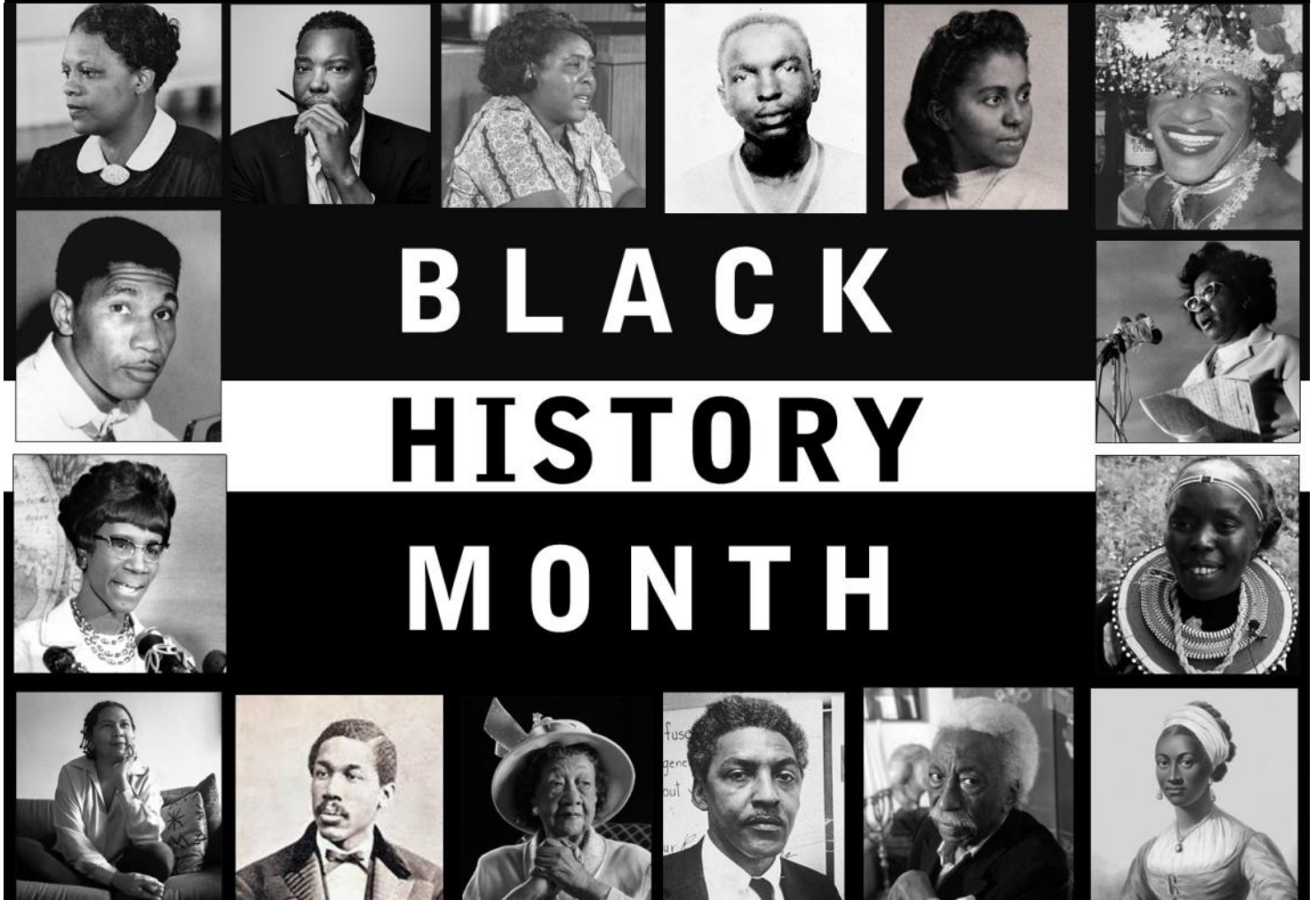


FEBRUARY 2025



Dear Friends,

Who is on the cover? See page 3

“The road to a friend’s house is never long.” This wise proverb is the heart of the extraordinary documentary, *Will and Harper*, now out on Netflix. The movie chronicles the cross country expedition of two friends; the comedian, Will Ferrell, and his long-time writing partner from Saturday Night Live, Harper Steele. Without giving away too much of the story, Harper, at age 60, has recently changed her name and pronouns, coming out to her family and friends as a Trans woman. Packing their station wagon for the miles ahead, their road trip becomes an emotional expedition; the miles revealing what true friendship - and allyship - can be. If you watch the film, keep a box of tissues nearby and plan to call your nearest and dearest afterwards.

