

# February 2024



Pictured: Members of FCCOL with a local community in West Africa

## Dear Friends,

At a recent meeting of our church council, those seated around the table spent ten or fifteen minutes reflecting on the year we had just passed, and all that had happened in our community over the previous twelve months. It was an impressive litany. Here are a few of the things that were mentioned:

- The first event of the year was a celebration of Epiphany, known in other parts of the world as Three Kings Day, or in other parts still, Twelfth Night.

- In our worship, we devoted a Sunday morning to the poetry of Emily Dickinson, asking what a reclusive New England writer might still have to share in a world such as ours. The morning was completed by musical settings of the poems, composed by Carleen and sung by the choir.

- We immersed ourselves in the poetry of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste

Land" on Ash Wednesday.

- A small group from FCCOL visited New Orleans for St. Joseph's Night festivities, to witness the spectacular arts and rituals of that city's African American population.

- We began a three year immersion into the world of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, completing a full public reading of *Inferno* on the evening of Maundy Thursday. Prof. Peter Hawkins served as our theologian in residence as we prepared for our descent into hell.

- The Board of Deacons completed work on a Land Acknowledgment, written in partnership with some new friends from the Nehantic community, now living in different parts of New England. Shortly after Earth Day, in keeping with our commitment to becoming better stewards of the land we care for, we presented the Land Acknowledgment publicly, sharing a service with our

Nehantic friends.

- During Lent, the Boards of Deacons, Trustees, and Missions met weekly for a seminar and training led by Rev. Dr. Terrlyn Curry Avery on ways to confront, and then to dismantle, racism in our personal lives and our institutional settings.

- A new collection of Witness Stones was dedicated, telling the stories of those who had been enslaved in the Old Lyme community.

- Coinciding with that dedication, FCCOL hosted a gathering of Afro-Cuban musicians and artists - Lázaro Galarraga, Román Díaz, and several others - as a means of both honoring and exploring a vital and still growing tradition of the Black Atlantic world, one representing the kind of religion that might once have been practiced in

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# HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL

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Pictured: Members of the West Africa trip at sea with the locals.

## Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

On January 15th, we resumed work in the Sheffield Auditorium on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. - 2 p.m. We're adding new items every week to the Partnership Store inventory. The store is open on Sundays after the church service and Mondays while we work.

**Socks and Jeans:** We are collecting both socks and jeans for The Alliance for Living and for the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. They can be new or used, but must be in very good condition. Donations may be brought to us on Mondays or left on the Sheffield Stage if clearly marked for "Ladies Who Stitch."

**Greeting Cards:** Save your greeting cards - holiday and all occasion - and bring them to us. We use them to make gift tags and other items. They can also be left on the Sheffield Stage, labeled for us.

Questions: Contact Eunice via email - [eunicetaylor@me.com](mailto:eunicetaylor@me.com).



## Senior Choir Schedule

To all members of the Senior Choir - thank you for your wonderful singing in January. It's been a great start to 2024!!

Here is the February schedule:

Sunday, February 4: Singing at the 10:00 am with a rehearsal at 9:15 am  
Wednesday, February 7: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm  
Sunday, February 11: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am  
Wednesday, February 14: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm  
Sunday, February 18: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am  
Wednesday, February 21: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm  
Sunday, February 25: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am  
Wednesday, February 28: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Many thanks to all,  
Simon

## Writing at the Well

We are an informal writing group that meets monthly at our church. Feel free to join us. No writing experience necessary just a willingness to explore on the page and go deeper with friends along the way. Our next session will be Friday, February 16th, 10:00-11:30am.

## Progressive Bible Study

Bible Study meets on Thursdays, 11-12 in the library. Available also on Zoom. All are welcome!

Wanna read a great book in the New Year? The Bible is chock full of legendary characters, strange plot twists, tricksters and thieves, mystics and musicians as well as, the horror and the holy within its pages. How does it all end up and what's love got to do with it? We're making our way through Genesis and someday we'll get to the book of Revelation. Join us!

## The Old Lyme Ringers

The handbell choir of FCCOL has been practicing weekly since its first rehearsal on January 10, and it looks forward to its first appearance in worship in the new year on February 11. Later in the season we will be performing twice with both organ and musical instruments. This year's ringers are Debbe Delaney, Lisa Feltes, Barbara Hack, Cindy Hautaniemi, Pat Jungkeit, Rachael Jungkeit, Doug Kiem, Leslie Kiem, Sean McCarty, Donna Miller, and Angela Mock. Gary Jungkeit serves as the director.

## Interested in Confirmation?

Confirmation classes for 1st, 2nd or 3rd year high school students will meet next on Sunday, Febru-



ary 25th from 4-5:30pm. Classes will meet January-May and include field trips, films and a service project. Confirmation is offered every other year. For more information contact Laura at 860-304-9096 or [lfitz.nager@gmail.com](mailto:lfitz.nager@gmail.com).

