

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD

P A S T O R : REV. ROBERT R. LAROCHELLE

IN THIS ISSUE

- A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR BOB
- CALENDAR
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
- TRUSTEES REPORT
- IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH
- A LIGHTER MOMENT ...
- BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARIES
- MISSIONS
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
- NOMINATING COMMITTEE
- WORK DAY
- HOLLY BAZAAR
- FLEA MARKET REPORT
- BLESSING IF THE ANIMALS
- PAST YEAR ANNUAL REPORTS
- KIT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
- OTHER STAFFORD CHURCH'S ACTIVITIES

A Message from Pastor Bob ...

First of all, I want to say how grateful I am for this opportunity you have given me to serve as your pastor. As many of you know, I first came into regular contact with this church over these last couple of years when I began filling in quite a bit as a supply pastor here. Over the last few months of supply pastoring, I began reflecting on the possibility of serving this congregation on a regular basis. On September 10, you, the members of this congregation, made a decision to call me here as your Designated Term Pastor. In this, my first of many monthly messages to you through this publication, I want to share with you something about my background and about how I approach my ministry as a pastor.

AVAILABILITY

It is important that you have access to be in touch with me. If you ever wish to meet with me, you may contact me on my cell phone 860-670-6461 or by sending me an email at rpbksl@cox.net. I am available to meet in the pastor's office here at church. However, if someone is in need of a home visit due to circumstances,

please be in touch and I will be sure to arrange that!

MY PRIORITIES AS A PASTOR

In the years I have served as a pastor, I have emphasized the following and I bring this approach to this church community:

- Your accessibility to me as needed.
- The importance of preaching which includes a close look at what is contained in the Bible and its applicability to our daily lives.
- Variety in worship. In preparing worship services, I draw on the resources of the United Church of Christ as well as available ecumenical resources from a variety of sources. In addition, I use church music and other music from a variety of sources as well.
- Providing educational opportunities for the congregation. I place a very strong emphasis on this. You can expect that I will be offering an educational program at least once a month.
- Working to get word out to both local and neighboring communities about what is happening in this church. This includes regular posting on Facebook and the use of other local media. I will post regularly on the church Facebook page as well as my own personal page.
- An invitational approach. This is connected with the outreach I describe above. I have always found it to be very important to get word out about what is happening in churches that I have served.
- Looking for opportunities to help make the church's presence known and to help engage the church in ways to be of help to those in need. Over my years in serving in churches, I have helped develop a variety of different programs, including benefit concerts and other means of reaching out to others.

ABOUT ME

In making the decision to call me as your pastor, I know that you have become familiar with my background. The following includes a brief overview:

- I am a native of Putnam and graduate of St. Mary's School and Marianapolis Prep.

- I was raised Roman Catholic and was an ordained Permanent Deacon in the Catholic church from 1989-1998
 - I was ordained in the UCC in 2002 at First Congregational Church of Vernon.
 - I have worked as a teacher, counselor, pastor and varsity basketball and baseball coach.
 - I worked in the field of education for 43 years, including 30 years as a Counselor, in addition to my years of teaching.
 - I have been married to Patricia Coppinger LaRochelle since August 23, 1980. Tricia worked as a high school English teacher for many years.
 - My undergraduate alma mater is Holy Cross. I am a loyal follower of their sports teams. My graduate degrees are from Boston College and Central Connecticut with my doctorate from Chicago Theological Seminary.
 - Tricia and I are the parents of three adult children and also have two young granddaughters who live with our oldest son and his wife in the Boston area. We enjoy being with them as often as possible. All three of our adult children work in the field of education.
 - I have written several books.
 - I love sports and am an incorrigible fan of the Boston Red Sox.
- Once again, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve this congregation. I have already begun enjoying it here very much and I look forward to serving with you in the days ahead!

In Jesus always,
Pastor Bob

Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle
860 670 6461
rpbksl@cox.net

Facebook page: Robert LaRochelle



October 2023

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 891.63	\$ 733.33	122%
R22—Pledges	\$ 12,622.00	\$ 12,333.33	94%
R23—Contributions	\$ 3,786.94	\$ 4,666.67	81%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 6,281.61	\$ 6,666.67	94%
Capital Campaign	\$ 1,195.00	\$ 1,685.33	71%

Thru August 31:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council met on Tuesday 9/19/2023 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;
2. Clerk states that a thank you card has been sent to Sun Valley for allowing us to meet there;
3. We welcomed a new member, Teresa Raymond at Sun Valley;
4. We enthusiastically welcomed the Rev. Dr. Robert LaRochelle as our new Designated Term Pastor;
5. Ken stated that going forward the deadline for KIT will be the 25th of the month prior to publishing.(ie.Oct.25th would be the deadline for KIT coming out in Nov.);
6. Council dissolved the pastoral Search Committee and established the Pastoral Relations Committee. The members are: Kim Dickson, Sue Briggs and Michele Sedor. Thank you, ladies;
7. 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;
8. Missions will begin preparing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food boxes;
9. Stewardship is getting ready for the annual appeal with stewardship Sunday scheduled for Nov.26th;
10. Nominating will be looking for people to fill boards, committees and other positions within our church;
11. Our church's 259th birthday is Oct.31st. We will celebrate it on Sunday Oct. 29th;
12. The next council meeting will be Oct. 10th at 6:30 pm.

