

Congregational Church of New Fairfield, United Church of Christ
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203-746-2865 office@ccnf-ucc.org

CANDLELIGHT - JANUARY 2026

Hello Beloved Children!

Come and see...

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." John 1: 35-39a.

Last Sunday this passage from the Gospel of John was part of our scripture reading. We thought about the ways that Jesus invited his future disciples to join him in his ministry. We are called to do the same. How do we engage in the work of the church? How do we want to impact the world? Our world is in a great deal of turmoil right now. It is challenging for us all to manage the stress and strain. We all have ways to restore ourselves in the midst of it all.

Our faith is an important part of our resistance to the ways of the world. Trusting in God's promises allows us to maintain and embrace hope. Putting our faith into action helps to keep it real. In this season of Epiphany, we can focus on the ways that Christ is revealed to us. I think you will find evidence all around the Congregational Church of New Fairfield. So I invite you to come and see. Join us in worship on Sundays and for our twice a month Tuesday night Prayer Worship Service. Practicing our faith together in worship praises God and resets our minds for our living. And of course there are many ways to take action in ministry to others. Consider sharing your time and energy by cooking, making sandwiches, or serving at Dorothy Day Hospitality House. Maybe you would like to help in the Thrift Shop, with our flower ministry, or knit a prayer shawl. Would you like to send a card to someone, make a phone call, or say a special prayer? Time and talent can be shared in the faith formation of our young people, singing in the choir, or helping with church maintenance. Maybe you would like to help prepare bulletins on Friday afternoons, write an article for this newsletter, or create a post for Facebook. There are many ways to engage and you may have an idea of your own you would like to share, please do!

I hope that you all make time to come and see. I also hope you share the news of our congregation with others. Invite a friend to come and see. Share our ministries and offer them as ways for folks to enhance their own spiritual journey. We all need hope right now. We all need to seek out joy in the midst of the challenges of life. Connection with each other helps in so many ways. We are called to be God's hands, feet and heart, helping others to feel God's presence. So invite a friend to come and see. Blessings and peace,
Pastor Liz



COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS *Lay Ministry Opportunities*

It is time to recommit to the ministries of Compassionate Connections or sign up for the first time. Are you someone who likes to talk on the phone? Are you willing to write a card? Do you have time to make a meal? Are you interested in praying for others?

Would you be willing to drive someone to church? Do you love flower arranging or creating prayer shawls (knitting, crocheting, or looming)? Do you have a little bit of free time to serve?

Cards indicating your willingness to serve are on the Welcome Table at the entrance of church and in Pilgrim Hall. You can also find one on our website or call the church office. Thank you so much for being a part of the ministry of this congregation.

Trustee Corner

Everyone - Happy New Year to all!

The Trustees have been busy over the past several weeks and months with work related to our Church.

We have several items of note that folks may have noticed inside and outside our church.



Seasonal Cleanup

First, Fall Cleanup completed with the assistance of the local New Fairfield Scout Troops 42 & 137 on November 8th.

It was a grand effort and we always appreciate the strong support of the Scouts in our community and the Church Volunteers who show up to help us get the work done. Next cleanup will be in the Spring, so keep an eye to the Church News for the date, and come join us!

We also want to acknowledge the wonderful Eagle project completed by Lee LaTourette. He reconstructed, repaired, and repainted the gate and dumpster surround in the church parking lot. The project was a success and we are very grateful for his time and energy on the project. Thank You!

Repairs

We want to thank John Kohany for his help in replacing the water damaged ceiling tiles in the church office.

Parsonage

The Parsonage lease has been updated and there is renovation work going on the next few weeks coordinated by the Trustees with a local contractor, Morelli & Sons. A note of thanks to Attorney Ray Lubus for his assistance and guidance with recent questions and issues we brought him regarding the Parsonage and the Church.

Upkeep

The Trustees also have reviewed and updated contracts for building cleaning, outside landscaping and snowplowing, heating oil, pest control, and electric fees.

We are in the process of scheduling an energy audit that was offered by Eversource to take advantage of grant money available to hopefully understand where we can save energy usage and gain efficiencies for our Church. More to follow on the results of that effort. We plan to continue to oversee the maintenance with walkthroughs and updates in the coming year.

New Team Members

Trustees welcomed two new members to our Team in 2025 - **John White and John Zegley** - We really appreciate their input, time, and their expertise in so many areas that benefit the Church.

Going forward, the Trustees continually work to maintain the Church for us all and the community. We truly appreciate your support!!



