

APRIL 2026



Koinonia Farm, Georgia

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*Now, looking through the slanting light of the morning window  
toward the mountain presence of everything that can be  
What urgency calls you to love?  
What shape waits in the seed of you  
to grow and spread its branches  
against a future sky?*

-David Whyte

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter! The stone has been rolled away from the tomb and we celebrate the spacious hope found in resurrection stories from scripture and our own lives. In spite of the painful backdrop of the world's ongoing violence, the hope of new life is in the air. Thanks to all of you, our church community is a place of open doors, minds and hearts.

This month, our Youth Group is getting ready for their upcoming journey to walk in the footsteps of Civil Rights giants. We'll be traveling to Atlanta, Americus and Albany, Georgia from April 11th-16th. After visiting the King Center in Atlanta, we'll drive to Koinonia Farm, participate in the communal life there and visit other civil rights highlights. Fourteen of us (8 young people, ages 11-17, and 5 adults) have signed on.

Koinonia Farm is in Southwest Georgia, a place that has been an FCCOL partnership journey for many decades (the last trip there was in 2016). Koinonia (*Koinonia* is Greek for spiritual community) was established in the

*(continued on page 6)*

# HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FCCOL

## FCCOL Choir

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

**Wednesday, April 1:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

**Thursday, April 2, MAUNDY THURSDAY:** Singing throughout the day, beginning at 10:00am. Evening: Soup Supper & Communion with some music - your presence is requested! More precise details to follow.

**Sunday, April 5, EASTER DAY:** Singing at the 9:00 am & 11:00 am services, rehearsal at 8:15 am.

**Wednesday, April 8: NO REHEARSAL!**

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

**Wednesday, April 15:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

**Sunday, April 19:** Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am. Guest Organist: Violeta Chan-Scott.

**Wednesday, April 22:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

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

**Wednesday, April 29:** Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

Many thanks and best wishes to all.

Simon

## Old Lyme Ringers and ReBELLion

The **Old Lyme Ringers** have been working hard during the month of March preparing for Easter Sunday, April 5. They will be ringing *Canticle* by Arnold B. Sherman, which is the most difficult piece that they have encountered thus far. The music paints pictures of Jesus' resurrection--from the explosive rising from the dead to the women hurrying to tell the disciples of what they have seen and heard. The music uses changing time signatures to express both excitement and confusion. We hope the congregation will sense both the mystery and the wonder of the first resurrection morning through the music of the handbell choir.

After **ReBELLion's** playing on Palm Sunday, the children and youth are quickly learning a piece

entitled *A Joyful Ring*, which they will ring on April 26, the last day of their handbell season. The piece requires the kids to use a number of different techniques beyond just the traditional ring. It will be a challenge, but, as always, the young people will express the music beautifully with a lot of support and appreciation from the congregation.

## Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

We are still collecting holiday greeting cards which we use to make sets of gift tags. Cards can be given to one of us, or left in the marked container on the counter at the back of the Sheffield Auditorium. Also, the many **IRIS** donations have been delivered and we will continue to support this effort.

New this month are our decorative pillows which will be displayed on the antique benches in the hallway outside the Fellowship Hall whenever we open the

**Partnership Store**. Recent fabric donations have inspired these creations. Some of our other new items include key wristlets, magnetic bookmarks, "Melt the Ice" red hat pins, Easter gnomes,

crocheted coasters and several kinds of hearts. We have also increased our inventory of popular favorites such as baby quilts, shawls, potholders, Simple Bags, tote bags, embroidered bookmarks, rope/fabric baskets, and greeting cards.



Quite a few of our creations are consigned at the unique, non-profit gift shop, **Woman's Exchange/Lyme Tree** located beside Subway in the Big Y Shopping Center. If you have never visited, you're missing a treat. The store is filled with

wonderful creations from local artisan's and more.

The business hours are Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

We are grateful for another generous donation. This time it was a large collection of fabric samples, from interior decorator Rosemarie Padovano, whose studio ([www.artemisiainc.com](http://www.artemisiainc.com)) is located nearby at 23 Lyme Street. We've enjoyed sorting these samples and they have already inspired some new creations - so stay tuned.

**Ladies Who Stitch** meet regularly on Mondays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in the Sheffield Auditorium. Visitors, and shoppers are always welcome.

