

March 2024



Pictured: Marching in the Pilgrimage for Peace was Susan Switzer, Bill Belluzzi, Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager and Jody Belluzzi.

Dear Friends,

Putting one foot in front of the other in justice work is oftentimes hard, cold and unglamorous. There was nothing romantic about my frozen fingers and toes as I walked shoulder to shoulder with a fellow peace marcher named Grace from California last week. We'd joined the Pilgrimage for Peace for a couple of days and found ourselves walking along Route 40 in Delaware; it's one long strip mall. I appreciated the drumbeat of my new friend, Tim, a Buddhist monk from DC, who kept my feet moving in rhythm with the others. A moment later, organizers of the March ended our walking early due to hazardous traffic conditions on the roadway, so we piled onto the church bus again and did more backtracking.

Our small foursome from FCCOL (Bill and Jody Belluzzi, Susan Switzer and I) calculated that we'd driven 523 miles to walk 13 with our fellow activists. Perhaps that was in the mind of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., too, when he

said "the arc of the moral universe is long". Passing the baton to new arrivals, we waved goodbye, packed up the car and started the long car ride home. Steve, Carleen and Ted Crosby are continuing the marching where we left off.

Whether seeking a cessation of the war in Gaza or helping unload boxes of produce on yet another Thursday morning for the Saturday food pantry, the day to day deeds of justice and care can be pretty mundane and unremarkable. Jesus knew that, too, when he sent his disciples out two by two.

And yet, here at FCCOL, what is remarkable is the extraordinary tag teaming and community effort of each and every one of you! We are all walking along the road of faith and justice in good company.

As we make our way through the wilderness days of this Lenten season, there are plenty of activities and

ministries to attend to. The Soup Bowl Supper is on the calendar for March 8th, thanks to the efforts of Stephanie Kenny and many potters getting those handmade soup bowls ready. Travis Hardin, Lakota artist and friend of our church from South Dakota, is visiting FCCOL, too. There's an Adult Forum on March 10th featuring the stories of our West African travelers and our Confirmation class meets in the evening with college students from Connecticut College. In addition, Steve is preparing us for the reading of Dante's *Purgatorio*, which we'll read after the Maundy Thursday service this year on March 28th. Slowly but surely, we'll make our way along the Way of the Cross towards the renewed hope of Easter Sunday.

Crossing over the non-descript border into Maryland, the welcome sign reads, "*Leave No One Behind.*" That reminded me of home and all of you!

Love all around,
Laura

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL



Steve Jungkeit, Mustafa and Ted Crosby on the Pilgrimage to Washington, DC

Senior Choir Schedule

To all members of the Senior Choir - thank you for your wonderful singing in February.

Here is the March schedule:

Sun., March 3: Singing at the 10:00 am with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., March 6: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

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

Wed., March 13: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sun., March 17: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., March 20: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sun., March 24: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wed., March 27: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Thurs., March 28: Singing at the 6:00 pm Maundy Thursday service with a rehearsal at 5:30 pm

Sun., March 31: Singing at the 9:00 am and 11:00 am services with a rehearsal at 8:15 am, should there be two services. If there is only one service at 10:00 am, we will rehearse at 9:15 am

Many thanks to all,
Simon

The Old Lyme Ringers

Our handbell group continues to practice each Wednesday evening and is preparing two pieces for worship in March. On March 3, the OL Ringers will play "Pie Jesu" (pronounced *pea-eh yay-sue*), composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the writer of "The Phantom of the Opera." Instead of ringing handbells on this piece, we will be playing it using hand chimes. It gives a much more ethereal, heavenly effect for the middle of Lent. Then on Easter Sunday, March 31, to celebrate Christ's resurrection the OL Ringers will be ringing "Hymn to Joy," by Beethoven, accompanied by organ

and trumpet. A number of different techniques on the handbells will be utilized, so we ask the congregation to be prepared to hear something very different from the usual sound of handbells! Happy listening to everyone!

March 12th LBS Luncheon

March will soon be here, and hopefully Spring will be right on its heels, so why not plan on coming to join us for some fellowship, delicious food, and an entertaining historical program at the Ladies Benevolent Society luncheon on **Tuesday, March 12th** from noon to 2pm. Chicken Marbella over buttered egg noodles and steamed green beans, followed by a wonderful homemade dessert is to be the luncheon menu, and the post meal program, beginning at 1pm, will be a presentation by Lucretia Bingham, grand-daughter of Hiram Bingham who rediscovered Manchu Picchu. Ms. Bingham, a writer and painter, who followed her grandfather's steps along the Inca Trail, will present "Invaders of an Ancient Culture: Conquistadors, Explorers, and Tourists in Peru."

Suggested donation is \$5 per person, plus a nonperishable food item or a package of disposable diapers for the Food or Diaper Banks. If you plan to join us at the luncheon, please call the FCCOL office at (860) 434-8686 by Friday, March 8th to make a reservation so we can be sure to have enough food prepared for all to enjoy.

Writing at the Well

March 15th 10-11:30 am "Fill your paper with the breathing of your heart."

