

# NOVEMBER 2025



Dear Friends,

On a recent Saturday evening, I was invited to a banquet hosted by the Council of American Islamic Relations - Connecticut (CAIR-CT), an invitation I was glad to accept. It was a joyful occasion, where many of our Muslim friends from the Tree of Life had gathered. Though it wasn't the only topic of the night, Palestine was at the forefront of everyone's mind. Most everyone in the room had friends, and many had close family relations, who were caught in the horror of the Israeli/US campaign in Gaza or the West Bank. Late in the evening, the organizers recognized our work at FCCOL on behalf of Palestine, and our ongoing partnership with the Muslim community here in Connecticut. They recognized David Good for his foresight and for his courage. And they urged us to keep going in this time of eroding civil liberties.

I was humbled by their recognition, and deeply grateful for the relationships we have forged over the years. More than that, I was grateful to be a part of a congregation that understands the importance of this work, moving to the boundaries of our own faith tradition in order to seek understanding with others. It's a unique position among churches, and it is a privilege to share in such a project with all of you at FCCOL.

With that image of the boundary (an image borrowed from Paul Tillich, by which he meant the places where differences between various groups or traditions somehow blend and merge), I wish to share with you two important undertakings. First, a small delegation of travelers will be returning to Palestine this coming January and February, to visit our friends in the West Bank. We have not been able to travel to Palestine since early 2023, prior to Oct. 7 and its aftermath. And it is time to return. We need to visit our friends in the region, to let them know that they have not been forgotten, and to strengthen our own resolve to continue working for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Second, in August of 2026, FCCOL will journey to the city of Salvador in Brazil, one of the great centers of African descended cultures in the western hemisphere. During the transatlantic slave trade, Brazil received the greatest amount of people kidnapped from Africa (followed by Cuba and Colombia), and the people of Salvador have kept that heritage alive in ceremonies, music, food, architecture, and other important ways. While we're there, we'll have the opportunity to witness one of the most important celebrations in all of Bahia (the region in which Salvador is located): The Feast of Our Lady of the Good Death. A blending of Catholic and African spiritualities, it is organized

(continued on page 6)



# HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL

## FCCOL Choir

Thank you for all your wonderful singing in October. Here is what November's rehearsal and service schedule is looking like:

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**Wednesday, November 5:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

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

**Wednesday, November 12:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

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

**Wednesday, November 19:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm

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

**Wednesday, November 26: No Rehearsal Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Sunday, November 30:** Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am

Many thanks and best wishes to all.  
Simon

## Handbell Notes

By the time you read this the month of November will just about be here or it will have just arrived. The **Old Lyme Ringers** have recently started their weekly rehearsals, and already they will be heard in worship. First, on November 2nd, they will have a unique part in the All Saints portion of the worship service, as we remember those who have passed away in the previous twelve months. Second, on November 23rd, in preparation for the Thanksgiving holiday the **Old Lyme Ringers** will ring a stirring arrangement of the hymn "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come." Simon Holt will also be playing the organ as part of this great piece.

Parents, please start preparing your children now for the beginning rehearsal of **ReBELLion**, our children and youth handbell choir. This group is for those in grades 3 through 10. The first rehearsal will take place in the first full week of January, either on Wednesday, January 7 or on Thursday, January 8; the rehearsal day of the week is still to be determined. Last season, our kids had great success

playing on two separate occasions. This group can handle no more than 14 ringers, so Gary must know who will be ringing prior to the first rehearsal. Parents, please call the church office (860-434-8686) and give Anne your child's name and contact number, and Gary will respond as quickly as possible. We look forward to another year of outstanding ringing and learning from our young people!

## Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

It is difficult to believe how quickly September and October have passed. Thanks to great support, more than 60 pairs of jeans were sold during the September Women's Jean Sale, adding \$330.00 to next year's WES totals. The remaining jeans have been sorted and were donated to the Midnight Run, the New London Homeless Hospitality Center (NLHHC), the Malta Charity, and the Jonnycake Center of Westerly, and we saved a few jeans for sewing projects and future sales. We also facilitated the distribution of the overage from the Midnight Run's clothing collection to the same charities.



