

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD

IN THIS ISSUE

- MOTHERS DAY
- CALENDAR
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
- TRUSTEES REPORT
- PASTORS FOR MAY
- IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH
- WORK DAY
- A LIGHTER MOMENT ...
- BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
- MAY FLEA MARKET
- PANCAKE BREAKFAST
- TOWN-WIDE CLEAN-UP
- G. R. O. W. MEETING MINUTES
- POLISH DINNER
- ACTS BIBLE STUDY
- YARD GOATS GAME
- PAINT PARTY!

History of Mothers Day

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday."

Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.

Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s.

Ann Reeves Jarvis and Julia Ward Howe

The origins of Mother's Day as celebrated in the United States date back to the 19th century. In the years before the Civil War, Ann Reeves Jarvis of West Virginia helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" to teach local women how to properly care for their children.

These clubs later became a unifying force in a region of the country still divided over the Civil War. In 1868 Jarvis organized "Mothers' Friendship Day," at which mothers gathered with former Union and Confederate soldiers to promote reconciliation.

Another precursor to Mother's Day came from the abolitionist and suffragette Julia Ward Howe. In 1870 Howe wrote the "Mother's Day Proclamation," a call to action that asked mothers to unite in promoting world peace. In 1873 Howe campaigned for a "Mother's Peace Day" to be celebrated every June 2.

Other early Mother's Day pioneers include Juliet Calhoun Blakely, a temperance activist who inspired a local Mother's Day in Albion, Michigan, in the 1870s. The duo of Mary Towles Sasseen and Frank Hering, meanwhile, both worked to organize a Mothers' Day in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some have even called Hering "the father of Mothers' Day."

Anna Jarvis Turns Mother's Day Into a National Holiday

The official Mother's Day holiday arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother's 1905 death, Anna Jarvis conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

After gaining financial backing from a Philadelphia department store owner named John Wanamaker, in May 1908 she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia. That same day also saw thousands of people attend a Mother's Day event at one of Wanamaker's retail stores in Philadelphia.

Following the success of her first Mother's Day, Jarvis—who remained unmarried and childless her whole life—resolved to see her holiday added to the national calendar. Arguing that American holidays were biased toward male achievements, she started a massive letter writing campaign to newspapers and prominent politicians urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother's Day as an annual holiday, and Jarvis had established the Mother's Day International Association to help promote her cause. Her persistence paid off in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure officially establishing the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

Jarvis Decries Commercialized Mother's Day

Anna Jarvis had originally conceived of Mother's Day as a day of personal celebration between mothers and families. Her version of the day involved wearing a white carnation as a badge and visiting one's mother or attending church services. But once Mother's Day became a national holiday, it was not long before florists, card companies and other merchants capitalized on its popularity.

While Jarvis had initially worked with the floral industry to help raise Mother's Day's profile, by 1920 she had become disgusted with how the holiday had been commercialized. She outwardly denounced the transformation and urged people to stop buying Mother's Day flowers, cards and candies.

Jarvis eventually resorted to an open campaign against Mother's Day profiteers, speaking out against confectioners, florists and even charities. She also launched countless lawsuits against groups that had used the name "Mother's Day," eventually spending most of her personal wealth in legal fees. By the time of her death in 1948 Jarvis had disowned the holiday altogether, and even actively lobbied the government to see it removed from the American calendar.

Mother's Day Around the World

While versions of Mother's Day are celebrated worldwide, traditions vary depending on the country. In Thailand, for example, Mother's Day is always celebrated in August on the birthday of the current queen, Sirikit.

Another alternate observance of Mother's Day can be found in Ethiopia, where families gather each fall to sing songs and eat a large feast as part of Antrosht, a multi-day celebration honoring motherhood.

In the United States, Mother's Day continues to be celebrated by presenting mothers and other women with gifts and flowers, and it has become one of the biggest holidays for consumer spending. Families also celebrate by giving mothers a day off from activities like cooking or other household chores.

