



**Sunday Worship, April 3, 2022, 10am
The Fifth Sunday of Lent
Communion Sunday**

As you know, we are now gathering both in-person and online.

**If you are worshipping at home, you may access
the livestream of the service in one of two ways.**

**If you prefer to watch on youtube, the link and Bulletin will be in
an email that will go out Sunday at 6am.**

**The service will also be live on the church's Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalBranford/>**

**Each Sunday, BCTV Cable 18 airs the worship service
from the previous Sunday at 5:30pm.**



The Prodigal Son

This week's lectionary brings us the familiar parable of the prodigal son. Most of us are very familiar with this story, and identify variously as the father, the oldest son and the youngest son. I think there is an additional dimension to this parable that gives it even more meaning.

In the parable, Jesus talks about the younger son, and uses an image that may not resonate with us, but certainly would with the Jewish population he was speaking to. He describes the youngest son as herding the most unclean of animals, pigs. For the Pharisees, this image would have been beyond forgiveness. Jesus then goes even further in making everyone uncomfortable when he describes the father running to the son. This act would have required the father to lift his robes and show his legs, something that was considered shameful. The father runs to forgive his son, and welcomes him with open arms.

In this season of Lent, would we do the same in this era of division and enmity? Would we have the same reaction to those who have hurt us, offended us, or done us some harm? I would ask each of you to reflect on your reaction in these situations. You cannot change your

life if you are not open to the possibilities that people who sin can be forgiven, that hate can be overcome by love, and that evil can be beaten by prayer and good works. It is easy to criticize. It is easy to wait for someone to approach you and beg for forgiveness.

Philip Rinehart

April 3, 2022

Prelude: *Ricercar*, Froberger - Phil Rinehart

Introit: *Fill the World with Beauty* - FCCB Choir

Liturgist: David Crockett

Hymn of Praise: *Jesu, Jesu*

Anthem: *Praise My Soul, The King of Heaven* - FCCB Choir

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 43:16-21 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=515596900>

John 12:1-8 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=515596941>

Sermon: *Full To The Brim...Brazen Beauty* - Rev. Joseph Perdue

Hymn of Reflection: *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

Communion Hymn: *We Come as Guest Invited*

Mission Moment: Jennifer McCaughtry

Offertory: *Full to The Brim* - Katie Jones

Hymn of Dedication: *Fairest Lord Jesus*

Benediction Response: *Lenten Meditation*, J. Althouse - FCCB Choir

Postlude: *There is a Balm in Gilead*, Hayes - Phil Rinehart

Your Offering

We are so very grateful for your generosity. It makes a real difference. Every little bit of your generosity counts and we thank you so much! FCCB, 1009 Main St., Branford, CT 06405 Thank you for being the Church!



New Communications Director

I am excited to tell you that we have hired a new Director of Communications! Rachel Postovoit Newman obtained her Bachelors of Arts in Music in 2009. She grew her professional resume in the retail world and then realized she wanted to open her own store, which she did in 2018: Greenhouse Beauty. Owning a small business allowed for Rachel to use and further her talents for writing, design, and photography. Rachel married her person, Ethan, at the ever-lovely Killam's Point in 2021, and they have a son together, Elliot

Rachel has always had strong roots in the church, playing piano, and singing. She is so glad to join the team at FCCB. Rachel will be responsible for the livestream, social media engagement, website maintenance, and helping other staff get the word out about FCCB's programs.

Rev. Joseph Perdue
Senior Minister



Faith Formation Focus with Kerry

This week, as it is the 1st of the month and Communion Sunday, we will meet for our **Monthly Chapel in Walker Chapel at 10 am and return to Worship with our families in time for Communion.** As we continue to talk about Spiritual Practices (mirroring what we have been covering in our Wednesday Evening Lenten Series) we'll be walking a Labyrinth. We'll learn about how it is different from a maze and spend time walking one, doing tabletop ones and more! Can't wait to share it with you all!

PF Youth Group returns on Sunday April 10th with **Glow in the Dark Duckpin Bowling.** We'll be leaving FCCB at 12noon sharp and returning at 3pm for pickup. 2 hours of bowling, shoes, pizza and drinks are all included. *You must RSVP by Wednesday April 6th to be included.* The bowling alley needs our final headcount by then. Please call or email Kerry to RSVP!

Look for upcoming news on our end of the school year activities including our sponsoring the All-Church Picnic Sunday May 15th and our Lock-in at the beginning of June out at Killam's Point! And then onto our Local Youth Mission Project in August (22-24th)

In Peace,

Kerry Stewart
Faith Formation Coordinator
kerry@firstcongregationalbranford.org

PF Youth Group Spaghetti Dinner



Thank you all so much for the support of our PF Youth Group on Sunday Evening! We had over 50 people here for dinner in the beautifully set up Pilgrim Hall. We were able to raise over \$1000 towards our Local Youth Mission Project in August. We will be able to do all kinds of good with those funds!

