

JANUARY 2025

JANUARY 1929

of taking a kind of general and panoramic view of the whole of human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" I would take my mental flight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark dungeons of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there. I would move on by Greece and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides, and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon and I would watch them around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to be early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but fear itself. But I wouldn't stop there. Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th Century, I will be happy." Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up the nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding. Something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee - the cry is always the same: "We want to be free." And another reason that I'm happy to live in this period is that we have been forced to a point where we are going to have to grapple with the problems that men have been trying to grapple with through history, but the demands didn't force them to do it. Survival demands that we grapple with them. Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world, it's non-violence or non-existence. That is where we are today... Now, what does all of this mean in his great period of history? It means that we've got to stay together. We've got to stay together and maintain unity. You know, whatever Pharaoh wanted to prolong a period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. Now, let us maintain unity... Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness. One day a man came to Jesus, and he wanted to raise some questions about some vital matters of life. At points he wanted to trick Jesus, and show him that he knew a little more than Jesus knew and throw him off base. Now that question could have easily ended up in a philosophical and theological debate. But Jesus immediately pulled that question from mid-air, and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man, who fell among thieves. You remember that a Levite and a priest passed by on the other side. They didn't stop to help him. And finally a man of another race came by. He got down from his beast, decided not to be compassionate by proxy. But he got down with him, administered first aid, and helped the man in need. Jesus ended up saying, this was the good man, this was the great man, because he had the capacity to project the "I" into the "thou", and to be concerned about his brother. Now you know, we use our imagination a great deal to determine why the priest and the Levite didn't stop. At times we say they were busy going to a church meeting, an ecclesiastical gathering, and they had to get on down to Jerusalem so they wouldn't be late for their meeting. At other times we would speculate that there was a religious law that "one who was engaged in religious ceremonies was not to touch a human body twenty-four hours before he ceremonies." And every now and then we begin to wonder whether maybe they are not going down to Jerusalem - or down to Jericho, rather to organizing a "Jericho Road Improvement Association". That's a possibility. Maybe they felt it was safer to deal with the problem from a causal root, rather than get bogged down with an individual effect. But I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible that those men were afraid. You see, the Jericho road is a dangerous road... It's a winding, unimproved road. It's a dangerous road.

Dear Friends,

The other day, I nearly crashed the car when I overheard a conversation my daughter Sabina was having in the passenger seat as I drove. A friend called her, and here's what she said: "Hey, we're going over to (x)'s house and we're going to read. Do you want to come?" Sabina responded with an enthusiastic "Yes!" while my jaw just sort of dropped. "Wait, did you just get an invitation to go over to somebody's house to read?" I asked. "Yep," she responded. "Um, can I come?" I asked, only half joking. "Nope," was what she said.

Rejection aside, you can imagine her father's delight. What recent high school graduate, on break from college, gets together with friends in order to read? To watch a movie, sure. To go to a concert, of course. But to read?

That phone call challenged all the stereotypes about the decline of the adolescent mind (and not only the adolescent mind) in all of the hand-wringing think pieces I've come across lately about such topics. In the *Atlantic*, there was a much discussed piece this past fall about how, even on Ivy League campuses, students are arriving without ever having read a book from cover to cover. Articles, excerpts, chapters, yes, but many freshmen, apparently, have never been challenged to read a full book (see: "The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books"). A similar oft-cited article in *The New York Times* was written by a parent who paid her daughter to read a book, any book, this past summer. It worked, but only because financial coercion was involved (see: "I Paid My Child \$100 to Read a Book").

Maybe it's an anomaly, but among some college kids, reading has become sort of cool, like discovering a parent's vinyl collection, and realizing that some of that stuff is actually pretty awesome. I'm hearing of reading clubs on campuses, and of self-organized student groups dedicated to the slow reading of novels together, some of which even receive college credit. I'm hearing of kids who are ditching their phones, or at



Senior Choir Schedule

To all members of the Senior Choir - Thanks for such uplifting singing in December and especially on Christmas Eve!

