

## ***Our Mission***

***By God's Grace, West Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,  
is committed to Nurturing and Celebrating God's Love in our lives, in the  
Church Family, in the Community and in the world***

# **September 2022 newsletter**

## **Steeple View**

### **West Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ**



## **Pastor's Perspective**

In the past six months, I have offered eulogies for both my father-in-law and my father. It's been a difficult time but sharing these words has been healing as well. Writing this brought me much peace and comfort. Here's some of what I shared at my father's service on August 13th in Moorestown, NJ. I share it with you to give you some insight into who my dad was and what he passed on to me:

"As everyone knows, my dad had a great sense of humor. When I was very young, Dad told me that he was going to take me to beautiful downtown Maple Shade. That name—Maple Shade—conjured up all sorts of visions in my youthful head. It sounded so beautiful, a land of gently swaying trees and forest glades. And Dad was going to take me to this place—just me! We were going to have a special trip to this exotic place called Maple Shade. I couldn't wait for the day to arrive. On the day of the trip, I jumped into the car, eager with anticipation, and we set off for the short trip to Maple Shade. After a short drive, Dad announced "Here we are, we're in beautiful downtown Maple Shade!" I remember looking around...and seeing strip malls, lots of concrete...and no trees anywhere to be seen. The bubble had been burst. I asked him, "This is Maple Shade?" He smiled at me and asked "What were you expecting?" This was a great lesson in managing expectations and not having one's hopes raised.



Another famous incident that has gone down in LeConey lore was the time my father stole money from a blind man. We had gone to a Phillies game, one of the things I most loved doing with my dad, and, as we approached the ball park my father realized that he had forgotten his wallet and the tickets. He must have found just enough money in the car to buy us tickets for outfield seats at Veterans Stadium. Luckily, it was Photo Night when people were allowed to go on the field to take pictures of the players. This allowed us to go back to our regular seats behind first base. After the game ended, Dad realized that he was not going to have enough money to get over the bridge to go home. He told me to wait for him as he headed toward the bathroom. A few minutes later, he returned and told me, "OK, we're all set." I asked him how he got enough change and he told me that he had seen a

blind man asking for change near the bathroom. Under the guise of giving him some change, Dad had actually taken some change out of the bowl! This shocked me but Dad reassured me, "It's OK, he's here at every game. I'll give him twice as much the next time we are here. He'll never know the difference." And, sure enough, next time we went to a game, Dad went right to the man and gave him a five dollar bill. This was a lesson in creative problem solving—and justice - but it's probably not a story Dad ever told in one of his own sermons.

What I most learned from my dad....was how to be a great husband and a father. I have learned the importance of being an example to my children, modeling behaviors and attitudes that have been positive and promoted growth and wellbeing. I have learned kindness and empathy. I have learned the importance of having a good sense of humor and not aking myself too seriously. I have learned the importance of "hanging in there," and being loyal and constant. All of these things were things I learned from watching my dad. So much of this was encapsulated in being a fan of the Philadelphia Phillies. You have to remember, this is a team that is the losingest team in any sport, having lost over 10,000 games in their history. Yet, the highs—two World championships in my lifetime along with a couple of other "almost" seasons—have been times I will never forget. And it all goes back to going with my dad to see the Phillies play. I was fortunate in that my growing up coincided with one of the best periods in their history—from 1976 to 1983. We would go to see them when they were doing really well and when they were doing REALLY bad....but it didn't matter how they were doing. We were not fair weather fans. We had the same people sit around us at games, had the same seats every time we went—it was a small community of dedicated followers. The Phillies were the "faith" or the "religion" that my dad taught me, and I loved every minute of it. Through going to those games, bonding over statistics and watching Mike Schmidt either hit a massive home run or strike out and get booed by 40,000 people, bonding over hot dogs and lukewarm soda, bonding over foul balls hit into the crowd near us and watching the Phillie Phanatic. These are the things I remember and what my father passed on to me the most. They were the best, most memorable times in my life.

My father showed me what loyalty, dedication, and steadfastness means. Thank you, Dad. We will miss your stories, your jokes, and your songs...but you taught us well and your spirit lives on."

Tim

## **Christian Education**

In August the Christian Ed committee sponsored an all church picnic at the Chandler's house on Sunday Aug 21. There was a lot of sharing of food, conversation and fun.

On September 18<sup>th</sup> Christian Education and the World Service committee are planning educational stations for the CROP hunger walk following the ecumenical service on The Bethel Common at 10:00 AM.



This year the Christian Ed committee will have activities (Including art, puppetry/drama, storytelling, Science, STEM and Music) for students in pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade on Fridays after school from 3 to 5 PM. The first session will run from October 14-Nov 4. Starting with an Ice Cream Social on October 14.



For Middle School students we plan a monthly, leading into bimonthly pizza supper and youth group activities from 5:30 – 7 PM

Intergenerational plans include: Crop Walk in September, Michealmas (kites), October Lantern Hike, Advent Spiral in December, Seder Meal on Thursday before Easter, Maypole and May baskets in May.

Key dates coming up:

Sept 16<sup>th</sup>: middle school 5:30-7 PM; pizza party (grades 6 - 8)

Sept 18<sup>th</sup> -CROP walk 10:00 AM

Oct. 14, 21, 28<sup>th</sup>, and Nov 4<sup>th</sup>: 3-5 PM (ages pre-school-5<sup>th</sup>) elementary after school program

Ice Cream social - Oct 14.