The Greeks thought the highest form of love was Agape, a self-giving love rooted in honesty, respect and the golden rule. Agape is the generative love of true friendship (or *phileo*) which accepts each person for who they are. Agape is not the physical attraction of Eros or based upon obligation but flows from a heart choosing to love wholeheartedly beyond the self.

Agape love occurs in the New Testament 106 times (yes, somebody counted!) It was what Jesus was talking about when he said to his disciples at the end of his life, “I call you friends.” (John 15:15)

At the end of the documentary, Will and Harper are on a West Coast beach toasting their completed journey. They had arrived at a beautiful place and covered a lot of ground. I had the sense that together

(continued on page 6)

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL



Senior Choir Schedule

To all members of the Senior Choir - Thanks for such a great start to 2025!

Here is what February 2025 is looking like:

Sunday, February 2: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, February 5: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 9: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, February 12: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 16: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, February 19: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 23: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, February 26: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Many thanks and best wishes to all,
Simon

Handbell Notes

The Old Lyme Ringers have been hard at work preparing their February offering. They will be playing "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi, arranged by Gary Jungkeit, on Sunday, February 2. The piece will be accompanied on organ by Simon Holt. The piece is familiar to many and is based on the opening movement of the cantata of the same name. I can assure you that you will be in amazement as you watch early in the piece the treble ringers ring their bells so rapidly! It doesn't get much harder than that!

The Ringers are also working on music for Lent and Easter. Of course, the Lenten piece is slow and meditative, and the Easter piece is bright, cheerful, and very uplifting! The Ringers are looking forward to playing again in worship. Happy Listening!

Children's Handbell Choir

This new handbell choir is off and running! As of this writing, we have 14 children enrolled, and they are all eager and enthusiastic! They use every natural note bell that the church owns, including the new upper treble bells, and so it is impossible to have even one more in this group! The children range from grades 3 to

9. Their director would not be able to do all that is necessary for this group without the assistance and support of parents, especially Angela Mock, Matthew Rice, Jolene Brant, and Doug Kiem. We have had two rehearsals thus far, and we hope to play in worship sometime in February and on Palm Sunday, April 13. You will be astounded at the musicianship of these young people!

Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

We are busy creating many things for sale and donation. **Baby and kid items include:** hats, mittens, socks, sweaters, critters, bibs, quilts, touchy-feelies, toys, Simple Bags and crayon aprons. **Youth and adult items include:** hats, head bands, mittens, fingerless mitts, neck warmers, shawls, scarves, aprons, tote bags, Simple Bags and fabric pins. **Home items include:** napkins, table cloths, runners, placemats, pot holders, dish cloths, pillows, baskets, coasters, quilts, sachets, and ornaments. We also occasionally offer donated vintage items such as hand made quilts. Everything we offer makes for wonderful gifts for others or for yourself!

If you haven't visited the **FCCOL Partnership Store** across from the Fellowship Hall, you're missing a treat! As a bonus, the goods from Palestine, Haiti, and Tribal Crafts are all part of the store space. We call it guilt-free shopping since all proceeds go directly to the artisans, or to FCCOL outreach missions. LWS opens the Partnership Store on Sundays after the service, Mondays during our working hours, Wednesday around choir practice, and during most large in-house FCCOL activities. Also, our fabulous sexton, Sean, and/or our fabulous office manager, Anne, are happy to assist with store purchases by special request. Call the church office 860.434.8686 during working hours.

Ladies Who Stitch regularly meet from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Sheffield Auditorium - with a lunch break in the library at noon. Visitors, shoppers, and potential new members are always welcome.

Questions: Contact Eunice via email (eunicetaylor@me.com) or stop by on a Monday.

God's Neighborhood

"I have only one thing to do and that's to be the wave that I am, and then sink back into the ocean."

- Fiona Apple



Happy February my friends!! February is Black History Month and the month we get to make crafts for friends and give gifts to our loved ones for Valentine's Day!! That means that we have a lot to do and to learn in God's Neighborhood. We've begun a special project called *Church Buddies* to connect our youth, families and elders together. This semester, we're focused on learning scripture stories and prophetic voices on building community with love wherever we are.