Here is what January 2025 is looking like:

Wed, January 1: No Rehearsal. **Happy New Year!**

Sunday, January 5: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, January 8: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, January 12: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, January 15: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, January 19: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, January 22: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Sunday, January 26: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Wednesday, January 29: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

Many thanks and best wishes to all,
Simon



Handbell Notes

After a busy December of ringing, the Old Lyme Ringers are now enjoying the new upper octave of handbells that have been added to our current set of bells. They certainly add a new dimension to the sound that the ringers play in both rehearsal and worship. We are so appreciative of the donors that made this purchase of additional bells possible!

In January the congregation will hear "We Three

Kings" on Epiphany Sunday, January 5. It will be played by our handbell quartet: Annie McCarty, Sean McCarty, Pat Jungkeit and Gary Jungkeit. Of course, the Old Lyme Ringers will also be busy during the month as they practice and prepare for music in worship in February and beyond.



Children's Handbell Choir

On January 8, our new children/youth handbell choir will be having its first rehearsal. This newly-formed group is made up of students in grades 3-9. We anticipate they will be ringing in worship on Palm Sunday, April 13. We are excited about this new music group joining the music ministry of FCCOL. please contact Gary Jungkeit, either in person, or by email: gjungkeit@charter.net, or by text: 423-782-6308.

Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

We all will have to create our own joy during these times, and LWS will do its part. We have been on a well-deserved break since December 9th, but are back now beginning Monday, January 6th. Our regular work schedule is 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Sheffield Auditorium - with a lunch break in the library at noon. Many of our creations are the result of numerous "off campus" hours in our homes - but Mondays are a time of coming together for the joy of sharing, supporting, finishing and camaraderie. Visitors, shoppers, and potential new members are always welcome.

LWS opens the Partnership Store on Sundays after the service, Mondays during our working hours, Wednesday around choir practice, during most large in

-house FCCOL activities, and sometimes by special request. Contact Eunice via email (eunicetaylor@me.com) or our fabulous office manager Anne (860.434.8686).

Happy New Year from Ladies Who Stitch!

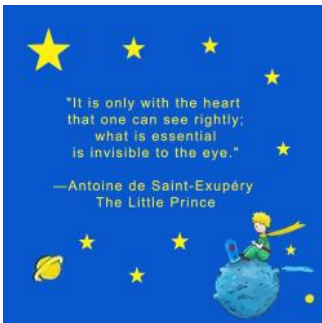


God's Neighborhood

Happy New Year!

In this New Year, we'd like to start by wishing you and your family peace and love. We are so grateful for all our families. We are excited to continue our exploration of the sacred gift of peace and its importance in our lives, relationships and world with our theme, *Peace Partners: Meet you at the Peace Table!* We'll keep sharing stories from scripture, enjoy special projects, learn about peacemakers and wisdom figures from around the world, and practice our skills in Knowing Peace, Taking a Step Back, Understanding Others, and Being Compassionate and Courageous.

We're delighted to begin a New Year together and to have so many friends in God's Neighborhood. See you soon!



Sunday, January 5th

Happy New Year! Today we will be welcoming our students back to Sunday School where we will be drinking hot cocoa, reminiscing about our favorite parts of Christmas/New Year's vacation, and reading the story of the arrival of the Three Wise

Ones (Matthew 2:1-12). We'll ask questions like...Who were the Magi? What did they bring the baby? Why did they bring those presents? Have you ever been on a long journey with your family? We'll also learn about the many ways cultures all over the world celebrate what is known as "Three Kings Day" or "Epiphany." Some classes may make centerpieces for our Epiphany coffee hour.

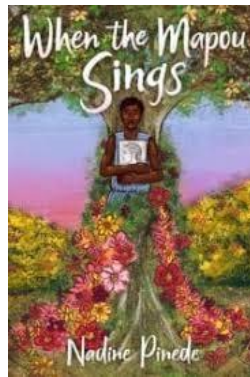
Sunday, January 19th

We will be celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and what he taught us and the world, as well as the legacy that he left behind.

What is non-violence and how does it make a difference in our lives and around the world? What do we think Dr. King meant when he said that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere?" How might we follow the "dream" of Dr. King and so many other Civil Rights heroes and brainstorm a service project?

Sunday, January 26th, 10 am

We have a special guest author, Nadine Mapou, who will share her new Young Adult book set in Haiti called, *When the Mapou Sings*. We'll learn some Creole words and hear the story of Haitian Independence along with our church partnership called the Crosby Fund for Haitian Education. There will be an evening presentation and author talk with soup and conversation, from 4- 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.



