

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD
PASTOR: REV. DR. ROBERT R. LAROCHELLE

IN THIS ISSUE

- A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR
- TREASURER'S REPORT
- CHURCH COUNCIL
- TRUSTEES
- MISSIONS
- IN AND AROUND CHURCH
- A LIGHTER MOMENT ...
- BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES
- ANNUAL MEETING
- STEWARDSHIP
- CALENDAR

A Message from Our Pastor

Happy New Year!

As we move into this new year of 2024, we do so soon after we gathered for a joyous Christmas celebration at worship on December 24. It was so wonderful to see the outstanding attendance at that service, all reflective of what we have been experiencing both spirit AND attendance wise over these past few months.

As we enter 2024, I believe we are doing so with a really good feeling about our church. As noted above, we have been enjoying an increase in participation and we have also been benefiting by the commitment of our young people who have been attending Sunday School. Their attendance and the terrific adult leadership that goes along with it are great indicators of the vibrancy to be found within this congregation.

Over these past few months, I have been so impressed with the many ways in which people are involved in this congregation. This includes outreach to those in need as well as helping to organize special events.

As your new pastor here, I am also grateful for the ways in which this congregation has welcomed me and Tricia with such open arms! I am truly grateful for the many ways you have shown your support.

All of this is to say that I look forward to a wonderful 2024. On our second Sunday in the New Year, I will be continuing our Adult Education series which I will be offering once a month. I will be posting more details about this in our bulletin and mentioning this in our pulpit announcements as well. I am also encouraging you to feel free to suggest topics that you would find to be of interest. In my view, this is an important part of what a church should be doing, i.e. providing opportunities to explore important issues of faith.

As we enter into 2024, I thank you for calling me to be your pastor and I am also excited about what we will be doing together as a community of faith over these upcoming months.

Wishing you a blessed and joyous New Year,

Pastor Bob

Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle, Pastor
January 2024



TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 693.00	\$ 917.00	76%
R22—Pledges	\$ 33,906.00	\$ 33,444.00	101%
R23—Contributions	\$ 3,535.00	\$ 1,833.00	193%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 10,755.00	\$ 10,083.00	107%
Capital Campaign	\$ 6,711.00	\$ 5,733.00	117%

Thru November 30

CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Council met on December 19th and discussed numerous items of interest:

Pastor Bob's report shows him to be very busy since he has joined us with the following:

- Contacting homebound via phone email and visitations
- Meeting with individuals who requested face to face interactions
- Preparing and delivering an Adult Educational program monthly after service
- Making himself available when people to to speak with a pastor
- Continually getting the word about our church out on social media

All these items and more, thank you Pastor Bob for all you do !!

Our Diaconate delivered cocoa, candy, cookies and Christmas decorations to people on our "check in list" to let them know we think of them. It was mentioned that we could use some help on Diaconate next year so if you have the desire to serve in this capacity please see Andrew or Sarah Greaves

Trustees report the following:

- They have canceled our insurance policies with Emery and Webb as we switch to Anderson and Krause where we are getting better coverage for less money
- Also discussed was the more stringent rules of the Public Health Dept. that we must follow when we serve food such as at the Holly Bazaar. We are going to have to review and decide our course of action going forward.
- In the recent wind and rain event the church lost power and due to the mount of rain and sump pump inoperable we had water in the parish building basement and some of the Little Shop, thanks to the quick action and work of Andrew and Lisa the affected area was kept to a minimum and was cleaned up and dried out quickly

Christian Education

- Sunday School going well, recently learning about advent and community service as the students designed and made Christmas cards for our homebound people and also for residents of Evergreen
- Also reported that our Nursery will be opening in January , a sign up sheet will be available for volunteers to sign up. See Andrew if interested

Missions

- Gift tags were distributed and gifts bought and given to youngsters in Stafford
 - Mittens, hats and scarves were collected for distribution by social services
 - Linda and Judy took 37 coats, some collected in fellowship hall and some from the Little Shop to the Stafford Thrift Store to be distributed to people in need of warm outer wear
 - A monetary collection was taken for families with food insecurities, our congregation donated \$220.00 to that cause.
 - During Christmas Eve service a special collection for the Christmas Fund (veterans of the cross) was taken
- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the members of your Church Council.

Bruce Ladr
Moderator

TRUSTEES

I have signed and cancelled all three policies (Building policy, Auto policy and Workman's Comp) with Emery and Webb/Guide One. I have also signed our Workman's Comp proposal from Anderson and Krause to go into effect with our Insurance policy January 1st 2024. This policy is \$2.00 more than it was with Emery and Webb but gives us more coverage, and the option to Umbrella in as well. We will have our water tested annually through Banner Water when they check our water softener to stay up to date on all events involving food. Scott's Karpentry took a look at our steps and saw no issues with wood rot, or anything major. On Monday December 18th, Frontier texted me that the Church had lost power. Due to all the rain, and our pump in The Little Shop not being able to run, I noticed an inch of water flooding The Little Shop. Lisa and I were able to mop, lift the rugs, and dry out the areas. We also removed all water by hand using buckets until the storm slowed down. We appear to have not had any other issues with flooding. Thank you!