A special thank you to the supervising adults who came in to teach and work with our youth to prep, cook, bake and serve the delicious meal. And clean up! Without your assistance it would not have been possible!!

The support this community shows for the important work these youth are doing is so appreciated and so necessary for this program to grow and for these youth to grow!

Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group



We raised more than \$700 to support disaster relief efforts through our friends at CWS.



Lenten Study Series: Full to the Brim

As is our tradition, we are holding a Wednesday evening supper and study series for the season of Lent. Our program runs on Wednesday evenings during Lent. This program is open to all ages and all stages! A light supper of soup, salad and bread will be served at 6pm with the program beginning at 6:30pm

(Please sign up below to share the responsibility of bringing soup (one vegetarian), salad and bread as well as serving, clean up and set up. If you do need a vegan meal, please let us know ahead of time so we can accommodate your needs, by contacting the Church Office.)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0449ACA62AA0FB6-lenten2>

A Series on Ways We Can Fill our Spiritual Cup

This year's theme is *Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent*. Our study series will focus on filling our spirits with the fuel they need. The past few years have been difficult for us all; A chance to sit back and look at what we can do to recharge and be sure we have what we need to care for ourselves and then be able to reach out and care for all those around us is very much needed.

During the first three weeks we focused on some more modern takes on Spiritual Practices and how we can incorporate those into our lives to enrich our spiritual lives. The last two weeks will focus on ancient Spiritual Practices.

Our last meeting date is:

April 6: Rev. Joseph Perdue: Spiritual Practice: new expressions of ancient spiritual practices that help us find rest and God's love.

We can't wait to see you all soon.

The Discipleship Team



The origins of Lent were that one was to leave their old life behind to fast and prepare to be baptized into a new way of living. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith. And so, our Lenten series, Full to the Brim, is an invitation into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.

The scriptures for this Lenten season are filled with parables and promises of God's abundant and expansive grace. Jesus as a mother hen, a prodigal son welcomed home, a fig tree nurtured with care and hope, precious oil poured out lovingly and freely, stones shouting out with praise — these sacred texts are brimming with a gospel of grace. We've done nothing to deserve or earn this grace, and yet, like water, it spills over. This season is an invitation—into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. It disrupts the scarcity mentality that

capitalism, oppression, or hierarchy can plant inside of us. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.

April 3 The Fifth Sunday of Lent: We are called to exhibit a shameless and brazen faith that resists injustice and death.

April 10 Palm Sunday: As we begin our walk through Holy Week, we are invited to ask: What can't be silenced? What must be said? What things can we not stay quiet about? What is bubbling up that we need to give voice to—faith questions, apologies, issues of justice, truth-telling? As we go deeper into the story, the truth will soon be set free.

April 14 Maundy Thursday: Jesus shocks his friends with loving vulnerability and tells us to do likewise. We are encouraged to remove the walls and protective layers we have built up, to allow ourselves to be loved fully by God, and to be filled to the brim so we can go out and fill others too.

April 15 Ecumenical Good Friday: On Good Friday, we grieve the violence of humanity. Yet, even here, God's love is full, poured out, and self-emptied. Even in his last moments, Jesus is overflowing with truth and the fullness of the human experience. God embodies the fullness of pain and deep sorrow.



**FCCB EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS
(April 17, 2022)**

IN MEMORY OF

IN HONOR OF

NAME

(PLEASE INDICATE NAME(S) AS THEY SHOULD APPEAR IN BULLETIN)

CONTACT

TELEPHONE

Select (how many):

Lilies (\$12) _____ Tulips (\$9) _____ Azaleas (\$12) _____

Daffodils (\$9) _____ Hyacinths (\$9) _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

Deliver my plant to a homebound person

I will take my plant home after worship on April 17th

*Make checks payable to First Congregational Church and note Easter Flowers in the memo line.

Return your completed form by mail or drop it off at the Church office.

You can also email your form to office@firstcongregationalbranford.org

Deadline is 4/6/2022



Singers Wanted

The Third Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference of the UCC is assembling a virtual choir. Singers will have ample time to listen to the music, practice, and then record their parts on their phones or other devices. Please register by April 9.

<https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/singers-wanted-virtual-conference-choir-for-annual-meeting-16394355>

Singers Wanted: Virtual Conference Choir for Annual Meeting - Southern New England Conference of the UCC - sneucc.org

Southern New England Conference of the UCC. The Southern New England Conference's third virtual Annual Meeting will be held June 18, and organizers are looking to assemble a big choir to prepare music for the gathering.

www.sneucc.org



Killam's Point Day Camp

All weeks of Killam's Point Day Camp are now full! There are always families who must change their summer plans, so we will be creating a waiting list. If you are interested in being put on the waiting list, please visit the main camp page <https://www.killamspoint.org/camp> for more information and registration forms.



