

Keeping In Touch

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STAFFORD

PASTOR: REV. DR. ROBERT R. LAROCHELLE

EMAIL: RPBKSL@COX.NET TELEPHONE: 860 670 6461

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A Message From Our Pastor

Greetings, members and friends of Second Congregational Church:

At the time you are reading this, we as a church community are in full "regular season" mode. I guess I could not avoid the sports reference!!! While there is much activity going on in our church this Fall, details of which you will see in this newsletter, we have been most fortunate to have gone through an excellent period of summer which included very good attendance on a regular basis.

As we move through this busy season, I want to pause to thank you, the members of this church community, for the wonderful celebration you arranged for the celebration of my Installation as your pastor. I am deeply grateful for all of your kindness and hard work. Sunday September 22 was both a busy and a wonderful day and I want to extend my thanks to you for all you did to make this possible. So many of you worked so hard to make this day so special and I am very grateful to you for all that you have done to

be so supportive of my ministry here in this wonderful church community. In addition, I am deeply grateful for the beautiful stole that you gave me as so kind a gift on the day of my Installation.

Going forward into this Fall season, we will be offering many special opportunities for sharing our faith together. Among these are:

- Our educational forums to be held October 13 and 20. Watch for upcoming details! We had a phenomenal turnout at our first session, earlier this Fall.
- The Blessing of the Animals which will take place October 5 at 10 am
- The viewing and discussion of the film LUTHER will take place on October 18 at 5:30 pm. Please note the change in date.

I am very grateful for the increase in individuals attending worship! Sunday mornings are filled with great vitality---and that is truly wonderful!

Wishing you a wonderful Fall season and looking forward to being together with you as together we experience the joy and the meaning of being this community we call church.

In Jesus always,
Pastor Bob

Rev. Dr. Robert R. LaRochelle
Pastor, Second Congregational Church of Stafford at West Stafford

PS: Updated information on church events are accessible through the emails I send (If you are not on the list to receive them, email me at rbpksl@cox.net and I will be sure to add you to the list.)

My Facebook page Robert LaRochelle contains regularly updated information about church activities, as well as occasional online presentations.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 2,825.00	\$ 1,000.00	283%
R22—Pledges	\$ 12,608.00	\$ 12,666.67	99%
R23—Contributions	\$ 2,829.00	\$ 3,500.00	81%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 6,204.00	\$ 6,933.33	89%
Capital Campaign	\$ 1,717.00	\$ 2,000.00	86%

Thru August 31:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Report: Pastor Bob reports he was pleased with the number of people who attended the Sept. educational forum and asks for anyone to share topics we wish to discuss or learn about. There will be a two part forum on Sept. 29th and Oct. 13th. He also mentioned that on Oct. 11th at 5:30 the film "Luther" will be shown followed by a time of discussion. Bob also reminded us of his installation on Sept. 22 at 3:00 PM.

Treasurer Report: The treasurer reports that he had budgeted \$10,453.00 to be transferred from invested funds into checkbook to be able to pay bills but he was pleased to report that he only has had to transfer \$7,000.00. All bills are paid and current but he also pointed out that quarterly payments will be coming due and the heating season will start soon.

Clerks Report: The clerk reports that the first quarter of this year ending 03/31 the average attendance was 30.5. In 2023 it was 20.4 and 2022 17.7. The second quarter ending 06/30 averaged 37.7; in 2023 18 and 2022 21.5. He also reports our current membership is 61 people.

Diaconate Report: The deacons continue to assist during all services and one of those ways is making and presenting visitors to our church a welcome bag with our info in it as well as other goodies. The good news is they have used all the bags they had prepared! They are in the process of making more to be ready to hand out to our visitors.

Trustee Report: The trustees are waiting for the new fire extinguisher inspection company to come out and do their inspection and will be reaching out to see if they can expedite this task. A drum warning error message on the copier has been reported to our service rep. and we are waiting for his response. The copier is still functioning at this time. Trustees are in talks with our phone and internet provider to see if we can get a break in cost.

Financial Secretary: We are doing better than last year as far as money coming in but as noted in treasurer report we are going into the heating season.

Christian Education: Rally Day was Sept. 17th, and we have 15 registered students this year. Looking at the possibility of starting a youth group in the future, maybe next year. Our nursery is open and ready to be used if anyone is in need.