Andrew Greaves, Board of Trustees Chair

MISSIONS

As is the usual case, December is a busy time of the year for the Missions Committee. I'll start off by thanking you, one and all, for your generosity shown again this year. Because of your selfless giving, many families currently having to deal with food insecurities and trying to make ends meet with their monthly income, were blessed with food, gifts and warm clothing.

We donated \$220 to the Crystal Lake food pantry to be given to families in need so that they could purchase food items for their Christmas dinners. Seven Stafford youngsters were delighted on Christmas morning to find the gift they had asked Santa for under their tree. Additionally, through your donations of miscellaneous gift items, the kids were treated to some wonderful toys, games and clothes. The outerwear, including thirty-seven coats, twenty-four hats, twelve pairs of mittens/gloves, nineteen pairs of socks, nine scarves and a sweatshirt were also donated to be distributed to folks who have need of those items. All parties who were there to accept our donations were joyful and thankful for our help.

Our tradition has been to give the offering collected at the Christmas Eve service to the Christmas Fund. The monies collected are used to support retired pastors and their families who are in need through the UCC. We followed tradition and the offering collected on Sunday, December 24 at the 9:30 AM service was forwarded to the UCC for disbursement at their discretion.

It's our pleasure to serve as your Missions Committee
Judy, Linda and Michelle

IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers of healing and comfort for Teresa ... continued prayers of Lucy, Doris, Donna and Sarah ... prayers for the family of "Mr. Bob" Pingree ... prayers for Joe and Flo Demars ... prayers for the Dignazio, Raynock Krar families ... prayers for Mark, Al, Melissa, Liam and Austin ... prayers of healing for Jim and Dee ... prayer for the family of Rev. Kathy Faber who passed away ... continued prayer for recovery from surgery for Bruce ... prayers for Janet and Rick ... prayers of healing for Karen's daughter Amy ... continued prayer for my brother Alan and sister Louise ... prayers for those who suffer from the violence of was and gun violence ... prayers for all who suffer from addiction and mental illness ... prayers to my mother in healing ... prayers for peace and prosperity for my family ... prayers for World Peace ... prayers for all who are in war zones and who face natural disasters ... prayers for those we lost in life ... prayers for people searching for jobs ... prayers for peace and for those struggling this holiday season—hope for a Happy Holiday Season for all ... prayer for my brother who needs a liver transplant ... prayers for my granddaughter who will be having surgery ... prayers

for Karen who has dealt with depression since her Mom dies ... prayers for the children affected by the wars ... prayers of safe travel for my parents ... prayers for the Starvish family recovering from Covid ... prayers for Amy and baby Leo sick with Covid ... prayers for Joyce healing from heart surgery ... prayers for the family of Ellis Hunt ... prayers for all my friends and family and be thankful for them ... prayers for a woman named Anne who has disappeared from her home—may she be found ... prayers for Lyn Soares ... prayers for Roy ... prayers for all missing loved ones this Holiday Season ... prayers for Jeanne Sanger ... Celebrations: a joy as Sarah celebrates a birthday ...

A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .

Where do snowmen go to dance? — snowballs!
 Which dogs are the best at getting girls? — golden retrieve-hers!
 What does an old deer say when he’s feeling young? - I feel like a million bucks!
 Why do brass bands always bring a cornucopia to Thanksgiving? - They have horns aplenty!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

January Birthdays

January Anniversaries

January 2 Robert LaRoche
 3 Michael Gowdy
 6 Flo Demars
 6 Deanna Hirsch
 15 Amy Lingley
 16 Isabella Ostrowski
 24 Samantha DelBene
 24 Aidan Ladr
 27 Ruthanne Talamini
 29 Dorraine Parker
 30 Aiden Sedor

None

ANNUAL MEETING

Just a reminder that the Annual Meeting of the Second Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, February 4, 2024 in Fellowship Hall at 11:00 AM. All members and friends of Second Congregational Church are invited, although only members will be allowed to vote.

Annual reports are due January 14, 2024 to Ken May and the Annual Report should be posted to the website on or about January 21, 2024.

STEWARDSHIP

Total of 18 pledges as of 12/20/2023						
Current	Expenses	Missions	Capital	Campaign	Total	
\$19,375.00		\$1,526.00		\$3,027.00		\$23,928.00

January 2024

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednes- day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1		2	3	4	6	6
7 Worship Service 9:30 AM Deacon's After Church Adult Education - Pastor Bob	8		9	10	11	12	13
14 Worship Service 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday	15		16 Church Council 6:30 PM	17	18	19	20
Annual Reports Due							
21 Worship Service 9:30 AM	22		23	24	25	26	27
28 Worship Service 9:30 AM	29		30	31			