



Bridgewater Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Good News

May 2022

PASTOR'S CORNER

7 Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. 8 The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. 1 John 4:7-9

It is amazing what one hears when we give ourselves permission to pause in stillness, silence, and wonder. For many of us, a moment to pause is a gift, a blessing, a privilege that we feel we can't afford and/or accept. Our list of to-dos', our family needs, our own needs, the fast pace world that revolves around us all telling us we don't have time to pause, to give ourselves this moment of stillness and silence, this moment to care for our mind, body, and spirit.

This month I was blessed with a week to leave the sounds and the to-dos of our daily living and immerse myself in silence, stillness, awe, and wonder that fed my soul, my mind, my body. It was a week of mindfulness classes, of yoga, of reading, of sermon planning, and a time of learning how to pause and lean into the silence the week afforded me. My world became alive in the silence, the colors more vibrant, the sounds of nature more rhythmic: bird song and squirrel chatter, leaves dancing and rustling, water splashing upon the rocks and in these precious moments I felt joy and thankfulness for this gift, this blessing.

In the midst of my silent retreat, I took time to imagine my installation service that will be held on Sunday, June 12th at 2pm here, at the church. As I gave myself space to start the planning of this service the above scripture spoke to my heart and became my meditation, and now, the scripture that will shape the service. My Installation Service, this time when the Litchfield South Association, Bridgewater Congregational, and myself gather together to bless and remember our call to live into and celebrate the covenant we established when I was first called to this church those many months ago. In the United Church of Christ's Book of Worship under the "Order for Installation of a Pastor" it reads: "In this order the association, at the request of a local church, confirms and celebrates the covenant between a local church and a newly called pastor and teacher and reaffirms the covenantal relationship of all the churches in the associations." Thus, my installation as YOUR pastor and teacher, goes beyond my being called by you all. The Installation Service is about our covenant – yours, mine, the association, the clergy and people of our LSA congregations – to each other as we share in our mission and ministry together. As we come together to be Jesus' hands and feet, God's voice in this world, our world. And we do all of this in covenantal love. A love that is vibrant and vital and life-giving. A love that is from and of God.

I realize that June is a busy time for many. However, it is my prayer, that whether in-person, virtually, or in-spirit you will join me on Sunday, June 12th at 2pm as we celebrate and confirm OUR covenant together, through my installation as your pastor and teacher. It is such a blessing and joy to do ministry alongside you all.

In the Spirit of Love, Pastor Abby

Bridgewater Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Abby Gackenheimer, Minister
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FAREWELL TO HOWARD ROVICS

On May 1st we hosted a wonderful farewell party for Howard Rovics, our beloved organist for the last 15 years. Howard and his wife Christina along with their daughter were very touched by the number of people who attended the farewell reception. The church presented Howard with a gift basket filled with Bridgewater chocolates and note cards, restaurant gift cards, and a book on the best pipe organs in the world.



ONE MAN'S GARBAGE IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE

The BCC had another successful Tag Sale on May 30th raising almost \$8,000.00.

Two weeks of gathering with FRIENDS, eating together, and arranging "lots of good stuff". With endless chatter and piles of "if it fits in the back of your car, we'll take it", we survived beautifully. "I feel relief when it's over but I can't wait for the next one in the spring of 2023.

About 50 Church people participated, and now I so miss being with everyone of you," said Jean Jusko.

A gargantuan THANK YOU and our love to Jean from her church family!



WE ALL WENT TO CAMP!

Thank you to all the campers (22 of us) who spent the day at Silver Lake. The morning Work Party included fixing windows, raking and hauling twigs and fallen leaves and filling up the bunks with mattresses. Silver Lake's Open House the following day had over a hundred visitors, and the Camp looked terrific!

We enjoyed a scrumptious lunch including a salad bar, Asian chicken tacos, and Cowboy cookies. We shared the dining hall with a group of women from the West Hartford Yoga Club who were there on a weekend retreat. After lunch Rev. Abby held a bible study outside on a beautiful porch overlooking the grounds. The theme evolved around the verse from *Matthew 6:34*: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

After bible study there was the option to tour the Camp by foot or by car. The tour included a peek at the cabins, dining & social halls, arts & crafts building, outside chapel and the pond.

