



**Sunday Worship, February 20, 2022, 10am
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

As you know, we 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.



God Speaks to Us in Unexpected Ways

I keep the latest issue of "The Upper Room" in my backpack so that I can read it every weekday morning during my bus ride to work. On the weekends, I pull it out of the backpack to read while I'm eating breakfast. The reading for Sunday, February 13th, was entitled "Perfect Peace." The thought for the day was "When troubles overwhelm me, God will ease my burden." The prayer focus was "Those living with a terminal illness." The writer was Belinda Voigtmann, a woman from Missouri who had recovered from a bout of breast cancer only to have the cancer return and metastasize. She knew there was no cure, and she wrote about some of the worries that were going through her mind. She noted that when her worries became overwhelming, God was there to share her burden. She ended with a prayer in which she wrote "And when it is time to die, may we die in faith." A note was added that said "The author passed away before the publication of this issue." That note really hit me.

I re-read the piece several times and, as I did, thoughts of Dottie Althoff - a longtime and much-loved member of my chorus – popped into my head. In 2021, Dottie and her husband finally decided to leave Connecticut winters behind. They found an apartment in Florida and moved there before winter set in. In order to make this move, Dottie had to resign from her position as

president of the chorus. Obviously, she was unable to sing with the chorus in person, but over the winter she tried to keep in touch with us by Zoom. She planned to rejoin the chorus when she returned to Connecticut in the spring.

Last month at our first meeting of the year, the board learned that Dottie had been diagnosed with cancer. She was in a Florida hospital, but she was hoping to be released soon. The board sent flowers to her hospital room to show our love. Dottie's family kept in touch with a board member and gave her occasional updates. Unfortunately, the updates became more and more grim. As I read "Perfect Peace" in "The Upper Room", I felt God was speaking to me; that He was trying to prepare me for news I didn't want to hear. That was on Sunday, February 13th. On the afternoon of February 15th, an email was sent to chorus members informing us that Dottie had passed away in the overnight hours. Although I am extremely sad, I feel myself calmly accepting Dottie's passing in a way that might not have been possible without God speaking to me through the "Perfect Peace" meditation in "The Upper Room". Rest in perfect peace, Dottie.

Pat Carroll
Bookkeeper

February 20, 2022

Prelude: *Amazing Grace*, Diemer - Phil Rinehart

Liturgist: David Colley

Hymn of Praise: *O God Of Every Nation*

Children's Moment Kerry Stewart

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 45:3-11,15 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=511967600>

Luke 6:27-38 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=511967533>

Sermon: *Offensive Love* - Rev. Joseph Perdue

Hymn of Reflection: *Now the Green Blade Riseth*

Offertory: *How Great Thou Art*, Anonymous - Phil Rinehart

Hymn of Dedication: *Jesu, Jesu*

Postlude: *The Old Rugged Cross*, Bennard - 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!



Faith Formation Focus with Kerry

Thank you all for your support of Love Fest 2022. So far, in addition to the food we have collected, we have \$60 to donate to the Branford Food Pantry. And over \$350 for the CWS Blanket Sunday! That is over 35 blankets to keep families warm!! We are still collecting non-perishable items for the Branford Food Pantry and donations for the Church World Service Blankets, through the end of February since the weather kept some of us home on Sunday. **Be sure to stop by our Love is... Wall in Pilgrim Hall and add your Heart to it. What makes you feel loved? How do you express God's love for you?**

This week's lesson both in our Children's Message and in Sunday School is The Golden Rule. That's right, the Golden Rule comes from Scripture! It's not just something your Mom or Dad or Grandparents made up! Imagine that. We will play some dress up during our Children's Message in Worship at 10am and play some fun games during Sunday School time. Can't wait to learn about how we should be treating others and how to Love each other with you on Sunday!!

As we are back to in-person Worship, Sunday School is back to in-person as well.

Our next Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group is Sunday, February 27th. We are headed to CityClimb in New Haven for Indoor Rock Climbing!! This is at no cost to the participants. **RSVP is required by Sunday, February 20th. The Gym must have our final tally to be sure they have the staff needed.** We are meeting at FCCB to leave at 11:15am. Carpool is available. If you are not carpooling with us, you need to alert Kerry so we don't wait for you. We'll be back at FCCB at approximately 2pm and will have a Pizza lunch and pick up is at 3pm. So excited for our first community outing in quite a while. Masks are required, along with appropriate clothing (including sneakers.) **RSVP to Kerry!**

Looking forward to playing dress up with you all on Sunday morning!