Stewardship: The committee has received the updated list of mailing labels that reflect the updated church directory. The committee in conjunction with Pastor Bob, who volunteered to help with the Stewardship letter, will be distributing the appeal letter by the first week of November with Stewardship Sunday being the end of November—possibly November 24th.

Also discussed: Membership, baptisms, fund raisers (rest stop) Installation of Pastor Bob and Christmas plans.

These are some of the items discussed and worked on at our Sept. Council meeting.

Bruce Ladr
Moderator

CLERK REPORT

Hey everyone, I just wanted to share this year’s attendance for our first two quarters. It includes averages for the last three years, and includes our holidays and special services. We don’t have a lot of information on our Christmas Eve service since Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday last year, and we didn’t have a service in 2022, but we are seeing great attendance all across the board otherwise. I want to thank everyone who has been going to services, volunteering, and joining us in a lot of fun things over the year. It’s a very exciting time for the congregation.

	2022		2023		2024	
	Overall avg.	Avg. Children	Overall avg.	Avg. Children	Overall avg.	Avg. Children
1st quarter	17.7	2	20.4	3.6	30.5	7.6
2nd quarter	21.5	2.8	18	1.7	37.7	9
3rd quarter	15.1	0.7	17	1.7		
4th quarter	19.7	3	29.4	5.5		
	Total	Children	Total	Children	Total	Children
Easter	29	3	28	4	63	20
Brookside	20	0	11	0	29	6
Sun Valley	20	0	22	1	27	7
Christmas Eve			39	4		

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Greaves, Church Clerk

TRUSTEES

We met with our new fire extinguisher inspection company this week and there were no issues with inspection. All extinguishers will continue to be manually inspected yearly by Allstate Fire Equipment.

It has been noticed that a small section had caved in a bit in our upper parking lot and the Trustees have decided to postpone the phlox Spring project to discuss if we should look into filling in the cracks and sealcoating the upper parking lot next year instead. The Trustees will speak with the treasurer about putting this into the budget. We did receive three quotes this year which were pretty close to identical, so we will pursue those quotes in the Spring.

Last year we turned the internet back on because Frontier offered us a great deal to bundle. We were paying \$63.46 a month for only phone and now we are paying \$46.88 a month for phone and internet combined. This deal is for 12 months saving us \$198.96 for the year and is at the end of that cycle. After the 12 months our monthly payments go to \$77.00 a month. The Trustees will reach out to Frontier to try and find a new deal that benefits the church and gives us the best option to pay for.

Lastly, we will have a Fall work day sign up sheet in the kitchen in October. We will do it the same way where anyone who signs up can work on those jobs when they have the chance and sign off when they're complete. Tom and I are putting together a project to cut down some limbs that are hanging over the barn and removing them. We could use a few more volunteers. If interested let us know!

Respectfully yours,
Andrew Greaves, Board of Trustees Chairperson

IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers for the family of David Smith who passed away ... prayers for the Dignazio, Krar and Raynock families ... prayers for Al 3 and family ... prayers for Carrie Crawford who is battling cancer ... God bless our educators, paraprofessionals and school staff ... prayers for good health for Mike, Polly and Lloyd, Phil and Linda Hines ...prayers of happiness for Eric who has stayed clean for nine years today ... prayers for the family of Conrad Stearns who passed away ... prayers for Patrick Gilhuly who is in rehab after a bone marrow operation ... prayers for the family of Shawn Ferguson who passed away in South Carolina ... prayers for peace on earth ... prayers for my Dad and his health ... prayers for my lovely church family ... prayer for Patricse Weber ... prayers for my brother Mark suffering from liver disease ... prayers for the family of Jim Fantoli ... prayers for Lucena during her pregnancy and for Devika as she starts the school year ... prayers for Shirley facing breast cancer surgery ... prayers for Elise ... prayers and thankfulness for Carol-Ann as she recovers from hip surgery ... prayers for a friend for good test results ... prayers of joy for our growing church family ... prayers of safe travel for Calvin and family ... prayers for Dave, his wife, and all of our flea market regulars and friends who are struggling with health issues ... prayers for Joe and Flo ... prayers for the LaRoche family on the passing of Tricia's sister Rosemary ... prayers for safe travel for Bethany ... prayers of safe travel for Al and Nancy ... prayers of safe travel for Lisa ... prayers for Aloma, Kyle and Kaitlyn and the new baby ... prayers for all who struggle with mental health and addiction ... prayers for my sister-in-law Gladys who lost her husband ... prayers for the communities of Haitian immigrants who are dealing with hate, xenophobia and mistrust in their communities ... prayers for my friend Cindy recovering from a fall.