**The Partnership Store** is open while we work, on Sundays following the service, and during most special FCCOL events. We offer 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).

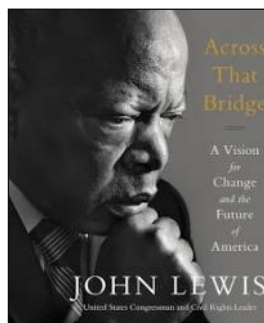
## God's Neighborhood

**"Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society. Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet."**

***Across That Bridge: Life Lessons and a Vision for Change, civil rights activist John Lewis***

As we welcome the fresh beginnings of April, we're excited to spend this month celebrating the beauty and wonder of our Earth together. With signs of spring all around us—blooming flowers, longer days, and new life emerging—it's a perfect time to slow down, notice the world outside our doors, and nurture a sense of care and gratitude for the environment. Throughout the month, we'll be exploring simple, meaningful ways to appreciate and protect our planet, and we invite your family to join us in these moments of discovery, connection, and joy.

**Friday, April 3rd:** Good Friday: 11 am-1 pm. Our Youth Group with Confirmation students will hike at the McCulloch Family Open Space 84-56



Whippoorwill Rd, in Old Lyme. Please drop off by 11:00 am. Students are invited to bring canned goods or bags of coffee to donate to the Old Lyme Food Pantry.

**Saturday, April 4th,** Confirmation students serving at Cup of Joe's Cafe at the FCCOL food pantry from 8:30-10:30.

**Sunday, April 5th at 9:00 am:** Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday! No Sunday School on Easter Sunday but the nursery is open! Following the 9:00 am service, we'll host an Easter Egg hunt in the Friendship Garden!

**Sunday, April 12th:** Civil Rights Youth Group Trip Travelers are away this week in Georgia. We wish them well!! In Sunday School, we will read *The Good for Nothing Tree* inspired by the parable in the gospel of Luke that Jesus tells about the fig tree that never grows fruit (Luke 13:6-9).

Figs will be tasted by our students and the theme of the bible story will be thought about and shared.

**Sunday, April 19th: Celebrating Earth Sunday** today, our students will enjoy making Planter Gardens in class to place them out in front of the church for everyone to enjoy including the pollinators. Meanwhile, our class will also learn about "pollinator pathways" and the importance of planting native plants. As the poet ee cummings wrote, " i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes."

**Sunday, April 26th:** We will continue learning about pollinators and how to support them in their migrations and efforts to grow their populations. Together, we'll explore how we can be mindful allies—minimizing disruption to their ecosystems and, when impact is unavoidable, providing safe, pesticide-free sources of food and water to help them thrive. We'll make a special art project of recycled materials for the garden.

Confirmation Class meets with their mentors this evening from 4-6 pm on April 26th.

**Memorials:**  
Beverly Herbert



## Grief and Loss Group

This monthly support group is for those who have lost a loved one and those struggling with other losses. Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, April 1st** from 5:00-6:00 pm in Hoag Parlor.

## Weekly Bible Study

**The Book of Leviticus:** Please join us as we discuss The Book of Leviticus. We meet every Thursday (except from 11:00 -12:00 pm in the Library. Call or email the church for the Zoom link.

## The Benevolent Society's April Luncheon

April showers may be in the forecast, but a warm and hardy pot roast dinner prepared by our own chef Rick Strickhart is on the menu. Come join us at the Benevolent Society's April luncheon on **Tuesday, April 14th**.

The FIRST Robotics Team 236, the Techno-Ticks, is a FIRST Robotics Competition Hall of Fame team made up of students from Lyme-Old Lyme and East Lyme High Schools will be explaining what FIRST Robotics is, how they design, build and program a 120-pound competition robot each season. The program will conclude with a live robot demonstration.

Suggested donation for the luncheon and program is \$5 per person, plus a nonperishable food item for our food bank or a package of disposable diapers for our diaper bank. Please call the FCCOL office (860-434-8686) by Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> to make a reservation.

## TransParent Group Meeting

Meets monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of every month 5:30-6:30. Next meeting is on **April 15th**. 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).

## ARC Blood Drive

American Red Cross Blood Drive at The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme will be on **Thursday, April 16th** from 1:00 pm -6:00 pm. in the Fellowship Hall.



