

April 2024



Dear Friends,

This month I'd like to turn this space over to David Fitzpatrick. We're in the season of Easter, and the story David has to tell is a kind of Easter story. David is a friend to many of us, and he joins us in the pews most Sunday mornings. He's also, as it turns out, Laura's younger brother. About a month ago, David shared this essay with me about his own experiences with mental illness, and recovery. I knew immediately upon reading it that I wanted to find a way for him to share this with the rest of you. Mental illness is a condition afflicting far more people than we may realize. For some of us, it is a daily struggle. For others, it touches the life of a sibling or a parent, a child or a friend. It is an agonizing journey, as David's story makes plain. But there is another side to that struggle, one that encompasses healing, self-

acceptance, and love. I'll let David take it from here.

Blessings to all of you in this season of Easter resurrections,

Steve

Mental Health Molasses By David Fitzpatrick

It seems like mental health clients can't get out beyond the slog of our own psychic universe; like there's an unbreakable plexiglass dome around us, something torn straight from a Stephen King novel. We get stuck in this thick, self-loathing molasses up to our thighs as we rush toward life or love but something provincial keeps tugging us back. In and out of inpatient hospitals and day-treatment facilities, a raven caws, "Help them, David, why not help them with what you've already learned?"

The revolving door squeaks a maddening refrain; Admitted,

discharged, admitted, discharged, admitted, and on and on. Family members study their siblings and Nanas suffocating under the heft of mental anguish, which traumatizes. If it were a film, they'd call it Nightmares R Us. Some data from NAMI, The National Alliance on Mentally Illness, help with clarity, although the facts are bracing. One in five adults experience a mental illness each year. And a devastating note: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among kids ages 10-14.

I recall feeling trapped for over ten years, like a claustrophobic fuse was pulsing in my skull set to blow. But on Sunday, April 26, 2009, brilliant sunlight entered my life for the first time in years. I met this

young woman named Amy, first online, and then at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport. On that first date, we were surrounded by these
(continued on pages 4-5)

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL



Senior Choir Schedule

To all members of the Senior Choir - thank you for your wonderful singing in March and especially on Easter Sunday!

Here is the April schedule:

Wed., April 3rd NO REHEARSAL—enjoy date night.

Sun., April 7: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., April 10: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sun., April 14: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., April 17: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sun., April 21: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., April 24: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sun., April 28: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am.

Many thanks to all,
Simon

The Old Lyme Ringers

Our group of eleven handbell ringers continues to work hard preparing music for Easter Sunday, March 31, and for later in the spring on April 14th and April 21st. Easter will see the handbells playing a spirited arrangement of "Hymn to Joy" by Beethoven, accompanied by organ and trumpet. You will hear techniques of ringing, use of mallets, martellato and shaking. On April 14, the handbell quartet will ring the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy," accompanied by piano. Then on April 21st the whole handbell choir will play a wonderful arrangement of the hymn "This Is My Father's World," accompanied by organ and flute. This number has the ringers playing both handbells and hand chimes, with a section of the piece having the treble bells played with mallets. There is much to listen for in the coming weeks as the Old Lyme Ringers present joyful music of the spring season!

LBS April Luncheon

We welcome everyone to come join us for some fellowship, delicious food, and an entertaining and personal historical program at the Ladies Benevolent Society luncheon on Tuesday, April 9th from noon to 2pm. In charge of our kitchen once again, Chef Rick will be serving up a delicious meal of Mom's meatloaf, mashed potatoes and a vegetable side, followed by a wonderful homemade dessert.

The post-meal program, beginning at 1pm, will be a presentation by Arnie Pritchard, Storyteller/Historian. Years ago, Arnie inherited his father's World War II army footlocker, containing hundreds of letters and family papers. From this trove of information and personal insights, Mr. Pritchard has created a story he will share with us titled "This Business of Fighting." It portrays the journey of a young man dealing with raw fear as he endures incredible trials and hardships, culminating in his father having a leadership role amidst chaos. Questions and answers will follow his presentation. Arnie Pritchard has a PhD from Yale and has been telling stories for nearly twenty years.

