

# Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD

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Independence Day  
by Steven (Steve) Liechty

I am a fan of freedom. I believe in the inherent dignity of all God's beautiful children. I am a fan of the notion that all are created equal. I certainly appreciate the notion that we are all endowed by our Creator with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I will resist every effort to deprive humanity of those God-given endowments. And when any power, authority, or government persists in ongoing attempts to deny persons of those precious gifts, the governed should not only resist but revolt.

I am aware how precarious the maintenance of those rights can be, and how fragile becomes the human spirit when they are deprived of any race. Being white and being American ranks me among the precious few who can live an entire life without worrying about how I

will recover those inalienable, God-endowed rights.

And so I will join the throngs of Americans who this week celebrate our hard won Independence. The stories of the brave and heroic leaders who risked their lives to escape tyranny and secure freedom for the generations that would follow is a story worth celebrating.

But I won't be waving my stars and stripes. I won't sing "God Bless America". I won't obediently rise and place my hand over my heart when our National Anthem is played. I have nothing at all against those who will, and who do so with great pride.

Mine is not an act of protest. It is not a statement about how America has never fully lived out its creed that all are created equal. It is not a commitment to Black Lives Matter or any other protest movement, although I am fully committed to that and other movements seeking a just world for all.

I am a citizen of the world. I resist the temptation to believe that lines drawn on maps, lines that move as a result of having bigger guns and higher ambitions, define me and separate me from those who live on the other side of those arbitrarily drawn lines.

As long as flags and anthems and national hymns and patriotic fervor breed the notion of any nation's exceptionalism and compel their youngest, best and brightest to take up arms against enemies foreign and domestic, I will refuse to bend the knee to any entity or product that smacks of national pride.

I love my freedom, and I appreciate that a government has been established with checks and balances to secure that freedom. I will sing my praises to God for endowing me with those precious, inalienable rights. I will continue to resist oppressive forces that assemble at the expense of any citizen's rights.

Mindful of this, I end with the words of one of my favorite Hymns. It is written to the tune of Finland's national anthem, entitled "Finlandia" written by Jean Sibelius during their country's struggle to be free of Soviet Russia.

It reads:

"This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine.  
This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;  
But other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

"My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine;  
But other lands have sunlight, too, and clover, and skies are everywhere as blue as mine.  
O hear my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for their land and for mine."

Let there be peace on Earth, dear gentle traveler, and let it begin with us on this, our journey Into the Mystic.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 1,629.00	\$ 1,666.67	98%
R22—Pledges	\$ 8,234.00	\$ 7,916.67	104%
R23—Contributions	\$ 1,627.61	\$ 2,916.67	56%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 2,587.97	\$ 4,166.67	62%
Capital Campaign	\$ 922.00	\$ 1,250.00	74%

Thru May 31:

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Council met on June 10th, 2025 for our last council meeting until September. We talked about several things that include

1. Looking into Venmo to receive donations or purchases for future events if someone does not have cash.
2. Duck Race, Sun Valley, Fall Flea Market, and Holly Bazaar dates.
3. The Tolland Association Annual Meeting and what changes were presented that may effect our church. The only change were our dues we pay every year went from \$.72 cents per member to \$1.00 per member.
4. We also discussed numerous other things like double side inserts to show upcoming events, updating building use policy, and numerous other things.

### T-Shirts

Everyone who ordered a T-shirt the order has been put through and paid by our treasurer. We hope to have them ready before the duck race. The shirts are \$12 and will be reimbursed for what has been paid already. Thank you and I will let you know when they're available!!

### Pastoral Search Committee

Our seven member pastoral search committee put together a profile to hire a Designated Term Minister. It has been adjusted to fit the new format for the UCC and is available for pastors to look at. The UCC will reach out if we have any interested candidates and we can make changes if we need to along the way if need be.

Thank you everyone for handing in your detailed reports and enjoy the summer!! We will meet again on Sunday September 21st following the service.

