

That's' what we're trying to do at FCCOL, throughout the month of June, but well into the remainder of the year as well. On Friday June 2nd at 10 AM, there will be a Witness Stones ceremony on the library lawn, as several new stones are installed to commemorate the lives of the enslaved in our town. On Friday, June 9th at 7 PM, FCCOL will be screening a

film, *I Am Muslim-American*, followed by a talk back with some of our Muslim friends and partners. That event is brought to us by the Long Wharf Theater, in partnership with PARJE (Partnership for Racial Justice and Education). On Saturday June 17th at 2 PM, there will be a jazz concert and poetry reading on the lawn of the Old Lyme Inn, to mark the Witness Stones once again, but also to mark Juneteenth. And then on Sunday, June 18th at 10 AM, Román Díaz and his Rumba Ensemble will return to Old Lyme for our morning worship service, bringing the sacred songs of Afro-Cuba into our midst. They'll be joined by two special guests, Lazarro Galarraga and Sandy Perez, two of the foremost living repositories of knowledge of the sacred Orisha tradition. Meanwhile, June is Pride month, and so we'll be finding ways to celebrate and honor the LGBTQ voices in our midst, something that churches can't do often enough. It's all of it a way of having big ears, big minds, and big hearts, in a moment when the space for such largesse seems to be shrinking all around us.

And books? I always list my aspirations for summer in this space every June. This year, I have my eye on our Africa journey in December and January, and so I'm hoping to read a few of the following: *Vodun in Coastal Benin*, by Dana Rush, *Remains of Ritual*, by Steven Friedson, and *In the Wake*, by Christina Sharpe. If I'm lucky, I may get some Faulkner and Joyce in there as well. We'll see.

I hope you have a great summer. And I hope in the midst of everything, we all find ways to keep

our ears, our eyes, our minds and our spirits open - which is to say, big!

Stay human,

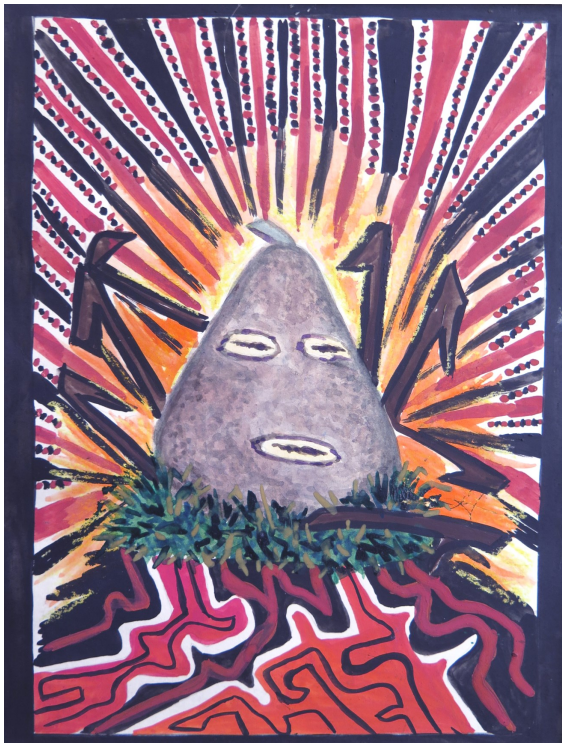


Reading: *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, by Dante; *The Complete Short Stories*, by Clarice Lispector; *Playing Changes* by Nate Chinen; *A Little Devil in America: Notes on Black Performance* by Hanif Abdurauqib; *The Winter's Tale*, by Shakespeare; *Medea*, by Euripides.

Listening: *Ascension*, by John Coltrane; *Mélusine*, by Cecile McLorin Salvant; *Música de las Américas*, by Miguel Zenon; *Eye of I*, by James Brandon Lewis.

Watching: *Ted Lasso*; *Daisy Jones and the Six*.