## News About the Church Library

Our library has been reorganized and replenished. Check out the new books about world religions, the Middle East, current events, individual journeys, recent religious scholarship, LGBTQ issues, the fiction, the plays, and the art books. Everything in the library

is now open for members of the congregation for borrowing purposes. All you have to do is sign the Log-Out sheet on the clipboard, writing your name, the title of the book you are borrowing, and the date the book was taken out and later returned. Happy Reading!

## Writing at the Well

Join us on **Friday, April 24th** 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.

## IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services)

**IRIS** is helping the homeless and is especially in need of twin-sized bedding, personal care items, kitchen items (including dishes, glassware, baking pans, cookware) and diapers. Gift cards (e.g. to Walmart) are also welcome. A FCCOL volunteer regularly travels to New Haven to deliver collected items. LWS will help by accepting new and gently-used donations for IRIS and for the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. Please leave donations on the Sheffield Stage clearly marked "LWS." (<https://irisct.org>)

## Adult Forum with Marc Zimmer: Hot Mess, Cool Science: How Change Climate Really Works

Join us on Sunday, April 26th after the 10 am service to hear Marc give a talk that is a mix of the history, science and politics of climate change. He has written two books that each have a chapter about climate change: "*Solutions for a Cleaner Greener Planet*" and "*The State of Science*."

Zimmer is a chemist with a passion for jellyfish, fireflies and all other bioluminescent organisms. Marc has written eight books and published over 65 research papers about cow flatulence, computational chemistry and bioluminescence in fireflies and jellyfish.

## Peace Walkers for Nuclear Disarmament

Meet the Peace Walkers on Wednesday, April 1st from 5-7 pm, in Fellowship Hall. Join us as we offer hospitality to 15 peace pilgrims walking from New Haven to New London to raise awareness for Nuclear Disarmament. The group includes individuals from the Hartford Catholic Worker community, Buddhist monks and veterans who will enjoy a light supper with us and offer a presentation.

## Easter Services Schedule 2026

### Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

Reading Books 1-4 of John Milton's "Paradise Lost" from 10am - 5pm with selections of music sung from Haydn's Creation. In lieu of our usual service we will gather at 6:30 pm for a simple dinner of soup and bread, followed by the sharing of communion.

### Good Friday April 3rd

The Meeting house will be open for Prayers and Meditation

### Easter Sunrise Service April 5th

Join us at 6:15 am at Griswold Point  
(call the church for the directions at 860-434-8686)

### Easter Sunday Services at 9:00 am and 11:00 am

A light breakfast will be served between the services.  
Childcare will be provided at the 9:00am service. Sunday school will not meet today, but will resume on April 12th at 10:00 am.

## Easter Memorial Music and Flowers Fund

We invite you to make a donation to our Easter Memorial Music and Flowers Fund before April 2nd. Please call the church office at 860-434-8686 or email ([fccol@fccol.org](mailto:fccol@fccol.org)) with the names for whom you would like make a dedication Their names will be listed in the Easter Sunday bulletin. Checks may be made out to FCCOL and mailed or dropped of to the church office. Thank you!

## Environmental Committee Things to Think About

It's true! There are too many things that need your attention. From the laundry to making dinner or getting your taxes done on time, the list is endless. Not to mention the more existential worries- do you have enough to make rent? Retire on? Fix the car? And what *about* the political situation?

After all that, if you are wondering where to apply your 'save the world' energies, here are some ideas for those of you who are not already members of Sierra Club..

**Locally**, the Preserve in Saybrook / Essex and Westbrook is under threat of logging by the state. A discussion was held on March 21 (between this writing, and your reading.) More information will be available on the CT Sierra club website. This is Connecticut's largest remaining intact coastal forest and wetland system, and logging would fracture what so many people worked for years to protect.

Zooming out a little, there is also a lot of action regarding pipeline expansion efforts across Mass, CT, NY and RI. There is too much information to put here, but search for "No Pipeline Expansion Northeast". Pipeline expansion efforts are *literally* dinosaurs. It is no longer true that renewable energy is more expensive than fossil fuels. The build out of infrastructure for oil and gas for a once-and-done use (i.e. use it all up, and poison us in the process) doesn't make sense any more now that technology has made harvesting a continuous source of energy (sun and wind) cheaper! Bill McKibbin quipped, "Energy from Heaven, not from Hell!"

