

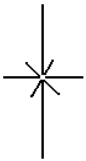
The Seekonk Congregational Church
United Church Of Christ

The
Caller

Gathered 1885



COME TO WORSHIP!!
9:00AM OR 10:30AM



REMEMBER~~

God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it...AND there is everything you can do about it... like honor the Holy Source of Life with your presence in worship...!!

Here in our Seekonk Congregational Church UCC, we have **ONE** hour a week to worship with praise and thanksgiving... and **167** hours to live out our faith in the world!!

Who am I?

I am a child formed by God...

Nourished by God's love

Preserved by God's grace and mercy

Open to God's promises

Expectant of God's future

I am the human expression of the Divine hope

I am God's best and last chance in the world

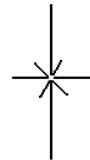
That is who I am

I am all of that...and more...

Set Free and Empowered

Thanks be to God!

(adapted from a sermon by Rev. Peter Gomes)



FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER

Writing this Caller article after the first winter snow storm of 2024... I was recalling past words of more than one of you saying... “This is the time of year that we need words of courage that take us through the cold and snow and ice of winter... so I share with you these thoughts and biblical verses for strength when needed for the weeks ahead....

From the Psalms:

God is my light and my saving grace...whom shall I fear?
God is the strength of my life!
Be strong and take courage

From the prophet Isaiah

Fear not for I am with you be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you
I will uphold you with my right hand.

From the gospels:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Eleanor Roosevelt said “You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, “I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.”

J.R. Tolkien said: it is not the strength of the body that counts, but the strength of the spirit.

Anais Nin ... “life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.”

Maya Angelou said: Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time.”

Lao Tzu said: From caring comes courage”

Madeleine L’Engle said: We have to be more courageous than we think we can be, because God is constantly calling us to be more than we are:

Malcolm Gladwell wrote: - Courage is not something that you already have that makes you brave when the tough times start. Courage is what you earn when you've been through the tough times and you discover they aren't so tough after all!

SO, in the days ahead of us in 2024... “take courage!! Yes... there may be some chaos or struggle but dare to take courage into each new day. Breathe in the breath of God’s Spirit..., and trust that – YES! COURAGE is ours when we dare to risk... dare to love... dare to be all that God is calling us to be... May it be so!!

Peace and blessings...Rev. Joy

YOUR CHURCH STAFF EXTENDS TO ALL
IN THIS FAMILY OF FAITH
A *HOPEFUL, *JOYFUL, *PEACEFUL, *LOVE-FILLED
Happy New Year!

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION:

Confirmation Schedule:

- Feb 4 ...9:00 Worship
- Feb 5 or 6 ...Mentor & Confirmand ZOOM chat7:30-8:45PM
- Feb 10... Sat 10-11:30AM
MAKE GRINDERS/ BRING ITEM from list!
- Feb 11... 9:00 worship SELL GRINDERS and Class Time until 1:00
- Feb 14 Ash Wed Worship - Required 7PM mentors invited
- Feb 18 no required worship, school vacation week
- Feb 25 no required worship, school vacation week
- Feb 26 or 27-Mentor & Confirmand ZOOM chat7:30-8:45PM



CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

JANUARY 2024 ~

- 7th Baptism Sunday ~ K- 8th grade BEGIN (with family) IN CHURCH then *gather in lower hall to meet a special guest who will “Share their Gifts” (Storytelling)*
- 14th Regular Classes ~ Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Weekend
- Lock-In Event (5th-8th GRADES)
- 21st Regular Classes
- 28th Regular Classes

FEBRUARY 2024 ~

4th K- 8th grade BEGIN (with family) IN CHURCH then *gather in lower hall -special guest who will "Share their Gifts" (Love)*

11th Regular Classes (Mardi Gras Coffee Hour)

Wednesday Feb 14 ~ASH WEDNESDAY Services Noon -7pm

Parents encouraged to bring children who are old enough to understand that in this one worship service each year we offer to God all for which we are truly sorry and seek forgiveness.