Sunday, January 26th, 4-5:30pm:

Youth Group For our Middle School/High School (Pilgrim Fellowship students): We'll meet the author, Nadine Mapou, for a book discussion of her new Young Adult book, *When the Mapou Sings*, set in Haiti in the 1930's. After the Author Talk, we'll eat tacos and plan exciting upcoming events and trips. Bring a friend!

May the Lord give strength to all people! May the Lord bless God's people with peace!
-Psalm 29:11



Ella Kiem organized a food drive at Lyme Old Lyme High School's Spanish Honor Society for the Shoreline Food Pantry.

Memorials

Morgan Ely
Judy Simmons

(continued from the cover)

least limiting them, so that they can engage in old-fashioned analogue activities - talking, creating art, making music, baking, turning pages, and playing board games. It's pretty fantastic. Amidst so much bad news coming our way, this strikes me as something to feel genuinely hopeful about.

I can't invite you to come over to my house to read - who knows how many of you would say yes? - but I can invite you to read along with me this winter. It's something I've done ever since Covid, and a number of you have taken up the invitation. This year, I have three books in mind for the winter months, all of them loosely associated with the Romantic era in England: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Why those novels? Well, I've never read them, for one. Also, the choices I've made in previous years have been largely male-centric, to my embarrassment. But then finally, I think it's time to explore the Romantic era more fully. It may be that our own era is now echoing certain aspects of the Romantic period, especially as young people begin a quiet revolt against apps, algorithms, and inner lives dominated by tech. It may be that our time is one in which people are reawakening to their own inner depths, which happens to be where and how religion takes root in a soul. It may be that Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, and Mary Shelley can help us to unlock some features of our own souls, as we enter not only a new year, but also, perhaps, a new era. It's also worth noting that it was the Romantic era that brought us the first child labor laws, women's suffrage movements, revolts against enslavement, abolition movements, and resistance to economic exploitation by industrialists. All the more reason to take up these authors now.

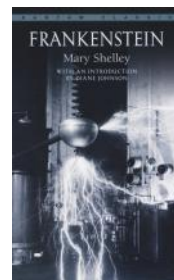
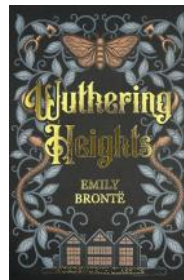
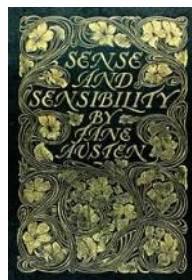
We'll read Austen in January, Brontë in February, and Shelley in March. I'll schedule discussion times for each one, probably on a Thursday evening late in each month. Why not put the books on your Christmas list, and then read along?

Of course, there will be other opportunities to read and think with one another in these winter months as well. On Thursdays, at 11:00, we'll be continuing our reading of Genesis and Exodus. Then at noon, right after Bible Study, those who wish will be reading the South African Kairos Document together.

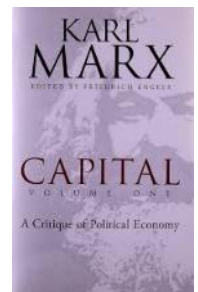
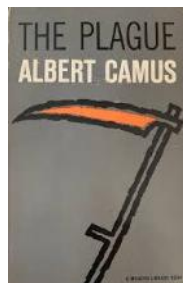
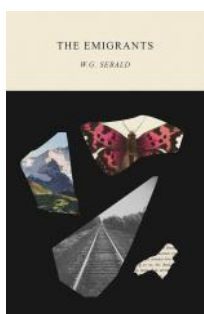
And, let us not forget, Dante's great finale, the *Paradiso*, awaits us in late April. More on that soon.

I've come to cherish this time of year, as a time of reflection and renewal. It is one of the gifts that the shadows and darkness of the season deliver to us all. I hope to share some of those gifts and pleasures with you.

Stay human...stay analogue...and turn every page.



