

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD
PASTOR: REV. DR. ROBERT R. LAROCHELLE

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With the onset of the month of November, we are drawing near a unique and special time of the year. Over these next few weeks, we will head toward the celebration of Thanksgiving AND as we see when we turn on our televisions, go to our mail, walk into stores or spend time on the Internet, we are right on the edge of a full scale time of preparation for Christmas!

These past few weeks have been quite special to me as I have begun immersing myself in service as your pastor. I have been most grateful for the spirit that is present when we gather here for worship on Sunday mornings. There is so much to be thankful for here in this wonderful church community! I am also inspired by what I have seen in the amazing ways people serve within this church. The commitment to this congregation on the part of so many is most inspiring!

One of the things, among many, that I have found to be very special on Sundays is the participation of our children in our children's message and their active involvement in Sunday School. Thank you so much to those who spend quality time with our young people and offer them such great opportunities to experience the active, vibrant life of this church community. What is so wonderful is that over the years I have found that this involvement with youth in church congregations can have a lasting impact over the course of their lives!

What I am hoping for is that at some point, we will be able to involve middle and high school youth in the life of this church as well. This has always been an important part of my ministry in the churches I have served as pastor. This is an area of programming within churches that has undergone significant decline over the past 15 to 20 years. However, I believe that local churches need to explore different ways in which to involve youth. I will be sharing more of my thoughts about this in the following months.

Along this line, I want you to know that I will be involved in two local groups involving clergy of different congregations in the area. I will be participating in meetings of Tolland Association UCC clergy and have already met with the leader of that Association and have established connections with the ecumenical clergy group here in Stafford. In these meetings, I will be bringing up the topic of youth ministry in local churches.

In addition to our weekly gatherings for worship, in the past month we also enjoyed a very special and joyful Blessing of the Animals service and have begun what will be a monthly program of offering educational opportunities on a variety of topics. Under the leadership of our Council, we have developed upcoming programs for the benefit both of our church and the wider community. The ministry of those serving in our Little Shop continues to be a wonderful service!

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you who have been so kind and supportive to me over these first few weeks in which I have been blessed to serve here in this congregation!

As we draw near the beginning of November, we look forward to the celebration of Thanksgiving and soon thereafter to the beginning of the season of Advent as we enter our time of preparation for Christmas. Through our worship and our outreach, this will be a very special season in our lives and the life of our church community. In our December newsletter, I will be getting very specific about the Advent season and what it can mean for all of us. In addition, the monthly Adult Education programs will include exploration of this special season of preparation for an outbreak of Christmas joy!!!

Over the years I have served as a pastor, I have seen how these special seasons often inspire people to participate in both the worship life of the church and the church's generous outreach to those in need. In addition, these seasons offer us unique opportunities to delve ever more deeply into the teachings of Jesus and their impact upon our lives. I look forward to sharing these seasons with you, the wonderful congregation of this community of faith we call church.

Gratefully,
Pastor Bob

Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle, Pastor

November 2023

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 947.63	\$ 825.00	115%
R22—Pledges	\$ 13,992.00	\$ 15,000.00	93%
R23—Contributions	\$ 3,906.94	\$ 1,250.00	74%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 7,727.05	\$ 7,500.00	103%
Capital Campaign	\$ 1,309.00	\$ 1,896.00	69%

Through September 30, 2023

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council met on Tuesday 10/10/2023 at 6:30, reports were read and accepted some highlights as follows:

1. Treasurer reports that all bills and obligations have been paid and met. He also reports that we have been holding our own as far as spending is concerned. Now we have a pastor so additional spending will occur going forward.
2. Diaconate reports that while Bob is off for two previous Sunday commitments Sarah and the deacons will be filling in.
3. Trustees report there were issues with the phone in the pastor's office, concerning receiving calls and voice-mail. Frontier has addressed this problem. We will switch to fiber optics in the near future.
4. Water to the bathroom upstairs in the parish house has been turned off due to a leak. Trustees will look into changing supply line.
5. Andrew's organ service performed maintenance on the organ and will be back every two years to keep it functional. They also suggested running it periodically so Ken volunteered to do that every Communion Sunday.
6. A couple steps leading to parish house seem a little soft or spongy, we will ask Scott's Karpentry to check them out.
7. We will be looking to do something with front lawn of the church because of the angle of the hill going down to the road.
8. Financial Secretary reports that as of the end of September we have taken in \$21,650.00 less than 2022. This includes all pledges, contributions and fund raisers. There are multiple reasons such as the passing of several members and friends who faithfully contributed to the church regularly. Also, some fundraisers, such as the Coffee Stop, have been stopped due to insufficient numbers of people to work them successfully.
9. Stewardship is getting ready for the annual appeal with stewardship Sunday scheduled for Nov. 26th . Please prayerfully consider what you might pledge for next year.
10. A reminder to all chair persons or others who wrote SOPs to review them and make any necessary changes printing out revised SOP and put it in SOP note book in the church secretary's office by November. Please feel free to see me if you need help.
11. Missions will begin preparing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food boxes.
12. Nominating will be looking for people to fill boards, committees and other positions within our church.
13. The church's 259th birthday is Oct. 31st, we will celebrate it on Oct. 29 with a cake. There was discussion about wearing 1764 period clothes as we have done in the past always a fun time.
14. It was mentioned that Bob has been doing an excellent job. He is communicating about our church through Facebook, emails, Stafford Springs Bulletin Board and in person meetings in his office. He is now a member of the Stafford Clergy Association and the Tolland Association. He has also started an Adult Christian Education program meeting monthly on communion Sundays. Thank you, Pastor Bob.
15. The next council meeting will be Nov. 14 at 6:30 pm.