Suggested donation for the luncheon and program is \$5 per person, plus a nonperishable food item for our food bank or a package of disposable diapers for our diaper bank. If you plan to join us at the luncheon, please call the FCCOL office at (860) 434-8686 by Friday, April 5th to make a reservation so we can be sure to have enough food prepared for all to enjoy.

Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

March just flew by - but we accomplished a lot anyway and are welcoming spring! Crocheted men's scarves, adult dining scarves, Easter Bunny treat bags, and small totes for kids and adults topped our "new creations" list. We had a successful sale of winter items - hats, mittens, and scarves - and have now stored the remaining ones for fall sales. The large tote bags that we make for the New London Homeless Hospitality Center continue to be a big hit and we estimate that we've donated over 600 of them in the past few years.

One of our members created a beautiful quilted "Tree of Life" wall hanging and it was given to David Good as an appreciative and commemorative gift from all of FCCOL.



We opened the Partnership Store during the recent Soup Bowl Supper and the March LBS Luncheon. There were sales of goods from Haiti, Palestine, Tribal Crafts, and Ladies Who Stitch as well as a lot of good publicity. The store is

regularly open on Sundays after the service, Mondays while we work, and Wednesdays after choir practice.

Our Monday work days in the Sheffield Auditorium continue to be productive, joyful and fulfilling. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., we knit, sew, craft and organize but we also welcome shoppers, visitors, and curiosity seekers. Donations of greeting cards (for making gift tags), socks (for the Alliance for Living) and jeans (for the Homeless Hospitality stage, clearly marked for LWS). **Our winter items (scarves, mittens and hats) are on sale in the Partnership Store - 15% - 50% off - through Easter Sunday.**

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



Sunday School

God's Neighborhood

April is upon us and students in God's neighborhood will be hearing familiar scripture stories of the season and be on the lookout for sightings of spring in our backyards! We'll remember Jesus' message of love to "love one another as I have loved you."

Later in April, we'll celebrate **Earth Day** and the beauty of all creatures great and small. We'll reflect on some of the learnings that we've done this year about interconnectedness, and God's diversity. We'll work on our service and art projects. How is your garden growing?

Sunday, April 7th- Our Youth Group will be on their Civil Rights trip down to Atlanta, Georgia, and Selma, and Montgomery, Alabama. They will have left April 6th and will return April 11th. The younger students in God's Neighborhood will continue to learn about God's diversity and how to continue pulling people into our circle who are being marginalized even today.

Sunday, April 14th- Our Youth Group will be back from the south, they will reflect on their trip for the Children's Message during the service. Sunday School will

start to work on getting organized for our Children's Sunday June 9th.



Sunday, April 21st- Celebrating Earth Day! Yay! We plan to have guests joining us this Sunday and we will be planting seeds and doing stuff outside, weather depending.

Sunday, April 28th- Our Youth Group is invited to join Reverend Greene and his congregation in Harlem, NY. We will be taking a field trip leaving the church at 7am and driving down to Harlem to St. Luke's African Methodist Episcopal Church. We will enjoy their church service that morning, and then go to lunch. "Do Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly with God"-Micah 6:8

Spring Poem:

This morning the redbirds' eggs have hatched and already the chicks are chirping for food.

They don't know where it's coming from, they just keep shouting, "More! More!"

Their eyes haven't opened yet, they know nothing about the sky that's waiting.

Or the thousands, the millions of trees.

They don't even know they have wings.

And just like that, like a simple neighborhood event, a miracle is taking place.

What spring miracles have you seen lately?

Please reach out to me if you have interest in these events and would like to plan ahead! Jolene Brant- 860-460-9511

Progressive Bible Study

Thursday mornings 11:00-12:00

What's Love Got To Do With It?

Come each week or just drop in to catch up on the latest soap opera unfolding in the book of Genesis!

Confirmation

April Vacation: Civil Rights Trip April 6th -11th, flying to Atlanta, GA and driving to Birmingham, AL.

Sunday, April 21st, Confirmation Class goes to Connecticut College. We will depart for New London at 4:00 pm to meet up with college students who will show us Chicago Footwork and other types of dance. After eating pizza there, we will return to Old Lyme by 7 pm.

Sunday, May 5th 4-5:30 pm:

Confirmation class will be meeting in the library with mentors and pizza!

Confirmation Ceremony

will be May 12th during the 10:00 am Service.