Knit, Purl and Pray

We will wear masks and be socially distanced in the Russel Room, but we can once again be together and catch up on the past 14 months. Anyone is welcome whether you can knit or crochet or neither. We can teach you. We make prayer shawls, baby hats, and work on our own craft projects.

We meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 10:00 – 11:30. Our next sessions will be April 14th & April 28th.

Please join us!



Book Group

The book group will meet on Thursday, April 7 at 7:00 pm in the Russel Room. **NOTE CHANGE OF DAY AND TIME.**

We will be discussing the book, Connecticut Bootlegger Queen Nellie Green by Tony

Renzoni.

May 4 - The Choice: Embrace the Possible by Edith Eger

June 1 - TBD

Barbara Colley



Scholarship Program

The purpose of the First Congregational Church of Branford Scholarship program is to provide some financial aid to needy and worthy young men and women who are members or are children or grandchildren of members of The First Congregational Church of Branford (FCCB). Applicants for a scholarship grant must be a senior at a private or public secondary school, who are planning to attend a post-secondary school. Scholarship grants are given to the recipients for use during their first year of post-secondary education and are paid in two halves. The first half of the grant is paid to a recipient after confirmation of the school the recipient will be attending. The second half is paid to a recipient after the recipient provides to the Scholarship Committee a copy of their first semester transcript, showing they have achieved at least a “C” average. Applications are available in the office.

The deadline is April 15, 2022.



GROCERY CARDS WILL BE SOLD AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS

Big Y Stop and Shop

Did You Know... FCC Branford makes 5% of every dollar on the grocery cards we sell?

If you buy a \$100 grocery card, you get \$100 in groceries, and FCC gets \$5! It's that easy. This currently adds up to about \$2000 income annually for FCC and could easily be more. We offer both \$50 and \$100 Stop and Shop cards and \$50 and \$100 Big Y cards. Cards are sold after worship every Sunday. Why not try it out and help support FCC?

THANK YOU



Kids Weekend Meal Pick Up

Weekend food for Branford children will be distributed at:

Feed Branford Kids Warehouse - 29 Business Park Dr.

Every Thursday, 5-6 PM

Free for all Branford Children

For further information, please go to www.feedbranfordkids.org, or find @feedbranfordkids on Facebook.



The Branford Microfund, Inc.

The Branford Microfund, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit whose mission is to help members of the Branford community, in need of assistance to see them through a financial emergency. Something a bank can't or won't do.

The Microfund offers loans of up to \$3,000, interest free, with up to 30 months to repay. The loans are for unexpected, non-recurring expenses such as the purchase of a car needed to get to and from work, a major car repair, dental work, etc. The application process is confidential. All you need to show is the ability to repay the loan without interest in up to 30 months.

The FCCB Mission Board, the Branford Rotary Club, the Branford Community Foundation and others have made generous donations to the Microfund to fund its mission.

For additional information on how to apply for a loan or make a donation, go to www.branfordmicrofund.org . Brochures are also available in the Church office. Remember, all inquiries are completely confidential.

Betsy Gay

Norb Church

Chip Marsh



Sunday Flower Chart

If you are able to contribute \$35 for flowers, please consider signing up on the flower chart located on the bulletin board outside the Russel Room. You can also call or send an e-mail and Missy will sign up for you. Include who/what you would like the flowers to be in honor/memory/celebration of.

Thank you so much for keeping our altar adorned, and our flower fund supported!

*The flowers in our sanctuary ~
Congratulations to Rev. Betsy Dorsi upon her acceptance
of the call to be Senior Minister at the Westborough UCC church.*



For Our Prayers This Week

We give thanks for...

The return to normalcy - step by step

Happy Birthday to...

Sheila Potter - April 7th

Nancy Sutton - April 7th

We are so happy to have you in our lives!

Ongoing prayers for...

Reg Vetrano, Jean Andros, Sharon Reynolds, Ethel Marchesseault (Linda's mother) and Linda's Brother-in-law Charlie, Barbara O'Keefe, Tom Spivey (Linda Mitchell's father), Marissa, Betsy Boynton, Ruth Greco (Mae Genovese's sister), Zak and EmmaRae Carroll, Alberto Tirry (friend of Deb Laudano), David Lendler, Jeff Buggee, Philip Rinehart, Bianca Dorsi (Aunt of Betsy Dorsi), Janice Roberts (FCCB CDC), Rick Barker, Don Potter, William Chisholm (Teresa Sander's Grandfather), George Spear, Janet Young, Jean Andros, Colin & Justin Williams (Linda Mitchell's cousins), Grace Chaplin (Paul's mother), Nancy Dougherty, Joseph Arnson (Take-A-Vet Fishing Volunteer Care Member), Marge Nalewajek (Meghan St. Pierre's mother), Ella Furjes, and her mom, Gwen (Jennifer and Mareyna McCaughtry's friends), Cory Martens (Kelly Marten's brother), Jim