WEST AFRICA JOURNEY



Where the River Meets the Sound: A Celebration of Sacred Afro-Cuban Music in Old Lyme

featuring the Román Díaz Rumba Ensemble, Lázaro Galarraga & Sandy Perez

Sunday, June 18, 10 a.m.
First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
2 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT

Image: Elegua at the Crossroads by Vincenta Casteñeda "Angarica" of Havana

For the past several years (and much longer, really), the FCCOL community has been on a journey of discovery about the legacy of colonialism and enslavement in New England. In our Stories from the Deep North series, and in the ongoing work of the Witness Stones, we have come to know the stories of many who were brought to the Southern New England Coast from West Africa, or from the Caribbean. And we have learned, via Tom DeWolf, how one of the largest slaving empires in the United States emerged from a family who got their start in Old Lyme. Throughout, we have become acutely aware of the ways Africa, the Caribbean, and New England have been intimately connected, far more so than we previously understood or acknowledged.

In keeping with all we have learned, and in a line of continuity with each of our Mission Partnerships, FCCOL will embark upon a journey to West Africa later this year, to Ghana,

Togo, and Benin. There, we'll have the opportunity to consider the ongoing legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, visiting the Elmina and Cape Coast fortresses in Ghana. We'll ask how that legacy continues to haunt our own country, and indeed, our own community, even as we con-



sider the international ramifications of that historic rupture. But in all three countries, we'll have the opportunity to witness something further: the ways traditional African religions and cultures have not only survived in the midst of such horrific suffering, but the ways those traditions have thrived. From the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana to Vodun ceremonies in Benin, we'll be invited to witness the healing arts of these traditions, including their stunning visual and aural beauty, and their powerful insights into the human story. We'll study the ecological significance of these traditions. And we'll consider the many ways that such ritual and religious expressions have actually helped to make America (and within America, the United States) what it is. Whether in music, food, religion, fashion, language, sports, or the visual arts, we'll come to understand how the African traditions we'll explore have shaped the world around us.

This is an extraordinary and rare opportunity. It will require a good deal of preparation, as we read together, talk together, and think together about how to enter such an experience with the reverence and care that shall be required of us. It promises to be life changing.

Space is limited. In order to function well, our group needs to remain fairly small. If you're interested in learning more, email Steve at steven@jungkeit.net.

YOUTH SUNDAY



YOUTH SUNDAY REFLECTIONS



Members of God's Neighborhood singing on Youth Sunday.

Reflection on Faith by Maeve Gosman

(Maeve is entering high school in the fall)

When I was six, I just knew two things: God loved me, and Jesus had loved me. Being six years old, I happily accepted these two things and never questioned further. I was a child of God, and I was loved.

But, as I grew older, I heard so many different views on what was necessary to make me "deserving" of love. At first, I tried to hold on to what I knew for certain when I was six, but the chorus of voices telling me that I was unworthy, a terrible person, destined for hell scared me. Because, what if I wasn't good enough? What about the times I had rolled my eyes at my mother or snapped at my brother? I had sinned.

I Am Grateful

by Drysile Mulanga Kazadi

(Drysile is a junior in high school and has assisted in the 4-6th grade classroom this year.)

I Am Grateful

I'm grateful for the neighborhood I live in, the people that I trust and with whom I feel a sense of belonging to and strongly appreciate family conflict...for which I mean I have people who love me and are always there for me.

Thankful for the light drizzle, the gusty breeze and the fading blue all the criticisms of our government that I hear that means I have freedom of speech.

I'm grateful for my skin's color because it helps me understand who I was, who I am, and who I will become.

I am grateful for the neighborhood that has supported my family and I in getting where we are today.

Above all else, I'm grateful for what life has given me. The breathtaking skies makes me value nature more. The challenges and obstacles that help me develop my creativity and problem-solving skills; the failures that helped me become stronger; the successes that teach me about friendship and love; and the deeds of kindness that encourage me to see and be the good in the world.