At times, Mother's Day has also been a date for launching political or feminist causes. In 1968 Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King Jr., used Mother's Day to host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women's groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Little Shop 10 - 2
7 Worship Service 9:30 AM	8	9	10	11	12	13 Little Shop 10 - 2
					SPRING FLEA MARKET	SPRING FLEA MARKET
14 Worship Service 9:30 AM	15	16 Church Council 6:30 PM	17	18	19	20 Little Shop 10 - 2
21 Worship Service 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday	22	23	24	25	26	27 Little Shop 10 - 2
28 Worship Service 9:30 AM	29	30	31			

TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 276.00	\$ 183.33	151%
R22—Pledges	\$ 4,409.00	\$ 3,333.33	132%
R23—Contributions	\$ 1,815.00	\$ 1,166.67	155%
R24-Fund Raising	\$ 528.94	\$1,666.67	32%
Capital Campaign	\$ 558.00	\$ 421.33	132%

Thru March 31

CHURCH COUNCIL

Good Day everyone, hope you are all well. The Church Council met on Tuesday April 18th at 6:30 PM, we discussed a number of things and I will highlight a few.

The Clerk reported that the average attendance is 17 people per Sunday.

Deacons report that Easter flowers were delivered to our members who aren't always able to get to church so they know we're thinking of them. Sarah has been successful at scheduling and filling the pulpit on a weekly basis. Some of the upcoming pastors in the near future are: Kari Nicewander, Bob LaRochelle, B. Suzy Rivera and Carolyn Young.

Trustees report that the lawn has been mowed, the deck on the parish house has been power washed and a corroded pipe in the parish house bath room has been replaced. A thank you to Tom Hoffle for acquiring the materials and doing the plumbing.

The Treasurer report shows all bills are paid and obligations met.

Mission Committee reports that food collections for the food pantry is ongoing and well received at the food pantry.

The search committee reports that we still have not received any profiles for a pastor. We continue communicating with our conference minister and work on filling our pulpit. In the meanwhile, enjoy the supply ministers that Sarah has arranged for us.

New Business: We discussed and implemented recognizing and celebrating members on milestone anniversaries.

Thank you all, and may God Bless.

Church Council
Bruce Ladr, Moderator

The Church Council met in special session on Sunday April 23rd after church to discuss reaching out to the Eastford Congregational Church and offering whatever help they may need after fire destroyed their church.

I contacted Pastor Michael Moran and told him that he and his congregation were in our thoughts and prayers. I offered our help in any form they may need now or in the future. I offered the use of our facilities if they needed them. He thanked us for our kindness but said they were covered for the time being. Numerous groups and churches had reached out as we did and for now, they are set with places to meet.

During our conversation he said that luckily the financial people (trustees) had kept updating their insurance so they are in relatively good shape. The only issue might be the most recent increases in material costs but that should be covered by fund raising.

Pastor Moran thanked us again for reaching out and assured me that if the need arises, he will most certainly call us.

Thank you all, and may God Bless.

Church Council
Bruce Ladr, Moderator

TRUSTEES

Hey everyone! Just a couple things this month. It was noticed in our Parish House downstairs bathroom that the sink pipe was corroded. Tom Hoefle replaced the supply line and cleaned up the pipe. Thanks Tom! Lastly, it was noticed that our phone bill was not changed. I contacted Frontier and got a new order put through. The good news with this mistake is we will now save \$659 over the year rather than the initial \$420.

Kind regards,

Andrew Greaves, Board of Trustees Chair

PASTORS FOR MAY

May 7th - Pastor Bob LaRochelle

May 14th - Deacons

May 21st - Reverend B Suzy Rivera

May 28th - Reverend Linda Huff

IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: continued prayers for Donna, Doris, Lucy and Sarah ... prayers for Mark, Marie, Chris and the Dahlstrom family ... prayers for all those affected by recent natural disasters... prayers for the Ukrainians who have lost everything. Keep the faith strong and help to rebuild their land. Please pray the war will end ... prayers for a good recovery for Hailey who had emergency surgery ... prayers for a friend who has family problems ... continued prayers for Vicki Littell ... prayers of strength for Lauri as she grieves the passing of her mom ... prayers of safe travel as we head to Florida for a weeks vacation ... prayers for Anne and her family ... prayers for those who have had a great loss ... continued prayers for Theo in chemo and all who struggle with illness ... prayers for my daughter Marilyn who is having a difficult pregnancy ... prayers for F. L. with cancer ... prayers for R. R. who husband was badly burned ... Easter blessings to all and birthday blessings to Andrew ... prayers for my brother and Alicia in the loss of their pets ... blessings for my sister ... prayers for Peter enduring chemo ... prayers for a grandson who had a stroke ... prayers for Kyle and Angelique on the imminent birth of son Oliver ... prayers for all of our trans kids ... prayers of joy for having an expanding family. ... prayer for life long safety for Liam and Clarence ... prayers for Tracy preparing for open heart surgery ... prayers for healing for Charlee Fay who fell and lacerated her face ... prayers for Pat who is fighting a head cold ... prayers for Patty whose cancer has returned ... prayer for Linda and my mother-in-law ... prayers for my brother who still needs a liver transplant ... prayers for my mom in heaven ... prayers for Roger Tellefsen who is in the hospital with breathing problems ... prayers for the parishioners of Eastford Congregational Church ... prayers for a friend Stu battling cancer ... prayers for Gary following heart surgery ... prayers for people seeking employment ... prayers for the Dignazio family ... prayers for Al and Melissa and family ... continued prayers for Joe and Flo ... prayers for Jeff healing from surgery ... prayers for Aunt Millie who suffered a fall. Celebrations: my sister Karen is here this week ... Bruce celebrates his birthday ... we ask God's blessing on the marriage of our granddaughter Sierra to Ethan Ives.

