

The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

MAY 2026



Dear Friends,

Congregationalists are not known to follow liturgical calendars, or at least not strictly. We cover Advent and the days after Christmas, and we do pretty well through Lent and Easter. Following Easter, however, we tend to follow our own calendar rather than that of the wider church, which works out just fine. In our context at FCCOL, we'll welcome those who are new to our community on May 10, and we'll celebrate our young people on May 17. Looking into June, plans are underway for our Juneteenth celebration on Sunday June 21. On the Sundays between, we'll do our best to make sense of various aspects of our lives in light of the grace and mercy we've come to know in our faith.

But following Easter, we often miss one of the major liturgical events in the life of the wider church: Pentecost. This year Pentecost will fall on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, May 24. It's a day in which we tell of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, after the ascension of Jesus. It's a remarkable and highly symbolic story in which the sound of wind is heard, and where tongues of fire flicker above the heads of the disciples. The text tells us that representatives of all the nations are gathered, and that with the coming of the Spirit they were all able to comprehend the languages that the others spoke. It's a story in which the fragmentation of language and culture unleashed in the Tower of Babel story found Genesis 11 is reversed. In Pentecost, disparate and divided cultures are enabled to share meaning with one another.

In popular Christianity, Pentecost is often associated with speaking in tongues, an ecstatic form of worship

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HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT

FCCOL Choir

Thank you for all your wonderful singing in April, especially on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday!

Here is what May's rehearsal and service schedule is looking like:

Sunday, May 3: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am. Guest Organist: Mike McCarthy.

Wednesday, May 6: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

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

Wednesday, May 13: NO REHEARSAL - DATE NIGHT!!

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

Wednesday, May 20: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

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

Wednesday, May 27: Rehearsal at 7:30 pm.

Sunday, May 31: Singing at the 10:00 am service with a rehearsal at 9:15 am.

Many thanks and best wishes to all.
Simon

Old Lyme Ringers and ReBELLion

The **Old Lyme Ringers** will conclude their handbell season on Mother's Day, May 10, with the ringing of "Pendaneni" by Cathy Moklebus. The title is one word in Swahili for the English equivalent "Love One Another." The music involves various handbell techniques: martellato, martellato lift, mallets, thumb damp, and the shake. Several African percussive instruments, played by our own middle school boys, will assist in the ringing of this exciting piece. You won't want to miss this one!

Some interest has been expressed for an adult **beginning** handbell choir. We would need a minimum of 8 people to make this work. No previous music reading and training would be needed to be part of this new venture. Time of rehearsals (either daytime or early evening) will be determined by the ringers. Rehearsals would begin in the fall. Contact Gary Jungkeit by text (423-782-6308), or contact the church office, if you are interested in being part of something new!

It is now time to complete our set of handbells. FCCOL currently has four octaves of bells, but much handbell repertoire is written for five octaves. There are music pieces that our own Old Lyme Ringers cannot play because of the lack of the bottom octave. Also, we have hopes for this fall to begin a youth ensemble of six ringers that need bells in the bottom octave. These bells are the largest to complete our set, and the most expensive because of size. For this octave and their cases, we need approximately \$26,500. Are there people and organizations within FCCOL that would be willing to help us meet our goal? Please contact Gary Jungkeit for more information and to answer any questions.

Ladies Who Stitch (LWS)

We continue to collect holiday greeting cards which are used to make sets of gift tags. Cards can be given to one of us, left in the office, or left on the counter behind our curtain at the back of the Sheffield Auditorium.



Many **IRIS** donations have been delivered and we will continue to support this effort. There is a bin

marked "IRIS Donations" on the Sheffield stage where quality clothing, bedding, cooking utensils and dishes may be left.

This past month we've added several new creations to our inventory: jar grippers, pillows, fabric key wristlets, zippered pouches, various kinds of bookmarks, spring gnomes, pocket cats, and a variety of household creations donated by *Amelie Michel* and *Patricia Spratt for the Home*. Many of our items will again be donated for FCCOL to use as gifts for



various activities: these include bookmarks, potholders, Simple Bags, napkins, pocket pins, "Bag of Worries" booklets, and more. Also, since 2017, thanks to our generous fabric donations from multiple sources, we have made and given 567 large tote bags to NLHHC and IRIS.

In early June, since we do not meet during the



summer, we will be packing up and storing our supplies to prepare for the 2026 White Elephant Sale. It's hard to believe that we have only seven or eight more working Mondays!

Ladies Who Stitch meet regularly on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. 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.

God's Neighborhood

May is here, bringing longer days, blooming flowers, and a gentle sense of renewal all around us. As we move deeper into spring, it's a beautiful time to pause, notice the growth happening in nature and in our children, and celebrate the small moments that connect us—whether that's time spent outdoors, shared laughter, or learning something new together. We look forward to a month filled with warmth, curiosity, and community as we continue our journey side by side.