In Peace,

Kerry Stewart
Faith Formation Coordinator
kerry@firstcongregationalbranford.org



Love Fest 2022

Loving on our Neighbors and our Community
Food and Blanket Drive Continue through February 27th

We will continue to collect for our Neighbors through the end of the month.
Thank you all for your support so far!

So, how can you help?

- Donate Food! The items listed below are the most requested. You can bring it to the church during office hours, bring to Worship on February 27th.
- Donate to support the Branford Food Pantry: We are accepting financial donations that will be sent to the Branford Food Pantry to support the work they do.
- Donate to support CWS: Each blanket costs \$10. These blankets go to victims of natural disasters, shelters, food banks and so much more. Let's help our neighbors stay warm!

Any Questions please contact the Church Office or Kerry
kerry@firstcongregationalbranford.org

Branford Food Pantry Needs:

High Need Items: (Need most and have difficulty getting from the Food Bank on a regular basis)

Vegetarian Items (in general, many more individuals are vegetarian)

Soups

Canned Tomatoes

Canned Pasta (SpaghettiOs's etc.)

Baked Beans (vegetarian preferred)

Kids Snacks:

Raisins

Small box Pudding/ Jello Cups

Fruit Cups

Cheese Crackers

Pretzels

Granola Bars

Always Need Items:

Peanut Butter

Jelly/Jam

Tuna

Canned chicken

Mac and cheese

Shelf Stable Milk

Cereal

Gluten Free Items

Rice (1 or 2 lb bags)

Brown Rice

In Peace and Health,

Kerry Stewart

Faith Formation Coordinator

kerry@firstcongregationalbranford.org



Lenten Study Series: Full to the Brim

A Series on Ways We Can Fill our Spiritual Cup

As is our tradition, we are planning a Wednesday evening supper and study series for the season of Lent. This year's theme is Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent. Our study series will focus on filling our spiritual cups. The past few years have been difficult for us all and 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.

We will be exploring different ways members of our own community and a couple of guests as well, fill their own cups and how we can all apply their practices to our own lives. We'll be exploring topics such as: Community and Media and how that influences us; Nature and seeing God in Creation; Praying and Practicing the Labyrinth and more.

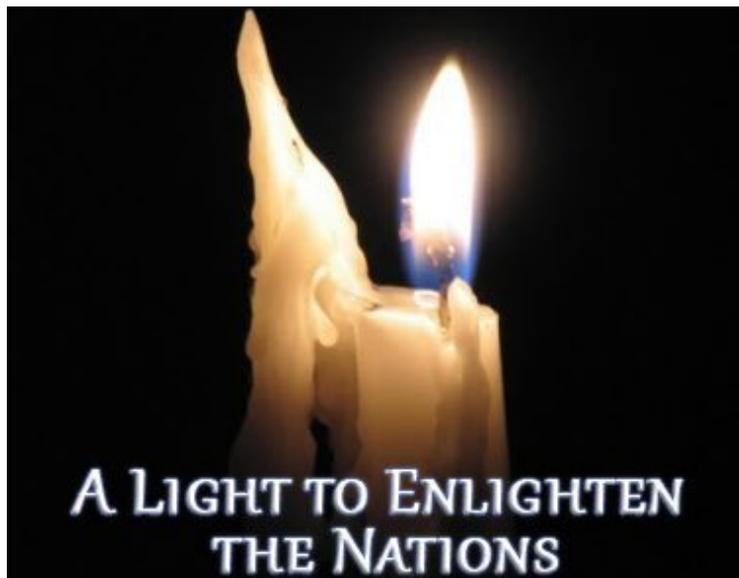
Our program will run on Wednesday evenings during Lent. This program is open to all ages and all stages! A light supper of soup, salad and bread will be served at 6pm with the program beginning at 6:30pm. Our meeting dates are:

March 9
March 16
March 23
March 30
April 6

We will have sign ups to share the responsibility of bringing soup, salad and bread as well as serving, clean up and set up.

Save the Dates and look for more specific details coming very soon!

The Discipleship Team



Epiphany Sermon Series: A Light to Enlighten The Nations

“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” These lines from the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32) speak of the season of Epiphany, the light of Christ for all the world. The audacity of the gospel is that the light shining in Jesus shone far beyond Israel to illuminate the whole world. During the season of Epiphany, we will focus on the steadily increasing light of Christ in the world of Luke and see how the light of Christ grows in our time. We will see how the light of Christ reached outsiders from the

beginning and continued to grow, lighting the dark places throughout our world and in our own hearts.

