



## **“An Easter Feast...every day”**

I know it seems as if I always come back to food, in one way or another, but as I've pointed out on many occasions, our Judeo-Christian traditions are intimately tied up with what we might call our divine culinary delights, as in Manna in the wilderness, or the many Old Testament teachings on the preparation of food, or Jesus' feeding the multitudes, or making a point of sharing meals, and, of course, there's the Lord's Supper, and Paul's occasional mentions of food offered to idols, or how to share the Lord's Supper. And, there's our celebrations on Maundy Thursday, when we gather for our traditional soup and bread supper as a way of being bound together in Christ before we share the Lord's Supper.

For many of us, Easter is also an occasion, deeply rooted in most of our religious traditions, for us to gather as families for the meals we have come to associate with sacred seasons, and most of us use these meals as ways to express our gratitude and, I would hope, specifically our gratitude to God for the gifts of creation that nurture us in body and spirit. Some of my most cherished memories are of our family festival gatherings on sacred occasions.

One of the Scripture readings for Easter Sunday this year is from Isaiah, and it contains the following: “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.”

This “feast” language, with all its richness, is a way of expressing the full range of God’s goodness to us and for us. And one of

the best ways to experience this goodness is to be intentionally grateful, to say the words of thankfulness aloud, for everything and not only for the big things. Try saying thanks for toothbrushes and toothpaste and toilet tissue and central heating and snow plows and fingernail clippers and plumbers and cable internet.

One of my favorite poems is Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “Pied Beauty,” with the following lines.

*Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches’ wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced — fold, fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.*

Hopkins reminds us that the goodness of God can be found in trades and tools and cows and trout and finches’ wings. Look for the Easter Feast in everything in every moment of every day. Be thankful, and you will find it! Amen.

Peace,  
Ken





## APRIL BIRTHDAY WISHES

Happy Birthday to the following Church Members:

Karin Ducham 4/1	Margaret McDonald 4/18
Livia Norman 4/4	Jason Martinez 4/20
Lorraine Allan 4/5	Kenneth Frazier 4/21
Stephen Gagnon 4/7	Kaitlyn Post 4/22
Todd Cicchetti 4/10	Helen Audibert 4/23
Rocco Capobianco 4/12	Martha Foster 4/25
Thomas Insero 4/13	Oliver Centeno 4/27
Stuart Post 4/17	



## GWIM FOOD BANK DONATIONS



Food Pantry  
Donations Needed

**Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Meats, Cold Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Juice, tuna, canned soups-stews-chili, canned fruits, canned vegetables, beans (canned or dried), rice pouches, etc.**

Other donations will be welcomed, but these will be the main focus. The food basket will be available each week in the Narthex.



# ***WISH LIST FOR SAFE HAVEN SHELTER***

- ◆ Liquid Laundry detergent
- ◆ Canned Juice
- ◆ **Dish Detergent**
  - ◆ Paper Towels
- ◆ Jars of Baby Food & cereal
- ◆ Toilet Paper
- ◆ Women's socks (new)
- ◆ **Videos**
- ◆ Baby Wipes
- ◆ Women's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Wash Cloths
- ◆ Gift Certificates (Walmart, Stop & Shop, Walgreens & CVS)
- ◆ Pillow Cases - Pillows
- ◆ Hair Brushes
- ◆ **Baby Diapers (large & ex-large)**
- ◆ Cleaning Supplies
- ◆ non-perishable food
- ◆ Sanitary Napkins
- ◆ School Supplies
- ◆ **Children's Socks (new)**
- ◆ Large Bath towels
- ◆ Fitted twin sheets
- ◆ Children's Underwear (new)

Safe Haven currently provides the following bilingual (English/Spanish) services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault: up to 60 days of shelter for women and their children; individual and peer group counseling; 24 hour crisis hotlines for domestic violence and sexual assault; legal advocacy information and referral; community education for adults and children; and court based family violence victim advocacy.

All information obtained through counseling remains confidential. They do not subscribe to Caller I. D. Please bring all your donations for Safe Haven on the third Sunday in March.