One of LWS's favorite charity projects continues to be making the large tote bags for the NLHHC. As of mid-October, we have made 513 of them since 2017. These colorful and sturdy bags are a team effort and are made mostly from donated fabric. In addition, this past month we finished a lovely, warm queen-sized wool patchwork quilt for the center. These donations help fill a significant need and are greatly appreciated.



We donated several items to the Old Lyme Historical Society for their fund-raising auction. Included were napkin sets, potholders, and a lovely lined tote bag. Many of our creations will again be displayed at the final TBS luncheon on November 11th, and all of our holiday and cold weather items will be available during the Elephants in Winter (EIW) event on November 15 and 16.

We appreciate The Benevolent Society's recent purchase of additional rolling shelves which has greatly increased our fabric storage capacity. We also appreciate Sean McCarty assembling these units, and his ever-present help with weekly set-up and numerous requested tasks.

Ladies Who Stitch meet regularly on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Sheffield Auditorium. Newcomers, visitors, and shoppers are always welcome. We also open the *Partnership Store* while we work, offering guilt-free shopping for goods from Haiti, Palestine, Tribal Crafts and LWS.

If you have questions, or you wish to receive the weekly LWS email updates, notify the church office, or contact Eunice via email [eunicetaylor@me.com](mailto:eunicetaylor@me.com).

## God's Neighborhood

"Will You Ever?"

You've allowed me to experience Something very hard to find, Unconditional love that exists In my body, soul, and mind.

by Kaitlyn M. Yawn.

**In God's Neighborhood** this month, we'll remember and experience different ways that we can grow in gratitude for the gifts we've been given. We'll share stories and traditions of table gatherings from around the world and also participate in a Thanksgiving service at 10 am on November 23rd. We'll also read a gospel story known as the Parable of the Great Dinner (Luke 14:7-24), a timely story for our Thanksgiving planning and feasting. As Mr. Fred Rogers said, "...appreciation is a holy thing--that when we look for what's best in a person we happen to be with at the moment, we're doing what God does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbor, we're participating in something sacred." On November 30th, our meetinghouse will be all decorated for the First Sunday of Advent and families will light our Advent Wreath. Rehearsals for the Christmas Pageant (held on December 21st at 10 am) will begin, too!

Here are additional events for our calendars: We are planning what's called 'Dinner-Church' for our Youth Group. And we are introducing a 'Parent's Night In' since parents need a night too! We are calling it, "It takes a Village." Both events are on the calendar!

In the spirit of getting together, if anyone is interested in having a nursery playdate at a park or at your house, reach out to me and we can put that together! It's always nice to find other parents traversing the same path, so we can feel like we are all in this together!

**Saturday, November 1st 8-10 am:** Cup-of-Joe Pop-Up at the SSKP Food Pantry. We are inviting our youth group to serve coffee and breakfast treats to guests of the FCCOL food pantry on the first Saturday of every month. You never know what you might learn from someone until you're in conversation with them. Email Laura at [lfitz.nager@gmail.com](mailto:lfitz.nager@gmail.com).

**Sunday, November 2nd 2-4PM:** Major Edward Good Veteran's Home Lawn Cleanup in New London. 19 Steward St. **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS!!** Parents and Youth are all invited! Please call me (Jolene) to commit to helping at 860-460-9511.

**Friday, November 7th 7-9PM: For Parents:** Join us for "It takes a Village Night In"! It sure does take a village to raise a family. Come on over to 67 Whippoorwill Rd, Old Lyme, with your favorite snack and beverage, share it with friends and meet some new friends too! Playing a board game may be happening.

**Sunday, November 16th during Sunday School:** Our Youth Group class and teachers will be making chili, cornbread, and brownies to freeze for the next week serving at DINE in New London for people in need. If you are a parent and would like to help in the kitchen, let Jolene know! We'd love to have you!