Last but not least, I am appreciative of all the blessings life has given me. I am thankful for a home I can call my own. For that, it means I have a bed, food, and no worries that others have. The alarm that goes off early in the morning, for example, today, means that I am alive.

I'm grateful for that lady behind me who occasionally sings off-key.

All of this is what I am so dearly thankful for.



We served ice cream during fellowship hour to kick off the summer!

I committed this to heart, and in the process I forgot something important: we all make mistakes, nobody is perfect, and we are all deserving of God's love.

In John 13:34-5, it is written "Love each other, just as I have loved you, so you must also love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other." I think that verse sums up the problem with some Christians today: we are often not identified as followers of Jesus because we love each other, but because many focus on judging one another. I am so grateful to have found this community where tolerance and compassion are at the forefront of its teachings, but it still makes me sad that the word "Christian" is sometimes synonymous with the word "judgemental". It is disheartening for me to have to explain hastily after saying I am Christian that I am not homophobic, racist, or full of hate, and that I strive to be open-minded and loving.



So, the question is: why is it this way? Why do many choose to focus on what they consider the shortcomings or mistakes of others? Because, as that verse described, we all fall short. We all sin. We are human. We try, but nobody is perfect, because that is impossible. We can't hold ourselves to the standard of God, but what we can do is what Jesus told us to: love each other. We shouldn't constantly judge others, because deep down we are all trying.

I held myself to an impossible standard for so long, making track of every single misstep and feeling like I was unworthy because I had been hearing that from those who claimed to be more worthy in God's eyes than unless I did every single thing in my life perfectly...Now, I know that struggling is what makes us all human. And, even more importantly, despite my struggles, I am no less deserving of the love of God.

And please, don't just obsess over your mistakes or struggles. Forgive yourself, too! On the days where you might feel guilty or distressed, please remember: you are not unworthy...You are loved.

Additional reflections from Youth Sunday will be printed in the September issue.

God's Neighborhood

Thank you to all of our families, teachers, students and volunteers who helped make this year's youth ed programming a wonderful communal journey! The nursery will be open on Sundays throughout the summer except during the White Elephant Sale. Arts and Crafts are available in Sheffield Auditorium during summer services for K-5th grade. We will resume Sunday School for the new academic year starting on Homecoming Sunday, September 10th at the 10 am service.

We are deeply grateful to Sunday School Coordinator, D. Andrews and Youth Sunday Director, Gavin Lodge, and our teachers (Rachael Jungkeit, Elsbeth Dowd, Mary Bradford, Melissa Lambrecht, Marybeth Franco, Tim Dowd and Elijah Styles) for their extraordinary leadership, creativity and steadfast care this year!! We also appreciate our high school assistants, Taylor Quintin, Julia Clark, Sabina Jungkeit, Drysile Kazadi and Delaney Donovan, as well as all of our families and congregation!



Gavin Lodge (seated left) did such an amazing job directing Youth Sunday!

TREE OF LIFE JOURNEY TO THE HOLY LAND

TO DISCOVER HOW TO BE
HUMAN NOW IS THE REASON
WE FOLLOW THE STAR!



Tree of Life Journey to the Holy Land: January 2 to 13, 2024 Optional Extension to Bosnia - January 13 to 19

In all his letters Mazin Qumsiyeh, our good friend, founder of the Palestine Natural History Museum, professor at Bethlehem University and author of “Sharing the Land of Canaan” closes with the important reminder to “**Stay Human.**”

As we all struggle with so much inhumanity, we need that wise reminder now more than ever, and we need to follow the example of our friends in Palestine who despite apartheid and ethnic cleansing exemplify what it means to “stay human” even when surrounded by increasing violence, hate, greed, fear, and the apathy of the international community.

The wisdom of the prophets suggests that we cannot do it alone. The Hopi elders said, “The time of the lone wolf is over... We are the ones we've been waiting for.” Philosophers speak of “Telos Anthropos” and the evolution of the human spirit. The prophet Moses said, “Would that all the Lord's people were prophets.” The prophet Mohammed prayed with the prophets who came before him, including Moses and Jesus. Peace be upon them. Jesus empowered his followers by saying that they would do even more than what he had been able to do to advance the cause of justice and peace.