Church World Service Blanket Drive

CWS is named one of the top 100 highly rated Charities by "GiveSpot" and a B+ rating from The American Institute of Philanthropy, and a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Last September, our congregation received a plaque honoring FCCOL for having donated \$90,000 for blankets over the last 25 years. Blankets can be rolled up and therefore ideal for carrying belongings, or providing padding for someone sleeping on the sidewalk, in cars or under bridges. Blankets are urgently needed domestically and abroad. Each blanket costs only \$10. Please make checks payable to LBS. Special CWS envelopes are available in the pews. They can be put in the offering plate or sent to FCCOL c/o LBS, 2 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371.

Grief Group

Join us for our monthly support group for those living with grief and loss. Wednesday 5:00-6:00 pm, April 17th.

Memorials

Peggy Wasley

(continued from page 1)

proud, magnificent peacocks, lovely indigo and teal and turquoise, wild feathery creatures strutting around, doing their thing with panache and flair. After a decade at a group home on Broadway in New Haven, getting to know Amy was magical and lovely. One date turned into many more as my life began to change for the better.

We wed twenty-one months later during a snowy Halloween, in October of 2011, surrounded by friends and family from all chapters of our lives. Life in those early days of marriage was wonderful and challenging and hard. We honeymooned in Ireland, saw the Cliffs of Mohr and danced by the river Liffey in Dublin, and got drunk in a winding, spooky castle with a claw-footed tub in a wide room.

I was learning that I was more than my history of depression, schizoaffective disorder, and self-harm and so we gradually learned to trust in one another. Another lifeline was my writing which turned into a memoir leading to a book contract with Harper Collins. A year later, in 2012, *Sharp: My Story of Madness, Cutting and How I Reclaimed My Life* was published. Amy and I spent a year signing books, offering workshops and giving speeches and somehow, the two of us, morphed into role models. After spending a year and change in the Ninth Square Neighborhood of New Haven, I packed up my boxes and followed my wife up I-91 north to her hometown of Middletown, Connecticut, leaving the Elm City behind.

Looking back, I've always been a sucker for the underdog. I remember the Olympics in 1980 and The Miracle on Ice in Lake Placid, New York when scruffy American college hockey kids out hustled the detached Russians before going on to win the gold medal which had me and my brothers and dad dancing around the TV. Commentator for ABC Sports, Al Michaels asked, "Do you believe in Miracles?" "YES!"

Once I left the group home for good, I still had appointments in New Haven and walked briskly from Orange Street to Atticus Books on Chapel street and back every morning to my therapist. Challenge yourself David, I'd whisper, like I was an up-and-coming life-coach practicing a snazzy new mantra.

I still experience miracles. Another current miracle of mine is touching down this summer. On July 22nd my new novel called, *Wolf Boy*, is being released by Running Wild Press. It is a Young Adult LGBTQ+ love story of fear, confusion, curiosity, uncertainty, and recovery. I have a two book deal with Running Wild, and so my 2nd novel, called *End Zone*, is due out nine months later on April Fool's Day, 2025 (thanks to Lisa Kastner with Running Wild and RIZE Press out of Los Angeles). This second book is another YA thriller about secret societies, dark dreams, and toxic masculinity, but also there's hope and redemption in it.

Let me now slip in one more fact from NAMI that hits hard. Through my writing and research, I learned that over fifty percent of LGBTQ+ people struggle with a mental illness.

I was hospitalized at Yale Psychiatric for the first time in eleven years in March of 2016, and it lasted for just two weeks, clients don't stay long at hospitals anymore. In the early nineties, though, I had been hospitalized at the Institute of Living in Hartford for over two years. My insurance policy and I were like well-meaning dinosaurs lost in a time warp, not sure what to do or whom to be, or even how to heal. I found empathic, talented doctors there that eased me some, offering guidance but I was consistently off-balance and out-of-step with the world.

Some years later, I was trapped in molasses again, cloaked in shame. I felt I didn't belong in a hospital or clinic - I had gotten well, I had been cured from all that muck and fuel and rage, right? I mean, isn't that what's supposed to happen in successful mental health memoirs? Or at least, the one written by me? But there was no linear path to wellness for me, David Fitzpatrick, because all my trails were ragged, serpentine, and had way too many potholes, almost as bad as the city of New Haven in late February.