**Sunday night, November 16th 4-6PM:** "Dinner-Church" for our Middle and High School Youth Group and families. We will make and enjoy dinner together, share in communion and enjoy serving one another. Come take part in making dinner together, serving dinner family style together, and cleaning up after dinner together! Lasagna, salad, garlic bread, and desert are on the menu!

**Sunday, November 23rd 4-6:30PM:** Serve at New London Meal Center DINE. We are looking for high schoolers and family volunteers to take the food down to New London that we've prepared the previous week during Sunday School. Meet at FCCOL by 3:30 for departure to New London. We set up and serve from 4-6 pm.

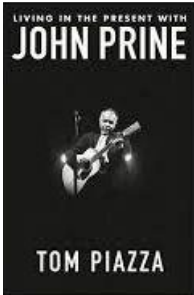
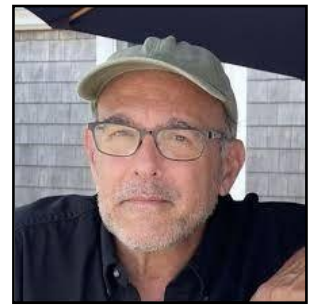
**Sunday, Nov. 30th: First Sunday of Advent 10 am** The Christmas garlands are up and our Advent Wreath lighting will begin at each service. Calling all angels, sheep, stars and leading characters as we begin rehearsals for our upcoming Christmas Pageant!

We look forward to seeing you at one event or another throughout this month! Have a happy and healthy Thanksgiving and we look forward to seeing you after the holiday. If you ever need anything at all, please reach out as we are always here to help!

**Happy Thanksgiving to all of our students, teachers, helpers, mentors and families!**

## Adult Forum Sunday, November 9th with Tom Piazza

Returning on Sunday, November 9, author and musician Tom Piazza will join us at FCCOL to talk about his latest book, *Living in the Present with John Prine*, a loving testimony to both friendship and loss. John Prine remains one of America's greatest singer-songwriters, and his body of work is for the ages. In 2018, Tom profiled John Prine for the *Oxford American*, beginning an intimate friendship that was cut tragically short by Prine's death in 2020 from Covid-19. Prior to his death, Prine had asked Tom to work with him on a memoir. While far different from what either of them might have wished, this is the book that resulted.



What, you may ask, does this have to do with the life of faith? Plenty. It is a book about friendship. It is a book about the ties that bind us to one another. It is a portrait of a man whose art, whose songs, were about seeing the human beings that surround us, whose art awakened a curiosity, and empathy, in his listeners. It is a book about what it is to connect deeply with another human being, and what it means to say goodbye. And it is a celebration of the power of music and poetry to speak into the depths of the human story.

Tom will speak from the pulpit, but he'll also join us for an adult forum at 11:30 am, when we'll talk about friendship and the legend of John Prine.

## The Benevolent Society November Luncheon November 11th

Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> will be the Benevolent Society's final luncheon of 2025, and it is our "Let's get into the holiday spirit" celebration! Chef Rick will be serving an Autumn inspired meal of smothered pork chops with a side of apple dressing and a seasonal vegetable. A buffet of cakes, puddings, sweets and possibly a pie or two will be the "icing on the top" of this delicious menu.

Following the luncheon and while you are enjoying your sweet desserts, all are welcome to sit back and enjoy some musical selections presented by the Old Lyme High School Select Chorus. This talented group of vocalists, led by Kristine Pekar, have entertained us at our end-of-year holiday luncheon for many years and they always delight us with a professional and enjoyable performance.

We sit down to start our lunch at 12 noon, so arrive a little early to get your seat and make yourself comfortable. The musical program will begin at about 1pm. Suggested donation for the luncheon is \$5 plus an item for our food or diaper bank. Please call the church office by Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup> to make a reservation so we can plan on the proper number of place settings.



## New Members Orientation Sunday, November 16th & New Members Sunday, Nov. 23rd

On Sunday, November 16th, after the 10:00 am service FCCOL will be having a small gathering for those who are interested in exploring membership a little bit further. It's not a requirement in order to join. This is simply a way for all of us to get to know one another a little better and to learn more about FCCOL's history and community. Our new members will be welcomed during our Worship Service on Sunday, November 23rd.