Bruce Ladr
Church Moderator

TRUSTEES

Hey everyone! We had our yearly inspection of our fire extinguishers. Two needed to be pressure tested and/or recharged which happens either every 6 or 12 years. Rather than doing these tests Wayne gave us two used extinguishers that already had testing done to them to save us money. After speaking with Wayne, this will be his final year doing this after 54 years of service. He will be sending out letters to his clients to let them know this and what road they can take next as a replacement.

I will be turning the water back on to the upstairs bathroom in the Parish House. I will leave it on if everything seems to be tightened and fixed. If I see any drips or leaks I will turn it back off and replace the proper plumbing parts.

We will not be having a Fall Work Day this year, but rather be having a sign up sheet put out to work these list of jobs when the person is available. This sign up sheet will be out in October and have a section to check off when that job has been completed.

Lastly, I sent out our Liability and Declaration insurance pages over to Anderson and Krause. They

reached out with an offer to present a side by side proposal with the our insurance provider that we have right now. This will give us a good answer as to if we are paying too much for the insurance we have. Also whether we go with them or not they will be donating \$100.00 to a mission of our choice. The proposal is being written up and they will assess our properties/buildings. I will keep council informed and present what they offer hopefully next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Greaves, Board of Trustees, Chair

I N A N D A R O U N D T H E C H U R C H ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: a prayer for our neighbor Linda ... prayers of healing for Ken ... prayers for my sister Angela who is battling lung cancer ... prayers for all who are battling mental illness and addiction ... prayers for world peace ... prayers for Melissa, Victoria, Margaret and family as well as the people in Hawaii ... prayers for Zach who celebrates a birthday and is starting his Junior year of college ... prayers for Fred Soden and family whose grandson passed away due to injuries from a car accident ... prayers for the Dignazio family, Al, Melissa, Liam, Austin, Mark and the Raynock family ... prayers of blessings for Joe and Florence Demars ... prayers for all who suffer from wars and natural disasters ... continued prayers for Lucy, Donna, Doris and Sarah ... prayers of safe travel for John, Judy and Sarah traveling to Florida... prayers for my parents as they continue to age ... prayers of healing for John ... prayers for Robert and family who lost their wife and mother ... prayers for the people of Ukraine ... prayers for those who suffered the loss of a loved one ... prayers for the family of Jason Ellsworth who lost his battle with cancer.

Celebrations: our grandson Alex celebrated his 17th birthday ... a joy for a new baby Charlie and September birthdays! Happy birthday to Mitchell and Walker.

A L I G H T E R M O M E N T . . .

An exercise for people who are out of shape: Begin with a five-pound potato bag in each hand. Extend your arms straight out from your sides, hold them there for a full minute, and then relax. After a few weeks, move up to ten-pound potato bags. Then try 50-pound potato bags, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. Once you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

* * * *

As my five-year-old son and I were heading to McDonald's one day, we passed a car accident. Usually when we see something terrible like that, we say a prayer for whoever might be hurt, so I pointed and said to my son, "We should pray." From the back seat I heard his earnest voice: "Dear God, please don't let those cars block the entrance to McDonald's."

* * * *

A doctor died and went to heaven, where he found a long line at St. Peter's gate. As was his custom, the doctor rushed to the front, but St. Peter told him to wait in line like everyone else. Muttering and looking at his watch, the doctor stood at the end of the line. Moments later a white-haired man wearing a white coat and carrying a stethoscope and medical bag rushed up to the front of the line, waved to St. Peter, and was immediately admitted through the Pearly Gates. "Hey!" the doctor shouted. "How come you let him through?" "Oh," said St. Peter, "that's God. Sometimes he likes to play doctor."

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

October Birthdays

3 Michael Talamini
9 Lesley Bourque
10 Ross Kerr
21 Debi Reynolds
27 Magdelane Hatch
27 Al Kazokas

October Anniversaries

4 Janice and Bill Gowdy
15 Mary and David England
25 Debbie and Joseph Perko

MISSIONS

With the end of summer comes the end of the relaxed atmosphere as we go forward into a very busy time of the year for missions' opportunities. If you will please, once again, think of those less fortunate than us who need some help. The third Sunday of every month is Food Bank Sunday. Please bring your food offerings to church on that day, or any day that works for you. On the third Monday of the month, the Missions Committee will take the offerings to the Food Pantry located at the Crystal Lake Methodist Church on Route 140, where they will be given to families who are experiencing food insecurities.

I am just receiving information on the Town of Stafford Holiday Gift Assistance Program for the 2023 Christmas season. I will pass the information on to you as soon as I have it all.

We will also participate in the Holiday Family Dinner Boxes for both Thanksgiving and Christmas. Details on those programs will be presented to you in the next couple of months. We are a small congregation but I have always been amazed by the generosity shown in such a big way. Thank you everyone.