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

Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

We have welcomed three new members and have some new creations, so our Mondays in the Sheffield have been both fun and productive. Reversible adult bibs, bags and totes made with kid-appeal fabric, and inner soles made from felted wool sweater scraps are among our newer items. We have many new



crayon aprons, baby sweaters, hats, and blankets, pom pom hats, knitted mittens, socks, and Bernie Mittens.

We welcome visitors, shoppers and curiosity seekers every Mon. and we continue to accept donations of greeting cards (for making gift tags), socks (for the Alliance for Living) and jeans (for the New London Homeless Hospitality Center). Donations can be left on the Sheffield stage clearly marked for LWS.

We supervise the Partnership Store, which is open on Mon. 10-2pm while we work; on Wed. nights after choir practice 8:30 - 9pm.; and on Sunday's following the church service. The store offers goods from Haiti, Palestine, and Tribal Crafts as well as things made by LWS. When you visit, please notice that the glass fronts on the display cases have been removed, making for much easier visibility and access. We encourage you to enjoy "guilt-free shopping" since all proceeds directly benefit FCCOL's partners and missions.

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

Sunday School

God's Neighborhood

Throughout the month of March, students in God's Neighborhood will continue to learn about various holy troublemakers and unconventional saints highlighted in our curriculum. We'll read stories of how these unsung heroes have done the right thing, even when it's the hard choice and how they have stood up for those who are standing alone, worked together for the common good, and shown courage even when the odds were against them. These people have changed the very fabric of our society, and it's exciting that we can learn about them. Together, we will also acknowledge and learn about women within history during Women's History Month.

Additionally, we remember that the season of Lent is underway, a time of reflection marking the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness leading up to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We'll study how communities around the world must work together to find and gather critical resources, like water for instance, and since we are all interconnected, if some are left without, it affects us all. As part of our lessons, children will identify how they can help and send loving care to each other and to neighbors around the world.

Sunday, March 3rd 10 am: Travis Harding, Lakota Elder from Green Grass, South Dakota will be visiting FCCOL and God's Neighborhood.

Sunday, March 10th, 10 am: God's Neighborhood will meet in the morning.

Sunday, March 10th, 4-6 pm: Our Middle and High School youth are invited to join our Confirmation students for a special event as we host college students from Connecticut College who will share their Chicago Footwork fast-dancing. Taco dinner included.

Sunday, March 17th 10 am: Our middle school youth will be learning about the significance of the commemorative Witness Stones placed along Lyme Street and other areas in town that honor those people who were enslaved and labored in Old Lyme. Historian, Carolyn Wakeman, will visit with us and tell us about the people whose names are engraved on the 6 plaques laid on our church front lawn.

Saturday/Sunday, March 23rd/24th

Sharing Humanity: No Room at the Inn. (Formerly known as Box Night.) Middle school youth and high school youth are invited to stay overnight on the church lawn to experience with us what it feels like to sleep without their home for shelter.

Pizza will be provided for their dinner, and a movie (TBD) will be played on the lawn depending on the weather. We'll have breakfast the following morning and attend church at 10 am. This is Palm Sunday!

A HUGE THANK YOU to our wonderful community for giving so generously and supporting our youth for our April trip- Walking in their Footsteps: A Civil Rights Tour! The Mardi Gras Breakfast Fund-raiser was a great success! Thank you!

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2 NIV



Great Spirit, as we work to calm the storms within ourselves, help us see how we can share our peace, the peace you have given us. We pray to be guided to share our resources and help improve the resources of others. Teach us to be kind and recognize the storm in others with compassion. Amen

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

We're making our way through the book of Genesis encountering patriarchs, matriarchs, tricksters and legendary characters, sacred and profane. Come wrestle with the text and wonder aloud with us.

Confirmation

Sunday, March 31st 4-5:30 pm:

Confirmation Class. We'll meet our mentors and share a meal. Bring something to add to the potluck.

March 10th 4-6:00 pm: Special event with college students from Connecticut College who will share their Chicago Footwork fast dancing. We'll enjoy tacos, too.

Saturday, March 23rd

No Room at the Inn Night: Sharing Our Humanity with the Unhoused. (Formerly "Box Night"). Sleeping overnight on the church lawn, we'll also meet with someone who will share their experience of being without shelter and watch a movie together. The next morning, we'll have breakfast and attend church at 10 am. This is Palm Sunday, too.

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.

Grief Group

Join us for our monthly support group for those living with grief and loss. Wednesday 5:00-6:00 pm, March 28th.

Memorials

Sid Whelan
Bill Fish
Bob Regan

Easter Schedule

Easter Memorial Music and Flowers

As in years past, you can make a donation to our Easter Memorial Music and/or Flowers. Prior to March 22nd, please email the church office (fccol@fccol.org) or include a note with your check, with your name and the names for whom you would like a memorial or honorary dedication.

Maundy Thursday March 28, 2024

A 6:00 pm service of communion and sacred music.
A reading of Dante's "Purgatorio" will follow
at 7:00 pm.