WORSHIP & MINISTRY

"Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

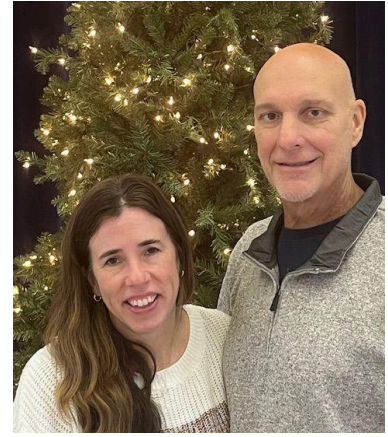
- 1 Corinthians 12:27

It is with much joy that we share photographs of the newest members of CCNF - Melissa Ballas and Nora and Mark Anderson. If you haven't already, introduce yourself and say Hi!

Worship & Ministry members are happy to assist you or answer any questions you have regarding service offerings. Members for 2025-2026 are Bart Carey, Pamela Schretzenmayer, Julie York and Doris Zegley. We look forward to speaking with you!



(Pictured at left, Melissa Ballas.
Pictured at right, Nora & Mark Anderson)



ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE - February 18, at 7 pm

Lent is just around the corner! Mark your calendar for worship on Wednesday, February 18th. We will continue our tradition of offering our prayers and confessions to God and burning them to create ashes. Together we can consider how we will observe Lent. Some folks give something up, some folks take on a practice. However you mark the season we hope to support each other in our Lenten journeys.

Come to our Evening Prayer Service



Each month, evening prayer services are held on the first and third Tuesday at 7 p.m. These services are a chance to pause during your busy week and spend a little time in peaceful worship. Come, catch your breath, feel closer to God. These services include communion, and are not live streamed. The next service will be on **Tues, Feb. 3rd at 7pm.**

TREASURER'S REPORT - December 2025	
as of 12/31/2025	
<u>INCOME/EXPENSE COMPARISON</u>	
INCOME SOURCE	Dec-25
OFFERTORY COLLECTIONS	3,397.00
PLANNED GIVING GIFT	18,000.00
PLEDGES	13,269.36
THRIFT SHOP (including Online Sales & St Pauly's Corp)	\$3,743.93
PARSONAGE RENT	\$2,100.00
OTHER	\$930.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$41,440.29
EXPENSE	
	Dec-25
PAYROLL	\$13,968.35
BUILDING & MAINTENANCE	\$12,947.29
OTHER MINISTRIES	\$1,520.18
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$28,435.82
NET OPERATING GAIN/(SHORTFALL) FOR MONTH	\$13,004.47
Respectfully submitted by Greg Slomba, Treasurer	



FAITH FORMATION

With the holiday season behind us and a new year ahead of us, the Faith Formation team is excited about what we've accomplished and what lies ahead. Throughout the month of December, we prepared diligently for our annual Christmas Pageant. Despite some delays from winter weather, the Pageant took place on December 21st to a wonderful reception. The children did a fantastic job bringing the story to life despite little time to prepare. The curriculum in January has featured many of Jesus' journeys, his baptism and meeting who would become his 12 disciples. Students tackled many different activities surrounding those lessons, including many art projects that can be found displayed around the church. The children have also continued contributing to Church wide projects, including helping to make lunches for Dorothy Day with Compassionate Kids. We will continue to look for more ways to help the community at large. We look forward to more exciting adventures as we traverse the winter weather and look forward to spring.



Compassionate Kids

little hands ~ loving hearts

The children gathered on Saturday, Jan. 24th, to make lunches for Dorothy Day with Compassionate Kids. It was awesome to see how willing they were to give their time to make sandwiches and cookie bags for the less fortunate.



Our Compassionate Kids will be meeting after church school on **Sunday, Feb 8th** to make cards for our members and friends in care. This is a great way for our children to show love and concern for others. Please mark your calendar for that day so your children will be able to participate.



Stewardship

What More Could I Have Done?

"What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?" Isaiah 5:4

January 13, 2026

Thanks to everyone who already submitted their pledge for 2026. It's deeply appreciated. Though our goal was set at 100% participation I am afraid to report we only heard from 56% of our members. The good news is that we have a total pledge value of \$147,038 but the bad news is that it only represents a small portion (47%) of the bare bones 2026 budget we just committed to as a Congregation this past December. Having all of our members contribute in some meaningful way is essential for a vibrant faith community.

Without your direct support we will be forced to make very difficult decisions later on in 2026 that no one would want to ever make.

This is an urgent appeal. Your participation is vital. We can't reach our goals without the full support of our entire church family, and every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. Please step up and make a pledge today. Together, we can ensure that our church continues to thrive and make a lasting impact in the community. Let us be heard, as we make a personal commitment to a future of faith, love, and transformation.

It's never too late to send in your pledge! Please take a moment and prayerfully consider a pledge if you have not completed one for 2026.