What would I say to someone just starting their own mental health journey? Don't give up because people do in fact get better. "Weller than well", in fact, as Dr. Karl Menninger was famous for saying. If you're struggling, or someone you care about it, I'd recommend contacting NAMI or Mental Health America or The Trevor Project. I'd use them wisely, for they are a phenomenal collection of caring, skilled folks that can guide you. If you're feeling suicidal or in crisis, dial 988. My other advice to mentally ill young people is not so radical. I'd recommend dating someone who cannot be found in the DSM-6 or 7 Manual or whatever number it's on now. Or, at least, that specific move worked well for me and my own miracle wife, Amy.

An early force of wisdom in my life was corny but in the same way a beloved mentor is corny, like how Yoda looks to the universe. I remember my mentor saying we'll take baby steps into your new life, going back to when you were a tiny baby splashing around in the kitchen sink. We'll build the baby body back up, make your muscles stronger. We'll head to the tub from there, before dipping our toes in a kiddie pool,

followed by trying out the shallow end of the pool, before treading water into deeper sections. Every time we swam, we practiced a variety of strokes; first the doggie paddle, followed by the crawl, free-style, and eventually the butterfly and backstroke. My skills and confidence grew slowly.

It took me a decade and hard changes before I found myself at sea again with the rest of humanity, always keeping my eyes peeled for those toxic sharks on land and in the ocean. Yes, it can be stressful in Long Island Sound, but it feels so damn good to be doing well and succeeding among the living. I'd recommend asking for help when you feel spent or crumpled; try to be kind to yourself, as well, not an easy task, I know. Progress is two steps up, one step back and changing our lives doesn't happen overnight. Be patient.

What does that mean, precisely? Maybe volunteer at a soup kitchen, a diaper bank, a homeless shelter, or a library to help regain some of your mojo. Trust me on this next one - life will get a whole lot better. Exercise helps, too, endorphins pulsing around like surfacing dolphins beside outgoing Clipper ships. Embrace hope in every shape and form. The world whirls on, so make good friends along the route. Go to the zoo when lost, ponder the Amur tigers in Bridgeport oozing power and sinewy grace, or checking out those peacocks, their colors will redeem, I swear they will one day deliver us all home.

Mental illness is a heinous fact of the world, but often people don't want to hear it. The lady beside me at CVS with two toddlers, and one developmentally disabled boy has more burdens and pressure than I could ever handle. Each of us are blessed and unique and capable of tremendous, life-affirming acts. Try to get through all the emotive static in your head today and tomorrow, okay? Try is all I'd say – do our best to get through the daze and haze of low-grade paranoia on the rough nights and challenging mornings. If we get winded, let's sit on a city stoop together, or a park bench together. Rest well, too, and never avoid sleep. Sleep for at least a good five to eight hours each night, if at all possible.

It's refreshing to feel positive for once in our lives, don't you think? Know that good people are out there, rooting hard for each one of us. Feeling supported by the world can help one to rise up on stressful mornings, which builds our emotive vertebra which in turn helps switch on the gravitas lever we picked up somewhere along this extended and bumpy ride, near where the years pass.

We might find ourselves lifted one day with a gust, leaving terra firma behind. Soar at a good clip when a breeze floats us higher still. The view is singular, stunning. Mist heals and feels like an aloe balm – when even the storm clouds offer comfort, ride them. Glide along. Don't look down or back, my friend, enjoy the trip and breathe deeply and fully. Don't forget how the cynical, cloying molasses has now been silenced, retreating beneath the neighbor's crumbling stonewall, leaving three wonderful words rising like balloons.

We are free.

David Fitzpatrick

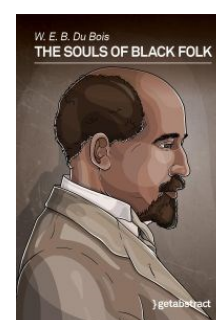
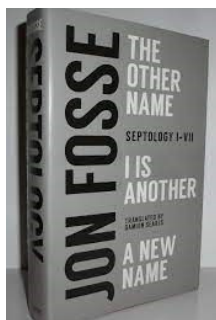


Steve's Recommendations for the Month:

Reading: *Septology*, by Jon Fosse; *Doppelgänger*, by Naomi Klein; *Stand Your Ground*, by Kelly Brown Douglas; *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W.E.B. Du Bois; *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer.