**Nationally**, The Trump administration has nominated former New Mexico Representative, former oil company exec and public land sell-off advocate, Steve Pearce, to lead the Bureau of Land Management. His job would be to oversee roughly 245 million acres of federal public lands and 700 million acres of subsurface minerals. Including Alaska, this is approximately 28% of the land in our country. It may seem unnecessary to contact CT Senators to urge them to oppose this nomination, but it's not. Our own Senators still need to hear from their constituents that they are doing what we want, and we support them.

And THAT is an easy task.

-Mariette Brown

(continued from "Dear Friends" on the cover)

1940s by Clarence Jordan, a white Baptist Minister, who sought to create an intentional, diverse community of Black and White folks living, serving and worshipping together in the heart of the Jim Crow South. Despite being fire-bombed and targeted by the Ku Klux Klan numerous times in the mid 20th century, Koinonia remained what Jordan called, "a demonstration plot for the kingdom of God." It also became the seeds of Habitat for Humanity when a man named Millard Fuller sought refuge at Koinonia. The rest is history!

Throughout the decades, our church remained steadfast in its commitment to Koinonia Farm and played a pivotal role in keeping Koinonia financially viable. Today, it is a sustainable small organic farm harvesting pecans, growing vegetables and supporting local community gardens and food pantries. Koinonia offers radical hospitality to visitors, supports immigrant neighbors, and continues to model a way of living in shared community that includes all kinds of people. It is a symbol of resurrection hope in a Good Friday world. I'm told there will be plenty of work around the farm waiting for us!

In this time of fractured leadership and war mongering, it feels important to expose our young people to the ordinary, extraordinary individuals who stepped up in their time and became giants of history. Folks like Clarence Jordan, who persevered on behalf of freedom, compassion and justice in rural Georgia. Activists like Joanne Bland from Selma whom we met on our last trip to Alabama, who reminded us all that each of us is "the missing piece" in the puzzle for bringing love and justice into the world.

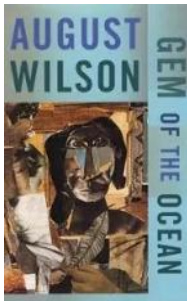
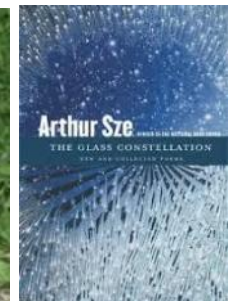
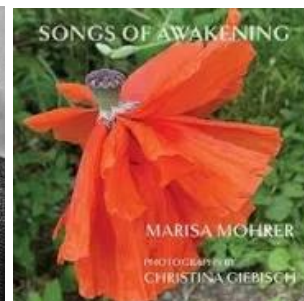
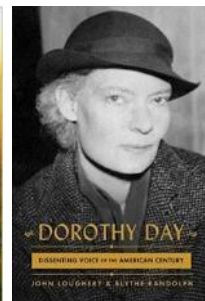
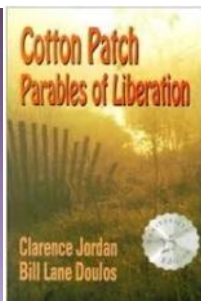
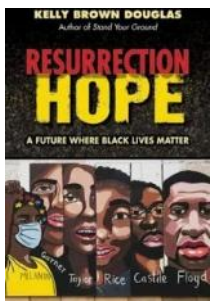
As the FCCOL gardens begin to bud, we have a number of worthwhile events and offerings this month. Emerging from darkness into the light, from the cross of Good Friday to Easter Sunday, may we practice resurrection where we see it, sharing our humanity as we go. Thank you for walking on this journey with us.

With love,



#### Reading:

*Resurrection Hope* by Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Irish Goodbye* by Beth Ann Fennelly, *The Cotton Patch Parables of Liberation* by Clarence Jordan, *Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice of the American Century* by John Loughery and Blythe Randolph, *Songs of Awakening* by Marisa Mohrer, *The Glass Constellation: New and Collected Poems* by Arthur Sze. *Gem of the Ocean* by August Wilson



## DINE New London Soup Kitchen (DINE)

For more than 30 years our church has been working alongside the folks at DINE (formerly known as The New London Soup Kitchen) to provide meals to those who are in need in New London. In fact, at the very beginning it was a crew of able carpenters from our church, under the leadership of our own Jim Noyes, who outfitted the original site.