Reading: *The Emigrants*, by W.G. Sebald; *Pale Fire*, by Vladimir Nabokov; *Demon Copperhead*, by Barbara Kingsolver; *The Plague*, by Albert Camus; *El Invencible Verano de Liliana (Liliana's Invincible Summer)* - still! - by Cristina Rivera Garza; *Late Fascism*, by Alberto Toscano; *Capital Vol 1* (selections), by Karl Marx. Listening: Father John Misty, *Mahashmashana*; The National, *Rome*; P.J. Harvey; TV on the Radio. Watching: *Dark* (Netflix); *Say Nothing* (Hulu)



Under The Meetinghouse Christmas Tree

We've been collecting gifts for the Homeless Hospitality Center of New London under our tree. And we'll continue through January 5th. So if you've not had a chance to add a gift, please feel free to do so. They need not be wrapped.

Special needs are for coffee (ground) because they need so much of it. Also socks. And recently I was told that canes would be wonderfully helpful. They have plenty of crutches – but hardly any canes and there is a growing demand because, unfortunately, a great many of the incoming guests are older. If you have a cane at home you no longer are in need of – that would be just fine!

Reading the South African Kairos Document

Beginning on Thursday, January 16, members and friends are invited to gather for a reading and study group of the South African Kairos Document. 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.



Fresh Greens in Lyme

It's *December* and Falls Brook Farm at 116 Sterling City Road has begun offering delicious freshly grown greens for sale. Last year Michael Newburg put up a 250' by 35' greenhouse and will be growing organic spinach, tat soi, arugula and mizumi throughout the winter. He plans a second one which he hopes will be up and producing by the 2026 season. A lower field is ready for warm season crops.

Many people don't realize that this is not a new technique. As early as the 1850's Paris was feeding it's residents year round. Approximately 6% of the land within city limits was devoted to year round gardening, using unheated glass houses in many cases.

Newburg's is also an unheated greenhouse, using only solar gain and the protection of the greenhouse to shelter his plants. He has an overhead irrigation system which allows for very dense planting. He works lying down using a creeper which spans each bed, rolling slowly down the row. The greenhouse has two layers of plastic sheeting, with air blown gently between the layers, mainly to relieve the load on the structure and to keep condensation from developing inside the house.

He also has, pending installation, 25KW's worth of solar panels, completing his net zero effort.

Michael started offering his greens only a couple of weeks ago. His IPO is a half pound bag of mixed greens for \$7.50. Some people may remember his farm from many years ago, which he stopped to focus on a family health issue. He is providing his greens from the same little garage in the driveway. A top loading chest refrigerator has the bags, and a can is provided for your payment. (First come first serve, honor system.)

-Mariette Brown

-The environmental committee is always on the lookout for people or groups being good stewards of creation. Please let any of us (me, Carleen or Tom Sherer), know if there is something you think we should get the word out about!

Looking Back as the New Year Dawns

Recently a lovely story was shared with me. And I thought it was worth sharing with all the church community.

Way back during COVID we established a team of people who made regular phone calls to check in on people, by phone, in those days of early isolation. There were about 20 callers in all. And we stayed in pretty regular contact with as many of our approximately 750 members as we could manage. Some of the people we called asked to be dropped from the list once the situation calmed down, but some seemed to want the calls to continue for quite a long time.

This Fall, a church member who was a “caller,” I’ll call her Lee, told me that she’d had the pleasure of finally connecting in person with the congregant she had called so many times. They met over the election proceedings when they were both wearing name tags. Lee said it was a happy realization when it hit them both. They were companions and friends by phone but finally were able to “put a face with a name.” “It was such fun to make the real connection,” she said.



A few months later, I had the pleasure of visiting with the person who Lee had called. And she told me the same story, from her point of view. She was full of gratitude and excited to tell me the story of how much their in-person connection had meant, at long last. Because those phone calls had meant a great deal to her during a lonely and harrowing time.

As we enter a New Year, I hope we’ll all remember how important the simple acts of connecting with one another can be. It will be a long Winter. Friendships and fellowship will help carry us toward the brighter days of Spring! Carleen



Grief Group

This monthly support group is for those who have lost a loved one and those struggling with other losses. Next meeting: Wednesday, January 22nd 5:00-6:00 pm in Hoag Parlor.