As for the word "membership," I know there are those who get hung up on the word and who feel resistance to the very notion of membership. That's because in many parts of our lives it suggests something transactional, dues and obligations owed in exchange for some kind of (exclusive) right of access. That's not how it is for us. It's simply a way to be more deeply in communion with one another, to build relationships, and to explore our faith journeys together. Let Steve, Laura or Carleen know if you would like to explore membership further. Alternatively, you can just show up at one of the meetings and we will be glad to see you.

Call FCCOL at 860-434-8686 or email [fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org) for more information. Feel free to share this post with your friends and families.

## FCCOL Moth Stories and Potluck Dinner

We still are looking for a couple of storytellers for our Moth storytelling night scheduled for **November 7th** (note that the date has been corrected from the 3rd to the 7th). Everyone has a fun story or two... please share! If you think you can cobble together a 5-minute story, we would love to hear from you (youth group members this also means you). Contact Tom Sherer. ([tesjr299@outlook.com](mailto:tesjr299@outlook.com)) and we can discuss. Bring a dish to share!

## Homeless Hospitality Concert and Wine

Community Benefit Concert with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and a wine reception in support of the New London Homeless Hospitality Center at FCCOL on **November 30th from 4:00—6:00pm**. Tickets are \$50. Join us to celebrate music, community and compassion in helping HHC continue its important work in helping our neighbors get a home. Tickets can be purchased at: [givebutter.com/whiffs](http://givebutter.com/whiffs).

## ARC Blood Drive



There will be an American Red Cross Blood Drive at the First Congregation Church of Old Lyme on **Thursday, November 6th** from 1:00 pm -6:00 pm.

## Donations IRIS

With the onset of fall and chillier temperatures, we have heard from recent discussions with IRIS (the Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services in New Haven) that there is a special need for gently used blankets, twin size bedding, towels, hats, gloves and socks. If anyone might have something they would like to clear out of their closets, please feel free to leave your greatly appreciated donations on the Sheffield stage over the next few weeks. We are planning a 'run' to IRIS in the first week of November. Warm thanks!!

## Bible Study:

**The Book of Exodus: Stories of Exile and the Search for Freedom.** Every Thursday from 11:00 - 12:00pm in the Library. Call the church to have the link to the zoom meeting emailed to you.

## TransParent Group:

Meets monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of every month 5:30-6:30. Next meeting is on **November 19th**. For Parents, Caregivers and Family Members of Trans Youth/Young Adults: Our group provides conversation, support community and education for parents and caregivers around the issues of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diversity. For more information email us at: [fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org).

## Writing at the Well:

Join us on Friday, November 14th at 10:00 am in the Hoag Parlor as we meet 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. Copies of our last Poetry book available in the Narthex or the Church office.



## SAVE THE DATE! For The Next Science Presentation & Discussion Potluck Supper

**Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm**. This is second in a series that began with a presentation on Artificial Intelligence by Tom Sherer. This time the presentation will be "What Do We Know About the Cosmos, and When Did We Know It" led by Bob McCracken. Bring a dish to share and enjoy a lively presentation and discussion.

(Dear Friends, continued from the cover)

by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Good Death, a society of women that dates back to the 19th century, when enslaved women created a community of solidarity and mutual aid, becoming one of the earliest examples of feminism in Brazil. The festival is three days long, and consists of processions, feasts, a mass, dance, African ritual elements, and of course, lots and lots of music. It is an opportunity to immerse ourselves in a sacred world that few North Americans, and still fewer churches, have been able (or willing) to explore. For us, it is the latest iteration of a multi-year pilgrimage project exploring the history, culture, and religions of the Black Atlantic world, whether in West Africa, Cuba, Haiti, New Orleans, or now, Brazil.