For all those 30 years, Julie Kuja and Charlie Hosley have coordinated a monthly meal at DINE on the fourth Sunday evening of every month of the year. As a quick estimate, I'd say they have helped to serve well over 46,000 meals in those years. A very impressive feat. Both Charlie and Julie have finally reached a time when they need to step back from this important work. And we are exceedingly grateful for their selfless and tireless years of service. Cathy and Mike Gentry will continue to help facilitate our work there, but they cannot do it alone!

In past years those seeking food assistance at DINE numbered about 100 folks each Sunday evening. We are now seeing crowds of over 200 guests each time we serve. So we are reaching out to the congregation for help.

The board and committees of our church each take a turn, serving one month of the year. But we now find we need additional volunteers to supplement those boards; making the casseroles and providing the salads, rolls, desserts, etc. There is only space enough for about 6 people to actually go to DINE on our Sunday evenings to serve. So it is primarily the preliminary cooking with which we need help.

Our upcoming dates at DINE are March 22, April 26, May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23 (the fourth Sunday of every month). If you could help us with some cooking assistance, please call the church office at 860-434-8686 or Carleen at 860-304-2070. The Board of Missions has established a fund which can help cover the costs of ingredients for the casseroles if any one would like that help (just save your receipts and the office will reimburse you.)

Thank you to all who have helped over the years and most especially to Julie and Charlie. They both have more than earned some rest!

## Reading the First Four Books of Milton's "Paradise Lost" Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

John Milton's poem is an outgrowth of the Reformation. In fact, it is the Protestant poem, par excellence. It was published in 1667, only two years after what is now Old Lyme was settled as a community, and only one year after our first minister, Moses Noyes, arrived in town. It is a poem that has shaped the world of Congregationalists for generations, in ways we scarcely recognize. But it has also shaped the thoughts of readers as diverse as Thomas Jefferson and Malcolm X, George Eliot and C.L.R. James. Its reach is vast, but its roots are roots we share in common. We're going to read it throughout the day of April 2nd, Maundy Thursday. **We'll start promptly at 10 am, you can drop in at anytime to listen and share the day with us.** We should finish by 5 or 6 pm. Throughout, we hope to have selections of music sung from Haydn's Creation, much of which was inspired by Paradise Lost. **I lieu of our usual maundy Thursday service we'll gather for a simple dinner of soup and bread, followed by the sharing of communion. All are welcome!**

## Come share your experiences of and concerns for justice! Your voice matters!

Join us on Sunday, April 19th at 11:30 am. Lunch will be served! We're living in extremely challenging times right now, and many of us want to take action to create lasting positive change. At FCCOL a small team of people have joined with other Southeastern Connecticut congregations to begin to identify justice issues for potential policy change.

This month, each participating congregation is listening to their congregants' experiences of and concerns for justice. In turn, areas of overlap will be identified (by the larger team) and a justice issue for collective action will emerge from that. We want to know what is on your heart. What keeps you up at night? What worries you? And what would you like to help change in and around Old Lyme or in New London or Middlesex Counties

Come! Share your experiences and witness for justice as we build a faith-based power base committed to systemic change in SE CT and across the State!

To help with planning, please email [wjcolihan@gmail.com](mailto:wjcolihan@gmail.com) if you can make it. And all are welcome too!

## White Elephant Sale—Volunteers Needed

It's that time of year again and the White Elephant Sale committee is hard at work preparing for the 88th sale, being held this year on July 10th and 11th. This is a good time of the year to sort through the cellar and attic to put aside some treasures for the sale. Hold on to those goodies until first intake day on June 25<sup>th</sup>, with five more days of intake to follow over two weeks. Last year was our best ever sale, so looking for big things this year!

This is the beginning of the committee's annual request for volunteers to tackle multiple tasks; including someone to coordinate the operation, people to take in, sort, price and sell donations, someone to run the operation of the food court, and in general, more people with the time and interest in being a part of an incredibly effective team. In prior years more than 200 folks helped in some way or another sorting, organizing, outside set-up, selling or clean-up after the sale. Even a few hours of your time will be greatly appreciated. You'll have a great time, meet new friends and have a rewarding experience.