WORK DAY

Work Day will be May 6th from 9 to 12. Thank you to everyone who has signed up so far. I have a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall with numerous roles still available. If you can't go that day but want to tackle one of those roles, just let me know or mark it off as complete on the sign up sheet. I am also open to anything else that people may think we need to do. Thank you!

Andrew

A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine, they laid down for the night, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." "What does that tell you?" Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies, and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?" Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke. "It tells me that someone has stolen our tent."

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

May Birthdays

May	5	Liam Parker
	21	Tom Hoefle
	22	Sheila Hoefle

May Anniversaries

May	16	Murray and Ellen Lancaster
	17	Ross and Lee Kerr
	19	Adam and Rosalie Starvish
	19	Andrew and Sarah Greaves

MAY FLEA MARKET

The date has been set for Friday May 12th and Saturday May 13th 9 to 3 both days. We will do our set up on Thursday May 11th. I am hoping that we can get a lot of help to run this event. A sign up sheet is in the Fellowship Hall. Please find the day and time that you will be available to lend a hand or you can just call me 860-684-5689 and I will be happy to sign you up. As usual, we will have a baked goods table so I am counting on you bakers to make some of your treats for us to sell. It is best if the treats are not inclined to melt since the days may be warm and sunny. We will be offering the usual hot dog lunch on both days, approximately 11:30 to 1:00. I'm looking forward to another successful sale.

Linda Sprague
Flea Market Coordinator

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

On May 21st, we will be having a Friends and Family Pancake breakfast following worship! It would be great if everyone could try to reach out to at least one friend or family member who may be interested, and invite them to the service and breakfast. This is a no-pressure way for people to check us out, but also to celebrate special people in our lives. You can grab an invitation downstairs at coffee hour, and sign-up for food will be next to the tickets. Please let Sarah know if you have a confirmed guest, so that we have an accurate head-count for food. No oven food yet please- crockpots welcome.

TOWN-WIDE CLEAN-UP AND EARTH DAY

On April 22nd, some of us participated in a town-wide clean-up, followed by Earth day festivities in Hyde Park. Through our pot-a-pollinator station, we had the pleasure of educating the public on the importance of our pollinators and got to know some compassionate young people. The kids expressed their love of birds, butterflies and bees, and were happy to be given the chance to draw more of them into their gardens. A few peo-

ple expressed wanting to visit our church! We made \$101 in donations, and the organizer (Amber Wakley) let us know that she would keep in touch with us whenever there was a town event that we may be interested in. Thank you to our volunteers! And special thanks to Garden's Dream in Enfield, who donated 6 flats of flowers to us for free.

G . R . O . W . M E E T I N G M I N U T E S

Andrew and I attended the Southern New England Conference's regional G.R.O.W. gathering. The main purpose behind this meeting was to make connections with other local church bodies and strengthen our relationships within our region. It was also a chance for us to see what the newly established Southern New England Conference of the UCC has been up to. Reverend Darrell Goodwin led many of the activities, along with our area conference minister Reverend Isaac Lawson, and a few other ministers. The Conference was held in The Congregational Church in South Glastonbury.

The meeting began with discussion and facts about church attendance and giving. Both church attendance and giving have decreased in Christian churches, since the pandemic. The way people approach "church" and what people are seeking for spiritual fulfillment has also changed. We have seen the emergence of micro-churches and house churches: small bodies of believers that are meeting in more intimate settings. We are also seeing more "neighborhood churches", which are laser-focused on the needs of the immediate community. We discussed in groups the ways that we have seen decline and major transitions in our own churches. We also discussed the things that give us hope. These were discussed in the context of G.R.O.W.

G.R.O.W. stands for Generosity, Revitalization, Outreach and Wonder.