Quiet room available also. Child Care **upon request**

18th Regular Classes ~ Lent 1

25th Regular Classes ~ Lent 2

Sunday Feb 4 ~ Youth Group 3rd - 8th grade in big hall, following church school, **10:00-1PM Mardi Gras Fun!** Masks, Beads & Candy and games!

Tuesday Feb 6 AND Feb 13

ART CLASSES with Sophia and Kristin

3rd-8th grade (church school fundraiser)

in lower hall 4:30 - 6:30PM

\$20 each class ~~~ Sign up for one or both!

RYE 2024

SAVE THE DATE July 28-31 - Regional Youth Event!

Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center, Sharon, CT

theme: "LOVE IS GREATER THAN FEAR"

All youth are welcome to attend!

This program is for youth who are currently in grades 6-12 as of January 2024.

RYE is a place to grow your spirits and connect with teens from all over New England. There will be time for swimming and service work, reflection and recreation, worship and workshops. Our beautiful outdoor ministry site has waterfront activities and a challenge course for team- building.

CONTACT KRISTIN PUTNEY

for more info 774-991-1555

A parent -youth informational meeting coming soon.

Fee is around \$345

Kristin will be organizing car pooling

Youth will do fundraising and scholarship funds available.

Registration opens mid January with early bird discount \$50 off

PEOPLE AND PASSAGES

BABY CELEBRATION NEWS

*Congratulations to Jared & Jessica Gregory
on the birth of their 3rd child,
daughter **Sydney Grace Gregory** born on Friday 1/5/24.
She is the sister to Marshall age 5 and Tucker age 2*

*And is the Granddaughter to our
Director of Music, Susan Barrow*



Our thoughts, condolences and prayers are with:

*~We grieve with the family of **Karen Barichello**, wife of Valentino and sister of Tracy Thomas, (Deacon) Lesley Daigle and Scott Johnson and many nieces and nephews who passed away on 12/20/23. In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be made to Seekonk Congregational Church UCC Memorial Fund.*

*~We express our grief to the family of **Marguerite Chenier**, 7 years old who passed away on 1/10/24 surrounded by her loving family. She had been battling brain cancer since October 2022. She is a family member of the Heelan's.*



NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

OVERFLOWING THANKS!!! ~~~

Many tanks to Andrew Correia, Director of J.H. Williams & Co., Funeral Home for donating calendars for the New Year 2024. Calendars are available for you to pick up on the table in front of the office or at either entry of the church.

*Let us know of your joys and celebrations so we can include them
in our People and Passages each month*

FROM THE BOARD DEACONS



At the time of this writing, we are approaching Martin Luther King Day, and as they have done in years previous, the confirmands had the opportunity to sleep outside in cardboard boxes in honor of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign, under the leadership of our Director of Faith Formation, Kristin Putney and with the help of many others. What a great way to give these young people the opportunity of feeling what it is like to be homeless, and an experience they are not likely ever to forget.

And, by the time you are reading this article, you will have had the opportunity to experience one of Re. Joy's incredible sermons about MLK Day. Our responsibility, after hearing this sermon is not only to have listened, but also to act. What can we, as both individuals and groups, do to further the MLK legacy?

Here are some ideas:

- 1) Join the Board of Mission & Social Action
- 2) Volunteer to deliver food from Doorways every other Saturday morning
- 3) Take charge of our green shed of redeemable cans & bottles and take them to the redemption center. Most of the monies from this effort goes to help the homeless & hungry.
- 4) Help manage our own food pantry to make sure we always have plenty available for those in need
- 5) Buy grocery gift cards for Rev. Joy to give out to the needy
- 6) Volunteer to help in nursing homes & senior centers
- 7) Help spread the word to friends & relatives about the need to help others and how to do it

And while we are on the subject of helping others, if you happen to be walking down the hallway by the church office, have you noticed the big bulletin board with pictures & names on it? If you look closer, you might even find YOUR name. Each of our Deacons have a list of church members assigned to them. The purpose of this list is to be able to reach out all of our members, but especially to the many that are not able to attend our Sunday services, and to make sure they are doing well. If any of you have needs of any sort, or know of someone else that does, please let your Deacon know, or let Maria know and we will try to help you.