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

For Parents, Caregivers and Family Members of Trans Youth/Young Adults: Our newly forming 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, January 15th at 5:30 in the Hoag Parlor. For more information: fccol@fccol.org.

Writers at the Well

Friday, January 10th, 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.

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.

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.



BLOOD DRIVE

There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive at the First Congregation Church of Old Lyme on Thursday, January 2nd 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 Crosby Fund for Haitian Education

The Crosby Fund for Haitian Education would like to wish you all the very happiest of New Years and to start the year off with some happy news. Last month, Nerlande Sidort graduated from Jeanne Mance Nursing School in Port-au-Prince, and shortly after, this letter of thanks arrived. We were deeply moved to hear her story of gratitude and perseverance. We hope you will be too.

"A big thank you to the entire Crosby staff, especially Mrs Rebecca and her family for organizing this program. Without you all, I would not have had the chance to become a nurse. I wouldn't have become who I am today. You have truly helped me throughout my journey, especially in Port-au-Prince where I spent five years studying without any family support. My mother and father passed away, leaving me with no family to support my education. For four years, I wouldn't go to school, but I found help along the way, and I took full advantage of it today, I am a nurse, and I don't have enough words to express my gratitude to the Crosby Staff. I love you all dearly. You have done so much for me. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't have made it through. You gave me food, and you provided me with clothes. Thank you so much. Mr Vaudy, (note: Vaudy is The Crosby Fund's Director in Haiti) for always respecting me and never looking down on me. You are a great director, and you treated me like your own child. Whenever I asked for money to buy books, you answered me with great wisdom. I spent five years studying in Port -au- Prince with no family to help me. All my help came from Crosby -sometimes, I felt like I was dying with worry because I had no family to call, no one to ask for help. Sometimes, I was embarrassed to ask Mr Vaudy for money, even for basic things like water or food, because I had no money even to buy them. But I knew Crosby was always there for me. Thank you so much, Crosby staff, for everything you did for me during my time in the program. I lost all hope for school after my mother and father died, and I faced many struggles. But with God and Crosby, I became a nurse. Thank you, Mrs Rebecca, I always pray to God for your health strength, and courage so you can continue with the program."



I am Sidort Nerlande.

Thank You

The New London Meal Center

During the last thirty plus years our Mission Board has supported The New London Meal Center on the fourth Sunday of every month, serving a healthy meal at the Center which includes sending meals to the Homeless Hospitality Center. Various church committees, and other groups, such as the Senior Choir, and Senior PF are assigned a month to provide a meal and servers. The Meal Center operates Monday through Friday with a small staff and many volunteers to serve lunch and dinner to many hungry clients who might not otherwise consume warm, healthy meals.

Once a month a dinner meal is served on Saturday, but otherwise some of the clients haven't eaten a decent meal since their last one on a Friday evening at The Center. **We are always in need of people who are willing to help out*** Each month we meet at the church at 3:30 to pick up prepared food and donated drinks plus food, and then carpool in to the Center. We serve promptly from 5:00-6:00. On occasion we have served as many as 170 meals to very hungry and appreciative clients. It remains a very important mission supported by our church.

If you have questions and are interested in helping out any month, you may contact either Charlie Hosley at hosleycs@aol.com or Julie Kuja at julie.kuja@yahoo.com. ***Either by cooking or shopping for items ahead of time or helping when we serve at the site.**

ACLU Civil Rights Town Hall in Old Lyme

On Thursday, January 9, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Connecticut will hold a town hall at the First Congregation Church of Old Lyme (FCCOL) entitled "Civil Rights Town Hall: Implications of a Second Trump Administration."

Legal, policy and communications experts from the ACLU of CT will outline how the organization plans to use every tool at its disposal – litigation, advocacy and grassroots organizing – to protect civil rights and discuss the critical role Connecticut residents can play.

The experts will also take questions from the audience and facilitate a robust conversation on protecting the civil liberties most likely to be targeted by the incoming administration, including:

Free speech and the right to assemble, Immigrants' rights, Reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, LGBTQIA+ rights, Voting rights, Criminal legal system, Government surveillance

The individuals expected to be on hand from the ACLU include:

Jaelyn Blickley, Staff Attorney (panelist/speaker)
Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel (panelist/speaker)
Bethany Rae Perryman, Director of Communications (panelist/speaker)
Logan Marshall, Director of Philanthropy (moderator)

The evening will be hosted by Greg Melville, Susan Fox and Ned Farman.