## Sunday School God's Neighborhood

January has flown by and here we are in February! Jolene is glad to be back from West Africa with the FCCOL group even though she says a piece of her heart is still there and she can't wait to go back. She is excited to share her African adventures with everyone and to inspire all of our kiddos with everything she learned. From the vibrant culture to the amazing wildlife, and we can't forget the deep history, we have so much to share with you.

Along with that, Laura and Jolene and our middle and high school youth are planning a Civil Rights tour from Atlanta, Georgia to Selma, Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama for April vacation, April 6-11th, where we will explore the history of enslaved people, the Civil Rights movement and how this tragedy lives on today. We will hear stories of hope and courage through these times, and we will examine how we can stand for change.

**Feb 02, 2024:** Chili Cook-off (The children and youth can enter their own recipes and compete for the win! Come experience this great event and bring your appetite!)

**Feb 11, 2024:** Sunday morning Breakfast (pancake breakfast for Mardi Gras). This will be a way for our youth to accept donations for their Civil Rights Tour trip in April. Fellowship doors open for breakfast to be served at 8:30-9:30am, followed by clean-up.

**March 23, 2024:** Sharing Humanity with the Unhoused. (Stay over outside with our friends at church and experience what it feels like to live one night without indoor shelter. Wake up and attend church in the AM.)

**April 6-11, 2024:** "Walking in their Footsteps Civil Rights" tour. From seeing the MLK National historic site in Atlanta to the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, to the Selma Civil Rights walk of Freedom in Selma, Alabama, we will delve into civil rights history with our

middle/high schoolers.

**April 22, 2024:** Earth Day 2024. We will do a Beach Clean-Up for our beautiful community, 10:00am-12:00pm! (All ages welcome to this event!!!)

**May 19, 2024:** Children's Sunday.

**June (dates TBD):** Green Grass South Dakota Family Trip. (This is a Native American territory where our church has a close relationship, we will get to experience some of the inner workings of the Lakota culture and traditions. This is an outside-of-the-box trip for families, and it is great exposure for all ages.)

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

## Grief Group

Our monthly Grief Group will meet on Wednesday, Feb 28th, from 5-6pm in the Hoag Parlor.

## Memorials

Jerry Lawrence  
Robert Colburn  
Gretchen Stanland  
Joan Kratzert

## Church World Service Blanket Drive

Church World Service Blanket Drive: The LBS started the CWS Blanket Drive in 1982. Over the decades the generosity of our congregation has donated thousands of blankets. In 2023, 32,785 blankets were distributed to people who were affected by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires and other disasters and to newly arriving immigrants from Mexico. CWS also donated 38,190 hygiene kits, 7,349 emergency cleanup buckets, 32,610 school kits and 606 welcome backpacks. Each blanket costs only \$10. Please make your checks payable to LBS. CWS envelopes will be available in the pews and can be put in the offering plates or sent to the Church c/o LBS, 2 Ferry Road, Old Lyme 06371.

## Save the Date

"Walking in their Footsteps." A



Pictured: Members of our God's Neighborhood Sunday School program during the Children's Message.

## Civil Rights Learning Trip for



Pictured: The 2023 Old Lyme Ringers, led by Gary Jungkeit, perform on a bright Sunday Morning.

Teens during April vacation. This is a 5-day journey. We'll fly round trip to Atlanta, Georgia and visit

### 2024 Stewardship Campaign

Our 2024 financial campaign still needs your support. If you have not sent in a Commitment Card, please do so as soon as you can. If you need a replacement card, please call the church office at 860-434-8686. Our financial challenge is mentioned on page 6, and please know that every commitment counts.

Thank you for your support!

sights there and drive to Bir-



# Environment

## Environmental Resolutions

Not sure about you but my New Year's resolutions tend to be repeaters, year after year. Most are personal such as "I am going to lose 10lbs". Maybe another approach makes more sense. Resolutions that impact others perhaps deserve a higher priority and may have a better chance of succeeding. Any resolution that has a positive impact on the environment would be in the latter category and potentially more motivating.

Each of us can think of excellent examples within the broad category of our environment. A few that come to mind quickly, include:

-planting and protecting milkweed

to help endangered monarch butterflies,

-reducing the use of plastic (including not buying clothes made with polyester),  
-composting organic materials,  
-reducing food waste, and eating more vegetables and less meat.

All can dramatically reduce our carbon footprint and have other benefits. Adopting any of these and other similar resolutions would improve quality of life for so many. It all helps. Make sure to share your good ideas with others this year.