DEACONS:

Evelyn Watkins & Tony DeJesus (Co-Senior Deacons)

Jim Siegfried, Dawn Houle, Bonnie DeBlois, Russ Noble, Cindy Pearson, Mark Johnson
Lori Ferreira, Ann Varna-Garis, David Supinski, Lesley Daigle, Louanne Jennings-Abelson
(Deacon Emerita), Ruth Graham (ad hoc), Jonathan Ryder (ad hoc), Donna Euell (ad hoc)

Submitted By: David Graham (Deacon Emeritus)

The Deacon's Fund goes to help those in our faith community in need of emergency help or those who have special needs! For those who give via paper envelopes, the envelopes are GREEN and in the offering envelope box for the first Sunday of each month. OR if you give on-line, go to www.scc-ucc.com and click on the online giving button at the top right hand corner and fill out the online giving form. We thank all who give faithfully and encourage others to consider a small gift for this fund each month.

New Member Seminar

Sunday, JANUARY 28, 2024

11:30AM – 12:10PM in Room 1 of the Gardiner Building

All who wish to join as members of the Seekonk Congregational Church UCC or want to know more about this faith community are welcome to attend.

(childcare provided if requested)

Music & Arts Committee presents

OPEN MIC NIGHT

FRIDAY JANUARY 26TH
from 6:30 to 9 PM in the hall

It's time to share your talents, some singing, musical instruments, comedy, dance - all talent is needed. All ages are invited.

Sign up sheets are in the hall or call the office to let us know you will be part of the entertainment. A fun night for everyone.

Any questions, see Craig Grant or Director of Music, Susan Barrow

Be a Well Being Group
TUESDAY~February 6, 2024 at 6 PM

ALL INVITED

The purpose of the Be a Well Being group is to provide a supportive and non-judgmental forum for exploring stress management strategies.

Meditation, prayer, gentle movement, breath work and group discussion will be utilized. The group will be held the 1st Tuesday of the month from 6pm-7pm in the Sanctuary...

Please join the group!!

If you have any questions, please email Sarah Stevenson at mamastaloney@gmail.com

ASH WEDNESDAY

LENT BEGINS with Ash Wednesday
on February 14, 2024



WORSHIP AT ONE OF THESE 30 MINUTE SERVICES OF
WORSHIP TO BEGIN THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT

“Create in me a Clean Heart, O God”

7:00AM - Noon - 7:00PM

Lunch follows Noon Service

*The Earnest Workers will serve different kinds of soups
(with suggested donation)*



CORNER BEEF & CABBAGE DINNER

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024

5:00PM to 6:45PM

Take out will be available!

Reservations and purchasing tickets ahead is encouraged but walk ins are also welcome!

This is a traditional Irish Dinner
with homemade cookies and ice cream for dessert.

More information will be available about purchasing tickets, placing take-out orders any ways you can help will be shared as we get closer to this event!

Please watch for more information in our weekly emails and Church announcements!

From the Board of Trustees

The Trustees would like to extend our best wishes for a safe and Happy New Year.

We would also like members to know that if they see something that needs attention in or around the buildings, please let a trustee know. Example, if someone notices toilets running or a thermostat not functioning, they should report it immediately even if they thought it might be insignificant.

The trustee of the month is listed on the office door. Otherwise, leave a message with the office.

Thank You, Trustees

SNOW SHOVELING

The trustees would like to remind anyone, to shovel walks when we have snow storms... **JUST COME!!** We have shovels or bring your own.

Many thanks to all who have come and shoveled during this winter.



As always, if you have any concerns please see any member of the Trustees.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE UPDATE

The Board of Trustees met on January 15th. We were pleased to learn that our church received a great deal of revenue through fundraising efforts, personal gifts, and pledges in December. Our budget deficit was reduced to \$6845.00.

We were apprised of a significant water bill. We suspect the water usage was due to a toilet running non-stop in the Gardiner Building. We also had a toilet running in the church. Shortly after learning of the problems, we tried to handle them ourselves but had to hire a plumber to effect repairs. We hope this resolves excessive water usage.