*"I have found that if you love life,
Life will love you back."
-Arthur Rubinstein*

Here's a look at all the special dates and activities coming up this month:

Saturday, May 2nd: Sharing Humanity Night
Middle and Highschoolers will meet from 5-8 pm in Fellowship Hall for an interactive workshop with two guests to learn about the juvenile justice system and the role art can play in healing and self-expression. Church member and artist, Nancy Gladwell, and a public advocate from the justice system will lead us. We'll learn about the restorative justice programs for youth as an alternative to the school-to-prison pipeline. The hands-on arts projects we create will then be displayed at a special event on June 18th event at the Garde Theater in New London with poet, author and formerly incarcerated person, Dr. Randall Horton. Pizza served! All are welcome!

Sunday, May 3rd: Our students in Sunday School will begin their rehearsals for Children's Sunday where our Ministers will hand over the reins for our children to show us highlights from everything they learned throughout this academic year. Keeping in mind our curriculum *Let Justice Roll Down: Crossing Borders to Find Each Other.*

Sunday, May 10th: Our annual Mothering Day Pansies Sale Fundraiser to benefit Heifer International. Pansies will be for sale in the Fellowship Hall this morning and our Youth Group will be collecting donations for this great cause. Heifer International gives people dignity and agency to care for themselves and their families. Please come and join us to help support this great effort.

Friday, May 15th: The Youth Group will be traveling to Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek. There will be a carpool from FCCOL at 6 pm.

Sunday, May 17th: Children and Youth Sunday at 10 am! Join us for a special service celebrating the highlights of the year in God's Neighborhood and the experiences of our young people. BYE (Board of Youth Ed) to host an Ice cream social to follow in Friendship Hall.

Sunday, May 24th: God's Neighborhood Beach Clean Up at White Sands Beach: We will meet at White Sands Beach at 10 am to pick up litter. Bring bags and gloves. Donuts, coffee and cider, and hand sanitizer will be provided.

Confirmation Retreat on Cape Cod: Friday, May 29th-Sunday, May 31st.

Confirmation students and friends will drive to Craigville Inn Retreat Center on Cape Cod for a special weekend of fun, community, hiking and beach volleyball. We leave FCCOL at 3:00 on Friday afternoon and return by 3:00 pm on Sunday. Cost is \$100.00 per student including meals and lodging. RSVP to save a spot! Contact Laura or Jolene.

Memorials:

Deborah Knox Putnam Warren
Susan Shelby Griswold Schavoir
David Austin Wood
Tommy Starkweather

(on the cover: Ogden Minton Pleissner 1905-1983)

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, May 6th** 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 from 11:00 -12:00 pm in the Library. Call or email the church for the Zoom link.

The Benevolent Society's May Luncheon

Join us for the TBS May luncheon on Tuesday, May 12th. Chef Rick will have a delicious and seasonally appropriate meal prepared for you to enjoy. As always, lunch will be served at noon. Our after-meal program will introduce you to Helen Charov, author of *"Tatyana's War - Escape and Survival on the Eastern Front in World War II."* Finding her mother's diaries in the attic of her mother's Connecticut home, Helen translated them into English and composed this book. It promises to be a presentation that will inspire us all as we learn about Tatyana's strength and perseverance, that will encourage us to seek and find our own grit! Books will be available for purchase following the program.

The suggested donation is \$5 per person, plus a non-perishable food item for our food bank or a package of disposable diapers for our diaper bank. Please call the FCCOL office (860-434-8686) to RSVP by Friday, so we can be sure to have enough food prepared for all to enjoy.

TransParent Group Meeting

Meets monthly on the 3rd Wednesday of every month 5:30-6:30. Next meeting is on **May 20th**. 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.

ARC Blood Drive



Blood Drive at FCCOL of Old Lyme will be on **Thursday, May 21st** from 1:00 pm -6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Writing at the Well

Join us on **Friday, May 22nd** 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 writ-

ing 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.

Pastoral Care

Please just let us know if a pastoral visit would be helpful to you or someone you know. Years ago, hospitals and nursing homes often notified the church when a patient who said they were part of our congregation was admitted. In the post-HIPPA era, this just doesn't happen. Also, hospital stays are often remarkably short. So if you know of someone who needs our pastoral care, please call Anne in the office or one of our ministers directly. We really appreciate your help!

New Additions to the Church Library

Bible scholar Bart Ehrman's latest book, *Love Thy Stranger: How the Teachings of Jesus Changed the Moral Conscience of the West*, about the impact of Christianity on the Roman Empire's understanding of charity; Toni Morrison's novel about healing, *Home*, which Steve quoted from in a recent sermon; and some plays by the foremost African-American playwright, the late August Wilson (including *Radio Golf*, to be performed at Hartford Stage next season). Free for borrowing.