For those of you who would like to help out—please call the church at (860)434-8686 and leave a message, or contact Jane Marolda at (860) 608-0257 or Deb Heminway at (860) 625-3144 to let us know how you would like to contribute. In the meantime, keep cleaning out your closets and filling boxes labeled: "high quality donation for WES", and look for more detailed updates about the sale in the May and June Newsletter. Many thanks and we look forward to hearing from you.

## All This Sainted Difference: A Spiritual Pilgrimage to Brazil August 10–20, 2026

In her poetry collection *The Cachoeira Tales*, Marilyn Nelson writes of a contemporary group of pilgrims, each with a story to tell, traveling together not to Canterbury, but to Cachoeira, Brazil. There, the pilgrims encounter the Sisters of Our Lady of the Good Death, who blend African, Indigenous, and Catholic ritual elements. Founded by those who had been enslaved during the 19th century, the sisterhood was established to serve the poor, while keeping alive the sacred traditions of Africa, handed down as a precious inheritance from one generation to the next. Every year in Cachoeira, the Sisters offer a three-day celebration of music and of dance, where the Orixas (African divinities who bear a striking resemblance to Christian saints) come in order



to bless, heal, chasten, and encourage contemporary people. It is in Cachoeira that the pilgrims in Marilyn's poems converge. And it is in Cachoeira that pilgrims from FCCOL shall converge this coming August.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore the African ritual traditions of Brazil. Visiting not only Cachoeira, but locating ourselves in and around the city of Salvador, we'll encounter the rituals, music, dance, foodways, and visual art that have sheltered and protected human lives through generations of hardship. We'll visit *terreiros* (house temples) around the city and throughout the surrounding countryside. And we'll discover how these dynamic and aesthetically charged spiritual systems (Candomblé and Umbanda) have evolved across time. The centerpiece of our journey will be the Feast of Our Lady of the Good Death, where we shall witness how the Sisters become a living bridge between this world and the other.

Designed to resonate and to link with our travels to Haiti, Cuba, New Orleans, and West Africa, our pilgrimage to Cachoeira and Salvador will be organized with the help of our friend Ned Sublette, and his vast network of contacts in Brazil. It is a fabulous opportunity to explore a beautiful part of Latin America (it will be winter in Salvador, meaning we can expect temperatures in the 70's and 80's), together with the history and spirituality of the African descended peoples of Bahia.

## Breaking the Cycle: The Crosby Fund's Literacy Programs

Haiti faces one of the most severe literacy crises in the Western Hemisphere. More than 40% of all Haitian adults are illiterate, a staggering figure that ripples through every aspect of daily life. For many parents, the inability to read means they cannot help their children with homework, navigate a medical form, or even decipher something as fundamental as their child's report card — leaving them disconnected from one of the most important windows into their children's futures. And without intervention at a young age, that same cycle of illiteracy is passed down to the next generation. The Crosby Fund for Haitian Education is tackling this crisis at both ends of the age spectrum. With our Primary and Secondary scholarship programs filled to capacity every year, and with half of all Haitian families unable to afford school, the Crosby Fund offers a free Youth Literacy Program for non-scholarship children ages 6 to 13 at its Education Center in



Deschapelles. The goal is to provide children in the community with basic literacy and math skills. At the program's founding in 2020, the Crosby Fund worked with a team of literacy trainers from USAID who also provided the printed curriculum for the program.

For adults, the need is equally urgent. The Crosby Fund's Adult Literacy Program, started in 2019, offers reading, writing, and basic mathematics to adults of all ages in the local Deschapelles community. Like the youth program, the two-year program meets three times a week, three hours per session. Together, these two programs help to create a community where both children and adults are learning to read - generation by generation. For the parents in the program, learning to read isn't just an academic achievement — it's a chance to finally pick up their child's report card and understand every word on the page.



## anchors Aweigh and a Safe Harbor, A Testimonial by Bob McCracken

We are sailors, and our church experiences over the last 50 years can truly be called a "voyage".

Our children were baptized in a Presbyterian Church near Philadelphia. In their early years we were in the Rye, New York Presbyterian Church. In Westport, Connecticut, we found the Greens Farms Congregational Church. Our move to Mexico City brought new adventure, but the Union Evangelical Church opened its arms for us. Returning to Washington, D.C., at the Georgetown Presbyterian Church we heard what we now consider to be the second-best preaching ever. Then in Chicago, we found the Union Church of Hinsdale and more service opportunities. Returning to New York City, we were inspired by the commitment to social outreach of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

At each new leg of this voyage, we first sought our church. Every time, there was the Church of Jesus Christ, a safe harbor when we needed safety, an anchor if we needed an anchor, and always, unending opportunities to serve.