Bolan, Rose & Tom Moore (Sharon Reynold's Mom & brother),
Edward DeFrancesco, Dormer Family, Robert & Margaret Gehm
(parents of Nancy Gehm), Martha Hickman (Lil Sakai's mom), Alison
Hobbie (Betsy Gay's daughter), Sylvia O'Brien, Lou Wells

Life Among the Believers

Sunday, April 3

10:00am Worship Service, Communion Sunday - Meetinghouse

Monday, April 4

Tuesday, April 5

7:00pm Discipleship Team Meeting - All Purpose Room

7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal - Meetinghouse

Wednesday, April 6

6:00pm Lenten Study Series: Full to the Brim - Pilgrim Hall

Thursday, April 7

7:00pm Book Group - Russel Room

7:00pm Choir Rehearsal - Meetinghouse

Friday, April 8

Saturday, April 9

Sunday, April 10

10:00am Worship Service - Meetinghouse

GLOBAL MINISTRIES - WEEKLY PRAYERS

Each week Global Ministries highlights the work our mission partners do in countries around the world. We're able to pray

together for our partners and the people they serve, and learn a little about the ways they're bringing God's realm to earth today. This week we are invited to pray with the people of Japan.



Pray with Japan, April 3, 2022

Lectionary Selection: Isaiah 43:16-21

Prayers for Japan

Creator of Heaven and Earth,

There is no valley too vast or shadow too dark that you cannot overcome, for there is no end to your power and light. We often dwell on things in the past, on the hardships we face, the distance that we have carried our burdens, and the mistakes that we have made. Remind us of who we are. Remind us of who you are. You make

things new; you carry us through the difficult times, you relieve us of our burdens, and you forgive all mistakes we have made.

Open our eyes to what is before us. Give us new hope for the future. May it be the water in this wilderness and streams in this wasteland. May we welcome new faces to the Asian Rural Institute and may it be a place of healing and learning and growing together. May you protect our health: spiritually, mentally, and physically.

We proclaim your praise now and forevermore.

Amen.

Mission Moment from Japan

We recently held a community movie night where we screened Encanto. We had great conversations afterward about which character we related to, and how each member of the family had a gift that came with its own complications and responsibilities and was under pressure for different reasons. We could all relate to that feeling of pressure, and the fear of failure. One volunteer shared that perhaps their brother struggled because they were not the golden child. Another felt like they had often been expected to be the peacemaker in the family.

As family, friends, and community, we have expectations of each other. However, because we are all human, mistakes will always be made, and cracks can form in the walls. We all want to be included, heard, and seen, but these things should never depend on our performance or ability to contribute. Here I have gained a greater understanding of how God encourages us to have community, to be community. To love and be loved by people not for what we can give, but for who we are.

Prayer and Mission Moment by Maria Abigail Hernandez

Mission Partners in Japan

- Asian Rural Institute
- Doshisha University
- Emmaus Center
- J.F. Oberlin University
- Kobe College
- Korean Christian Church in Japan
- Miyagi Gakuin Women's University
- National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ)
- Tohoku Gakuin University
- United Church of Christ in Japan

More about Japan

Global Ministries Mission Co-worker in Japan

*Abi Hernandez serves with the Asian Rural Institute, Japan. Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church's Wider Mission, WOC, and your **special gifts**.*

BCTV

This Sunday's service will be shown on BCTV next Sunday. BCTV Channel 18, 1070 for Comcast customers and Channel 6004 for Frontier customers at 5:30 pm on Sundays.

Notifications

Information Regarding The E-Spire

- **The deadline for an article to be published in the weekly e-spire is 12pm on Tuesdays.**
- Email articles to office@firstcongregationalbranford.org

- Those who have requested a paper copy now receive a copy of the weekly e-spire in the mail.
- The e-spire is only mailed out weekly if it can be done in a timely fashion.

If you have not received recent e-Spires, or would like to subscribe to our weekly newsletters, please let the office know and we'd be happy to help!



Check out the church Facebook page! This is a public page for everyone to be able to see everything going on at OUR church.

Please be reminded that this page is open to the public and therefore no pictures should be shared of children unless the parents are asked specifically. The FCCB Youth Ministries CLOSED GROUP is where pictures including children can be posted.

Click the link below to be brought right to the page and like it!

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalBranford/>



AMAZON SMILE DONATIONS

PLEASE shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile), and First Congregational Church can receive donations from AmazonSmile.

StartWithaSmile at [smile.amazon.com/ch/06-6042800](https://www.amazon.com/ch/06-6042800) for your purchases and Amazon donates to First Congregational Church.



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