Andrew Greaves — Moderator

## TRUSTEES

Our two furnaces were cleaned on June 4th with no issues presented. Banner Water will do our annual water softener maintenance on July 16th at 7 am. We received quotes last year and this year for sealcoating our upper parking lot. We decided to use Rose Paving, LLC. This year's quote was 518 LF of crack seal for \$1375.00 and 10230 SF of two coats of sealcoating for \$2750.00 for a total of \$4125.00. This work was completed, and we all agree looks really good. We have a construction crew using our bottom parking lot for a three-week project. If there are any delays, they will move their materials across the street during the weekend of the duck race. They called before using our lot and offered a donation. The Trustees will try to get a \$1000.00 donation and ask them to level out any areas in our lot that took a hit during this process.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew Greaves Board of Trustees Chair

# IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers for Ed Parker as he receives treatment for a medical issue ... prayers for Donna, Lucy and Sarah ... prayers for safe travel ... prayers for my mother-in-law and her workmates ... prayers for warm weather ... prayers of peace for Florence ... prayers for health ... prayers for Aloma recovering from illness, Tracy on the loss of her mother ... prayers for Patrick Gilhuly and Nancy Pease ... prayers for sister Angela fighting lung cancer ... prayers for physical and mental health for my family ... prayers for Aunt Laura fighting cancer ... prayers for Bertrand and Claire ... prayer for peace ... prayers for Polly fighting cancer ... prayers our two kids in the military as well as all troops serving home and abroad ... prayers for Lorene battling cancer ... prayers of comfort and strength for a life choice ... prayers of healing for Dick Krar ... prayers for Kim and Bill ... prayers for the Demars family ...

Celebrations: the birth of Harper Lee Wentworth ... congratulations to all the graduates ... a great granddaughter who celebrated her third birthday ... Noah celebrating his twelfth birthday

...

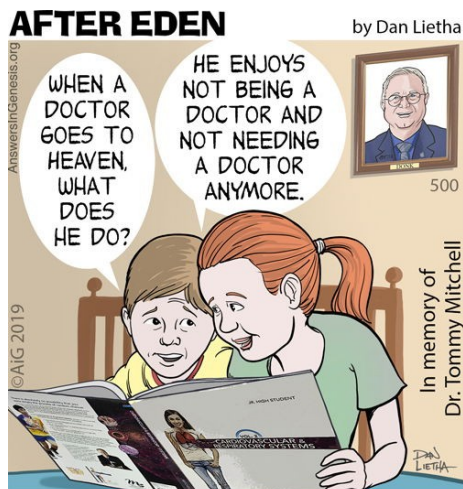
## LIGHTING OF THE CROSS

In memory of **Bruce Ladr** and **Linda Sprague** by Cindy Lingley

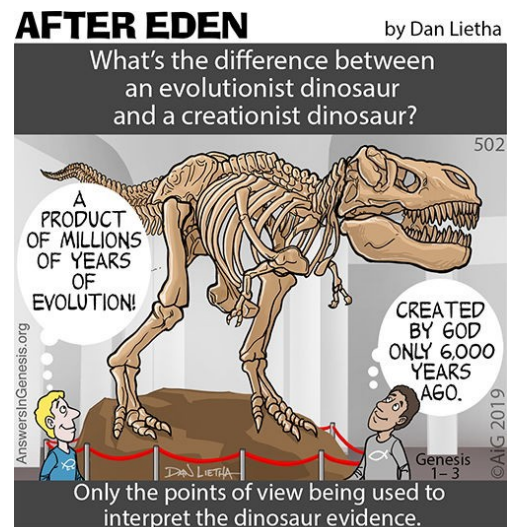
In memory of **Joe Demars** by Ruth Ann and Mike Talamini.

In loving memory of **Linda Sprague, Barbara Kellem, Warren Bradway** and **Michelle DelBene** by John and Judy DelBene

## A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .



God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21:4 (ESV)



Only the points of view being used to interpret the dinosaur evidence.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:8 (ESV)

# BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

## July Birthdays

9 Shawn Depault  
12 Stephen Lingley  
13 Kenneth May  
16 Vi Irish  
17 Lisa Ostrowski  
18 Aaron Ladr  
21 Linda May  
23 Margaret Salisbury

## July Anniversaries

12 Ed and Dorraine Parker  
22 Bruce and Peg Ekenbarger  
31 Jason and Heather Hatch

# SUNDAY SCHOOL / CHRISTIAN ED

We went on a hike on June 1st at the West Stafford Conservation area behind the West Stafford School. This hike consisted of 5 kids and 6 adults. We had a fun time and look forward to soapstone in the Fall!

We had Children's Sunday on June 22nd. We had a quick presentation and following the service had a pot-luck in Fellowship Hall. I just want to thank everyone again guardians, teachers, and students for making this a great Sunday School year. I look forward to doing more with all of you this summer and when Sunday School Starts back up again!!

Sarah and I are planning a tie dye event this summer with dates TBD that I can figure out will work with families!!

For any families that attend services this Summer Sarah will have coloring activities during the service for the children, and we look forward to seeing everyone!!

Rally Day will be Sunday September 7th.