Celebrations: Charlie Benet celebrating 1 year old ...

A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .

What do you call a rabbit with fleas? — Bugs Bunny

Why did the singer perform on an airplane? — Because she wanted her career to take off.

Why are cowboys always religious? — The Bible spurs them to good deeds.

Why was the computer cold at work? — Because it left its windows open.

Why did my sister bury her lightbulb? — Because she wanted to grow a power plant.

Where do lions like to go on vacation? — The Catskills.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

October Birthdays

3 Michael Talamini
9 Lesley Bourque
10 Ross Kerr
19 Lydia Brazalovich
27 Magdelane Hatch
Al Kazokas

October Anniversaries

4 Janice and Bill Gowdy
15 Mary and David England
25 Debbie and Joseph Perko

LIGHTING OF THE CROSS

For the month of October:

In loving memory of **Billy Ostrowski** by Lisa, Mettie and Isabella

In loving memory of **Barbara Kellem** by Roy, Linda and Judy

In loving memory of **Dan Irish** by Karen Moore

In loving memory of my sister **Carmen Olson** by Cindy Lingley

In loving memory of **Roger Tellefsen** by Linda Sprague

In loving memory of **Lucille Bradway** by her family

In loving memory of **Mary and Al Kazokas Sr.** and **Claire and Jack Richens** by their families

MISSIONS

Thank you all very much for your food donations, totaling thirty-seven pounds, which I took to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry on September 17th where they were gratefully accepted. A great big thank you for your continued support of this much needed mission.

Blessings to All,

Linda and the missions committee

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Rally Day/the first day of Sunday School was September 8th. We didn't have any new families join us that Sunday but we do have all 15 registered students returning this year

We only received one response of yes to do a Youth Group, so we will try again next year but will more than likely do one with the larger younger class a few years down the road. None of our class will be at the age for confirmation this year, but it will start being discussed next year.

The nursery is open, and we have two volunteers so far available to sign up if it needs to be used. If anyone else would like to volunteer in the Nursery please let the Sunday School teachers know, thank you!

We have a bunch planned for this upcoming year including a movie night/possible Halloween party, a costume church service followed by trick or treating in fellowship hall, a Christmas pageant, and a few other things that will be discussed down the road! We continue to work hard to educate and have fun with this awesome group!

Thank you, Andrew, Judy, and Kathy!

HOLLY BAZAAR

The Holly Bazaar will be held on Saturday, November 16, 2024 from 9AM to 2PM. Things are moving along very well and looking fantastic!

We will be having our Autumn Soup lunch so we will need people to sign up to help with that (more to come on that including the recipe). We need cookie bakers; whatever you might like to bake from a dozen to a few dozen. This always goes over very well. Cookies need to be put in baggies this year - (Board of Health requirement) - two cookies to a bag.

We have a few booths available upstairs in the Parish House, if you know anyone with a craft who might be interested. I would love to see some Christmas themed crafters, if you know any! Questions? Call or text me at 413-374-3247 or email me at kdickson1958@yahoo.com.

KIT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline to submit articles for KIT for the month of November will be October 25th.

OCTOBER 27TH (COSTUME SERVICE/TRICK OR TREATING)

We discussed at council doing a trunk or treat, but a great idea was brought up, why not have the kids trick or treat with the church members after the service. It is something new we haven't done before, and gives us something on a smaller scale to try out. Similar to last year I invite everyone to dress up for the church service, and in Fellowship Hall following church the kids who attend can walk to anyone interested in joining this activity, and day trick or treat. Any grown-up who wants to be a part of this feel free to bring a small bag of candy that day and join the fun. We do have one child with a dairy allergy so please keep that in mind. If anyone attending is bringing any extra kids just let me know, so I can plan Sunday School accordingly. Thank you!!



October 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 Little Shop - 10 - 2
6 Worship Service 9:30 AM	7	8 Church Council 6:30 PM	9	10	11	12 Little Shop - 10 - 2
13 Worship Service 9:30 AM	14	15 Church Council 6:30 PM	16	17	18	19 Little Shop - 10 - 2
20 Worship Service 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday	21	22	23	24	25	26 Little Shop - 10 - 2
27 Worship Service 9:30 AM	28	29	30	31		