- February 20: **Seventh Sunday After Epiphany** Jesus continues the Sermon on the Plain, challenging us to follow God's example of radical and inclusive love. (Luke 6:27-28)
- February 27: **Transfiguration Sunday**: As Jesus is literally bathed in light, the heroes of the past challenge us not to box in the message of God's love. (Luke 9:28-43)



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 session will be February 24th.

Please join us!



Book Group

March - Great Circle by Maggie Shipstead

Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 3rd, at 7:00pm in the Russel Room.

Please join us.

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!



For Our Prayers This Week

We give thanks for...

The return to normalcy - step by step

We Celebrate...

Bill Reynolds, who is cancer free!

Happy Birthday to...

Lynne Hoadley - February 10th

We are so happy to have you in our lives!

Happy Anniversary to...

Nora & Reg Vetrano - February 7th

Ongoing prayers for...

Sharon Reynolds, Ethel Marchesseault (Linda's mother) and Linda's Brother-in-law Charlie, Barbara O'Keefe, Tom Spivey (Linda Mitchell's father), Andrew Buggee (son of Jeff Buggee), 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), Wayne Childs, 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, February 20

10:00am Worship Service - Meetinghouse

Monday, February 21

Tuesday, February 22

7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal - Meetinghouse

Wednesday, February 23

5:00pm KPMT Meeting - Russel Room

Thursday, February 24

10:00am Knit, Purl, Pray - Russel Room

7:00pm Choir Rehearsal - Meetinghouse

Friday, February 25

Saturday, February 26

Sunday, February 27

10:00am Worship Service - Meetinghouse

Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group - City Climb Gym in New Haven

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 Chile



Pray with Chile, February 20, 2022

Lectionary Selection: Luke 6:27-38

Prayers for Chile

O God, Our Creator,
help us to be present in the life of others –

help us to sit with others in their pain, in their sorrow, in their grief,
even when we do not know the battles that they face;
even when we do not know the fears that they hold;
even when we do not know the pain or sadness that they have felt;
help us to understand that we do not know what is in the hearts of others,
but we do know that what we see and come into contact with
is an image of you, God. Our brothers and sisters may not be blood,
but still are part of our extended family of humanity,
and even when there is much that we do not know –
we do know to love our brothers and sisters;
we do know to love our families;
and we do know to show love as we want to see more love
in the world around us.
O God, fill our hearts with your spirit –
so that we are better able to handle situations that challenge us,
with love.

Amen.

Mission Stewardship Moment from Chile

Luke 6:27-38 talks about loving our enemy, but more than that it touches on how important it is to love everyone as children of God as people created in his image and also as the imperfect humans that we are. In times of a global pandemic, there is so much that we do not know of the situations of others, of their experiences, of their sacrifices. What we do know is the importance of understanding, of love, of care, of showing grace in the face of that which we do not know, and in Luke – the emphasis is on spreading love to everyone and extending that love towards those that we hesitate to because what we do not know is that they may need it the most in those moments. By showing grace in moments that we find ourselves hesitating, we are helping to create a domino effect of God's love being spread throughout the world. I'm serving my time in Chile, and although I have not been able to be in the physical presence of the church there and with my peers, I have been given much grace and love that is shared virtually with the work that I have been able to do and complete for the Shalom Center in Talca, Chile. For their grace to work with me in a world with many unknowns, I am grateful to feel that love from afar.

Prayer and Mission Moment by Angelica Santiago-Gonzales

Mission Partners in Chile

- Popular Education in Health (EPES), Chile
- Theological Community of Chile (CTE)
- Pentecostal Church of Chile (IPC)

[More about Chile](#)

Global Ministries Mission Co-worker in Chile

Angelica Santiago Gonzalez is a Global Mission Intern, serving as Associate to the Executive Director of the Shalom Center from the Pentecostal Church in Chile. She assists the Executive Director with the accompaniment, participation, and organization of virtual and on-site workshops, retreats, and educational processes regarding environmental issues, trauma crisis, and youth work. In addition, she collaborates in interpreting the work of the Shalom Center and the Roots in Ruins Programme to delegations of churches, Regions, and Conferences in the U.S. and Canada.

[Make a gift that supports the work of Angelica Santiago-Gonzalez](#)

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, and First Congregational Church can receive donations from AmazonSmile.

StartWithaSmile at smile.amazon.com/ch/06-6042800 for your purchases and Amazon donates to First Congregational Church.



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