It was Marilyn Nelson who first spoke about the Sisters to me, and who suggested that a visit would make an excellent journey for FCCOL. Marilyn has written a book of poems about her own pilgrimage to Salvador, and to the Feast of Our Lady of the Good Death, in a book called *The Cachoeira Tales and Other Poems*. I highly recommend it. Our friend Ned Sublette has the connections and wherewithal to help make this journey a reality. Let me know if you're interested. This is a journey that is utterly unique and unforgettable.

Two more things: on the first Sunday of November (the 2nd), we'll have a visit from Ramzi Aburedwan and Michael Dabroski. Ramzi grew up in Palestine, and leads an ensemble of musicians dedicated to showcasing the music traditions of Palestine and the wider Levantine world. Michael is a renowned violinist, and has composed a suite of songs dedicated to David Good. Ramzi and Michael will perform together in our worship service on November 3rd. At 5:30 that evening, we'll gather for a meal of Middle Eastern cuisine, followed by a concert with Ramzi's entire ensemble at 7:00. I hope you'll be a part of those events.

And then, the following Sunday, on November 9, our friend Tom Piazza will join us once again to speak about his latest book, *Living in the Present with John Prine*. It's a book about Prine's life and his music, of course, but it's really a book about the art of friendship. Prine's lyrics were always filled with keen observations that illuminate, often with a gentle and compassionate humor, how to have soul in what is often a soulless world. More than a few people have found traces of religion in Prine's work (in the best sense of that term). I promise that it will be a great morning at FCCOL.

We are, as ever, people on a journey. We are ever in conversation with other traditions, other cultures, other individuals, as we seek to build lives of responsibility, empathy, and justice. And I'm grateful to be on this pilgrimage with all of you!

Stay human,

**Reading:** *Living in the Present with John Prine*, by Tom Piazza; *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf; *The Story of the New Name*; *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*; *The Story of the Lost Child*, all by Elena Ferrante; *The Melancholy of Resistance*; by Laszlo Krasznahorkai; *We Do Not Part*, by Han Kang; *Pedro Paramo*, by Juan Rulfo; *The Argonautica*, by Apollonius of Rhodes; *Solito*, by Javier Zamora; *El Viento Conoce mi Nombre*, by Isabel Allende; *Anniversaries*, by Uwe Johnson (selections); *Finnegans Wake*, by James Joyce (selections); *Capital, Vol. 1*, by Karl Marx (selections).

**Listening:** *The Mookse and the Gripes* (podcast); *To Be Kind, Swans*; *Voodoo*, *D'Angelo*; *Bish Bosch*, Scott Walker, *Life of a Showgirl*, Taylor Swift.

**Watching:** *My Brilliant Friend* (HBO/Max); *Cien Años de Soledad* (Netflix); *The Lowdown* (Hulu); *One Battle After Another* (in theaters).



## Convergence Update

The FCCOL task force has been working closely with the consulting firm Convergence since October of last year to map out a plan that ensures a solid future ahead for our church.

As we enter the second year of this partnership, the task force would like to present a report to the congregation on the progress that was made in Year 1.

The report will summarize the findings from the research conducted during the past 12 months and outline the five areas that the church will focus on moving forward.

These focus areas include developing:

- A continuous, year-round approach to stewardship;
- A plan that ensures the church will have sustainable, long-term funding;
- A new approach to attracting and integrating new members;
- Strategies and programs to improve how FCCOL communicates with the congregation and the community;
- Long-term staffing plans that will ensure the successful continuation of our ministries, operations and programs.

The report will be presented to the congregation in the near future by Rev. Gregg Carlson, the task force and our ministers. We hope you will join us for an enlightening discussion about what's next for FCCOL.

## GIVING MATTERS

When we receive our invitation from FCCOL to make a pledge we are challenged to make a decision. Should I pledge or not? If we pledge how much? There are many possible answers to these personal questions.

To me, pledging, like much of life, is about love, not money. Pledging is an act of compassion because of the work it enables FCCOL to do. Of course, money is the means but it is not the end. FCCOL's activities which our pledges enable, provide compassionate support in countless ways to those in need. They also offer us opportunities to find and articulate a purpose.

