



## January Reflection 2024

### Decluttering as Sabbath

Decluttering is clearing away the less important things. It gets down to what matters, spiritually as well as physically.

You cannot make dinner with yesterday's dishes still clogging the sink, nor can you keep sabbath if too many worries clutter its gate.

When we fail to make decisions about what really matters to us, choosing fog over focus, waffling over decision, aimlessness over intention, we become people who do not know how to keep sabbath. Instead we keep clutter. Not to decide on a life of focus is to decide on a life of fog, choosing confusion over clarity.

Stephen Covey, in his book 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' recommends sitting down and writing a life mission or purpose statement that is simple, sustainable, and personal. I might call it a Covenant with God. For when we know what we must do, rather than letting others decide for us, then we can also decide what we do not have to do. The choices we make in determining our life purpose and life focus involve giving up everything to which we do not belong. These choices focus our lives. They sign our name to our life.

Oddly enough, the more successful we think we are at Sabbath keeping, the more serious are the temptations that get in God's way. Sometimes our very talents can get in the way, as an old story tells us.

A great organist is playing a masterful concert. At the end of the first set, he discovers that not only is he supremely pleased with

**Continued**

his performance but the crowd has risen to its feet in a cascade of bravos. He is moved to speech: "Yes", says He, " that was my best performance ever."

As he speaks, the custodian who has been in charge of blowing the air into the pipes of the magnificent organ joins him on stage. "Yes", He adds," this is our most magnificent performance ever." The maestro is aghast. "what do you mean? Did you attend music school? Did you practice every day? Did you reach deep into your soul to evoke that music? The custodian slinks off-stage.

But when the maestro returns to play his second set, he places his hands on the keys and his feet on the pedals and nothing happens. No music comes out. He tries again and still nothing happens. Everyone in the audience realizes what has happened at the same moment: The custodian is not providing any air.

The maestro is not stupid. He sees how he has cluttered himself with his own triumphs. He has no room for others, let alone for God. Promptly the maestro stands up to thank the custodian for his labor and his faithfulness over the years. He returns to the bench. He places his hands on the keys and his feet on the pedals and magnificent music emerges once again.

Like the maestro, we need to remember where our air comes from, we need to remember whose air we play. Our lives are cluttered by our own performances, our own skills, our own powers. These good things get in the way of something even better --- the ability to remember God, the source of our air.

So let us Thank God so we don't forget where our air comes from.

Blessings in the New Year!

*Dennis*

# JANUARY "BIRTHDAY" WISHES!



## *Happy Birthday to the following Church Members*

Terri Alessio 1/3

George Chaivanik 1/22

Mario Liburdi 1/16

Elizabeth Manners 1/25

William Cone 1/17

Marissa (Liburdi) Venturo 1/26

Grace Sweeney 1/20

Zachary Corcoran 1/26



## Scholarship Information 2024

"Scholarship New Applications and Scholarship Renewal Applications will be available in the Church Office. You can pick them up between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or you can call us and we will mail one to you. They are also available on line at <http://firstchurch-wtby.org>." All new and renewal applications have a deadline of March 25<sup>th</sup> – no exceptions.



## FOOD BANK DONATIONS

### COMMUNION SUNDAY

**Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Meats, Cold Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Juice, & Tuna**

Other donations will be welcomed, but these will be the main focus. The food basket will be available each week in the Narthex. Although we ask everyone to bring in items the first Sunday of every month, you can still bring them in on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday. We will be collecting donations this month on the first Sunday in January. **The Food Pantry is serving more people than ever, so our generous support is needed more than ever.**





## **2023 ANNUAL REPORTS DUE**

All Board and Committee Annual Reports are due in the Church Office no later than **January 20, 2024**.

This date allows time for them to be typed, printed and available to members prior to our Annual Meeting. If you wish you can email the report to me at [rox252@comcast.net](mailto:rox252@comcast.net). Or you can drop it off to the church office. **The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 11, 2024**



## **Stewardship 2024**

Just a note to all Church Members who have not submitted their pledge for 2024: Please mail it to the church office or leave it in the offering plate on Sunday morning. We pray God's guidance and await your faithful response.

**AND PLEASE PICK UP YOUR ENVELOPES  
IN THE NARTHEX!**



## **Condolences**

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Roger L. St. George who joined the Church Eternal & Triumphant on Monday, December 11, 2023. We will continue to keep his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.





## CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHURCH BY-LAWS, THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WATERBURY, INC. WILL BE CONDUCTED ON THE PREMISES OF THIS CHURCH AT 222 WEST MAIN STREET, WATERBURY, CONNECTICUT ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE WORSHIP SERVICE FOR THE PURPOSE OF:

- (1) To accept all Annual Reports from the Officers and various Committees and Boards,
- (2) Such other business as may properly come before the Annual Meeting.

ALL ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS SHALL HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF VOICE AND VOTE AT THIS MEETING. HOWEVER, NO PROXY VOTES SHALL BE COUNTED.

DATED AT WATERBURY, CT \_\_\_\_\_  
December 2023                      Stuart Post, Corporate Secretary

**\*Snow Date February 18, 2024**



# **WISH LIST FOR SAFE HAVEN SHELTER**



- ◆ Liquid Laundry detergent
- ◆ Pillow Cases -
- ◆ Canned Juice
- ◆ Hair Brushes
- ◆ Dish Detergent
- ◆ Diapers (large & ex-large)
- ◆ Paper Towels
- ◆ Cleaning Supplies
- ◆ Jars of Baby Food
- ◆ Baby Cereal
- ◆ Toilet Paper
- ◆ Napkins
- ◆ Women's socks (new)
- ◆ School Supplies
- ◆ Videos
- ◆ Children's Socks (new)
- ◆ Nintendo Games
- ◆ Large Bath towels
- ◆ Women's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Fitted twin sheets
- ◆ Wash Cloths
- ◆ Children's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Gift Certificates

Safe Haven currently provides the following bilingual (English/Spanish) services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault: up to 60 days of shelter for women and their children; individual and peer group counseling; 24 hour crisis hotlines for domestic violence and sexual assault; legal advocacy information and referral; community education for adults and children; and court based family violence victim advocacy.

All information obtained through counseling remains confidential. They do not subscribe to Caller I. D. Please bring all your donations for Safe Haven on the third Sunday in January).



*Thank  
You*

To all who helped serve, contribute and donate their time for the Joy of Christmas “Dinner”. A special thank you to Gianna Lukcso and her family for volunteering their time to organize and make this happen.



**NOTES FROM OUR  
Director of Music**



Happy New Year! As we get into the New Year we have so far been fortunate with somewhat good weather but it’s still early! With that please keep an eye on weather stations, and emails in the event activities at First Church are postponed due to inclement weather.

Activities such as Bell Choir, The Chosen, Arts & Crafts will resume in February, please stay tuned for dates & times. Upcoming events for this year are as follows; Interfaith Ministries Soup Kitchen Concert is being planned for this coming year. Our former First Church Organist and renowned concert organist Ronald Ebrecht will return to the console here on May 5th to perform a fundraiser concert for the Waterbury Chapter American Guild of Organists Scholarship Fund.

This year’s Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, March 24 will be in need of candy and possibly plastic eggs, keep in mind the candy will need to fit in the eggs. Stay tuned for more information.

Best Wishes for the New Year!  
Director of Music/ Building Super



# WINTER



# WORD SEARCH

BOOTS	HOT COCOA
MITTENS	HAT
ICICLE	SCARF
SNOWMAN	SNOWFLAKE
JACKET	FROZEN
PENGUIN	WINTER
SKIING	FIREPLACE
SLEDDING	SWEATER

Search the puzzle below to find the 16 winter related words.

J H I O E Z V V O H D D Y V J  
 X O F Q D M V F K J H S D F O  
 B T G G F I R E P L A C E R M  
 O C E V R I P G P X P A Z O F  
 O O S K I I N G R A E R H Z S  
 T C F C Z D M W Q Z N F A E L  
 S O L O L G P D D N G N T N E  
 P A F K M Y W W H W U R S V D  
 W Q U X U C U V D Y I S W R D  
 I S N O W F L A K E N N E J I  
 N C T Q T L K O P H K O A A N  
 T I I P W G X X R J F W T C G  
 E G E C M I T T E N S M E K O  
 R G E X L K Q G S Z T A R E P  
 H U D X G E W C Q H L N Z T N



# WORD SCRAMBLE

Try and unscramble the 5 winter related words below.

RADIBZZL \_\_\_\_\_

OWROSSNTM \_\_\_\_\_

GNIEREFZ \_\_\_\_\_

OHT ETOCCOHAL \_\_\_\_\_

ODLC \_\_\_\_\_