Good Friday March 29, 2024

Meetinghouse open for prayer and meditation.

Easter Sunrise Service March 31, 2024

6:00 am at Griswold Point
(if you need directions, call the church).

Easter Sunday 9:00 am & 11:00 am Worship Services

Childcare will be available at the 9 o'clock service.
Sunday School will not meet, but will resume on
April 7th at 10 am.

Soup Bowl Supper

The Soup Bowl Supper makes its triumphant return to our church on Friday, March 8th, from 5pm-7pm.

Choose from an assortment of amazing handcrafted bowls donated

By Walt's Pottery and friends, enjoy some delicious homemade soups and donate to a great cause!

Proceeds go toward the church's food pantry and food ministry programs.

We hope you'll join us!



Environment

Sleeping Under the Stars

A few years ago, I added twenty feet to our deck and extended a shed roof out over the northern portion to create a "sleeping porch." We strung some mosquito netting and we've slept outside a number of times since that summer. Although summers seemed the logical choice, I didn't love the netting and so this fall, I threw some foam on the deck and we ventured out, netting-free. We've slept outside, hovering above our beloved estuary, ever since!

If you're thinking, "These two are nuts," you're in good company – we've heard that. Yes, some nights it has been 12° F and yes, there is a perfectly warm bedroom just a few steps away. Yet, the experience differs, being outside, immersed in the night. Admittedly, the initial jump into the

icy sheets is a shock to the system – not helped by the fact that the foam is frozen and takes some time for our body heat to thaw. But the thick down comforter kicks in and soon the makeshift bed forms a cozy nest against the winter's bitter cold.

Orion's belt bedazzles us as we peer out from under our covers. The phases of the moon have become familiar as have the tidal rise and fall of the estuary waters beneath us. Each morning the treetops across the water are slowly turned golden-red as dawn approaches and a cacophony of bird song gently rousts us to the new day.

On a stormy night, we can just hear the roar of the waves crashing where the estuary meets the Sound. On calmer nights, the few still clinging oak leaves twist in the soft breeze and the brittle tree branches click us to sleep. Rain drops thump on our steel roof and a muted hush engulfs us when a

rare snowfall blankets the marsh. Fox, racoon, deer, rabbit and the occasional bobcat rustle through the phragmites at the edge of the frozen waters below. The blackened landscape is punctuated by coyote cries ringing from Hatchett's Point and a lone barred owl calls softly from the forest.

Not everyone will 'warm' to the idea of discarding heat and walls at night. I can tell you, however, that to the extent that you immerse yourself in the natural world, it will change you. Embrace the outdoors and the environment will cease to be an abstract political debate and will become a part of your being – do that.



Pilgrimage for Peace: Sacred Conversations on the Road...



Guess Who?



Carleen and Ted carry the banner



A March from Philadelphia to Washington D.C. calling for Peace in Gaza



The Marchers made it to D.C.!



The Islamic Center of Delaware hosted Pilgrims one Evening

GIVING MATTERS

Stewardship Campaign

Our 2024 financial campaign - aka Stewardship Campaign - is coming to a close soon. We are grateful to all our members and friends who have so far committed to support the church financially this year. Your commitments, sometimes called "pledges", are **vital** to keeping all of our missions and ministries functioning and growing.

Please know that what we call "commitments" or "pledges" are not formal contracts, but simply expressions of intended giving for the year. And when expressed early, they allow us to plan the year ahead.

You are VITAL because fully 75% of our church funding each year comes from individual contributions from our members and friends.

For those who have not yet expressed their commitment to contribute, please do so soon. We are still short of the funds needed for 2024. You may call the church at 860-434-8686 or email at fccol@fccol.org.

Thank you everyone for supporting our church!
Bob McCracken, Treasurer

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.

Adult Forum: Our West African Journey, Sunday, March 10th

Following the service, our church travelers will share stories and pictures of their journey to Ghana, Togo and Benin. In Fellowship Hall.

American Red Cross Blood Drive, March 5th, 9-6pm

The next American Red Cross blood drive will take place on Tuesday, March 5th, from 9am-6pm.

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.

Maundy Thursday Dante Reading

On Maundy Thursday, March 28 FCCOL will continue its exploration of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, making the arduous ascent up Mt. Purgatory. Beginning at 7 pm, and continuing until we're done, we'll read the entirety of the *Purgatorio*, canto by canto.

If you would like to be a reader, please let Steve know.



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.

WELCOME OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER!



We are pleased and happy to announce that Anne Koczka (pronounced kahs-ka) has joined the Fccol team as our new office manager. Anne joined us on February 12th, and she comes to us with a wealth of experience and qualifications. Most recently she was the Business Manager at the Christ Lutheran Church in Amston, Connecticut, where she served for the last six years. Arriving here she dove right in to the weekly email broadcasts, the bulletins, the website, the March newsletter and the church calendar!

Anne has a delightful and welcoming personality. Please introduce yourselves to her whenever you can, and be patient as she learns a couple hundred new names! WELCOME ANNE!

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 next Newsletter will be for April; deadline is March 15th.

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!