When we made our final move to Lyme, we found this wonderful church and we dropped anchor for what we thought was to be the "last time" in this safe harbor. But anchors, it turns out, have some real problems! The longer they stay put, the deeper they set and the harder they are to move, the more they prevent exploration. Spiritually, they can mire one in repetition, dogma, and creeds. However, in this church, we found ourselves spiritually doing just the opposite of swinging at anchor! We found ourselves embarked on a very exciting new voyage of spiritual exploration and service, with no end in sight.

A successful sailing voyage requires three things: a good chart, a reliable compass, and a fresh strong breeze. Our "chart" is the open Bible, central and always open in the Meeting House. Our "compass" is the inspired preaching we absorb each week. And the "fresh strong breeze" are the wonderful words, and the promise, of John Robinson that "there is yet more truth and light to break forth from God's Holy word".

Then, as with some voyages, the thunder clouds started to form and the storm hit. I lost my first mate. But when the sun arose the next morning the anchor was holding firm, as it continues to do, in the love and support of this wonderful congregation.

## APRIL 2026 CALENDAR

**ReBbellion Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 1st at 4:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Board of Missions Meeting** *Wednesday, April 1st at 5:00 pm* in the Library.

**Grief Group** *Wednesday, April 1st at 5:00 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.

**Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 1st at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 1st at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

**Paradise Lost Reading** *Maundy Thursday, April 2nd starting at 10:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.

**Soup Supper and Communion** *Maundy Thursday, April 2nd at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Good Friday Prayers and Reflections** *Friday, April 3rd open all day* in the Meetinghouse.

**The Shoreline Food Pantry & Diaper Bank** *Saturday, April 4th at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Cup-A-Joe Café Youth Group** *Saturday, April 4th at 8:00 am* in the Library.

**Sunrise Easter** *Sunday Service 6:15 am* at Griswold Point.

**Easter Sunday Service** *Sunday, April 5th at 9:00 am and 11:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.

**Easter Egg Hunt** after the 9:00 am service in the Friendship Garden.

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

**Walt's Pottery Classes** *Tuesday, April 7th 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.*

**ReBbellion Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 8th at 4:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

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

**Bible Study** *Thursday, April 9th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

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

**Walking in their Footsteps Civil Rights Trip** departing *Saturday, April 11th* from FCCOL.

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

**The Benevolent Society Luncheon** *Tuesday, April 14th at 12:00pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**Walt's Pottery Classes** *Tuesday, April 14th 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.*

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

**ReBbellion Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 15th at 4:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

**TransParent Meeting** *Wednesday, April 15th at 5:30 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.

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

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

**Bible Study** *Thursday, April 16th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

**ARC Blood Drive** *Thursday, April 16th from 1 to 6 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

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

**SECT House Church Meeting** *Sunday, April 19th at 11:30 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

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

**ReBbellion Rehearsal** *Wednesday, April 22nd at 4:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.

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

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

**May Newsletter Deadline** *Wednesday, April 22nd.*

**Bible Study** *Thursday, April 23rd at 11:00 am* in the Library.

**Board of Stewardship Meeting** *Thursday, April 23rd at 4:00 pm* in the Library.

**The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, April 25th at 8:30 am* in Fellowship Hall.

**Musical Masterworks** *Sat, April 25th at 5:00 pm and Sun, April 26th at 3:00 pm* in the Meetinghouse.

**Adult Forum Marc Zimmer** *Sunday April 26th at 11:30* in the Fellowship Hall.

**DINE New London** *Sunday, April 26th departing FCCOL at 3:30 pm.*

**Confirmation Class** *Sunday, April 26th at 4:00 pm* in the Library.

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

**The Benevolent Society Meeting** *Tuesday, April 28th at 10:00 am* in the Library.

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

**Newsletter Folding** *Tuesday, April 28th* in the Library.

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

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

**Bible Study** *Thursday, April 30th at 11:00 am* in the Library.

# 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

Church Office Tel: 860-434-8686

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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.

13/100

Bill Steene

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The submission deadline for the May Newsletter will be Thursday, April 22nd.

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!



*A painting of our Meetinghouse by Childe Hassam..*