Bruce Ladr,
Church Moderator

TRUSTEES

We will not be having a Fall Work Day this year, but rather be having a sign up sheet with all tasks listed on it. This sign up sheet is in the Kitchen and you can do your task at any time. There is a box to check off when the work is completed, and if you have questions please let the Trustees know. A proposal is being written up this week for a side by side comparison with our insurance company. A few of us will meet with Michael from Anderson Krause to see how the insurance we have now compares with other insurance companies. This meeting will take place between October 30th and November 3rd.

The phone in the pastors office had an issue again with voicemail and receiving calls. Frontier came out and fixed the issue outside. We decided to set up an appointment to get fiber optic to hopefully resolve these issues and upgrade to the new technology. Frontier set us up from the outside and the inside. The conversions involved replacing all of our copper cables with fiber optic from the Little Shop basement. A new box was hooked up on the wall under the central vac tank, and the internet cable connects through the floor into the Sunday School room. In that same room is our EERO Wi-fi connector. We turned the internet back on because Frontier offered us a great deal to bundle. We were paying \$63.46 a month for only phone and now we are paying \$46.88 a month for phone and internet combined. This deal goes for 12 months saving us \$198.96 for the year. After the 12 months our monthly payments go to \$77.00 where we will assess if we want to continue paying for the internet.

Tom Hoefle repaired the toilet issue in the Parish House. He put in a new supply line, took apart, cleaned and lubricated the shutoff. Everything is now in working order. Andrew's organ service did some maintenance on our organ. We will have general maintenance done, specifically oil checks, every two years. They also recommended running the organ periodically. Ken has offered to do this every Communion Sunday. Other than that we were told the organ runs great for it's age and everything was satisfactory.

Lastly, it has been brought to my attention that a couple steps coming down to the Parish House are soft. Scott's Karpentry will take a look and give us a quote to see if we need to repair any areas. Also early winter I will be getting an updated quote from Outdoor Creations and another to match on the front lawn in front of the church. The quote will include a pitch on the front lawn to knock down the angle on that hill along with mulch, stone, grass, or wildflower costs. The trustees will discuss all of these quotes with the treasurer to see if any of the above falls into our budget for next year. The steps could be done by The Trustees if we aren't looking at a lot of rot and repair. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Greaves, Trustees Chair

DEACONS

Special thanks to our deacons, for serving during our many busy seasons, thus allowing our church services to run smoothly! We met on October 22nd to discuss our schedule for November and December, and to decide what we wanted to do to reach out to folks and let them know we are thinking of them. If you know someone who is in need of outreach, please let a deacon know.

Sincerely,

Sarah R.G.
Head Deacon

IN AND AROUND CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers of quick healing for Sue ... prayers for the kids I work with and their families ... prayers for Corrine Jones on the birth of Caleb Jones ... prayers for the Dignazio family, the Raynock family, Al, Melissa, Liam, Austin and Mark ... prayers for Joe and Florence Demars ... prayers for Melissa, Victoria and Margaret ... prayers for my brother-in-law Gary who was hospitalized in St. Francis ... prayers for the Soden family ... prayers for my daughter during a risky pregnancy ... prayers for Kari who was diagnosed with cancer ... continued prayers for the Ukranian people and everyone caught in the crossfire of war ... prayers of safety for all traveling ... Lord, please help me remove hate from my heart as it is eating away at mee ... prayers for peace in the Middle East ... prayers of safe travel for Kathy and Bruce, Janice and Bill ... prayers for safe travel for Cindy as she returns to Florida ... prayers for those who need to leave Gaza ... prayer for Chelse and family searching for a house ... prayer for my sister Angela battling lung cancer ... prayers for the Dahlstrom and Krar families ... prayers for Bob Alsop who fell and has back fractures ... prayers for Sam recovering from a virus ... prayers for safe travel for Adam ... prayers for my students ... prayers of heling for Jon Smith ... prayers of safe travel for all heading south ... prayers for Mine and others in the aftermath of gun violence ... prayers for continued health in the flu/virus season.