Listening: *African Scream Contest, Vols. 1 and 2* (Africa Analog); *Ethiopiquest* (multiple volumes of Ethiopian jazz from the 1960's and 1970's); Amara Toure, 1973-1980, from Senegal (Analog Africa); *Saint Cloud*, Waxahatchee; *The Past Is Still Alive*, Hurray For the Riff Raff.

Watching: *Perry Mason*, seasons 1 and 2 (Max); *Slow Horses*, season 3 (Apple).



For the Love of the Environment

Purpose of the Universe

My poem "Purpose of the Universe" was occasioned by a migration of dragon flies in September on Block Island. In fact, it was the first Labor Day after I had retired from teaching, and I regarded this swirl of glittering insects as a blessing on this new stage of my life.

The purpose of the universe is play. The artists know... that play and art creation are different names for the same things.

Frank Lloyd Wright



Take *anas junius*
Order *Odonata*, for instance,
sober name for a clown:
the green darner
dragonfly,
Stitcher of magic
On the margins of ponds. Two, three gleaming
darners
Flying angular paths through the grasses
Suggest that the world had a meter.
Watch, and you'll sense it.

But stand on a hill in September
Alive with the world
Of green darners,
Gold in the afternoon light,
A blessing.

(Where did they suddenly come from, so many?)
A hill filled
With joyous
Bright helicopters
Looping breathtaking loops
And you at the center.
Stand there: you'll know
That you are the dance.

*by Mary Jane Peterson
10/02*

Walk to End Homelessness, April 28th in New London

17th Annual Walk to End Homelessness - Register to Participate Today!

Southeast Connecticut's Walk to End Homelessness is a stark yearly reminder that homelessness continues to be a crisis in our area. Your participation raises critical funds in support of our neighbors experiencing homelessness. One hundred percent of the money raised helps the New London Homeless Hospitality Center guests go home. Getting your friends and family to donate in support of *you* makes an even greater impact. <https://www.nlhlc.org/walk>

Adult Forum April 14th at 11: 30 with Edie Twining

Join us for a brief review of the Halls Road Improvements project. Initiated in 2015, the HRIC is equipped with a masterplan (2019) to follow for Public Improvements and Private Development opportunities. New sidewalks, pedestrian bridge & trails design, overlay district proposal, and more. We will welcome your questions and comments. Hope to see you soon !

2019 - HALLS ROAD - Today



Chili Cook Off Winner

Allyson Cotton has shared her winning Chili Cook Off recipe! Enjoy! And congratulations Allyson!



Ranch Chicken Chili 2024 FCCOL Award winning Chili! From the Cotton-Learned Kitchen

Ingredients:

1 pound chicken breast, boneless, skinless
1 (15 ounce) can black beans, drained & rinsed
1 (15 ounce) can white beans, drained & rinsed
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 cup frozen corn
1 (10 ounce) can diced Tomatoes with green chilies
1 Tbsp Taco seasoning (McCormicks/Ortega etc)
1 Lime juiced
1 package of Hidden Valley Ranch Dry Dressing
¼ cup Cilantro Chopped
1 cup chicken broth
1 (8 ounce) package Neufchatel Cheese

Method of Preparation:

Place the chicken breasts in the bottom of the slow cooker. Top with black beans, white beans, chopped onion, corn, diced tomatoes with green chilies, lime juice, ranch dressing and chopped cilantro. Pour Chicken broth over it all, place Neufchatel cheese in the center of the slow cooker. Cover and cook for 5 hours on high, Stir the Neufchatel cheese and cook for 1 more hour. Remove Chicken, shred using 2 forks, and return to the slow cooker. Mix the chili and serve over rice.

I have done this in the Instapot by putting everything in and cooking on High for 20 minutes. Leave for 10 minutes before releasing steam. Shred chicken, mix and eat!



Diaper Bank Saturday Marks 5th Anniversary

2024 marks the 5th year that Diaper Bank Saturday will be in operation. Since then, 2,193 packages of diapers have been distributed for our babies/toddlers.

During these years unprecedented challenges were faced and resolved with the support of the church community.