Building relationships is an important skill to learn when making friends with others and making connections with people that are outside of our age group and people who are often marginalized. We are connecting our Youth Group with "wisdom figures" within our congregation that they will ultimately meet in person at a meet-and-greet in the Sheffield Auditorium after church some Sunday. Our younger students are writing letters and sending cards through snail mail to our wisdom figures that are homebound or we don't get to see that often.

So far, our Youth Group has learned the important skill of active listening in the month of January. This skill stands out as the first brick for building a foundation for a strong relationship, wouldn't you agree? Adding onto this lesson we will learn how to ask questions to foster closer connections as well as working through our curriculum which highlights:

Do we live in community intentionally, with great care and love for our neighbor? Or do we live in community carelessly and risk hurting others unintentionally? Living in community intentionally is a faith practice because it lets us turn our everyday interactions with others into something holy and full of God's love.

February 2nd: We will start the month with reading *The Hill We Climb* by Amanda Gorman in order for it to stay relevant in our hearts. Then work on writing letters and making cards for our Church Buddies and learning how to send it out in grades 4th and up.

February 9th: First we will enjoy catching up in the big room downstairs after the children's message, with the poem, "The Miracle of Friendship" by Maya Angelou. Then our classes will make brownies, cookies, and centerpieces (depending on age) in

order to offer it to the congregation at Fellowship Hour Sunday, 02/16.

February 16th: Celebrate Valentine's Day with each other by reading poems by black authors, enjoying hot cocoa and snacks, and get Fellowship Hall ready for Fellowship Hour.

February 23rd: Welcome back to anyone that went on vacation somewhere this past week! We will continue reading a poem downstairs, this one "**The Rose That Grew From Concrete**" by Tupac Shakur. This poem is important because it can be used as a metaphor for showing that against all odds, we can have resilience and determination. Our students will be challenged to write a poem (depending on age) to their Church Buddies. Our youngest will read stories about building friendships and make a craft.

Memorials

Lilly Spratt

Who's who on the Cover?

Start at the upper left corner and proceed clockwise:

- 1 Eunice Carter, One of NY's first female lawyers.
- 2 Ta-Nehisi Coates, Writer.
- 3 Fannie Lou Hamer, Civil Rights Activist
- 4 James Earle Chaney, Civil Rights Activist, killed working for CORE, registering voters in the South.
- 5 Mary Maynard Daly, Biochemist First African American to receive a PhD. from Columbia.
- 6 Marshal P. Johnson, Transgender Activist who participated in the Stonewall Uprising.
- 7 Clara Luper, Educator and Civil Rights Activist
- 8 Tegla Loroupe, Kenyan long distance runner and Activist for Women's rights globally.
- 9 Phillis Wheatley, Enslaved person and poet.
- 10 Gordon Parks, Photographer.
- 11 Bayard Rustin, Political activist, Prominent leader in social movement.
- 12 Dorothy Height, Leader in the Civil Rights Movement served as president of the National Council of Negro Women.
- 13 Octavius Valentine Catto, American Educator, intellectual, civil rights activist.
- 14 bell hooks, Author, theorist, educator, and social critic.
- 15 Shirley Chisholm, Politician, the first black woman elected to Congress.
- 16 Medgar Evers, Civil rights activist, First State Field Secretary of the NAACP.

DANTE: *Paradiso*

On Maundy Thursday, April 17th, we will return to Dante for the third and final part of *The Divine Comedy* - the *Paradiso*. It's an often overlooked and under read section of the poem, as many readers have preferred the creative torments of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. But it's actually a beautiful and moving finale to the entire poetic journey - and it's loaded with theological and psychological, as well as social and political insights. Where the *Inferno* demonstrates the violent disorder that besets human lives and societies governed solely by self-interest, and the *Purgatorio* demonstrates what it is to heal from those disorders, the *Paradiso* is bold enough to imagine what flourishing human lives and communities might look like, refracted through the lens of a Divine love.

As in previous years, we'll be reading the entirety of the poem aloud on Maundy Thursday, following our traditional service. We'll begin at 7, and continue well into the night. Individual readers are encouraged to sign up for particular cantos. There are 33, and so we'll need 33 readers. If we have more, some cantos may be shared. Like the previous two years, commemorative posters will be made for the occasion.