The day concluded with a BBQ complete with hamburgers, hotdogs, fruit salad, green salad, baked beans, chips and the classic s'mores. Bonnie and Jan entertained us with traditional camp songs as we watched the bonfire from the cabin's porch.

Please remember to tell your family and friends that Silver Lake is both a child's camp, family camp and retreat center. It is the ideal place to hold a reunion, any celebration, or just a relaxing getaway with friends. A little bit of heaven right here in Connecticut!

Folks who are missing in the photo below: Jean J, Carol, Sharon and Bill, and Dick and Wendy.



The Food Pantry

The Pantry is available to any Bridgewater resident with participation held in the strictest confidence. There are no formal records of participants kept or reported. It's free and available Tuesday through Thursday 10:30 -2 pm or by appointment by calling (860) 354-8283. Whether a one-time visit or more regular, the Pantry is your free resource to help stretch your budget.

The Pantry has evolved into this smooth-running collaboration out of Peter Kivela's Eagle Scout project tackling the renovation and relocation to where it is today. It was great foresight and a lot of work! The project was finished in January 2015 and the firm roots of this program were set.

Today, the BCC is proud to partner with Town Hall and the Burnham Library as donation sites and the Burnham School which holds food drives. We appreciate our town Tax Collector, Cathy Vikstrom, not only putting out the call for needed items on the Town's website and in email blasts but also for including a food drive during her Drive Thru tax collections. Many thanks to our volunteers for gathering and shelving donated goods and to our Secretary, Ashli, for facilitating a smooth and confidential process for all participants.



Summer Mission Trip Opportunity

The Bridgewater Congregational Church (BCC) is pleased to invite you to join us on our annual Summer Mission Trip to Philadelphia (July 31 through August 5). You do not have to be a member of Bridgewater Congregational Church to attend. Both adults and teens are invited to attend.

The BCC has hosted many mission trips to Philadelphia in past years, and we have great contacts and wonderful memories. We stay at the Old First Reformed United Church of Christ in inner-city Philadelphia and serve at soup kitchens, community gardens, day care centers, etc. Old First plans our week's itinerary but always includes some of our favorite missions. Some of our favorite venues are The St. Francis Inn, The Bethesda Project and MANNA (see links below).

Some things to note: Adults have the option to stay at a nearby, inexpensive hotel or (on the floor) at Old First Church. Adults can choose to stay any length of time (1-5 nights). Adults can choose the venues that interest them the most. Adults will have free time to explore the City, attend a Phillies game or hunt down the best cheese steak in the City. Old First has a commercial kitchen for our use for our entire stay.

If you have an interest in attending or have any questions, please contact Rev. Abby Gackenheimer at 860-354-8283 or Candy Smith, Mission & Outreach Chair at 203-947-6675.

bethesdaproject.org
stfrancisinn.org
mannapa.org
oldfirstucc.org



Choir, Easter Sunday 2022

DID YOU KNOW?

Answers can be found on the last page of the newsletter.

“I have 4 brothers.”

“In the late 1700’s my ancestors settled in Bridgewater, CT, however I grew up in Bridgewater, NJ.”

“I play 8 musical instruments, and I nearly earned a black belt in Karate.”

“I have written songs and had some of them published. I also won a state award for my bass clarinet solo when in high school.”



Sunrise Service, Easter 2022

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

JEAN KAVANEK

Jean was born and grew up in West Hartford and attended secretarial school. She met her husband, Bill Kavanek, on a blind date and were married for 56 years. In 1954 Jean moved to Bridgewater and later moved to a stone house that her father-in-law had designed and built by himself. And there started a dedicated life to family and friends.

Jean joined the Bridgewater Congregational Church in the early 1960's at the time that Pastor Gerlinger served this church and the Roxbury Congregational Church. His wife, Lajla, served as the organist. Jean joined the choir that year and has been a member since that time. Jean formed the children's choir that met for 10 years and sang every Sunday. She was also a member of the Women's Fellowship, the Board of Trustees and the Music Committee.

At one time Bridgewater did not have a kindergarten class. Jean and a friend hired a teacher and opened a kindergarten class which met mornings in the church building. After four years the Burnham School was able to add a kindergarten class.