In our discussions on Generosity, we went over sharing resources between our local UCC churches. This means connecting with other local UCC churches and lifting one another up. In particular, we discussed that people are always looking for ways to give, and want to do good, but aren't always given the opportunity. Within our churches, this can mean letting the people of the church KNOW when there is an immediate concern, and being very open about the cost of addressing said concern (or what the goal is for that project). We have done this recently, when addressing the concerns about peeling paint in the sanctuary, and replacing a pipe in the parish house. Generosity can also be tied to our ministry.

For Revitalization, the verse of Isaiah 43:19 was discussed ("Behold! I am doing a new thing...").

What opportunities do we see to serve our community and our world in new ways? What old ways are we clinging onto that aren't necessarily helpful? How can we serve those who need it most, in our present day? Who is the outcast, the poor, the widow- where is Jesus?

One church shared that they had begun a Refugee Resettlement ministry. Due to this ministry alone, they welcomed seven new members that Sunday, who were drawn to the church's efforts to help refugees.

Under Outreach, Reverend Goodwin spoke about one of his recent experiences. He went to a bar that was frequented by college students. He remarked that many of the students had grown up with a less-than-loving, even hateful image of "God", and a Christianity that was homophobic and racist. Many were engrossed with the image of an all-loving, inclusive God that Reverend Goodwin offered instead. He had also recently spoken with a woman who hadn't been to church in 20 years. After she had her baby baptized, she left her church and never came back, because the sermon was exclusionary and left a bad taste in her mouth. As Rev Goodwin described our churches, she was intrigued and asked, "Where can I find one of these churches?" After that night, some of the students e-mailed him looking for UCC churches near them. The SNEC has just launched a new project called "Find Hope Now". The website FindHopeNow.org will direct people to a SNEC UCC church database, to find UCC churches in their area. So far, the page has had over 2000 clicks. They are looking for more ways to connect people who are searching for a church with our churches.

Rev Goodwin urged us to show people how different a UCC church can be from other churches. We offer something unique, that they may not see in other churches- acceptance of who you are, and a passion for issues you care about.

Instead of doing the old door to door, "Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?", the prevailing message for this day and age seems to be "Come and find hope. Find a sense of community". Young people are especially lacking a greater sense of community, and could benefit from connecting with us- again, it al-

ways helps to engage in ministries they may be drawn to.

Finally, we discussed "Wonder". The Conference has been coaching pastors on leaning into a sense of awe that may connect well with potential members. Sometimes we can stifle a sense of awe, by not considering that what would be moving to us is not always what would be moving to others. Often, we present our churches as "Come here and be transformed!". Yet we do not allow people to come and inspire change in us. Are we looking to cater to a small crowd, or are our communities ready to let God's newness in?

That was what we gathered from the presentation, prayer and discussions! Any questions, come ask Andrew and me.

Sincerely,
Sarah

P O L I S H D I N N E R

On May 20 the Ladies Guild of Saint Edward Church is holding a Polish Dinner. The dinner will be held in St. Edward Hall and be served at 5:15. The menu consists of Rye Bread, Galumpki, Kielbasa, Pierogi, a vegetable, and assorted desserts and beverages. Tickets are a \$15 donation and can be obtained by calling Pat at 860-684-9419 or the church office at 860-684-2705.

A C T S B I B L E S T U D Y

Soon, we will be engaging in the "Listen Up!" Bible study series. Here is a description of our next study:

"Early followers of Jesus were discussing many issues that are still relevant to us today - leadership and power, cultural diversity and encountering people of different races and cultures, wealth distribution, the relationship between church and state. This and more are discussed in the Book of Acts. Through this study of Acts, we are looking for a fresh take on what it means to be a Christian, and to reclaim a feeling of wonder, excitement and adventure that early followers of Jesus may have felt!"

If you are interested in joining our Bible study, a survey will be e-mailed out soon to determine what dates and times work best for everyone. Please e-mail SCCBibleStudy@aol.com for details, or if your availability varies from day to day.

Sincerely,
Sarah R.G.

H A R T F O R D Y A R D G O A T S

The Hartford Yard Goats Faith and Family game will be on Saturday August 5 at Dunkin' Park in Hartford. Tickets are \$15 and signup sheets will be available in Fellowship Hall. In the past our group has had a great time, so plan to participate.

P A I N T P A R T Y

Come and have a relaxed and fun time with family or friends on Saturday July 15th at 12 noon. No experience is needed and lunch will be served. Bring your own wine. The cost is \$25 per person.