FCCOL is a VERY active church. Our Church lives its faith through action, not historical ritual or creed. Our Church offers many opportunities to help others, to make others happy, to make our world a little

more compassionate, a little more just. So, as the research suggests, we should take advantage of the many opportunities FCCOL offers to participate with one another. We will likely achieve higher levels of satisfaction. How? By giving our lives a meaningful purpose.

As we make our pledge decisions, we need to realize that our pledges make this wonderful outcome possible.

Please know that participation by all of us is the strength of an active church. All commitments of support are welcome and needed, regardless of the amount.

Jim Matschulat, Chair, Board of Stewardship

## New London Hospitality Center

As the region's largest shelter and housing counseling provider, the **New London Hospitality Center** serves adults from across southeastern Connecticut. The main facility includes a 36-bed shelter as well as a respite area for individuals facing health crises like pneumonia, post-op recovery, or cancer.

**The Center** provides shelter and essential support that help adults experiencing homelessness transition to permanent housing. So much more than simply a shelter. The **Center** collaborates with public and private programs to address the root causes of homelessness, offering support such as obtaining identification documents, access to addiction treatment, and job interview preparation. Guests also receive individualized assistance in securing affordable housing.

Beyond emergency shelter, the *Housing Resource Center* has helped hundreds at risk of losing their housing. This initiative has recently provided eviction prevention and relocation assistance for more than 1,000 individuals in the last year alone. The *Street Outreach* program actively seeks out and assists unsheltered individuals living in cars, on the streets, or in tents.

The proposed Federal budget will decrease Homelessness Funding by more than \$500 million dollars in 2026. It is very clear that, in this environment, we will need to rely more heavily on the generous support of friends and neighbors to continue providing critical assistance to those most vulnerable in our community.

Ross W. Higgins



**Ramzi  
Aburedwan**  
and his  
**Dal'Ouna Ensemble**

**RSVP SOON!  
SEATING IS LIMITED  
CALL 860-434-8686**

***Tree of Life Educational Fund & FCCOL presents***

***A concert in celebration of Tree of Life's late founder,  
The Reverend David W. Good***

**Ramzi Aburedwan & The Dal'Ouna Ensemble in Concert  
with guest violinist Michael Dabroski**

*A discovery of the Levantine musical universe between creation and tradition*

**~ Michael Dabroski will premiere his "Violin Suite No. 5 ~  
"A Prayer for David" as a tribute to Tree of Life's  
late founder Rev. David W. Good**

**Sunday, November 2, 2025 at FCCOL  
5:30 pm Palestinian Dinner  
7:00 pm Concert**

**Suggested donation for the dinner and concert \$30  
(reservations are required for dinner call 860-434-8686 to rsvp)**

*To attend the concert only the suggested donation is \$10, no rsvp needed  
Donations will be collected at the event*

**To help volunteer for this event, please contact Becky Crosby  
at 860-575-5687 or [rtcros@ftcrosby.com](mailto:rtcros@ftcrosby.com)**

**First Congregational Church of Old Lyme  
Corner of Lyme Street & Ferry Road in Old Lyme**

## ELEPHANTS-IN-WINTER & PARTNERSHIP HOLIDAY SALE

By the time this November newsletter arrives in your mailbox or appears on your computer, Halloween costumes will be packed away, days will be considerably cooler, and it will be dark by dinnertime. All is not sad and dreary however, as the holiday season is soon to be upon us with all of its music, family and friend get-togethers, celebrations and festivities.

The Benevolent Society and the Partnership Committee are excited to jump start your holiday experience with their annual Elephants-in-Winter and Holiday Sale. As in the past few years, there will be two unique and different sales held at FCCOL that will help all shoppers, young and old, get everything they could possibly need for the 2025 holiday season. Seriously.....gifts and decorations, dinnerware and olive oils, mittens and wrapping paper. Two very different types of sales, held in multiple rooms, over the same two days. **Both sales will be held on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup> (9am-2pm) and Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup> (9am-1pm).**

The Benevolent Society will be hosting the always popular Elephants-in-Winter sale. All the holiday items collected during the intake days for the White Elephant Sale this past July will be arranged throughout the Fellowship Room and sold at bargain basement prices. If you've come to this sale before, you know from experience the vast assortment of delightful treasures that await. If this will be your first time attending, you will find Christmas decorations, greens and wreaths, holiday china and glassware, linens and sweaters and stockings, toys, books, CD's and DVD's, paper goods, lights, candles, and ornaments.