While she was raising her five children (with one set of twins!), Jean served as the Bridgewater Tax Collector for 14 years. She formed the Litchfield County Tax Collectors Association and served as its first president. After serving as interim First Selectman for four months, she ran against Bill Stuart and lost by only three votes! She served as Vice Chairman of the Republican Party and was awarded Chairman Emeritus status.

She also worked part time as secretary and receptionist in a law office and also at H&R Block. In her "spare time" she worked for four area newspapers serving as Bridgewater Correspondent. WOW! – a wonderful career.

Her husband, Bill Kavanak, was an accomplished artist and received great recognition. As a present to Jean, Bill would surprise her with a special painting every year on Valentine's Day. They have been on display at the Burnham Library, and Jean proudly presents them at her home.

Her "retirement" has allowed her to enjoy some personal pleasures as she helped create the Hilltop Singers in 2010; has continued her work with the Roxbury- Bridgewater Garden Club where she was appointed a life member. She has enjoyed her years as a member of the Congregational Church making so many wonderful relationships she would never had known.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

JAN LEWYN

Jan left her beloved Chatham home on Cape Cod 15 years ago to move to Bridgewater so she could be closer to her daughter Kathy Barlow, son-in-law Walt and granddaughters Emma and Kate. "People don't move away from the Cape; they move to the Cape," joked Jan. Jan also has two sons: Andy in Melbourne, Australia and Peter in Lakeville, Connecticut, and she is blessed with 4 beautiful granddaughters.

Many of us know several things about Jan. First, she has a passion for dogs. She has had English Setters, Spaniels and Collies. Many of us remember Jensen and Lily but there was also an Abigail, Dina, Dodi, Maxwell and a Duff. "Once I had 3 Collies, several chickens, a horse, some sheep, plus two toddlers and an infant," Jan confided.

Second, we all know Jan is one adventurous lady. When asked about her favorite adventures she mentioned the time she was taken by boat to Monomoy Island, a spit of land off of Cape Cod, where she stayed in a cabin that had NO utilities, doors or windows. She also loved her travel adventures in Australia and Japan.

The third thing we know extremely well about Jan is her artistic talents have no end. She started knitting at the age of ten and hasn't stopped. She is also a painter, craft artist, gardener, illustrator and poet. Jan began writing poetry in her teens as she sat in her family's apple tree. She fondly remembers Robert Frost visiting Tufts when she was a college student.

Jan composed most of her new children's book "The King, His Coat, His Goat and His Boat" from her bed, which is one of her favorite places to write. "Poetry is so much fun, because it's brief and I love rhyming," Jan explained.

Jan's greeting cards have become famous across the state. The cards are adorned with bits of floral petals and leaves found in her yard. She loves to use the Bee Balm plant which is a North American native and is very attractive to bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The bee balm flower has an open, daisylike shape, with tubular petals in shades of red, pink, purple, and white. She transforms them into "Bee Balm People", wreaths, and trees. Her cards can be purchased at the Good Morning Market in Woodbury, the BCC Christmas Shoppe, or directly from Jan.





RIBBONS AND CHEESE

The BCC has hosted two sessions where we made lapel ribbon pins to raise money for Ukraine. The pins are being sold all over CT and Senator Richard Blumenthal was spotted wearing one at the confirmation hearings for Ketanji Brown Jackson. Both sessions were extremely well attended and all proceeds will go to the Lviv Red Cross to buy medical supplies.

The church also sold cheeses from the Wakker Cheese shop, a small family owned store in Wisconsin who is donating all online sales to humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. The owners are originally from Kharkiv, and they wanted to help their family and friends. The shop specializes in a variety of gouda and cheddar cheeses, Dutch milk chocolates and coffees. Please visit: www.wakkercheese.com to place an order.



OUR QUARTERLY QUESTION ?!?

In each Newsletter we will include a QUARTERLY QUESTION. It is our hope that our readers will answer the question if they have an idea or an opinion to share.

Please send your comments to: office.bwucc@gmail.com

What can the Bridgewater Congregational Church do to be more relevant and visible to the community?



Did you know answers:

Dick Jones

Dennis MacDonald

Jan Gregory

Jamie Pfeiffer