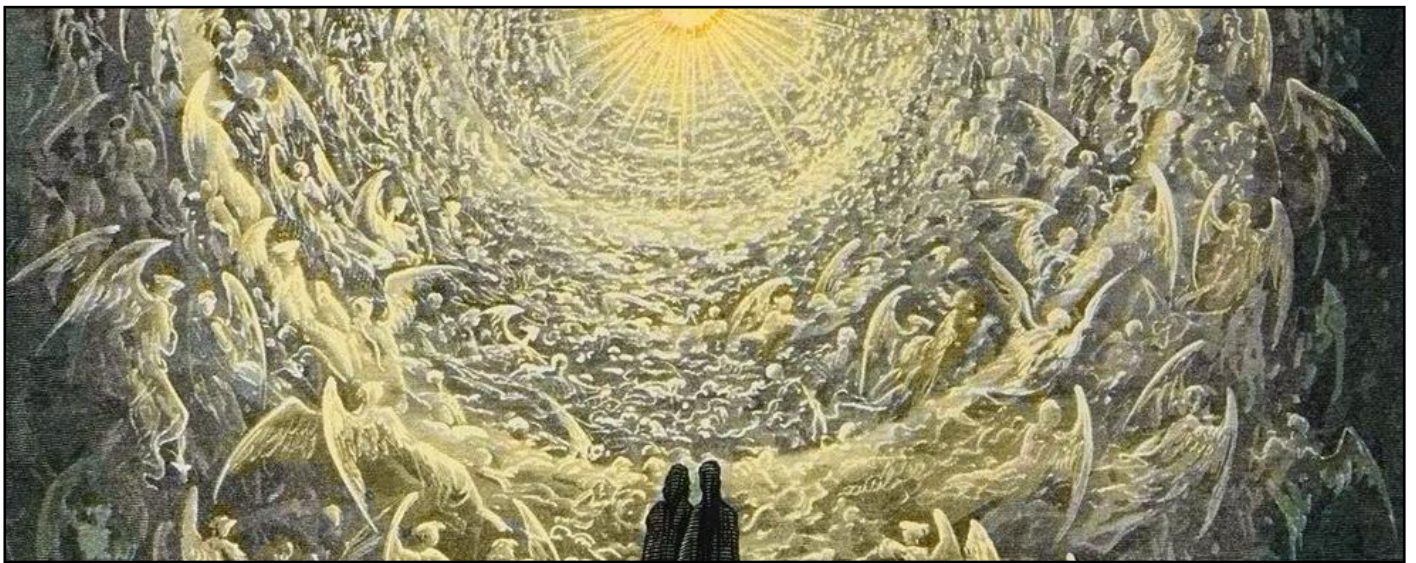
The last two years, Prof. Peter Hawkins has guided our efforts. This year we're going to try something different. For seven weeks leading up to Maundy Thursday (and perhaps one or two weeks afterwards - depending on how quickly we read) those who are interested are invited to read and discuss the *Paradiso* together. We'll try to do three or four cantos per session, touching down on some of the highlights within each section. It is a theological, poetic, and a moral education, all in one.

Those sessions will begin on Monday, February 24th, at 6:00, lasting for an hour or so each time. We'll meet in the church library, unless we find a better place. The schedule will look like this:

Feb. 24, March 3, March 10, March 17 (no meeting - Steve's in Cuba!), March 24, March 31, April 7, April 14.

There are any number of worthy translations. The Hollander translation is a favored one, but a brand new edition from Michael Palma has just been released, and it's reputed to be one of the best. But Mandelbaum, Singleton, Musa, Durling/Martinez or any number of others are also great.

For supplemental materials, Peter Hawkins' *Dante's Testaments* is highly recommended, as is his lecture on the *Paradiso* found in *Undiscovered Country*. Another brand new resource is a history of the *Commedia* and its influence on the world, written by Joseph Luzzi: *Dante's Divine Comedy: A Biography*.



Book Club

Steve has fallen behind in his winter reading goals! Which means that he's still making his way through *Sense and Sensibility*. With luck, we'll schedule a Zoom conversation about the book in late February, probably on a Thursday evening. Stay tuned for more details, and let Steve, or the office, know if you'd like to be a part of that conversation.

"MY BAG OF WORRIES"

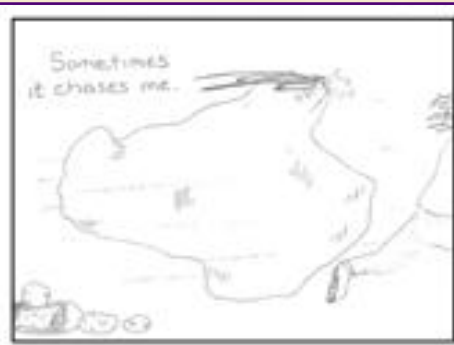


The author of this little book *"My Bag Of Worries,"* Gaye Symington, lives in Jericho Vermont where she brought up her three children.