To attend the town hall, please RSVP here.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aclu-of-connecticut-civil-rights-town-hall-old-lyme-tickets->

Old Lyme Meeting

Several of our members have been active in a plan to make some changes in the layout of the Halls Road business area. There is an important hearing that is critical to the progress of this work which will be held on Monday, January 13th at 6:30 in the Old Lyme Town Hall. This is perhaps mostly pertinent to residents of Old Lyme, though the shopping district is an important part of our region. The meeting is public.

Adult Bible Study: "Goodness, Greed and Grace: Journeys through Genesis and 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. Join us for rich discussion and wanderings as we pick up our reading of Genesis with Joseph, his brothers and that famous technicolor coat. Our companion book we will continue with *Reading Genesis* by Marilynne Robinson. .

Adult Forum Sunday January 12th: How to Move the Needle Toward Justice in Hartford

Christine Palm served six years as a CT state representative. While there, she was responsible for initiating and leading to passage many bills that mirror the social justice agenda of our church community. She is passionate about protecting the environment, supporting women's rights, gun safety, education, civil rights, etc. On January 12th she will lead us through an exciting power point program she developed to help citizens like us be more effective in Hartford. Christine will ever be remembered for tagging the omnibus climate bill #5004 "the Green Monster." Fans of Fenway Park know that monster. Through her leadership it was raised and passed by the house. With our help this year it could get raised again and come through both chambers. Come and learn how your voice in Hartford can influence the quality of life we aspire to in Connecticut.

A Stewardship Moment

I grew up in Colorado, but my father's family was from Old Saybrook. My father treasured our family history, and spoke with special affection and respect for his grandfather—my great-grandfather—Edward Mortimer Chapman, who served as the minister of this church more than a century ago. My father also spoke with a sort of reverence about the church itself, and its beauty and presence on the Green. My parents even had a copy of the Childe Hassam painting of the church hanging in their front hall.

Only later, as an adult, did I learn that part of the reason for my father's reverence was that, on July 3, 1907—about a week after Great-Grandfather moved his family into the Parsonage—the church burned to the ground. The congregation almost immediately decided to rebuild the church on the same site, as faithful to the previous structure as possible. Then they set out to make that happen.

There are many accounts of those efforts, but one of my favorites comes from Great-Grandfather's diaries. July 3 was a Wednesday. By the next day, the congregation had secured the use of Town Hall for worship services. That Sunday morning, they met to worship, and they came back together again at 4 o'clock for what he described as a "beautiful and impressive service on the green." One can imagine the emotions of those gathered. Within a week, he met with "persons to whom appeals could be made" (all women whom he named and whose names are still recognized in Old Lyme). Someone had the idea to use the church's bell, which had fallen and had to be replaced, to create miniature bells to sell in order to raise funds. You can see one of those bells in the display case outside Fellowship Hall. He even enlisted my then 14-year-old grandfather to stamp the new hymnals. It was in every sense a community effort. And the result—their gift to us—is this spectacular Meetinghouse where anyone is welcome to walk through the door, to come, as Steve has said, for a little Grace.

So after my husband and I moved to Old Saybrook in 2020, and after the worst of the pandemic had subsided, I came here, because of family. And I stayed here because of family, and what this church does still to this day to serve the community. Let's continue the tradition begun so long ago of supporting this church and its mission for future generations.

Lucia Chapman

2024/2025 Financial Update

We are projecting at this point that the church's operating results for 2024 will close with our income and expenses balanced. This past year fully three-quarters, or 75% of our income came from individual pledges and offerings for which we are profoundly grateful. And our contributors continue to increase their generosity. The average pledge for the 2024 stewardship campaign was \$2,076, and so far for the 2025 campaign that has increased to \$2,450. This generosity is not only heartwarming, but very important!

However, our TOTAL revenue for this year was substantially augmented by a \$50,000 contribution from the church's Endowment Fund. This source of additional revenue is not repeatable and will not be available in 2025. Therefore, we are currently projecting a substantial operating deficit for next year. Currently your Boards of Trustees and Stewardship and the Treasurer are working hard to find ways to close this gap.