When plans for the Diaper Bank were set, it was not known that a catastrophe was about to hit.

COVID!

During COVID, diaper distribution was held strictly outdoors, through-

out the seasons, in sun, rain, and snow. Volunteers teamed together, pushing carriages of diapers, wipes and food to the curbside.

Throughout all these years our inventory, at times, has been low BUT we have never run out of diapers AND no guest has ever been turned away. Also, during COVID, the Diaper Bank served every guest that came in need, regardless of where they lived. During the height of the pandemic, diaper distribution reached 90 babies in one month.

Guests outside our service area are now receiving diapers at sites established as a result of the pandem-

ic. Monthly diaper distribution now stands at 35 – 40 babies, consistent with the 8 towns served by the Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries.

The mission of the Diaper Bank remains constant: to show dignity and offer hospitality to our guests who we greet on Saturdays. All of this could NOT be possible without YOU. **Thank you.** Such a simple statement, yet it carries so much meaning; the gratitude for everyone working together to ensure babies have a healthy start in life.



PALESTINE MUSEUM

Sunday, April 14th: Have you ever been to the Palestine Museum in Woodbridge? Join us as we support the resilient spirit and arts of our Palestinian neighbors, especially needed during this time of war. Those who wish to eat a Mediterranean lunch ahead of time will leave church at 11:30 for the Rawa Restaurant (<https://www.rawainc.com/>) in New Haven, two miles from the museum. After lunch, we'll meet at 2:00 pm at the Palestine Museum, 1764 Litchfield Turnpike, Woodbridge, CT. For more information and/or to register, contact Anne, our FCCOL office manager, or Claire Reutter at (512) 299-0634, cdsittinginatree@yahoo.com.

Two of our young people achieved special recognition, making us all proud. Noah Brant placed third in the state-wide Martin Luther King speech-writing contest, and Leland Hine was named Most Valuable Player in the State Class V Basketball finals. Congratulations to them both!



Leland Hine



Noah Brant

Writing at the Well: The next meeting will be Friday, April 19th at 10:00 am in the Library

In this monthly spirituality group, we write and dip into the wellspring of the inward journey. No writing experience necessary.



Lee Carpenter giving the March 17th-Children's Message

APRIL CALENDAR

April 2024							May 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mar 31	Apr 1	2	3	4	5	6
	10:00am LWS, 10-2 (S) 7:00pm AA Evening (L)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 10:00am Kathy Organist 10:00am STAFF 1:00pm AA (S)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 5:15pm Yoga ((Sunday 6:30pm Point O Woods, 6:30pm Bell Ringers ((S))	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 11:00am Bible Study (L) 2:00pm Peggy Wasley 4:00pm Mission Meeting	Food Pantry Setup (F) 10:30am Organist Kathy Rehearsal (M)	Civil Rights Trip Laura and Jo 8:30am Diaper Bank 8:30am Food Pantry, 8:30-10:30(F)
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Civil Rights Trip Laura and Jolene out of town.....Civil Rights Trip Laura and Jolene out of town.....Civil Rights Trip Laura and Jolene out of town					Food Pantry Setup (F)	8:30am Food Pantry, 8:30-10:30(F) 1:00pm Kathy Organist Rehearsal (M)
10:00am Preaching: Steve	10:00am LWS, 10-2 (S) 10:30am LBS Setup (F/K) 7:00pm AA Evening (L)	10:00am STAFF 12:00pm LBS & Sr CTR 1:00pm AA (S) 7:30pm Trustees (L)	10:00am Senior Ctr 5:15pm Yoga ((s)) 6:30pm Bell Ringers ((F)) 7:30pm Senior Choir (F)	9:30am Weavers, 9:30-1 (H/K) 10:00am Senior Ctr 11:00am Bible Study (L)		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+ 10:00am Preaching: 11:30am Palestine 11:30am Adult Forum 3:00pm American Guild	10:00am LWS, 10-2 (S) 7:00pm AA Evening (L)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 10:00am STAFF 1:00pm AA (S)	Newsletter deadline 10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 5:15pm Yoga (S) 7:30pm Senior Choir (F)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 11:00am Bible Study (L) 12:00pm ARC Blood Drive, 1-6 (F)	Food Pantry Setup (F) 10:00am Writing in the Well (L)	8:30am Food Pantry, 8:30-10:30(F) 12:00pm Bill Fish Memorial and reception (M/F)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:00am Preaching: Steve 10:00am Reverend Green visiting AME Church in Harlem	10:00am LWS, 10-2 (S) 7:00pm AA Evening (L)	10:00am Sr Ctr Lunch & 10:00am STAFF 10:00am LBS Meeting 1:00pm AA (S) 7:00pm Deacons (L)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 5:15pm Yoga (S) 5:30pm Grief Group (H) 7:30pm Senior Choir (F)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 11:00am Bible Study (L)	Food Pantry Setup (F) 1:00pm Newsletter Folding (L)	8:30am Food Pantry, 8:30-10:30(F) 5:00pm MM Concert (M)
28	29	30	May 1	2	3	4
7:00am Bus trip to AME Church in Harlem 10:00am Preaching: Carleen or Laura 3:00pm MM Concert (M)	10:00am LWS, 10-2 (S) 7:00pm AA Evening (L)	10:00am Senior Ctr Lunch, 10-3 (F/K) 10:00am STAFF 1:00pm AA (S)				