## **CAN THE CHURCH HELP YOU PAY YOUR MEDICAL & DENTAL BILLS?**

**The Blakesley Bed Fund is available for active church members and their dependent children to help with medical bills.**

Please submit bills to Roxanne's attention in the church office. If you are not sure if a bill falls under the guidelines, submit it anyway, and the Trustees will determine if it is eligible for payment.

**All Dental Visits (for each procedure) will need a letter from the First Congregational Church Office (call Roxanne at the church office 203-757-0331) before going to your appointment.**

**ATTENTION: THERE WILL BE A BLAKESLEY FUND MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORSHIP ON APRIL 15, 2018. ALL ACTIVE MEMBERS SHOULD BE IN ATTENDANCE.**



## **SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

We have added a way for folks to give to the First Congregational Church General Memorial Scholarship Fund. "Give Local" has been assisting area nonprofits to raise money for the past five years.

On **April 24 & 25** anyone can log onto [www.GivelocalCCF.org](http://www.GivelocalCCF.org) At no expense to our church the Connecticut Community Foundation will collect donor online contributions and pass them to us along with bonus dollars. CCF collects thru corporate sponsorships.

You can give any amount from \$10 & up to be used for Scholarship only. Almost 100 area nonprofits will be participating in "Give Local" this year. Please log on April 24 & 25 and encourage friends and family to help our Scholarship Fund grow and look over the list of other worthy groups as well.



## Silver Lake 2018

Silver Lake registration is available online. The poster is up on the board coming out of the Narthex on the Holmes Ave side. If you are interested and would like to know more about Silver Lake check out their website at

<http://silverlake.ctucc.org>



### **From the Director of Music/Youth**



As a child, my weekly schedule was filled with activity's at First Church, I don't just mean on Sundays but also weekdays. First Church and its members helped & encouraged my development and eventual path to a career in liturgical music, a passion for theater and helping others, a strong work ethic and the list could go on for a long time.

Recently I discovered that First Church has several children and young adults who have expressed a strong desire to be the catalyst for change in the society just outside our front doors. It begins with a youth group that has chosen to meet every Sunday at 11:30 am their project of choice "Homelessness" and ideas that came from every corner of the table with which we were thinking about what can we do. Kamyra and her sister, Ava showed up the following Sunday with a gift bag or so I thought, the bag as it turns out is a blessing bag that they took upon themselves to put together with necessary essentials for daily life. The following Sunday Kamyra showed up with a poster that she made depicting all the necessity items which is currently in the Narthex. Every week since has been a new surprise and a strong indication of how serious, passionate and committed our youth and children are to this project. Through the great generosity of David Simpson and members of the Bunker Hill Congregational Church a very generous donation of \$500 was made to the cause of purchasing more items for the Blessing Bags, on Sunday March 18.

**Continued**

A request was made to the Board of Christian Outreach , Kamyra and her sister Ava attending the meeting stating their case after which a matching donation of \$500 was made to the cause to which we are very grateful! The goal of having Kamyra and Ava attend the Board of Christian Outreach was to encourage perseverance in something they believe in, encouraging others in cause and lastly, what a church board does and how it functions. I couldn't be any prouder of our children and youth and you the congregation for helping to support their cause.

So we have been busy over the last couple of months as a youth group and congregation, in two months this congregation and friends from outside First Church helped put together 40 plus care packages for Puerto Rico. Several cans of decaffeinated coffee were given to a senior center in Oakville. At current roughly 30 Blessing Bags plus the financial gifts allowing us to purchase many, many more and by the way these are ongoing missions. Again special thanks to: FCC Board of Christian Outreach, David Simpson and members of the Bunker Hill Congregational Church, Our Children, all of you, Rev. Ken Frazier, Rev. Dr. Maner Tyson, Diana Trumbly, Dennis McGuire, Winston and Pearlette Stephenson.

A huge thank you to everyone that attended, volunteered or donated to our Annual Easter Egg Hunt, thank you for again making this event successful!

COMING UP!! On Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm we will be hosting a Broadway Night here at First Church! For those of you do not know Kadriya Bikbova, Kadriya is the daughter of Liliya Bikbova our Soprano section leader, this evening is part of Kadriya's senior community service project for school. Please spread the word!

Stay Tuned!

Stewart W.Crouse  
Director of Music  
The First Congregational Church of Waterbury