Meanwhile, for me, losing 5lbs is more realistic.

For the Environmental Committee,  
Donald Gonci



Pictured: Members of the West Africa trip.

mingham, Alabama among other places.

## Chili Cookoff - Feb. 2nd

**Calling all chefs** for the Ground Hog Day Chili Cook-off on Friday, February 2nd, at 5:30-7:00 pm. Live music. Chefs—please email the office to sign up at [fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org). Get out your favorite recipe. Everyone in attendance gets to vote for the winning chili.

## Mardi Gras Breakfast - Feb. 11th

### **\*\*Fundraiser\*\***

Put on by our talented youth group to help raise funds for their Civil Rights Learning Trip in April. 8:30-9:30 am and at Fellowship Hour after church.

Donations graciously accepted.



Pictured: Members of the SPF and JPF take a photo op during the Breakfast Run to NYC, where clothes and hot beverages were delivered to those in need.

# Dear Friends, Continued

this community.

- The White Elephant Sale once again took over the church, and much of the town, generating donations that were spread throughout New London County.

- In the fall, for All Saints Weekend, Michele Rosewoman and her Latin jazz ensemble New Yor-Uba visited Old Lyme, delivering a concert on Saturday evening, and participating in worship on Sunday morning.

- Throughout the fall, a small group of travelers formed, and began meeting together in preparation for a journey to Western Africa.

- Beginning in the fall, we began the practice of “The Sacred Bowl,” putting our names in a bowl, and then being matched with another member of the congregation in order to have a meaningful conversation.

- In the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, and the resulting devastation unleashed upon Gaza, FCCOL hosted an ecumenical service, entitled “A Three Fold Cord Is Not Easily Broken,” representing Jewish, Muslim, and Christian responses to the war on Gaza.

- In November, the Board of Deacons hosted a luncheon for those members who have recently joined the church. It was a packed and joyous occasion, suggesting the ways that our community is growing.

- A group of our young people traveled to New York City for the Breakfast Run, delivering food and clothing to the unhoused population of the city.

- We resumed our Quiet Christmas service this year, offered for those seeking a moment of reprieve from the holiday crush.

- The Refugee Committee of

Lyme and Old Lyme welcomed a new refugee family to Old Lyme. Originally from Syria, our new family most recently resided in Lebanon.

- Children from the Sunday School once again put on an incredible Christmas Pageant, an effort spearheaded by Gavin Lodge.

- And finally, at the end of the year, a delegation of travelers departed from FCCOL and visited Ghana, Togo, and Benin, learning more fully about the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade, while also witnessing the spectacular beauty and culture of Western Africa.

Those were some of the things that were mentioned at the meeting. Of course, those are only some of the more notable events that occurred in 2023. The greater part of our time was occupied with far more ordinary moments. We had what felt like, and surely was, an unprecedented number of funerals in 2023, especially in the latter part of the year. There were pastoral care visits associated with those and with other matters, the education of our young people, attending and running Board and committee meetings, visiting during the Fellowship Hour, potluck dinners, volunteering at the Food Pantry and at the New London Soup Kitchen, and so much more.

All of those things suggest a congregation that is vital and filled with the best kind of life, leaning into the complexities and challenges of the world while also building intimacy with one another from week to week. Standing back and surveying it all, I couldn't feel more pleased with

the health of our community, and with the promise that lies before us.

It's also true, however, that we face some new challenges in the coming years. During Covid, like many large and small organizations, FCCOL was blessed with an infusion of funds from the Federal Government that helped to shield us from the worst economic effects of the pandemic. That infusion was crucial, but it also helped to mask a sobering reality – a budget deficit brought about by many things, but largely attributable to the changing demographics and habits around church attendance in the US. While FCCOL has avoided the worst of those effects, we too shall have to address what that will mean for our communal life. Indeed, how to do that is something that our Boards have been discussing throughout this past year.

During last year's annual meeting, we discussed several ways of addressing the budget shortfall: educating the congregation, and being transparent about the issues before us; hiring a consultant to help us imagine ways to navigate this terrain; and conducting visits with members of our community in order to share the church's vision, and to invite people to participate more fully in it. At a recent Board of Trustees meeting, a fourth recommendation was made: to encourage us all to trust who we are and what we're about strongly enough that we'll be moved to invite friends who are not active church members to join us. After a year of thoughtful conversation and planning, we hope to be able to

## GIVING MATTERS

Our church ended the year 2023 with a small operating surplus of \$11,621. In spite of a continuing reduction in income from Pledges and Offerings, we were able to show a small surplus due to significant (1) a substantial addition to revenue of funds from the balance sheet, PPP loans and anonymous contributions, (Other Income) and (2) some under-budget spending in Christian Education and Lay Employees.