As of this writing, we have experienced two snowstorms. Snow removal so far has cost \$3500 for the two storms. Each storm required two visits plus sanding. The two storms have already significantly impacted our snow removal budget of \$2500.00.

Speaking of storms, the most-recent wind, snow and rain storm resulted in the reports of two roof leaks, one above the memorial room in the church and the other near room 3 in the Gardiner Building. Appointments have been made to have the roofs inspected to attain repair quotes.

If you have any questions or recognize a problem on our campus, please contact a Trustee. Messages to us could also be relayed via Maria Tavares in the office.

Yours in faith and service,
Board of Trustees

Neal Abelson, Susan Boucher, Brian Burns, Ray Deslauriers, Donna Euell, Kim Johnson, Jason Langille, Craig Mace (Co-Chair), and Linda Sable (Co-Chair),
Tony Sousa

COLUMBARIUM NEWS

The Columbarium is available to all church members and their families. Use of the Columbarium Includes the inurnment spot, the container, the plaque, and the actual inurnment. Funeral and cremation costs are not included. We encourage anyone who would like more information on the Column to contact Shelley Alves or Linda Sable

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE



PLEDGE GIVING (2023-2024) “IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE.”

You can call the office at any time
Is your Pledge up-to-date?

Electronic Giving ~ Traditional: Church Envelope

For more information regarding Electronic Giving (*forms*) and Pledge Cards
call Maria in the office 508-336-9355.

Your Stewardship Committee

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED THE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL?????

30+ Years ago we, as a church, were told that if we keep asking that
question...in 20 years we would see the results! -- So far...not so great!! --

Our Senior Minister even told us that in her will it stipulates that 10% of
whatever remains at the time of death will go to the church.

Have you prayerfully taken this step of making the church a beneficiary to
insure the future of our Seekonk Congregational Church UCC??

It’s never too early to make that move.

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION



We want to thank all who provided food for the UCAP food
baskets this year. We were able to provide 25 food baskets to
needy families.

We served a hot meal of chicken, stuffing, and green beans for 100 people on
December 3 for Feed the Homeless RI. We will be providing another hot meal on
February 4 and will be looking for people to make American Chop Suey. A sign-
up sheet and a recipe will be provided by January 14.

This month the Mission and Social Action Book Club will be reading “How the South Won the Civil War” by Heather Cox Richardson. Although the North prevailed in the Civil War, the system that had sustained the defeated South moved West and established a foothold. The seizure of Mexican lands and the treatment of Native Americans cemented racial hierarchies.

Richardson traces the story of the American paradox: the competing claims of freedom and the American cowboy and the subordination of Negroes, Mexicans, and Native Americans. She seizes upon the “soul of the country” and the ongoing struggle to provide equal opportunity to all. She debunks the myth that the Civil War released the nation from the grip of oligarchy and shows the growth of American conservatism from Barry Goldwater to Donald Trump.

If you are interested in reading this book and joining this discussion group contact Betty Graham or Bonnie Deblois. The discussion will take place at Bonnie’s house on Thursday, February 15 at 6 pm.

We worked in conjunction with the Haiti Task Force at the Christmas Bazaar to raise \$475.

We were able to send over \$800. in gift cards to the recent migrants living at the Ramada Inn in Seekonk. We sent lots of fall and winter clothes to Human Services in Seekonk for the migrants also. Thank you to all who providing gift cards and clothing.

Mission and Social Action and the Green Team are working on achieving “Green” status with the SNEUCC. There are four levels that we must complete. Presently we are working on Level 3 and we must advocate for the passage of local or state environmental legislation. R. I. is in the process of trying to adopt a bottle bill. We will let you know when we have the contact information on whom you should write, email, or phone to advocate for this legislation. We will be looking primarily for R.I. residents.

We thank all who have contributed to our food pantry on the porch of the Gardiner Building, however, it has come to our attention that some of the food is past expiration date. Please, before donating, check the dates to make sure there are at least three months remaining before expiration.