Respectfully and faithfully,
Michael Iadarola, Stewardship Committee

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

The goal this year is 100% of our members returning their pledge cards. As of 1/21/26, the rate of return is 56%. Please take some time to fill out and return your pledge cards.

We have received 84 pledges, 73 from members and 11 from friends of the congregation totalling \$147,038.

THANK YOU TO ALL who have made a financial commitment to support the church and its ministries.

Carl Anderson	Patrick & Heidi Finlay	Todd & Lori Opsal
Nora & Mark Anderson	Lori Generali	Judith Paniccia
Will Anderson	Teri & Jerry Gentry	Dee Poquette
Stancy Armstrong	Maryann Gillotti	Lynne Purtle
Laura Baird	Donald & Judy Hatch	Lynn Raymond
Melissa Ballas	Irene Howard	Cheryl & John Reiner
Vinnie Bartolini & Bonnie Lees	Jaqueline Hutchings	David Riccardi
Kenneth & Dot Bass	Michael & Regina Iadarola	Patrick & Brenda Sacco
Linda Bass	Brian & Katy Johannssen	Stephanie Sacco
Cassie & Will Boylan & Family	Evelyn Joudy	Elizabeth Schalkham
Ralph Brechter	Fred & Sally Kile	Peter & Alicia Schmitt
Geraldine Brenia	James & Nancy Kile	Pamela & Richard Schretzenmayer
Gail Burger	Louise & John Kohany	Linda Seiler
Hazel Burger	LaTourette Family	Marcia Semchysen
William Burger Jr.	Elissa Leone	Greg Slomba & Stephanie
Bart & Adele Carey	Todd & Dawna Lovejoy	Shaughnessy
Vivian Cicale	Matthew & Lindsey Mapes	Gretchen Skidmore
Steve & Barb Coelho	Ryan & Lauren McCormick	Steve Snyder
Christine Cook	Carolyn McShane	Susan, Amber & Aaron St. Hilaire
Teri Czudak	Dorothy Milovic	Richard & Louise Stein
Laura (Nan) Delohery	Marie Moore	Donna Tescione
Nicholas & Pamela Dohan	Jayne Morin	Bill & Agnes-Betty Trimpert
Win & Kathy Donaldson	Calvin Nafziger	Sue & Ronald Webb
Janice Donnelly	Naomi Nafziger	John White
Richard Doscher	Sue Newton	Greg & Katie Williams
Robert Ebbessen	Dorothy Norman	Liz & Tracy Yoho
Karen Engstrom	Darren & Stephanie O'Connell	Chris & Julie York
Robert & Donna Fairchild	Rose O'Connell	John & Doris Zegley

Be Proud of Our Church and Share It with a Friend! - Don't Keep Us A Secret

We are all stewards of our church and that includes growing our church. Imagine what we would look like if there were fifty more people in the pews each week. That's an opportunity to make fifty new friends. Fifty new smiles! That would be fifty more ways to help accomplish the goals of our church and serve the Lord.

If you saw a movie and loved it, would you not mention it to people you bump into - friends at the coffee house, neighbors as you chat about the weather? While playing cards with a bunch of your buddies, why would you not share a word or two about our great little church and invite them to attend? Why are you keeping us a secret? We have a simple colorful card found in the pews and at the entrance of the church that you can give a person. This card makes it easy to break the ice and helps explain what our church is all about.

There are many things we hear and see in the news about our schools, our neighborhoods, crime, and violence over the slightest variation of opinion. We hear it from our friends, at the grocery store and waiting in line for your latte. We should be concerned! It should also cause us to pause and ask ourselves, what more can I do?

People are looking for answers – for solace. Now more than ever in my memory people should turn to their faith for comfort and understanding and even guidance. They can find it right here at our church. Help them! Don't keep us a secret. Commit to inviting people you see to our church until one actually shows up to share in our service.

I am looking forward to introducing myself to fifty new faces! I hope you are too!

Yours in faith,

Michael Iadarola



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY - Tuesday, Feb. 10th at 7:00 pm

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month and would love to have you come try out some purposeful crafting. We recently had an additional gathering on a Sunday after church to invite new people to learn about the ministry and pick up supplies to knit or crochet a shawl. Their next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 10 and all are invited to attend. If you are interested in making a shawl, we have yarn available for you. Just contact us in the church

office and we will set you up.



Sue St Hilaire and Dot Bass continue to be a vital part of our ministry but have stepped down as the coordinators after 17 years of service! Thank you to both for all the time and energy they have given to this ministry. They were presented with specially adorned prayer shawls at church earlier this winter.