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>).

Introduction to the Potter's Wheel: New and Returning Students

In this four-week pottery class, you'll learn to center clay with your hands, steady your body at the wheel, and pull the walls upward into a cylinder. Then on to shaping, glazing, and firing, following the clay through each stage of its transformation.

Held on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, this class meets May 12, 19, 26, and June 2, and the full four-week session is \$200.

No experience is necessary—just a willingness to slow down, pay attention, and let the clay teach you.

Taught by local artist Paul Fitzpatrick Nager

The Importance of Organ Donation

What does giving mean to us as a church family? Is it the offering we place in the collection each Sunday, or the gifts we share with loved ones on special occasions? Many of us also carry a small red heart on our driver's license - something we rarely notice. Yet that symbol represents one of the most profound and selfless gifts we can offer: the gift of life through organ donation.

In my work with New England Donor Services, I witness this kind of giving every day. I am often present in hospitals during some of life's most difficult moments, helping determine whether a critically ill patient may be able to give this final gift. It is a rare opportunity—only 3 out of every 1,000 people who pass away are able to become organ donors.

And yet, the need is great. Each day, lives are lost while people wait for a transplant, and more names are added to the list. These are not just numbers - they are neighbors, parents, children, and friends. One organ donor can save up to eight lives, and tissue donation can bring healing, sight, and renewed strength to many more.

As people of faith, we are called to love one another, to serve, and to give generously—even when it asks something of us. Organ donation is a final act of compassion, a way to bring hope and life to others in their time of greatest need.

If you have never considered organ donation, I invite you to take a moment to reflect and pray about it. You can learn more or register at <https://donatelife.net/>. Registration is a way of making your wishes known, and it is also important to share that decision with your family.

I would like to close with a story. A young man—an excellent student, deeply involved in his community - went off to college and tragically lost his life after unknowingly taking a substance laced with fentanyl. In the midst of unimaginable grief, his family chose organ donation. His mother later shared that she feared her son would be remembered only for how he died, not for how he lived. But through donation, she said, he became known as a hero. In that, she felt his true spirit and memory were restored.

As we reflect on what it means to give, may we remember that even in loss, there can be life. Even in sorrow, there can be hope. And through love, there can be a legacy that lives on in others.

If you want to learn more, feel free to reach out anytime.

Wendell Webber

Wendell Weber works for *New England Donor Services*. As a clinical responder, he helps to assess the viability of organ donations. He is a member of our church.

A Personal Story About Organ Donation

Last March we found out that my nephew-in-law, Dio, was suddenly in renal failure, requiring dialysis three times a week. Two months later he was deemed appropriate for a kidney transplant, and Pete and I responded for assessment. Alas, Pete, though in good health, needed his 2 kidneys, while I, months later, found out I was a good LKD (living kidney donor). Testing included blood, urine, chest x-ray, EKG, psychosocial assessment, MRI, and cardiac stress test. Because of our age difference, it was determined that I'd be part of the kidney-paired donation, where he'd receive a voucher for a live kidney closer to his age. Live kidney donation is preferred over deceased for a couple of big reasons...the wait is typically shorter and the kidney lasts twice as long.

The day of my surgery, January 20, 2026, Dio was released onto the LKD list. Two weeks later he was matched to a young woman, and on February 24th he received his new kidney. He's doing really well, and walking outdoors, but must stay away from others until 3 months out. So, we'll look forward to getting together in May!

My kidney was driven speedily from NJ to Pittsburg, where a man received it later the same day. I've heard he's doing well, and 3 months out, I'm invited to write to him. Then he'll decide if he wants to be in touch with me. I hope so.

If you have any questions about kidney donation, I'd be happy to speak with you. A couple of thoughts: The LKD age range is 18-75. There is a government program that reimburses you and your caregiver for travel, hotel, food, and, if you're still working, salary. Because Dio's hospital is in NJ, that's where my surgery was. Though, most of my testing was performed locally.

Susan Lang



(continued from "Dear Friends" on the cover)

involving a trance-like state and speech understood only by those under the power of the Spirit. But Acts 2 is symbolizing a dynamic far less esoteric, and far more important. It shows what takes place when ordinary human beings, and when cultures more broadly, find common ground, coming to understand one another across their vast differences. It shows the exceeding gladness that occurs when human beings somehow discover and affirm one another - even across a linguistic or cultural gulf. It demonstrates what the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber called an I-Thou relationship taking root - where antagonism falls away and the good, indeed, the holiness, of the other is recognized.

Such things happen between individuals, but Pentecost puts forth a vision in which all of humanity is caught up in that dynamic of mutual affirmation. The text tells us that this is a story about the nations, which means that it is, broadly speaking, a political story.