She got into politics there to improve the education system.



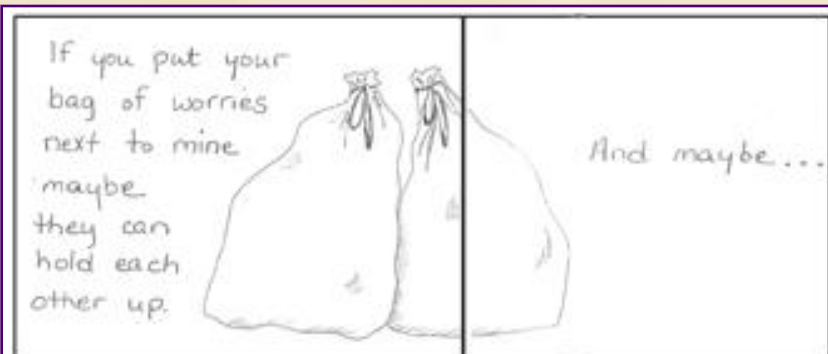
Eventually she became speaker of the House and ran for governor.



After retiring from politics she worked for the High Meadows Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation.



They funded many Vermont companies many of which were run by women. This book was given as a Christmas present to members of the family and close friends. We think it a treasure.



(continued from the cover)

they'd each become someone new. And, their profound friendship made the world a more hopeful place, too. May we all be so lucky to have such friends.

Given the threats to civil liberties and the challenging times in which we find ourselves right now, there's hope and celebration to be found in the bonds we make, keep and cherish. At FCCOL this month, we'll be honoring the relationships and neighbors we value in our families, community and the wider world. We'll honor Black History Month and Valentine's Day with a variety of offerings. In God's Neighborhood, we're exploring more about what it means to be a good neighbor and live in community with care and intention. Valentine cards will be going out to our new "church buddies," too! And, a fun parent gathering is being planned.

We have two Adult Forums on the calendar. On February 2nd, retired Navy officer and oceanographer, Dr. Bob Ballard will share his experiences of the hidden world in our planet's oceans. On February 9th, we'll host our friend, poet and church member, Marilyn Nelson, and author, Dr. Nadine Pinede. The daughter of Haitian immigrants, and the first Rhodes Scholar of Haitian descent, Dr. Pinede will share her novel, *When the Mapou Sings*, and her research into the little-known Haitian Renaissance. We'll honor our church partnership with the Crosby Fund for Education as well.

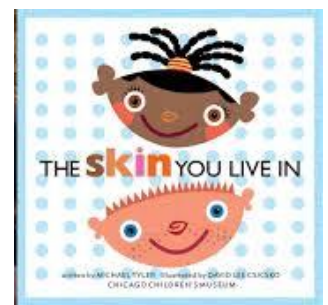
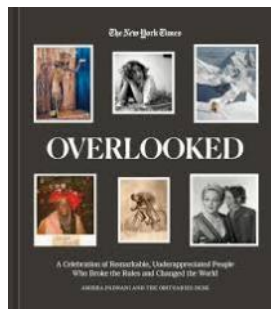
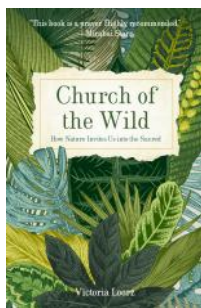
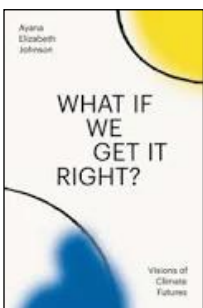
Our new monthly support group for parents and family members of those who identify as trans and gender-diverse will meet on Wednesday, February 19th at 5:30-6:30.

On Friday, February 21st, we'll gather together for a heart-healthy Faith and Science Potluck featuring presentations by Fred Behringer and Tom Sherer on from 6:00-8:00. At the end of the month, Gregg Carlson from Convergence will return to visit with us again and offer a workshop and fellowship forum on our ongoing visioning process.

Speaking of grand expeditions, our Thursday morning Bible Study has begun reading the book of Exodus and Steve is continuing to lead us through a read aloud of the South African Kairos Document. Hope to see you around the neighborhood!