Join them to knit or crochet or loom and for some fellowship in the conference room. All ages welcome. Bring size 13 knitting needles (long or circular), a size K or N crochet hook, or a long rectangular loom. Yarn will be supplied. The shawls we make are a loving gift for anyone in need. For more info, email prayershawl@ccnf-ucc.org.

We are always looking for folks to join in the effort of making prayer shawls.

This is a vital ministry of our congregation and the shawls are so appreciated by the recipients. Thank you to all who are working on making these warm and fuzzy reminders of God's love.

If you would like to request a shawl, please call 203-746-2865 or email prayershawl@ccnf-ucc.org.

MISSIONS at CCFN

DOROTHY DAY HOSPITALITY HOUSE

Our congregation has been supporting the ministry at Dorothy Day Hospitality House for decades! Thank you to all our volunteers who allow us to be a part of this ministry to those who are hungry in our area. Our Thrift Shop also supplies the clothing ministry with needed articles to be shared free of charge. Here is news from Dorothy Day about their ministry impact this past year.



*Serving at
Dorothy Day*

Dorothy Day's Service to the Community for 2025

52,945 meals served
57,720 sandwiches made
145 people a day fed
25 guests a day enjoyed their meal inside
1465 guests received clothing
556 coats gifted
1810 showers taken
20,422 breakfasts served by Morning Glory

Many thanks to the Compassionate Kids for putting together the sandwiches for Dorothy Day. This will be a monthly activity for the group.

The Mission Team is scheduling a food drive for this spring on Saturday, April 25th at Stop & Shop. This will support our area food pantries in New Fairfield and Danbury.

THANK YOU TO OUR THRIFT SHOP CREW!



Our Thrift Shop Team will be open on Saturday, Feb 7th and 21st from 10am - 1pm.

Come in and find a bargain.

The online sales program is going well. Our thrift shop volunteers find gems in the donation bags and Melissa Ballas lists them online for sale. If you have a specialty clothing item that is new or in fantastic condition maybe you would want to donate this to the Thrift Shop for its online sales. While not everything is as wonderful as we think or wish, the church does benefit from this new way to sell merchandise.



Compassionate Connections Ministry ~ Give the gift of yourself

There are many ways to participate in this care-giving ministry. You can offer to:

- make calls or visits to folks to check in,
- send a card to those on our prayer list,
- make prayer shawls,
- arrange or deliver flower bouquets,
- lift others in prayer through our prayer chain.

We will be renewing commitments for the new year and inviting new people to participate. If you didn't return the Compassionate Connections Card included with your pledge packet, you can still join by simply filling out a card and putting it in an offering plate. Please consider joining us in this care-giving ministry.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

~ John 13: 34-35



Lenten Pancake Luncheon

Lenten Pancake Luncheon

Mark your calendars - Sunday, Feb 15th after worship

Join us after church for delicious pancakes as we prepare for Lent to begin on Wednesday, Feb 18th. While the historical tradition has us eating pancakes on Tuesday (Shrove Tues/Mardi Gras) we don't want to wait. And who doesn't want to eat pancakes? We are hoping to have some helpers in the kitchen as well for set up, cooking, serving and clean up. Please touch base with the church office or Doris Zegley.



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, March 28th at 6pm

The ASP Team, youth and leaders are so excited about the 3rd annual Chili & Mac Challenge. This will be held on Saturday, March 28th at 6 pm. Do you think last year's winners can be beat? Maybe you want to dust off your recipe boxes to find that secret recipe! Keep your eye out for the scoop and further information but plan on dinner at CCNF to help raise money for our youth work trip to Appalachia.

A TIME FOR FELLOWSHIP



Remember, if you are available to assist with fellowship after the Sunday worship service by providing snacks or helping with a simple set up or clean up, please sign up in Pilgrim Hall or call the church office at 203-746-2865.



HAVE YOU "Got Faith?"

We have found a hidden stash of "Got Faith" magnets!

If you would like one for your car, stop by Pilgrim Hall at church and pick one up. We can also mail one to you... email the church office at office@ccnf-ucc.org

Let's promote our faith!



ALL TEAMS PLEASE NOTE UPCOMING DEADLINES

Annual Report: The deadline for each team's report for the Annual Report is Sunday, Feb. 8th. Please be sure someone on your team is putting together your report and is aware of the deadline. *Questions? Call the church office at 203-746-2865.*



FEA SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER CAMP

Registration is now open for the last summer of camp at Silver Lake in Sharon, CT. To help more youth enjoy this special summer before Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center winds down operations, the Fairfield East Association is offering scholarships. Visit <https://www.silverlakect.org/campsessions> to register for camp, and then contact the church office for a form to apply for a scholarship.