In that sense, I felt the winds of Pentecost blowing in a speech delivered recently by Claudia Scheinbaum, the President of Mexico. She delivered it at the Summit for Democracy held in Barcelona on April 17 and 18.

The Summit was attended by the Presidents of Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, and Mexico, while representatives from various other countries also attended. Connecticut's own Chris Murphy was one of the representatives from the US. The tenor of Scheinbaum's remarks, and indeed those of the entire Summit, stand in marked contrast to the belligerence of so many other leaders who did not bother to attend. Sadly, the Summit received almost no mention in the mainstream US press, nor did most news outlets carry any reports of Scheinbaum's address. This despite the fact that she is, arguably, one of the most consequential leaders on the world stage today.

In the Spirit of Pentecost, here are a few of Scheinbaum's comments:

I come to the Summit for Democracy on behalf of a hardworking, creative, and resilient people, but above all a deeply generous people—a people that has learned to resist without hatred, to defend its rights without ceasing to respect others, to believe in peace even when history has placed difficult trials and tribulations before it.

I come on behalf of a caring people, even amid adversity, a profoundly humanist people, that resists individualism, rejects discrimination, and refuses with dignity to look at others with contempt.

I come from a people that recognizes its origins in the great Indigenous cultures—those that were silenced, enslaved, and plundered, but never defeated, because there are memories that cannot be conquered and roots that can never be uprooted. I come from the Pyramid of the Sun; I come from Tlaloc, from Huitzilopochtli, from Coatlicue. I come from a millennial history that is not confined to the past, but a living presence in our communities, in our languages, in our way of viewing the world.

She then continues:

We believe that democracy implies freedom. But freedom is an empty word if it is not accompanied by social justice, sovereignty, and the dignity of peoples. When we speak of democracy, it is not the democracy of elites, but of the people. Not the concentration of wealth, but its distribution. Not imposition, but participation. Not war, but peace. Not indifference and exclusion, but cooperation and inclusion...There is no democracy when there is no option for the poor, for the dispossessed.

Therefore, I would like to propose a concrete action that I presented at the G-20: a simple proposal based on a new vision of the United Nations—allocating 10 percent of global military spending, which amounts to billions of dollars, to promote a global program that would enable millions of people to reforest millions of hectares of land each year. Instead of promoting war, let us promote peace; let us promote life.

I would like to propose a declaration against military intervention in Cuba, so that dialogue and peace may prevail. I would also like to extend an invitation for this summit to be held next in Mexico, where we can engage in dialogue on an economy centered on well-being and on a democracy that responds to the real needs of the people. Because democracy means placing love above hate, cultivating generosity instead of greed, brother and sisterhood above war.

I am a woman of peace, and I represent a nation that loves freedom, justice, and fraternity, and that understands democracy as the great Benito Juárez expressed it: “With the people, everything; without the people, nothing. With the peoples, everything; without the peoples, nothing.”

I believe Scheinbaum is demonstrating the same Spirit found in the Pentecost event in Acts 2. That Spirit blows wherever it will, and it is not limited to churches, or religious institutions. It is found wherever humanism, wherever cooperation, wherever inclusion, wherever peace, wherever generosity, wherever love, wherever these things are exhibited and practiced.

Let us remember in these weeks following Easter that Pentecost is still a reality taking place in our world. Let us remember that there are those who still choose to affirm human (and non-human) life across all the vast chasms that so often keep us apart. If you are tempted toward discouragement or despair in these tense days, I encourage you to look toward the global south. The Spirit of Pentecost is stirring there, a vivifying wind that may find us yet.

Stay human....

Reading: *Elena Knows*, by Claudia Piñeiro; *Not a River*, by Selva Almada; *A Month in the Country*, by J.L. Carr; *The Invention of Morel*, by Adolfo Bioy Casares; *Train Dreams*, by Denis Johnson; *The Hurting Kind*, by Ada Limón; *The Disappearance of Rituals*, by Byung-Chul Han; *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton; “Death in Venice,” by Thomas Mann; *Anniversaries, Vol. 1*, by Uwe Johnson; *The King James Bible* (portions); *Finnegans Wake*, by James Joyce (portions); *El Murmullo de las Abejas*, by Sofia Segovia (portions).



Listening: Osvaldo Golijov, *La Pasión Según San Marcos*; Richard Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*; Wednesday, *Bleeds*; Van Morrison, *No Guru, No Method, No Teacher*.

Watching: *The Pitt* (HBO); *The Secret Agent*, dir. Kleber Mendonça Filho; *The Gospel According to Matthew*, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini; *Death in Venice*, dir. Luchino Visconti.



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.

Contact Steve Jungkeit for more information, at steven@jungkeit.net.