The Partnership Committees of FCCOL will be hosting their fifth annual Holiday Sale with the Ladies Who Stitch and The Tree of Life organization set up in Sheffield Auditorium, and the other partnerships selling their goods in the Partnership Store and the library. Here is your chance to get beautiful, thoughtful and unusual gifts for everyone on your holiday list. There will be Haitian arts and crafts, imported olive oil and soaps, Lakota jewelry and crafts, and (of course) one-of-a-kind handmade items from "The Ladies Who Stitch." Everything for sale is wonderfully unique, and the support provided to the partnerships helps so many.

All profits from both sales go to support local, national and world-wide charities.



### DINE: New London Community Meal Center

Dine, also known as the New London Community Meal Center, was founded in 1985 by Laurie Bellinger in association with the Mount Olive Seventh Day Adventist Church of New London. In 2000, the operation was turned over to the community, and it has continuously served meals to the present day.

The vision of DINE is as follows:

"To make a systemic impact by feeding the hungry today, and working to help build a healthy and equitable food system and community for all. The NLCMC is committed to partnering with all sectors of the community to address the root cause of hunger and seek to restore dignity, health, opportunity, and hope to people experiencing food insecurity."

Given the increasing number of individuals facing food insecurity, along with significant decreases in federal funding, the continuing support of FCCOL is more important than ever.

Recently my granddaughter, Grace, and I joined several other church members to serve dinner to around 120 guests at DINE. I am always struck by the diversity of the guests that we meet. It is clear that their backgrounds are as different as any, but what unites them in that space is simply a need for a good, hearty meal and a safe place in which to enjoy it. They are consistently generous in expressing their gratitude and further, accepting second helpings with what can be described as almost an apology.

It didn't matter what circumstances brought them to DINE on that Sunday afternoon; it mattered that they were hungry and then they were fed.

For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.

-Matthew 25:35

I was very proud to share the experience with my Amazing Grace. She and her contemporaries are essential partners in this fight for the future.