With love and affection,

Reading:



What If We Get It Right: Visions of Climate Futures by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us Into the Sacred by Victoria Looz

Never Caught: The Story of Ona Judge (Young Reader's Edition) by Erica Armstrong Dunbar & Kathleen Van Cleve

Overlooked: A Celebration of Remarkable, Underappreciated People Who Broke the Rules and Changed the World by Amisha Padnani

What I Ate in One Year by Stanley Tucci

The Skin You Live In by Michael J. Tyler

Watching:

Jazz: A Documentary Series by Ken Burns

The Marlow Murder Club

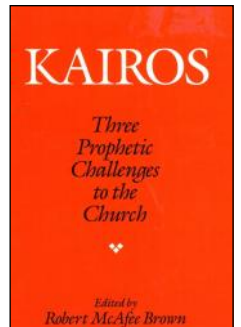
Documentary: Will and Harper

Adult Bible Study: "Goodness, Greed and Grace: Join us as we will begin reading the Book of Exodus

Curious about what we do in Bible Study? Wondering about the problem of evil and where the heck God might be found on any given day? Bible Study will resume on January 16th and be every Thursday at 11:00 am in the Hoag Parlor and on Zoom. Our companion book we will continue with *Reading Genesis* by Marilynne Robinson. Email: fccol@fccol.org for the zoom link.

Reading the South African Kairos Document

Members and friends are invited to gather for a reading and study group of the South African Kairos Document with Steve. Written at the height of the apartheid struggles in South Africa in 1985, this brief theological statement remains stunningly relevant. We'll meet every Thursday at 12:00 noon, in the Hoag Parlor, immediately after the weekly Bible study. Copies of the Document will be available in the church Narthex, on the table at the bottom of the stairs between the Meetinghouse and the Fellowship Hall, and in the church office. Email: fccol@fccol.org for the zoom link.



Grief Group

This monthly support group is for those who have lost a loved one and those struggling with other losses. Next meeting: Wednesday, February 26th 5:00-6:00 pm in Hoag Parlor.

Parent and Families Care Group of LGBTQ and Trans/ Youth & Young Adults

For Parents, Caregivers and Family Members of Trans Youth/Young Adults: Our group will provide conversation, support community and education for parents and caregivers around the issues of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diversity. Join us for an informational meeting held at FCCOL on Wednesday, February 19th at 5:30 in the Hoag Parlor. For more information email us at: fccol@fccol.org.

Writers at the Well

Friday, February 28th, 10:00 am. Join us as we meet once a month to write pages together and share our spiritual journeys as we go. Using informal writing prompts, participants give voice to memories and the stories that make up our lives. No writing experience necessary...just a willingness to pay attention and tap into the wellspring. Meeting in the Hoag Parlor.

Weekly Sunday Flowers

We're scheduling members and friends who would like to provide pulpit flowers for a week. If desired, flowers can be given in memory of a loved one, with the loved one(s) mentioned in the bulletin. Flowers or greenery can be fresh from your garden or ordered from florist. A house plant from home displayed for the morning would be lovely, as well. To sign up for a future week, please call Jill Harned, 603-398-9004.



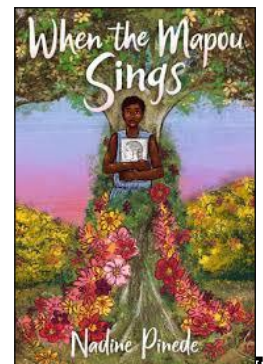
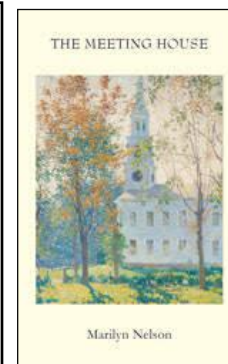
Adult Forum Sunday February 2nd with Bob Ballard "Exploring the New America. Exploring the 52% that lies below the sea"

On Sunday, February 2nd at 11:15 am in the Sheffield Auditorium. Retired Navy officer and oceanographer Dr. Robert Ballard an internationally renowned scientist, explorer and educator known for his numerous deep-sea explorations including his famous discovery of the Titanic, will share his experiences of the hidden world in our planet's oceans.

Adult Forum with Writer Nadine Pinede and Poet Marilyn Nelson

Sunday, February 9th at 11:15 am in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Poet and church member, Marilyn Nelson, and author, Dr. Nadine Pinede will join us for worship and offer an Adult Forum of poetry and discussion. The daughter of Haitian immigrants, and the first Rhodes Scholar of Haitian descent, Dr. Pinede will share her novel, *When the Mapou Sings*, and her research into the little known Haitian Renaissance. We'll honor our church partnership with Haiti and the Crosby Fund for Education as well.