Adult Forum May 17th: The Preserve is set to be logged

The Preserve in Old Saybrook is CT's largest remaining intact coastal forest and wetland system: 1000 acres in Old Saybrook with smaller tracts in Essex and Westbrook. Jointly owned by Old Saybrook and the state, this biodiversity gem is home to 38 vernal pools. Many rare or threatened plant and animal species are among the 30 mammal, 25 amphibian and reptile, and 57 kinds of birds that live in this area. The state is preparing to log in important sensitive areas.

Lea Sloan, former vice president of communications at American Forests, the oldest national conservation organization in the country, will speak on this at an **adult forum on May 17**. Come learn what we can do to try to minimize the damage and disturbance to this exceptional forest.

Diaper Bank Saturday

A guest, her carriage passing the Diaper Bank table, says with a smile, "I don't need diapers anymore." The success of the Diaper Bank is tangible in cases like this. It is rewarding to watch a baby grow, as diaper sizes change with age.

On a disconcerting note, children under 1 year of age account for 40% of all pediatric UTI hospitalizations. The Diaper Bank will continue to offer baby diapers, wipes and products with zinc oxide to combat this medical need.

According to the Urban Institute (Sept 2025) the average monthly cost of diapers for one child is \$100. The median America family could only afford to spend \$65. Tough decisions are made between food or diapers. 1 in 4 reported skipping meals to afford diapers. The average cost of diapers has increased 22% since COVID. The number of babies and toddlers receiving a monthly case of diapers at FCCOL this quarter has been steady with an average of 25. Someone asks, "What is our goal?" To go out of business because all babies and toddlers have diapers!



Crosby Fund For Haitian Education

Join Us for a Haitian Dinner!

If you would like to learn more about our work in Haiti, please join us.

***Sunday, May 17th at 5:30 pm
at The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
2 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT***

**Enjoy an authentic Haitian Dinner
prepared by "Mommy's Delicious Food" of Norwich.**

Becky will offer a presentation on their work in Haiti that will include a special guest...*Hélène Clervius*, a graduate of The Crosby Fund's scholarship program. She will be speaking about her journey from rural Haiti to becoming a doctor at SUNY University Hospital in Brooklyn, NY.

***For reservations please call the church
at 860-434-8686.***

Suggested donation is \$ 15.00 per person.

The Crosby Fund's Tutoring Program in Haiti

The reality facing Haiti's schools is a difficult one. Overcrowded classrooms, crumbling infrastructure, and stretched teacher-to-student ratios mean that too many bright, motivated children fall behind — not because they lack ability, but because these conditions call for additional support. The subjects that matter most for their futures — mathematics, languages, and sciences — are often the hardest to master without a little extra help.

This is exactly why The Crosby Fund created its after-school tutoring program.

This academic year, we are proud to report that 118 students are participating in our tutoring program at our Education Center in Deschappelles and the neighboring town of Verrettes. Ten dedicated tutors work with 5th and 6th graders in French and mathematics, while secondary students at both locations receive instruction in French, English, math, and sciences. Many of these tutors are themselves graduates from The Crosby Fund's scholarship program. Along with their university degrees in Education, Mathematics and Sciences these tutors bring hours of encouragement, patience, and genuine belief in what each child is capable of achieving.

The results speak for themselves. Year after year, more than 93% of our scholarship students advance to the following grade and show marked, consistent improvement on their national exams.

Covenant Shelter of New London Visit

One of this year's plans of the Board of Missions is to continue to meet with leaders of our benevolences with a goal of identifying some of their material needs which we may be able to meet, in addition to the funds that we disperse to them. It was with this intent that Carol Keyes and I visited the Covenant Shelter of New London.

We were meeting with Katherine Hannah, CEO, and Amamda Imbriglio, operations manager, for our visit. Upon arrival we were directed to the kitchen, where "Kat" (as she introduced herself) and Amanda were tidying up and organizing things. The Shelter had recently lost their cook and food prep person, so this added more responsibility to their day. They were anxious to fill this position. They were interviewing someone that afternoon and were very hopeful. In the shelter, guests are provided with three meals a day.

Since we were on the third floor, our tour began there. On this level the men's open space dormitory with 14 single beds is located. It is located next to the kitchen. There are also two offices (small closets) used for case management and the CEO. Two bathrooms with showers for the guests are on this level.

The main floor, also known as the Family Floor, can accommodate 24 guests, single mothers and their children in six rooms. There are two bathrooms with showers that are shared. This level also has a large room with a dining area with tables and chairs and a lounge area with a couch and television. Men are not allowed on this floor.

The lower level has a Nursery/Preschool room. There are many toys, games, books and art supplies. There was a preschool teacher for two afternoons a week, but at present this is not happening. This is also a position they are hoping to fill. Also on this floor is a storage room for donations. An industrial-sized washer and dryer are also located on this level for the staff to wash bed linens and towels. Guests must use outside laundry mats.