Our next Tree of Life journey will be held during the darkest time of winter, - “In the Bleak Midwinter” - at a time when we can remember how it was an interfaith group that gathered at the manger when Jesus was born during the winter solstice. The shepherds, Mary and Joseph were Jews, followers of Moses and the great prophets of Israel. In giving birth to Jesus, Mary would be giving birth to what would eventually be called, “Christianity,” and in the manger in Bethlehem, this Holy Extended Interfaith Family would be joined by wise travelers from Persia, Zoroastrians, who sought an answer to that perennial question, “to discover how to be human now is the reason we fol-

low the star.” (from W.H. Auden, “For The Time Being”). During the horrendous injustices of the industrial revolution, including the cruel treatment of children, the poet William Blake said, “Thine own humanity learn to adore.” Now, more than ever, in the face of so much inhumanity, we need such “adoration.”

Now, more than ever, we need border-less mangers. We need “doctors without borders,” “scientists without borders,” “musicians without borders” and “teachers and nurses without borders.” We need interfaith enclaves of those who seek to strengthen our common humanity, those who are looking to move away from theologies of entitlement to theologies of humility, those who know that the future of the human race is not in boundaries, sectarianism, racism and nationalism but rather in our shared humanity.

If you also are in search of your deeper humanity, if you wish to move beyond theologies of exclusion, if you want to meet Tree of Life 's extraordinary ensemble of friends - Christians, Muslims, Jews and those of no particular faith identity who everyday demonstrate what it means “To Stay Human,” please join us! We'd love to introduce you to our friends!



Motherhood by Malak Mattar.

Children of Gaza Dreaming of Peace by Malak Mattar.



'Sarajevo Safari' is a term used for rich foreigners who paid money to shoot civilians (often children) from the positions of the Republika Srpska (RS) Army in besieged Sarajevo during the 1990s.

About the artwork: The paintings in this entry are by Malak Mattar. Malak is a self-taught artist and published author from Gaza who paints expressionist faces, figures, and semi-abstract designs. Learn more about Malak Mattar at <https://www.malakmattar.com/>

Despite all the suffering, the people of Bosnia are known for their smiles, friendships, and dark humor. For many of us, humor is one way of dealing with the trauma from the past.

Sarajevo is often referred to as Jerusalem of Europe because major religions and people of different faiths coexisted with each other for many centuries.

The word "Bosna" means running water. This is a beautiful country with lots of rivers, exceptional natural parks, and mountains. Winter Olympic games were held there in 1984. Join us in our journey in January of 2024 and meet the courageous people of Bosnia. Enjoy the beautiful landscape but also get to learn about its past and present struggles. The people of Bosnia will be happy to host you."

Our journey in the Land of Promise - the Land of too many broken promises - will be from **January 2nd to January 13th**, and then, from **January 13th to January 19**, for those who can join us for the extension, we will have the extraordinary opportunity to visit Bosnia, a place that continues to struggle but in courageous and compassionate individuals demonstrates a more hopeful future!

We are very honored that our good friend Miki Nermin, originally from Bosnia and now one of the leaders at the Bosnian-Islamic Cultural Center in Hartford, will be one of the leaders on our journey. Here is his description for our extension in Bosnia:

"There is a country in Europe whose capital city was under siege for 1,425 days in the 1990s, the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare.

The biggest genocide after the holocaust in Europe was committed in this country where UN troops and NATO witnessed it and refused to help.

STAY HUMAN

David W. Good Founder, Tree of Life Educational Fund

We would love to have you travel with us! Let us know if you are interested in more information. David W. Good — davidwgood@fccol.org or Ghoufran Allababidi (President), Ghoufran@tolef.org.