**Neither of these sources will be available to us in the coming year 2024.**

First Congregational Church of Old Lyme				
Treasurer's Report for the Year 2023				
Revenues and Expenses - SUMMARY				
		2023 Actual	2023 Budget	% Budget
REVENUES				
CONTRIBUTIONS				
PLEDGES & OFFERINGS		630,259.08	666,000.00	94.63 %
INTEREST & DIVIDENDS		140,019.66	137,140.00	102.10 %
OTHER INCOME		128,905.93	114,335.66	112.74 %
Total CONTRIBUTIONS		899,184.67	917,475.66	98.01 %
Total REVENUES		899,184.67	917,475.66	98.01 %
EXPENSES				
MINISTERS				
SENIOR MINISTER		129,089.28	128,951.27	100.11 %
ASSOCIATE MINISTER-CRG		78,994.99	78,162.09	101.07 %
ASSOCIATE MINISTER - LFN		118,874.55	116,331.80	102.19 %
MINISTERS SUPPORT & SUPPLY		2,657.88	2,000.00	132.89 %
Total MINISTERS		329,616.70	325,445.16	101.28 %
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION				
SUNDAY SCHOOL		17,487.15	23,892.00	73.19 %
CONFIRMATION		0.00	100.00	0.00 %
JUNIOR PF		100.00	100.00	100.00 %
SENIOR PF		566.12	600.00	94.35 %
ADULT EDUCATION		450.00	300.00	150.00 %
ALL CHURCH EVENTS		590.50	1,000.00	59.05 %
Total CHRISTIAN EDUCATION		19,193.77	25,992.00	73.84 %
MUSIC				
CHURCH OFFICE		64,744.47	53,583.00	120.83 %
PROPERTY		48,325.52	43,000.00	112.38 %
DEACONS		169,333.19	171,917.00	98.50 %
LAY EMPLOYEES		3,793.40	4,730.00	80.20 %
		151,385.83	188,052.80	80.50 %
BENEVOLENCES				
UCC		16,000.00	16,000.00	100.00 %
MISSION BUDGET TO BE ALLOCATED		0.00	5,850.00	0.00 %
MISSION EDUCATION FUND		6,390.35	7,500.00	85.20 %
DIRECT PARTNER SUPPORT		6,500.00	6,500.00	100.00 %
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES		53.16	1,600.00	3.32 %
OUTREACH				
NEW LONDON REGION		21,250.00	21,550.00	98.61 %
MIDDLESEX COUNTY		250.00	250.00	100.00 %
FCCOL PROJECTS		4,888.93	5,250.00	93.12 %
CONGREGATION CONNECTIONS		3,000.00	3,000.00	100.00 %
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT		10,500.00	4,500.00	233.33 %
Total OUTREACH		39,888.93	34,550.00	115.45 %
SPECIAL RESERVE SAVINGS		11,167.56	8,000.00	139.59 %
Total BENEVOLENCES		80,000.00	80,000.00	100.00 %
OTHER EXPENSES				
		21,170.40	24,755.70	85.52 %
Total EXPENSES		887,563.28	917,475.66	96.74 %
Surplus/(deficit)				
		11,621.39	0.00	0.00 %

# 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

Julie Mardjekaj, Bookkeeper

Sean McCarty, Sexton

Church Office Tel: 860-434-8686

Fax: 860-434-1135

e-mail: [fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org)

Website: [www.fccol.org](http://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.

### An Invitation from Steve:

For the past several winters, I've been inviting our community to read along with a few dense and all-immersive novels selected for the season. This year, I'd like to invite everyone who is interested to join in reading *Septology*, by Jon Fosse. Fosse was the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2023, and his book is set in wintry Norway, making it the perfect setting for a January read. Further, Fosse is a convert to Catholicism, and his writing is imbued with a mystical sense of the world. Some have praised *Septology* as one of the greatest reading experiences of their lives. High praise, and I'm in. If you are too, let me know, at [steven@jungkeit.net](mailto:steven@jungkeit.net). When we're finished, I'll try to set up a discussion for us.

Here is a link to Fosse's Nobel lecture, delivered a few weeks ago. It's entitled "A Silent Language," and it's beautiful.

<https://www.nobelprize.org/uploads/2023/12/fosse-lecture-english.pdf>

I won't start to read until after I've returned from Africa, on January 12. So my own pace may require extending into February. After that, I'm hoping to tackle *Swann's Way*, by Marcel Proust, the first volume in his massive *In Search of Lost Time*. I'll be curious to know if there are any takers for that!



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

U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit #7  
Old Saybrook, CT  
Non-Profit Organization



**The next Newsletter will be for March; deadline is February 16.**

Please e-mail the church office at [fccol@fccol.org](mailto: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!