In God's Love,

Linda Sprague, Chairperson

Judy DelBene and Michelle Sedor, Committee Members

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Rally Day and our first Day of Sunday School was September 10th. All 6 of our students returned, and we look forward to having an awesome year! We have also been blessed with visitors, and are having a great start to the year. An email has been sent to the parents/guardians and our new Pastor about what this years lesson plan will focus on, along with a little bit about each of the teachers.

Some activities planned for October are: an outdoor class on October 1st (weather permitting). Then on October 14th (tentative date) a family hayride/pumpkin picking trip to Irish Bend Orchard in Somers. We are hoping Students, teachers and parents will "dress up" for the October 29th service. Trick or treating at the kitchen counter in fellowship hall will take place during coffee hour! We welcome the congregation to join in the festivities with us!!

If you have any questions please reach out to myself Mr. Andrew Greaves, Mrs. Sarah Roman Greaves, Mrs. Kathy Ladr, or Mrs. Judy Delbene. Thank you!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A sign up sheet will be put in Fellowship Hall sometime in October to sign up for Committee roles next year. Filling these roles are crucial to how our Congregation operates, and if anyone wants any information on what each committee does please don't hesitate to ask! A reminder anyone who has newcomers in their committees please don't forget to train them on how their position works.

Thank you, Andrew

W O R K D A Y

In lieu of a Fall Work Day, the Trustees will be posting a list of tasks that need to be accomplished and you can sign-up for the task, accomplish it at your convenience, and the sign-off as completed. Lets see if this works as it could be a new procedure.

H O L L Y B A Z A A R

The 2023 Holly Bazaar will take place November 11, 2023 from 9 AM until 2 PM. This year vendors may choose to locate on the 1st or 2nd floor of the Parish House or outdoors. I am looking for volunteers for the White Elephant Table, Cookie table, kitchen and Raffle Table. An Autumn Soup luncheon will be served. We need to fill out the list of Raffle Baskets as these are very popular. The Little Shop Thrift Store will be open. There will be plenty of space and Festival Fall Atmosphere. Sign up sheets are in Fellowship Hall or call or text Kim Dickson at (413) 374-3247 or email at KDickson1958@yahoo.com. We look forward to seeing you!

F L E A M A R K E T R E P O R T

A great big THANK YOU to all. The Fall Flea Market was cut short by a day due to the pending rain forecast. As I sit here on Saturday afternoon at 3:44pm, we have yet to have any significant rainfall. I guess we made the right decision in cancelling the sale for today since there have been numerous rounds of drizzle along with breezy conditions and a real chill in the air. With all that said, our combined efforts for the one-day event were very impressive. \$771.66. Everyone put in a great deal of time and energy to make the sale a success. I really appreciate all of your help and couldn't have done it without you. The baking, the setup, the organization and presentation of merchandise and the clean-up went so smoothly with so many helping hands involved. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. We truly are a caring and sharing church family.

Linda Sprague, Flea Market Coordinator

B L E S S I N G O F T H E A N I M A L S

On Saturday October 7 (weather permitting) at 10 am, we will be gathering on the lawn near the barn for a brief service of BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS. This annual event, inspired by the commitment of Francis of Assisi to all of God's creation, is an event that has been part of the church calendar of many Christian denominations, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike!

I encourage you to:

* Come to this brief service (Note- You may want to bring a chair as well)

* Bring along your pet. Even if you are not bringing a pet, please consider coming along and being part of this special celebration!

I have had the opportunity to offer this annual service at several churches going back to when I served in the Union church. I have found it to be a joyous experience as we come together to celebrate the beauty of all of God's creation.

I hope you will consider attending!

Rain Date: October 14 at 10 am

Pastor Bob

PAST CHURCH ANNUAL REPORTS

Last week while working on updating the website to reflect the addition of Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle as our pastor, I came across the box containing my collection of old Annual Reports. You all know how time flies—I seems that I have been doing Annual Reports since 1987—at least I have printed copies from 1987 forward. In an attempt to be practical, I looked at all that paper and thought ‘Do I need to keep all that?’. While the answer was not a definitive yes or no, I did decide to scan all the reports and add them to the website.

So if you look at the Annual Reports page you should see links to all of those Annual Reports.

From just browsing through the reports as I scanned them there is some really interesting stuff regarding forward planning in the last half of the 1990’s. Some of it related to the eventual renovation of the Parish House, and some to plans for the future five to ten years of our church family. If you are interested (or you just want to refresh your memory of where and when you were mentioned) they will now be available on the website.

Ken May

KIT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

I am establishing a new deadline to receive submissions for KIT. All news for KIT will now need to be submitted no later than the 25th of the prior month. This will allow me to get the newsletter out on time. Thank you for your cooperation.

OTHER STAFFORD CHURCH’S ACTIVITIES

The Second Annual St. Edward Church Starlight Wine & Cheese Social will be held on Saturday, October 7, 2023 from 6:00 PM until 9:00 PM in the St. Edward Church Hall at 27 Church Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076. The Donation to participate is \$30 per person. All tickets will be advance sale-No tickets at the door! Please RSVP by October 1, 2023 at 860-684-2705 or 860-306-9419. Music provided by Heritage Pops Orchestra.