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BLOOD DRIVE

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive at the First Congregation Church of Old Lyme on Thursday, April 18th, from 1-6pm. Please see the link below to make an appointment before arriving.

What are the 8 benefits of donating blood? reduce stress, improve your emotional well-being, benefit your physical health, help get rid of negative feelings, provide a sense of belonging and reduce isolation.

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>

GIVING MATTERS

In previous newsletters we have presented various aspects of the church's financial structure and situation. Two primary conclusions have emerged. First, is that fully 75% of the church's annual financial income (higher % in past years) comes from individual contributions from our members and friends. Second, even though the generosity of each house-

hold has continued to increase (measured by the average annual pledge), we have had to present a deficit budget to the congregation this year. This is due to the decreasing number of annual pledges. One fallout has been the necessity to decrease the church's benevolences giving this year by 25%, something we don't want to do.

So, if you are able to provide additional gifts this year, this would help your church immeasurably.

Thank You!

Bob McCracken, Treasurer

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

One great hour of sharing is a special annual offering sponsored by The United Church of Christ in conjunction with the National Council of Churches. This appeal makes it possible for monies to be available for immediate help across the globe to respond to humanitarian and climate disasters. Our church has participated in this special appeal for many years, and we were recognized a few years ago as one of the most generous contributors nationwide.

Our goal this Easter season is to raise \$10,000

for the work of OGHS. You may contribute to OGHS at any time (put OGHS on check's memo line), and all undesignated contributions at our Easter services will be dedicated to OGHS. Contribution envelopes will be located in the pews.



Save the Date

“Walking in their Footsteps.”
A Civil Rights Learning Trip for Teens during April vacation. This is a 5-day journey. We'll fly round trip to Atlanta, Georgia and visit sights there and drive to Birmingham, Alabama among other places. For more information, email Jolene Brant jmbrant2023@gmail.com or Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager at lfitz.nager@gmail.com.

Book for Sale by Prue Allen

The book entitled “Accidental Activist” is a first-hand account of her work with Martin Luther King Jr., during the civil Rights Movement. It is now for sale at Fellowship Coffee Hours after worship services. The book was self published and the price is \$40.

Springtime Gardening/ Yard Work Help:

A group of Connecticut College students are ready to help you prepare your yards and gardens for the spring and summer. They are available to work most weekends starting in mid-March. Please contact their faculty mentor if interested, Prof Eileen Kane ekane2@conncoll.edu.

Men Golfers

Anyone interested in getting together for a weekly outing every Monday at 8:30 am at Fenwick during the months of April and May?
Contact Gordon Hurlbert, 860-803-1633. Casual and fun!

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 (860-304-2070)

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

Rebecca A. Francisco serves as minister to the South Lyme Union Chapel

Jolene Brant, Director of Christian Education/Junior & Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Leader

Rachel Jungkeit, Director of Children's Music

Robert McCracken, Church Administrator

Anne Koczka, Office Manager

Julie Mardjekaj, Bookkeeper

Sean McCarty, 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.

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
OLD LYME
2 FERRY ROAD
OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT 06371**

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The submission deadline for the May Newsletter is April 17th.

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!