GIVING MATTERS: PLEDGING AT FCCOL: An Institutional and Individual Perspective

Annually, the Ministers invite FCCOL members and friends to participate in the Church's financial commitment campaign. Their request is an invitation to help FCCOL sustain and extend ministries and benevolences which are freely given but are not free.

Operationally, pledge commitments become next year's budget building blocks. They serve to sustain FCCOL as an institution. Over the past century, pledges have replaced the sale or rental of pew spaces as a major revenue source for many churches. At FCCOL our pledges create the major revenue source that enables the Church to continue as a well-managed organization. They are the backbone of FCCOL's continuing ministry.

However, there can be a deeper, personal meaning involved with generous giving to FCCOL. The acceptance of the invitation to pledge can have an important personal spiritual dimension. Pledge making can raise questions about what and how a

commitment means. For example, how does FCCOL make a difference on our personal spiritual journey?

As FCCOL works to make our world here and now a little more compassionate and a little more just, our financial commitment to FCCOL can help us individually grow in grace as we strengthen our faith, fellowship and service guided by the Christian spirit.

We navigate this journey according to our own conscience and in covenant with our Congregational fellowship. Of course, it is the conscious, thoughtful commitment that matters not the amount of our commitment. Every pledge is important. Every pledge is appreciated. Every pledge is put to work

So, pledging has an institutional imperative – it's an estimate of the Congregation's giving for the year ahead. This enables the Church to plan and responsibly fund much of what we do. But importantly, pledging can have a spiritual impact on us individually. Our conscious act of carefully considering, deciding, and generously giving can help propel us on our personal spiritual journey - a personal journey we take, while working together to help ensure no one is alone.

Save The Date: Faith and Science Discussion Potluck Suppers



Friday, February 21st at 6:00 pm is the first in a series of Faith and Science Discussion Potluck Suppers. "Know What's on Your Plate? Exploring the Risks and Benefits of Genetic Engineering." All are welcome (no science background required). Bring a dish to share. If you would like to help with the set up and break down of the potluck please contact Deb Heminway at dheminway9@gmail.com.



BLOOD DRIVE

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive at the First Congregation Church of Old Lyme on Thursday, February 13th from 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Please see the link below to make an appointment before arriving.

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

The sexton would like to acknowledge one of the unsung heroes of this church. Bill Slivinski is undoubtedly the most heartwarming, engaging, amenable, and sincere disciple of this church any sexton could ask for. Between opening and closing the church every morning and evening, assisting in cleaning up the church after every Sunday service, lighting the sacred lamp before each service, and the many other jobs done silently and lovingly, Bill's unwavering love for this church is manifested in his actions. We at this church are indebted to Bill's spirit and tenacity. With much love and admiration: thank you Bill!



FEBRUARY 2025 CALENDAR

Food Pantry and Diaper Bank *Saturday, February 1st at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.

Communion *Sunday February 2nd at 10:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.

Adult Forum with Bob Ballard *Sunday, Feb. 2nd at 11:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, February 3rd at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 5th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 5th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Bible Study *Thursday, February 6th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thurs, Feb. 6th at 12:00 pm* in the Library.

Children's Handbell Choir *Thursday, February 6th at 4:15 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Food Pantry *Saturday, February 8th at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.

Adult Forum with writer Nadine Pinede and poet Marilyn Nelson

Sunday, February 9th at 11:30 am in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, February 10th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Board of Trustees Meeting *Tuesday, February 11th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.

Ballroom Dancing Lesson *Wednesday, February 12th at 10:00 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 12th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 12th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Bible Study *Thursday, February 13th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thurs, Feb. 13th at 12:00 pm* in the Library.

ARC Blood Drive *Thursday, February 13th from 1:00 pm -6:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Children's Handbell Choir *Thursday, February 13th at 4:15 pm* in Sheffield Auditorium.

Food Pantry *Saturday, February 15th at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.

Musical Masterworks Concert *Saturday, February 15th at 5:00pm* in the Meetinghouse.

Musical Masterworks Concert *Sunday, February 16th at 3:00pm* in the Meetinghouse.

FCCOL Office Closed *Monday, February 17th* for President's Day

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, February 17th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Parent and Families Trans Youth Care Group *Wed, Feb. 19th at 5:30 pm* in Hoag Parlor.