- **CANS & BOTTLES MA Deposit Only:** Bring donations to the green bins - lift lid - drop in clean bottles and cans. Cans are sorted and brought to a recycling center. Money goes for hunger/shelter/mission concerns
- **FOOD CERTIFICATES NEEDED...** Gift certificates needed in \$5 or \$10 amounts from area stores to ease the way for those in need. Please give to Rev. Joy or leave in office any time.
- **FOOD PANTRY** (in Porch Area) is for anyone you know who has financial challenges Needed: canned meats, tuna, stew, peanut butter, paper goods, cereals



Flower Committee...Reminds everyone there is a sign-up sheet in Gardiner Building for flowers to be given in memory or in honor of a loved one.



EARNEST WORKERS

Earnest Workers upcoming events for January, February and early March 2024

Earnest Workers Soup Sales - January 14, 21 and 28th!

The Earnest Workers will be making and selling several kinds of delicious homemade soups on Sunday, January 14th, Sunday, January 21st and Sunday, January 28th. The soup will be on sale in the Hall after the 9:00 Church service and also after the 10:30 Church service during coffee hours. However, if you are planning to come to the 10:30 Church service you may wish to purchase your soup before you go to the Sanctuary. Often the soups sell out. The soups will sell for \$5.00 per pint and \$8.00 per quart.

February 7, 2024 - Guest Speaker Ellen - An armchair Travel about Ellen's recent trip to Egypt

We will meet in the Hall of the Gardiner Building at 10:00 a.m. for our Earnest Worker Business meeting and then go to the Sanctuary at 10:45 for Ellen's presentation. After Ellen's presentation we will go back to the Hall for lunch together. Please bring a bagged lunch and a beverage. Coffee and dessert will be provided.

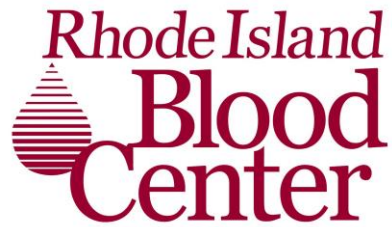
Wednesday, February 14th - Earnest Worker Soup luncheon after the 12:00 noon Ash Wednesday Church Service. Everyone is invited to join the Earnest Workers in the Hall of the Gardiner building after the noontime Ash Wednesday service. A variety of soups and chili will be provided.

March 6th - Cookie Decorating with Katie Poland!

We will meet in the Hall of the Gardiner Building at 10:00 a.m. for our business meeting. Katie will join us at 10:30a.m. Katie is a member of our Church who provides Cookie Decorating events for members of our Church and others in our community. She has agreed to meet **EARNEST WORKERS CONTINUED...** with us and teach us about cookie decorating. We might even be able to use a few of the cookies we make for our Earnest Worker March Hatters Tea which will be held on Sunday, March 10th - if there are any leftover that is! Please bring a bagged lunch and beverage to share lunch together after making the cookies. Coffee and dessert will be provided. Please contact Evelyn Watkins at 401-680-2490 (cell phone) or evelynwtkns@gmail.com if you wish to sign up to attend this fun event! We hope to see you there!

Earnest Workers March Hatters Tea - Sunday, March 10th Our annual March Hatters Tea will be held at 2 p.m. The menu includes tea, scones, tea sandwiches, and cookies/desserts. We meet in the Hall of the Gardiner building to share this fun time together. Everyone is invited to wear a fancy and fun hat- prizes will be given for some of the hats (funniest, prettiest and more). Tickets will go on sale beginning Sunday, February 12th. We have seating for 75 people. It is fun to invite family and friends to save a table at this event.

Look for more information in our Church Callers and Church emails as we get closer to this event!



BLOOD DRIVE
Tuesday...March 19 from
4-7 PM in the Hall

make your appointment at donate.ribc.org

Reasons to Give Blood

- One donation can save up to three lives.
- Donating blood is free.
- You or someone you know may need blood some day.
- Donating blood burns 600 calories.
- Someone in the U.S. needs blood every two seconds.
- Approximately 32,000 pints of blood are used in the U.S. each day.
- You get snacks and juice after you give.

Future Blood Drives 4-7pm in the Hall

Monday June 10th
Monday Sept 9th
Monday Dec 9th