EMPLOYMENT

Rab Nawaz/Kappri Painting, LLC

Free estimates. Power painting, power washing interior and exterior, gutter cleaning, wallpaper install and removal. 30+ years experience. Satisfaction guaranteed. The church has experience with this company. Kappripainting@gmail.com or 860-857-0326.

American Craftsmen needs America's help. Let me restore your family heirloom as a furniture maker of 33 years. My work includes restoration of antiques, work on cherished family pieces, and general furniture repair. As well, my passion is designing and building fine furniture. Please contact Dick Humphreville at 860-442-5003 or www.humphrevillefurniture.com.

Home Designer: Design & drawing from concept to construction documents for new homes, additions, and renovations. Servicing home owners, builders, and architects. Other services include drawings to help sell a house, develop & present an idea. Computer aided using DATA CAD12 - 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional. David S Nelson-Building Design Service DSNdesign@comcast.net or 860-434-5526.

The "Pet Nanny" Carol Giuliano, an Old Lyme resident, will provide loving care for your pets when you are not there. Over forty years experience with all types of animals. Call 203-738-9932.

Professional Caregiver Available. For evening hours. For more information and references contact Sim at 203-833-2992.

Sue Mandeville: Transportation and/or accompaniment to professional or medical appointments, as well as outpatient surgeries and home stay following anesthesia. Airport, train or bus transport. Livery license, insured, references and medical training. Call Sue Mandeville 860-908-2310.

Mediator, Lorelei Mitchell, is available to assist with family dilemmas, landlord-tenant disputes or workplace conflict. Mediation is a better alternative to litigation and can often transform relationships, while giving you a say in the outcome. To schedule a consultation, contact Lorelei at 860-536-0260 or loleleimitchell12@gmail.com.

Guli Gvelesiani: I lived in Old Lyme and worked for 7 years as a live-in caregiver for a church family. I can provide live-in caregiving for families in Old Lyme and other locations in CT. 860-391-5691.

Carolyn Randall: If anyone is flying somewhere for the holidays and you don't want to leave your car in long term parking, I will drive you to airport. Going South for the winter, I will drive you to airport—Bradley, Providence or JFK. Call me at 860-343-3573.

We periodically receive requests to post notice of people who can be hired to help transport, help in light housekeeping or help by offering companionship to those who are housebound. We are not able to make recommendations; but their names and number are listed below:

- **Martha Durfee** 860-575-6518

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME

Staff

The Rev. Dr. Steven R. Jungkeit, Senior Minister (860-434-8686)
The Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager, Senior Associate Minister (860-304-9096)
The Rev. Carleen R. Gerber, Associate Minister (860-434-0058)
Simon D. Holt, Director of Music (860-705-3037)
The Rev. David W. Good, Minister Emeritus
The Rev. Rebecca T. Crosby, Minister for Haitian Outreach
The Rev. Cynthia C. Willauer, In Ministry for The Care of Creation
Rebecca A. Francisco, a recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary,
serves as minister to the South Lyme Union Chapel.

D. Andrews, Director of Christian Education/Junior & Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Leader
Rachael Jungkeit, Director of Children's Music
Robert McCracken, Church Administrator
Odile Irakiza, Church Office Manager
Julie Mardjekaj, Bookkeeper
Mark Testori, Sexton

Church Office Tel: 860-434-8686
Fax: 860-434-1135
e-mail: fccol@fccol.org
Website: www.fccol.org

Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.
South Lyme Union Chapel Worship - 9:00 a.m.

Counseling and Psychotherapy Tel: 860-434-3813
Cary Walker, LCSW

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME,
Member U.C.C.

The reproduction of our Meetinghouse on the back is from a sketch by William Steeves.

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The next Newsletter will be for September; deadline is August 18.

Please e-mail the church office at fccol@fccol.org if you want to be removed from the newsletter mailing list and read it on the website. Please let us know if you would like an e-mail alert when the new issues are available on our website. Thanks for your help!