When asked about the most needed items and how our Board could help, Katherine and Amanda were very forthcoming with ideas. Twin size bedding, mattress protectors, pillows, blankets and bath towels are always needed. There is a great need for men's clothing: underwear, pants, T-shirts, shorts and jackets (depending on time of year) with a preference for larger men's sizes. Clothing that would be appropriate for job interviews is also needed. Other items needed were phones and phone chargers, cleaning supplies, disinfectant wipes, paper towels and garbage bags. The Shelter is trying to transition away from using paper products so they would like to use plastic/melamine dishes and cups with can be washed and reused. Katherine shared with us that she has applied for grants to help with the improvements needed in the facility.

The facility is in the process of replacing its beds with taller models so storage can be placed underneath the beds and spaces kept neater. She would like to see funding for a preschool teacher and adding a smartboard as a teaching aid. Katherine and Amanda are very energized and positive people. They are very appreciative and grateful for our Board's generosity and interest. It was our pleasure to visit them and learn more about Covenant Shelter.

by Mary Jo Shettle and Carol Keyes

Environmental Committee Yes! It's finally SPRING!

Planting a variety of plant species is an effective practice to deter possible disease and insect infestations. Native plants have adapted to the local climate, making them naturally hardy. Wildlife have evolved using them for food, cover and shelter. Proper selection, care, and placement of native plants can produce a landscape that is both visually attractive and beneficial to wildlife. Native plant descriptions, flowering and fruiting periods, site requirements, and wildlife habitat values may be found by following the link in this article.

Connecticut Native Perennial, Tree, & Shrub Availability List | Integrated Pest Management | College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources | University of Connecticut.

<https://ipm.cahnر.uconn.edu/connecticut-native-availability/>

Yoga with Isabelle Barbour

Isabelle has been practicing yoga for 20 years and is a certified 200 hour Kripalu yoga teacher. In her yoga classes she guides participants to notice the body, breath, and mind without judgement. Please feel free to reach out to Isabelle with questions or comments (isabelle@isabellebarbour.com). Classes for May are a gentle Tuesday Happy Hour Yoga 5:30-6:30 pm and an energetic Saturday Sangha (community) yoga class from 10:30-11:30am.

FCCOL Orientation

On Sunday, May 3rd following the 10:00 am worship service there will be an orientation meeting with Steve, Laura and Carleen for those wishing to learn more about the church and possibly considering membership. New members will be formally welcomed during our Worship Service on Sunday, May 10th. In the coming weeks, we look forward to talking more about what it means to become a member of FCCOL.

The Still Point (*In a World on Fire*) - by Jayne Gumpel

Ah yes~	you care fiercely.
there it is again.	But without surrendering your discernment
The itch.	to the machinery of despair.
The pull.	You grieve the children.
The mind spiraling through headlines,	You name the lies.
court rulings, bombed cities,	You refuse to normalize
lies repeated until they sound like weather.	what should never be normalized.
Pleasure still arrives- absurdly,	And you do it without letting hatred turn you
like a guest with wine.	into the very thing you oppose.
Pain arrives louder now,	You love justice
pounding on the door	without demanding certainty.
with the names of the dead,	You speak
the stripped rights,	without hardening your heart.
the casual cruelty dressed up as policy.	You resist
And you?	without losing your soul.
you keep answering as if it's all your fault,	Reality does not need your approval~
What if the chaos—	but it does require your presence.
the corruption,	And presence is not passive.
the grinding wars,	When you stop fighting the moment,
the selling of human life as collateral damage—	you don't withdraw from the world—
is weather moving through a collective	you stand more firmly inside it.
consciousness	Grounded.
that has forgotten how to pause?	Clear.
You are not the storm.	Unseduced by spectacle.
You are not the algorithm.	The secret is not disengagement.
You are not the outrage machine	It is regulation.
that feeds on your exhaustion.	Sit.
You are the stillness that can see clearly	Breathe.
without going numb.	Feel your feet on the ground
This, my friend, is equanimity.	while the world shakes.
Not indifference.	And when your mind lunges like a dog
Not neutrality.	at every siren,
Not "both sides."	every breaking alert,
Not looking away while people are erased,	every manufactured outrage:
bombed, caged, or dismissed	pause.
as acceptable losses.	Equanimity is not a prize.
Equanimity is staying present without letting	It is the inner architecture that allows you
rage hijack your capacity to act wisely.	to stay awake, stay human,
It's not that you stop caring—	and keep choosing how to respond in a world
	that profits from your collapse.