As a result we are asking all of our members and friends to help with additional contributions before year-end, or increased pledges for 2025. We need everyone who is able, to "step up", so we can continue the vital missions and ministries of our church.

Thank you everyone for supporting our church!

Bob McCracken, Treasurer

JANUARY 2025 CALENDAR

FCCOL Office Closed *Wednesday, January 1st.*

ARC Blood Drive *Thursday, January 2nd from 1:00 pm -6:00pm, in the Fellowship Hall.*

Food Pantry and Diaper Bank *Saturday, January 4th at 8:30 am in Fellowship Hall.*

Three Kings Worship Service and Fellowship Festivities *Sunday January 5th at 10:00 am.*

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, January 6th at 10:00am in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Children's Handbell Choir *Wednesday, January 8th at 4:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 8th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 8th at 7:30 pm in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

ACLU Town Hall Meeting *Thursday, January 9th at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

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

Annual Report Deadline *Friday, January 10th.*

Food Pantry *Saturday, January 11th at 8:30 am in Fellowship Hall.*

Judy Simmons Memorial Service *Saturday, January 11th at 2:00 pm in the Meetinghouse.*

Adult Forum with Christine Palm *Sunday, January 12th at 11:15 am in the Sheffield Aud.*

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, January 13th at 10:00am in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Board of Trustees Meeting *Tuesday, January 14th at 7:00 pm in the Library.*

Parent and Families Trans Youth Care Group *Wed, Jan. 15th at 5:30 pm in Hoag Parlor.*

Children's Handbell Choir *Wednesday, January 15th at 4:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 15th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 15th at 7:30 pm in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Bible Study *Thursday, January 16th at 11:00 am in the Hoag Parlor.*

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thursday, January 16th
at 12:00 pm in the Hoag Parlor.*

Board of Stewardship Meeting *Thursday, January 16th at 4:00 pm in the Library.*

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE *Friday, January 17th.*

Food Pantry *Saturday, January 18th at 8:30 am in Fellowship Hall.*

FCCOL Moth Planning Group *Sunday, January 19th at 11:30 am in the Hoag Parlor.*

FCCOL Special Event for MLK Day stay tuned, more details to follow.

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, January 20th at 10:00am in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Grief Group Meeting *Wednesday, January 22nd at 5:00 pm in the Hoag Parlor.*

Children's Handbell Choir *Wednesday, January 22nd at 4:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 22nd at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:30 pm in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Bible Study *Thursday, January 23rd at 11:00 am in the Hoag Parlor.*

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thursday, January 23rd at 12:00 pm
in the Hoag Parlor.*

Writers at the Well *Friday, January 24th at 10:00 am in the Hoag Parlor.*

Annual Church Meeting *Sunday, January 26th at 10:00 am in the Meetinghouse.*

New London Meal Center *Sunday, January 26th meeting at 3:30 pm at FCCOL.*

Ladies Who Stitch *Monday, January 27th at 10:00am in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Board of Deacons Meeting *Tuesday, January 28th at 7:00 pm in the Library.*

Children's Handbell Choir *Wednesday, January 29th at 4:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Handbell Ringers Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 29th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.*

Senior Choir Rehearsal *Wednesday, January 29th at 7:30 pm in the Sheffield Auditorium.*

Bible Study *Thursday, January 30th at 11:00 am in the Hoag Parlor.*

Reading the South African Kairos Document *Thursday, January 30th at 12:00 pm
in the Hoag Parlor.*

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME

ANNUAL MEETING

On Sunday, January 26, at 11:15 am, the church will hold its annual congregational meeting, during which, among other things, we will elect officers and board members, and approve the church budget for the coming year.

The "2024 Annual Report" available later in the month contains the agenda for the meeting and other informative materials. All Board and Committee chairs, please submit your annual reports by the deadline of January 10.

The purpose of the annual meeting is to:

- receive the reports of the ministers, boards, committees, and church officers for the year 2024;
- receive and approve the report of the nominating committee;
- elect officers and board members for the coming year;
- approve the church budget for the year 2025; and
- conduct such other old or new business as shall properly come before the meeting.

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.

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The submission deadline for the February Newsletter is Friday, January 17th.

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.