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 19th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 19th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

March Newsletter Deadline *Wednesday, February 19th.*

Bible Study *Thursday, February 20th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thurs, Feb. 20th at 12:00 pm* in the Library.

Board of Stewardship Meeting *Thursday, February 20th at 4:00 pm* in the Library.

Children's Handbell Choir *Thursday, February 20th at 4:15 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Faith and Science Potluck *Friday, February 21st at 6:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Food Pantry *Saturday, February 22nd at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.

William Earle Williams Lecture *Saturday, Feb. 22nd at 4:00 pm* in the Meetinghouse.

New London Community Meal Center *Sunday, February 23rd.*

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, February 24th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Newsletter Folding *Tuesday, February 25th*

Board of Deacons Meeting *Tuesday, February 25th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.

Grief Group *Wednesday, February 26th at 5:00 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 26th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, February 26th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Bible Study *Thursday, February 27th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thurs, Feb. 27th at 12:00 pm* in the Library.

Children's Handbell Choir *Thursday, February 27th at 4:15 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

Writers at the Well *Friday, February 28th at 10:00 am* in the Hoag Parlor.

Convergence Consulting Firm Presentation *Sunday, March 2nd at 11:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

William Earle Williams (Photographer) Lecture “The Evolution of Their Kindred Earth from Concept to Exhibition”



Sponsored by the Florence Griswold Museum, Free and Open to the Public, Saturday, February 22nd at 4:00 pm in the Meetinghouse at The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme.

Please follow this to register at: <https://14318.blackbaudhosting.com/14318/Lecture-William-Earle-Williams>

The Florence Griswold Museum presents its first solo exhibition by a contemporary Black artist, *Their Kindred Earth: Photographs by William Earle Williams*, February 22 through June 22, 2025. The exhibition of newly commissioned photographs makes visible little-known sites across Old Lyme (as well as the state and nation) significant to enslavement, emancipation, and African Americans' contributions to Connecticut history and culture. Williams's 120 poignant images acknowledge and honor the lives of the Black and Indigenous people who contributed in essential and often unrecognized ways to Connecticut's society, culture, and economy.

2025 Stewardship (Financial) Campaign Update

Our 2025 campaign, which provides the financial resources for the church to operate every year, is nearing the “home stretch”. So far, we have received 249 generous commitments totaling \$579, 539 which is very close to our goal of \$600,000. Last year we received 280 commitments. So, we would very much appreciate, for those who have not yet made a commitment to come forward. We would very much like to exceed the goal this year, so that we don't have to rely on a contribution from our Endowment Fund, which we needed to do last year. If you have not yet made a commitment, and/or have misplaced your commitment card, please call the office (860-434-8686) and we will make sure you get one. You can also give us your commitment over the phone. THANK YOU!

From your Treasurer, Bob McCracken

Petition to State Legislators supporting Environmental Efforts

If you are interested in information or want to sign the CT Coalition for Climate Action petition from the Inter-religious Eco-Justice Network, contact Mariette Brown for more information at: mariettetb98@gmail.com.

Homeless Hospitality Donations...

We are grateful to everyone who helped with the donations of socks and coffee for the Homeless Hospitality Center of New London. Their request for canes (used canes are just fine!) and ground coffee and socks will continue. Please bring them to church and leave them with the deacons at the front door if you have one to donate; or bring it to the church office during the week. Many thanks.

Stair Chair Available

A stair chair has been donated and available to any one in need of one. Please contact Ellen Calkins at ercalkins@gmail.com.

Sunday Flowers

We're scheduling members and friends who would like to provide pulpit flowers for Sundays. To sign up, call Jill Harned, 603-398-9004. Thank you!

Housing Wanted

We regularly hear from folks who are in need of an affordable rental. If you have any information that could be helpful, please let Anne in the office know. Even a room to rent for a period of time would be greatly appreciated.

Caretaker Position Available

Aldrean (Al) Chuma is a professional caregiver and available to offer any assistance you may need with your loved one at home. Part-time and full-time hours. References available upon request. #917-957-3963.

Car Wanted

Our caretaker, Bill Slivinski, is in need of a car. Please let us know if you can help. Call 860-434-8686. Thank you.

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. Rebecca T. Crosby, Minister for Haitian Outreach

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

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

Rachael 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 FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
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The submission deadline for the March Newsletter is Friday, February 19th.

Please e-mail the church office at fccol@fccol.org if you want to be added to or removed from the newsletter mailing list, or receive your copy digitally!
Thanks for your help!



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