Sunday School/Christian Ed

# DUCK RACE

Its that time of year! The duck race will be Saturday, July 12, 2025. There will be games and lunch from 12 – 1 with the race starting at 1 PM.

Sign up sheets will be downstairs. As with all of our fundraisers your help is needed to make this successful. There are things of all interests to do!!

We will also have a bake sale that day. Please bake your favorite cookies and package 3 to a snack baggie (per board of health).

Raffle prizes are most important. If you would care to donate a raffle prize, please sign up and bring them in as soon as possible. Linda always liked duck themed fun prizes (although any prize is welcome!) and they went over very well. If you will be adding a gift card to your prize, please make them \$15 - \$25 cards.

Lunch will be served, games will be provided for the children and there will be some duck souvenirs for sale. Linda has made this a highly successful fund raiser over the years and in her memory – I'd like to see it succeed. Your help is greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions or ideas, please give me a call at 413-374-3247. Leave a message if you don't reach me and I will call you back.

Thank you!

Kim Dickson – Event Coordinator

# PULPIT SUPPLY

July 6th: Rev Rob Donaldson  
July 13th: Rev Rob Donaldson  
July 20th: Rev Joe Tobin  
July 27th: Rev Rob Donaldson

August 3rd: TBD  
August 10th: Rev. Carrie Bail  
August 17th: TBD  
August 24th: Rev. Craig Cowing  
August 31st: Rev. Craig Cowing

# MISSIONS

We collected four very large grocery bags for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry in the Month of June. All will be going to the pantry tomorrow morning (Tuesday July 1). I will have to make two trips from my car to deliver them. I am always so proud of how generous our church family is. For what we lack in size, we sure do make up with our hearts.

June was a Safe Net month, and we were able to collect \$30.00 for Safe Net which will help them continue to distribute food to our neighbors in need.

Troop C, The Connecticut State Police in Tolland are hosting a Pet Drive for the entire month of July. They are Accepting donations of Pet food and Supplies which will be distributed to various animal organizations in our area, including the Stafford animal Control and a Non profit animal sanctuary in Coventry which rehabs various animals in need. I will offer to bring donations to the Tolland Police Barracks at the end of July, should any of our Church members want to participate.

I will also start collecting various school supply items all Summer, for the Children in our Town. I will bring them to the Stafford Human Services by Summer's end. Watch for a bin, which I will label and leave to the right of the Front Door entrance.

As a reminder, we have a total of \$150.00 in our account which was donated to our Church for Local Missions. If we have not found another need, I am thinking it definitely could be put to good use at Holiday/Christmas time at the end of the year.

Thank you to all our Congregation for your continued generosity.

Sincerely  
Michele Sedor, Chair

# REST STOP FUNDRAISER

We had our Rest Stop fundraiser on June 27th and 28th. I want to give a huge thank you to all of our volunteers who set up, cleaned everything, worked the event. It is truly important work and thank you all for being a part of this. Thank you, Tom, for letting use the trailer and generator. This event just doesn't happen without it. Thank you also to the Gowdy's who worked very hard to organize this event and make sure we had everything we needed so it ran smoothly. After reimbursing all expenses for this event we made \$508.59 on Friday and \$719.70 on Saturday for a grand total of \$1228.29. We give 10 % of our proceeds to Dana Farber which equals out to \$122.82 leaving the church with a total of \$1105.53! Thank you everyone again. It is unknown if we will do this again in September or start out slow.

# **E D I B L E   I D E N T I T I E S :   A   H E R I T A G E   I N S P I R E D P O T L U C K**

Hey everyone! On September 7th we are planning a multicultural potluck after worship. It is something Sarah and I have been talking about for years. Dishes people bring in would correlate to your ethnic heritage- not just meals you like to cook, but meals inspired by your ethnicity. Examples of ethnicity: Japanese, Scottish, Indigenous... ethnicity can also be self-described and specific, based on where someone lives. Examples of that would be Asian-American, or Italian-American. We would like you to write up a blurb about your dish, that will be displayed by each dish. You are also welcome to bring your family and friends! This could be a neat opportunity to explore our ancestral identities.

# July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 - Independence Day	5 Little Shop - 10 - 2
6 Worship Service 9:30 AM	7	8	9	10	11	12 Little Shop - 10 - 2 DUCK RACE
12 Worship Service 9:30 AM	14	15	16	17	18	19 Little Shop - 10 - 2
20 Worship Service 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday	21	22	23	24	25	26 Little Shop - 10 - 2
27 Worship Service 9:30 AM	28	29	30	31		