White Elephant Sale—Volunteers Needed

This year's sale dates are Friday 7/10 (9:00 to 2:00) & Saturday 7/11 (8:00 to 12:00)

It's spring cleaning time, so this is a good time of year to sort through the cellar and attic to put aside some of those treasures for this year's sale. Hold those goodies until the first intake day, Thursday, June 25th, followed by five more days of intake spread out over two weeks. Last year was our best ever sale, which we hope to beat this year with your help.

In prior years more than 200 folks have helped in some way or another sorting, organizing, outside setup, selling or cleanup after the sale. Even a few hours of your time will be greatly appreciated. You will have a great time, meet new friends and have a rewarding experience.

For those of you who would like to help out, please call one of the department heads listed below and volunteer to work in an area that interests you, or just show up during intake days and give us a few hours in any area you would like.

Jane Marolda	860-608-0257	Jayne Brundage	860-918-1321
Mike Gentry	860-608-3223	Rick Strickhart	860-304-4132
Scott Mahon	860-949-5422	Marianne Baez	860-608-8321
Deb Heminway	860-625-3144		



2026 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				JUNE 18 Pre-setup inside Hang signs, move tables, etc.	JUNE 19 Pre-setup inside Milk crates, tubs, etc.	JUNE 20 INSIDE SET UP 9-2 pm
				JUNE 25 INTAKE 9-2 pm	JUNE 26 INTAKE 9-2 pm Workers Lunch	JUNE 27 INTAKE 9-2 pm
	JUNE 29 CLOSED SORT & PRICE	JUNE 30 INTAKE 9-2 pm	JULY 1 INTAKE 9-2 pm	JULY 2 INTAKE 9-2 pm Workers Lunch	JULY 3 CLOSED Sort and Price	JULY 4th CLOSED
	JULY 6 SORT & PRICE 9-2 pm Move Art to Narthex Clean up & Finalize inside set-up	JULY 7 SET UP OUTSIDE 8-12 pm Big tents, sport goods, coffee, plant, baked goods, Toy Fly. Empty tables from garage	JULY 8 CLOSED SORT & PRICE FINALIZE ANY REMAINING OUTSIDE SET-UP.	JULY 9 SET UP OUTSIDE 8 AM>>> WORKERS LUNCH	JULY 10 SALE 9-2 PM	JULY 11 SALE 8-12 PM Clean up & Snacks 12 pm



We WILL NOT Accept:

Dirty or broken items or junk items	Gas cans with gas or kerosene
Appliances (large):	Guns, knives, weapons
Air conditioners	Magazines, newspapers
Refrigerators, freezers, stoves	Mattresses / Box springs
Washers, Dryers	Bed frames only
Bike helmets (used – safety concern)	Paint
Books: technical or textbooks	Phones
Encyclopedias	Punch bowls
Car seats – safety liability	Rugs
Cribs (used) – safety liability	Scanners
Chemicals	Stereo equipment, Speakers
Computers, monitors & software	Skis – old style downhill
Furniture:	Used stuffed animals
Stuffed sofa/chairs or sofa beds	Tires
Particle board	Treadmills
Dinning Room sets	Large artificial Christmas Trees
Lamps (floor or table)	(unless working & complete)
Lights or fans (ceiling)	Christmas tree stands
TV's – all styles	Single chairs, not in good shape
TV / Entertainment tables	

We GLADLY Accept (Quality Please!!!!)

Antiques, Fine China, Silver	CD's & DVD's (family content)
Appliances, small (working)	Furniture (not on the “will not accept list”)
Art, sculpture, posters, frames	
Baskets, vases, decorative bottles	Gifts, sundries, knickknacks
Bedding, linens	Jewelry: costume and fine
Boats, canoes, kayaks	Kitchen items, dishes, cookware
Bicycles, tricycles	Luggage – soft sided
Books: Nonfiction, fiction	Luggage – steamer trunks
Books: children's	Musical instruments
Christmas and holiday decorations	Plants, containers
Clothes: Children's, Men's, Women's	Shoes – all sizes and styles
Clothes: Fine, fashion	Skis (downhill must be shape style)
Clothes: Vintage, costume	Sporting goods (good condition)
Clothing accessories	Tools (house and garden)
Collections	Toys (new or gently used)
Curtains, drapes	Un-used stationary & supplies