Celebrations: Zoey celebrated her 10th birthday.

A LIGHTER MOMENT

A young man goes into a drug store to buy condoms. The pharmacist tells him that the condoms come in packs of three, nine, or 12, and asks which ones the young man wants. "Well," he says, "I've been seeing this girl for a while and she's really hot. I want the condoms because I think tonight's the night. We're having dinner with her parents and then we're going out. Once she's had me, she'll want me all the time, so you'd better give me the 12 pack!" The young man makes his purchase and leaves. Later that evening, he sits down to dinner with his girlfriend and her parents. He asks if he may give the blessing and they agree. He begins the prayer, but continues praying for several minutes. The girl leans over and says, "You never told me that you were such a religious person." He leans over to her and says, "You never told me that your father is a pharmacist."

* * * *

An Amish husband, wife and son travel to the city on vacation. They visit a shopping mall and while the mother is shopping, the father and son are standing in awe in front of an elevator (having no idea what it is). As they watch, an elderly lady walks into the strange silver doors and the doors close. The father and son watch as the numbers go up, and then back down. When the doors open, a beautiful young woman walks out. The father leans over and whispers to the son, "Son, go get your mother!"

* * * *

Paddy and Murphy are havin' a pint in the pub, when some scuba divers come on the TV. Paddy says, "Murphy, why is it them deep sea divers always sit on the side of the boat with them air tanks on their backs, and fall backwards out of the boat?" Murphy thinks for a minute then says, "That's easy. It's 'cos if they fell forwards, they'd still be in the friggin boat!"

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

November Birthdays

6 Sue Briggs
7 Mary England
9 Judy DelBene
17 Andy DelBene
19 Nancy Richens

November Anniversaries

4 Stephen and Amy Lingley

MISSIONS

Twenty-five pounds of food was delivered to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry on your behalf for the month of October. Thank you for your continued food offerings for this important mission.

Once again, this year we will offer four family sized Thanksgiving dinners to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry for distribution to people who are struggling with food insecurities. We will be putting food tags out in fellowship hall for you to take so that you can purchase the items listed. Also, we will be putting the NIN jar on the coffee counter for those who would like to donate money for the purchase of gift cards so the family may purchase their own turkey or other choice of meat. We will need to have all the food offerings ready to go to the food pantry on November 13th so Sunday November 12th is the date when we will need to have all your donations in fellowship hall.

Typically, December is a very busy month for missions and this year is going to be a busy one as well. We are planning to get gift tags with the names of youngsters who otherwise might not receive a Christmas present. Also, we will again offer four families a Christmas dinner through gift card offerings. More on this in the December KIT.

Thank you all for your continued support of families in need.

Your Missions Committee,
Judy, Michelle and Linda

HOLLY BAZAAR

We are all set to go for our Annual Holly Bazaar! We have many returning vendors as well as new ones, White Elephant is loaded with goods for gift giving or decorating, raffle baskets look amazing and our baked goods as always will offer everyone cookies and breads for use over the holidays. Finish your day off with our Autumn Soup lunch—always a favorite.

What do we still need? We need one person to help in the kitchen and at the baked goods table after 12:30 PM. We also need baked goods—especially cookies. If you have something you'd like to donate to the White Elephant table, Lisa is accepting good quality items that will sell easily. We always accept raffle baskets if you would like to donate one. Pick a theme and create your own.

If you can help out or have any questions, please contact Kim Dickson at (413) 374-3247.

STEWARDSHIP

Your pledge is very important to the operation and running of this church!

Letters will be distributed the first week of November. We are asking that pledges be returned by November 26. If you have any questions about your pledge, please contact: Lisa Ostrowski, 860 684 5332

Thank you,
Stewardship Committee
Sarah Greaves
Lisa Ostrowski

NOMINATING

We have a sign-up sheet in the kitchen if anyone wants to try a new role next year. We always look for Deacons but have a few other positions open as well. Please reach out to our Moderator Bruce, or the nominating committee if you would like to inquire about what a position entails. If anyone can't do their second year and are signed up for it, let me know! We have had good success getting a lot of new people trained on different roles in case of emergency and we will continue that over the next several years. Thank you!

Andrew

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hey everyone! Sunday School has been a blast so far. We enjoyed an outdoor service where we learned about creation, and we all got to know one another as we continue to get to know Jesus. We have a lot of fun things planned in class and out. We also want to try and do some service projects to teach the kids about giving back, helping people in need, and community service. On the final Sunday this month we will be coloring/painting pumpkins and doing other crafts while we take a break from the curriculum and learn about the His-