Our programs last year were blessed with lots of inter-generational assistance. If you would like to help out contact Jim Chandler, Rev. Tim LeConey or any of the Christian Education members.

Jim Chandler, co-chair Christian Ed committee

### **Church youth with their summer activities**

Sarah DeCato mentioned camping, theater camp, ziplining, and alot of swimming. Lucy has been refining her art skills and lost another tooth. Isla has been perfecting her baking skills and doing a little babysitting. Maren has been busy being three and has started preschool.

Jenn Doyle mentioned a fabulous summer on Martha's Vineyard.

Mary Scanlon mentioned great camping trips to Cape Cod and Moosehead Lake.

Jeremy Dunham mentioned Hermit Island camping and a trip to New York City.





## **CROP Walk Sunday, September 18**

CROP Hunger Walk (Communities Respond to Overcome Poverty) activities will be Sunday, September 18 on The Bethel Common. Tim is leading an ecumenical service outside under the Harvestfest tent. This year the World Service committee is focusing CROP activities on educational awareness, feeding the hungry locally and globally. Instead of walking around the town, with minimum visibility, stations around the Common will focus on learning opportunities provided by Christian Ed and World Service committee members.

CROP funds support the work of Church World Service. CWS provides help overseas for disaster responses and micro loans to promote long-term opportunities in underserved portions of the world. Locally 25% stays in this region helping with the food back-pack program in SAD 44 schools. This program brings food home to families on weekends, when children don't get food during the school day. Food insecurity is a real problem in our own community.



The LOVE BOWL for September goes toward the CROP Walk.

## **Welcome Home Sunday**

Sunday, September 25 is Welcome Home Sunday. Deacons want to have everyone invite a friend to worship. Deacons will provide refreshments for a social outside after church. It is time to bring the flock of sheep together.

The Deacons feel it is time to have discussion about communion by intinction. This should be done at the Council level. Council meets Sept 15. Please let your council members know your thoughts.



## **From the Moderator**

**Conference news** - The Maine Conference met and called Rev. Dr. Marissa Laviola as the new Conference Minister. Her focus is a love for small churches. She is called to be the settled conference minister.

Ron Baard, Dean of the Maine School of Ministry, just announced his retirement by the end of September. We all wish him well in retirement and thank him for great work training lay leaders and clergy.

**Mahoosuc Community Band** has a new conductor. Patricia Boyle-Wight has stepped down from the position she held for over 20 years. Jim McLaughlin, music director at Gould Academy, is the new director. The band will start rehearsing at Gould Academy Bingham Auditorium and music room starting in September. Anyone interested in joining the band is welcome to dust off their instrument and join the band Monday evenings starting September 5. The new rehearsal time is 6:45 to 8:30 PM. Hopefully Gould students will be able to join the band. The church council met with the MCB executive committee and the band expressed their great appreciation for use of the church building for 25 years.

## **September Calendar of Church events**

Saturday, September 3 - Red Cross Blood Drive at Church, 9 AM-1:30 PM

Sunday, September 4 - Worship with Communion at 10 AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live

Tuesday, September 6 - Prayer Group at 8:45am at church/on ZOOM

Book Group 7 PM at church and on ZOOM

Wednesday, September 7 - Men's Breakfast at 8 am at church/on ZOOM;

Christian Education Committee at 12 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, September 11 - Worship at 10AM at church/streaming on YouTube Live

Coffee order due

Tuesday, September 13 - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM;

Trustees at 6:30 PM on ZOOM

Wednesday, September 14 - World Service Committee at 3 PM at church/on ZOOM

Thursday, September 15 - Church Council at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Friday, September 16 - Middle School Youth Gathering, 5:30 -7 PM at church

Saturday, September 17 - Harvest Fest on Common 10 AM to 2 PM

Sunday, September 18 - Outdoor Ecumenical Service at 10 AM

CROP Walk Educational Activities following, on Common

Monday, September 19 –Thursday, September 22 Rev. Tim on vacation

Tuesday, September 20 - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church/on ZOOM;

Deacons at 10 AM at church/on ZOOM

Sunday, September 25 - "Welcome Home Sunday"

Worship/Fellowship time at 10 AM at church

## **Flowers for church in September**

September 11            Jan Whitworth

September 18            CROP Walk

September 25            Susan Herlihy

## Birthdays in September

September 2 – Reece Pierce  
September 7 – Henrietta List  
September 10 – Linda Davis  
September 10 – Dean Richmond  
September 11 – Suzanne Pierce  
September 14 – David Miles  
September 14 – Tom Davis  
September 22 – Liam LeConey  
September 25 – Eric Boyle-Wight  
September 26 – Cody-Ann Scanlon

## Equal Exchange Coffee plus

Coffee and tea orders are due September 11. New this month, check out the other foods that support local farmers and growers around the world. Nuts include cashews and almonds, dried fruit includes dates and mangos. No chocolate until November order.

Check out <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/> for a full listing of items around the world.

Contact Jane Chandler for a price. Checks are made out to WPCC with coffee in the memo line.

## Book Group

Book Group will start meeting on the first Tuesday of each month, after a break this summer. The book for September is *Bewilderment: A Novel* by Richard Powers. In October we will read and discuss *My Mother's War: The Incredible True Story of How a Resistance Fighter survived Three Concentration Camps* by Eva Taylor. The meetings are on Zoom and in person.