MAY 2026 CALENDAR

- The Shoreline Food Pantry & Diaper Bank** *Saturday, May 2nd at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Cup-A-Joe Café Youth Group** *Saturday, May 2nd at 8:15 am* in the Library.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Saturday, May 2nd at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Shared Humanity** *Saturday, May 2nd from 5:00– 8:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.
- God's Neighborhood & Youth Group White Sands Beach Clean Up** *Sunday, May 3rd drop off at 10:00 am.*
- FCCOL and New Member Orientation Meeting** *Sunday, May 3rd at 11:15 am* in the Library.
- Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, May 4th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Tuesday, May 5th at 5:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Grief Group** *Wednesday, May 6th at 5:00 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.
- Board of Missions Meeting** *Wednesday, May 6th, at 4:00 pm* in the Library.
- Handbell Ringers Rehearsal** *Wednesday, May 6th at 6:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, May 6th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Bible Study** *Thursday, May 7th at 11:00 am* in the Library.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Saturday, May 9th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- New Member Sunday** *May 10th at 10:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.
- Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, May 11th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Board of Music and Arts Meeting** *Monday, May 11th at 4:00 pm* in the Library.
- The Benevolent Society Luncheon** *Tuesday, May 12th at 12:00 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Tuesday, May 12th at 5:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Board of Trustees Meeting** *Tuesday, May 12th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.
- Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, May 13th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Bible Study** *Thursday, May 14th at 11:00 am* in the Library.
- David Austin Wood Memorial Service** *Friday, May 15th at 12:00 pm* in the Meetinghouse.
- The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, May 16th at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Saturday, May 16th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Children's Sunday Worship Service** *May 17th at 10:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.
- Haitian Dinner and Presentation** *Sunday, May 17th at 5:30 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Ladies Who Stitch** *Monday, May 18th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Tuesday, May 19th at 5:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Summer Newsletter Deadline** *Wednesday, May 20th.*
- TransParent Meeting** *Wednesday, May 20th at 5:30 pm* in the Hoag Parlor.
- Choir Rehearsal** *Wednesday, May 20th at 7:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Bible Study** *Thursday, May 21st at 11:00 am* in the Library.
- Board of Stewardship Meeting** *Thursday, May 21st at 4:00 pm* in the Library.
- ARC Blood Drive** *Thursday, May 21st from 1 to 6 pm* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Writers at the Well** *Friday, May 22nd at 10:00 am* in the Hoag Parlor.
- The Shoreline Food Pantry** *Saturday, May 23rd at 8:30 am* in the Fellowship Hall.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Saturday, May 23rd at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- DINE New London** *Sunday, May 24th departing FCCOL at 3:30 pm.*
- FCCOL Office Closed for Memorial Day.**
- The Benevolent Society Meeting** *Tuesday, May 26th at 10:00 am* in the Library.
- Newsletter Folding** *Tuesday, May 26th* in the Library.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Tuesday, May 26th at 5:30 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Board of Deacons Meeting** *Tuesday, May 26th at 7:00 pm* in the Library.
- Confirmation Class Trip to Cape Cod** *Friday, May 29th -31st.*
- Susan Shelby Griswold Schavoir Memorial** *Saturday, May 30th at 11:00 am* in the Meetinghouse.
- Yoga with Isabelle** *Saturday, May 30th at 10:00 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.
- Reading the Bible in One Year Discussion** *Sunday, May 31st at 11:15 am* in the Sheffield Auditorium.

Giving Matters

A little over a year ago, I was asked to help with the choir's food preparation and service at DINE, the community meal center in New London. Despite having committed most of my adult life to volunteer service (a value my parents and our church instilled in me), I had never worked at a meal center. There weren't many opportunities to volunteer where I lived outside of Thanksgiving and Christmas mornings, when I was always busy cooking our own family dinners. I made my casserole dish thinking it was far from fine dining but probably good enough.

I thought I knew what it would be like: serving a meal to mostly unhoused, "down and out" individuals. Wrong! I am truly embarrassed at my ignorance and prejudice. First, my fellow volunteers were obviously thrilled to be able to be there on that Sunday evening. I quickly learned why. We were delivering love and kindness to regular people, some in families, many of whom seemed just like me and you. They responded with gratitude, joy, relief. When seconds of the casserole were available, several of them were thrilled - most young men, which reminded me of how my son and his friends at that age could eat, and eat, and eat.

These people were able to dine with dignity, and we helped fulfill an essential life need for them that evening. And I thought, "There but for the grace of God go I." And the next time I prepared the casserole for the meal center, I did so with more humility and caring in my heart.

So what does this have to do with Stewardship? After all, the FCCOL bylaws tell us that "The Board of Stewardship shall be responsible for securing financial support for the Church and its benevolent and mission activities through annual pledges by the Church membership." My experience taught me first hand what one of those activities was, and impressed on me just how vital our support for those activities are. That support comes from our volunteers, certainly, but also from our financial support for the community organizations that facilitate the delivery of those services. Those organizations couldn't exist without contributions from places like our church. And I remember the bible quote I first learned in my Sunday School lessons, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

by Lucia Chapman, Chairperson, Board of Stewardship

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

Fax: 860-434-1135

e-mail: fccol@fccol.org

Website: 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 Summer Newsletter will be Wednesday, May 20th.

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!



A print of the Meetinghouse by Diane Wythe Tyler.