Carol Keyes

## NOVEMBER 2025 CALENDAR

- The Shoreline Food Pantry and Diaper Bank** *Saturday, Nov. 1st at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.  
**Cup of Joe POP-UP Youth Group/ Food Pantry** *Saturday, November 1st at 8:30 am.*  
**Youth Group Trip to the Major Edward Good House for Homeless Veterans**  
*Sunday, November 2nd from 2:00– 4:00 pm, 19 Stewart Street in New London.*
- Tree of Life Concert and Palestinian Dinner** *Sunday, Nov. 2nd 5:30 pm dinner, 7:30 pm Concert.*  
**Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, November 3rd at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Walt's Pottery Class** *Tuesday, November 4th at 6:00 pm* in the Pottery Studio.  
**Board of Missions Meeting** *Wednesday, November 5th at 4:00 pm* in the Library.  
**Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 5th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 5th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Bible Study** *Thursday, November 6th at 11:00 am* in Library.  
**ARC Blood Drive** *Thursday, November 6th from 1:00pm–6:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**Moth Stories and Potluck Dinner** *Friday, November 7th at 6:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, November 8th at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.  
**Adult Forum with Tom Piazza** *Sunday, November 9th at 11:30 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, November 10th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**The Benevolent Society Luncheon** *Tuesday, November 11th at 12:00pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**Board of Trustees Meeting** *Tuesday, November 11th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.  
**Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 12th at 6:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 12th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**EIW Set-up** *Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Nov 12-14th.*  
**Writers at the Well** *Friday, November 14th at 10:00 am* in the Hoag parlor.  
**Bible Study** *Thursday, November 13th at 11:00 am* in the Library.  
**The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, November 15th at 8:30 am* is curbside.  
**Elephants-in-Winter Sale** *Saturday, Nov, 15th 9-2pm and Sunday Nov, 16th 9-1pm.*  
**New Members Orientation** *Sunday, November 16th at 11:30 am* in the Hoag parlor.  
**Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, November 17th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Transparent Group Meeting** *Wednesday, November 19th at 5:30 pm* in the Hoag parlor.  
**December Newsletter Deadline** *Wednesday, November 19th.*
- Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 19th at 6:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 19th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**Bible Study** *Thursday, November 20th at 11:00 am* in Library.  
**Board of Stewardship Meeting** *Thursday, November 20th at 4:00 pm* in the Library.  
**Science Potluck Dinner** *Friday, November 21st at 6:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, November 22nd at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**New Members Sunday** *November 23rd at the 10:00 am service.*  
**New London Meal Center Dinner** *Sunday, November 23rd departing FCCOL at 3:30 pm.*  
**Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, November 24th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**The Benevolent Society Meeting** *Tuesday, November 25th at 10:00 am* in the Library.  
**December Newsletter Folding** *Tuesday, November 25th.*  
**Board of Deacons Meeting** *Tuesday, November 25th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.  
**Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 26th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.  
**Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, November 26th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.  
**FCCOL Office Closed for Thanksgiving** *Thursday, November 27th.*  
**Hanging of the Greens** *Friday, November 28th at 10:00 am.*
- Homeless Hospitality Center "Whiffenpoofs Concert" and Reception** *Sunday, November 30th from 4:00 - 6:00 pm* in the Meetinghouse / Fellowship Hall.

## Board of Missions: Programs of Hope

Did you know that the York Correctional Institution, also known as the Niantic Women's Prison, is the only medium to maximum prison facility in CT exclusively housing women? That there are approximately 800 women currently held there? That their average age is in their 20s? That they do not live in cells but rather sleep in single beds in a large, open area without privacy? That they are given only 10 minutes to eat meals and cannot take food away with them?

As members of the Board of Missions, we are dedicated to visiting and assessing the needs of agencies given financial support by FCCOL. On a recent day, we met with Allison Fresher and Ann Derouaux, co-Executive Directors for A Sacred Place. Originated in 2003, this agency offers spiritual and practical support in an effort to provide hope and meaning to the incarcerated women. Partially funded by chaplains, A Sacred Place operates with a Board of Directors who give guidance to approximately 30 volunteers who regularly visit with the incarcerated women. Six individual programs are offered:

- ◇ The Barbara Mahon Fund enrolls women in undergraduate certificate programs by paying for tuition, books and supplies.
- ◇ Houses of Healing offers a course in emotional regularity and accountability.
- ◇ Storybook volunteers bring books to York and record the women as they read their selected book out loud. The book and recording are then sent to the children of the incarcerated women for them to listen to at home as bedtime stories.
- ◇ Healthcare Education informs women about health issues and strategies for self-care.
- ◇ My Caregiver and Me organizes activities and art projects for women and their children during monthly visitations.
- ◇ Sacred Sweeties provides women who give birth during incarceration with a gift of infant care clothes and essential items for their baby and foster family.

The Executive Directors expressed extreme gratitude to the members of FCCOL for our ongoing financial support for these essential services for CT incarcerated women. Our continuing contribution makes a difference in their lives and gives them hope.

by Dale Bernardoni and Mary Jo Shettle, Board of Missions

## THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME

### Staff

The Rev. Dr. Steven R. Jungkeit, Senior Minister (203-430-3208)

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

Robert McCracken, Church Administrator

Anne Koczka, Office Manager

Julie Mardjekaj, Bookkeeper

Sean McCarty, Sexton

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

Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.

South Lyme Union Chapel Worship - 10:00 a.m.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME, Member U.C.C.

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The submission deadline for the December Newsletter will be Wednesday, November 19th.

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