

First Congregational Church of Thomaston

Transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Pastoral Letter – April 2019

Dear Friends,

This past Sunday, I spoke about the difference between knowing about God and being in a relationship with Him. Knowing about God can mean being aware of His presence and knowing who He is, but being in a relationship with God means listening, obeying, and letting Him affect how you think and live. It means making Him the center of your life. In a few days, we'll be taking a prayer walk. (For those of you who are just hearing about this for the first time, we'll be meeting at the church this upcoming Friday, April 5, at 6:30pm and finishing around 7:45pm at the Covenant Church.) Depending on what part of town you'll be asked to pray for, you'll either be driving there or walking there. We'll be praying in groups. When you get there, you'll be praying for whatever God is placing on your heart. Maybe you'll know the people who live or work there. If that's the case, pray for healing if they're sick. If you know that they're struggling, pray for strength and courage. If they lost someone, pray for comfort. But most importantly, if they don't have a relationship with Jesus, pray that they'll start one, pray that they'll move from knowing about Jesus to having Him be the center of their lives.

If you can't make it, I still want you to pray. I'm realizing more and more that we need to pray more for our church and the people around us.

Below is a map of our town with some of its demographics.



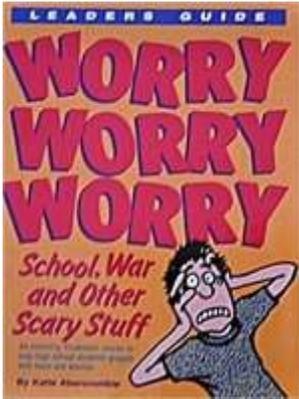
- We have 7602 people who call Thomaston their home.
- In terms of age, 25.3% are under the age of 18, 6.2% from 18 to 24, 33.2% from 25 to 44, 23.2% from 45 to 64, and 12.1% are 65 years of age or older.
- 4.2% of the population lives below the poverty line.

I can't wait to see what God has in store for us.

Blessings,

Pastor Marcus

H.O.P.E. Hanging On Promises Everyday: Sr. Youth Group's current study is on Worry, Worry, Worry



I have often heard people say, "Teens? What do they have to worry about?"

Think back to your high school days...

grades... issues at school ... troubles with friends... losing a friend or loved one... divorce... violence... crime... personal treats... appearances...identity... the future...

Within this study we will focus on: *understanding the "whys" of fear and worry*
**discovering ways to apply faith to fear* **practicing problem solving* **building self-esteem and confidence* **facing problems with courage and God's peace.*

Your prayers for God's leading are always appreciated.

C.I.A. Christians In Action: Jr. Youth Group:

It was exciting to be note taker and guide as this group began mapping out their future time together.

As our group grows, so does their desire for activities and purpose! And let's not forget *my excitement!!* 😊

We are holding steady, Self-Image, Relationships, and Spiritual Growth remain the focus of our study time together.

*If you enjoy interacting with teens or pre-teens,
 I would love to get together and share ideas about youth group and your possible role in it.*

April YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE : (both groups meet at the church)

Jr. Youth Group is for grades 4-6; we meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays from: 4:00 – 5:30pm

Sr. Youth Group is for grades 7-12; we meet on Friday nights from: 7:00 – 9:00pm.

All are welcome!

*for questions call: Debbie 860-283-5765



Though we are thinking happy thoughts of sunshine FLOWERS and GARDENS, the Sr. Youth Group does not have plans for our annual **THINK SPRING** flower sale.

Thank you for you past support!

Happy Spring Everybody!!

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 3 John 1:4"



Wednesdays 6:30 pm
March 6-April 17 (We will not be meeting April 3)

Join us on Wednesday evenings during Lent for our Lenten Soup Supper. Our hope for the event is to both prepare ourselves for Easter and reach out to the people in our community who are less fortunate.



Get connected by being a part of one of our 8 small groups that meet at different days and times during the week. Go to our website or call our church office (860-283-5765) for more details.

Day	Time	Location	Who's it for
Sunday	8:45-9:45 am	Church	Everyone
Sunday (2nd & 4th)	4:5:30 pm	Church	Everyone (Childcare Provided)
Tuesday	6-7:30 am	Church	Men
Tuesday	6:30-8:00 pm	Off Campus	Women
Wednesday	6:30-8:00 pm	Church	Everyone
Wednesday	6:45-8:00 pm	Off Campus	Women
Thursday	6-7:30 am	Church	Men
Thursday	9:30-11:00 am	Church	Women



Puggles Corner:

Every Sunday from 10:00 am to 11:15 am (end of service), kids between the ages of 2 and 3 meet for Puggles. We'd love for your kids to join us. We meet downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

(Children under the age of 2 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and older children between the ages of 4-5 are welcome to attend with teacher approval.)

For more information, contact our Puggles Directors, Matthew and Victoria Hopkins at fccawana135@gmail.com.



Deacon Ministry

Deacons met on 3/11/19. We reviewed how visitations with Valerie Barkus are going, she is reporting they are well-received by members of the congregation. Craig reports new sign-up method of recruiting offering ushers is working fairly well.

We also discussed moving Coffee Hour to the auditorium except for Sundays needed for tag sale, in order to provide more space to the Puggles group and for safety. (not having hot coffee pots in same room, or food as distraction). All deacons agreed with this move. Looking for input from council members on this proposal. (and if you will not be present for council meeting feel free to email me).

The Deacons hosted the Lenten Soup Supper on March 13th; about 35 people attended.

The Deacons continue to study "Crucial Conversations".

The deacons will be cleaning out and reorganizing the Deacon's room on the Day of Service, March 30th.



In order to maintain a safe environment for our children in Kid's church and the Puggles program, we will be locking the downstairs doors (kitchen and office) **each Sunday at 10:10 am beginning April 14th**. After that time, the only entry into the church will be through the sanctuary doors. (Doors will be unlocked after service) Thank you all in advance for your cooperation and understanding. The Diaconate



Deacon's Fund

Each Communion Sunday, we have envelopes in the pews for the Deacon's fund. This is a fund whereby Pastor Marcus can give assistance to those in need from our church and community. Please see a Deacon for more information.

(Lisa Hulton, Valerie Barkus, Linda Ferrier, Craig MacMillan, Mark O'Brien or Sandi Welch)

CHURCH COUNCIL



The June Annual Meeting date has been set for 12:00 noon, Sunday, June 2, 2019. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. This is an opportunity to review what the teams have done during the year and to elect Council members.

Council is discussing moving the coffee hour into the auditorium to relieve crowding and to protect the Puggles children. One child has a severe nut allergy of which we need to be very aware and the hot coffee pot in the vicinity of the Puggles children could be a danger.

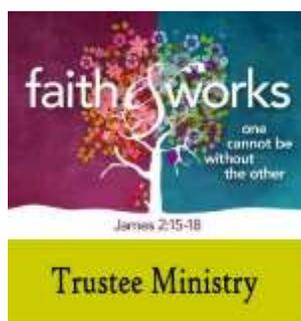
Council is also looking at installing a projector and screen in the sanctuary to replace the TV currently being used. The screen would be up and down movable so that it would not always be visible at the front of the church. There will be further discussion about this.

Council continues to discuss leadership development, especially in terms of bringing in new Council members. It is important that new people and the right people be found to be placed into leadership positions.



All Church Gathering
1st Sunday of the month 11:15 am

On the 1st Sunday of the month we have an extended coffee hour in the auditorium immediately following worship service. This time will be used to inform the congregation on what's happening within the church and to dream and address any questions/concerns you may have. We encourage you to attend to hear the latest on what's going on in our church.



The Women's bathroom near the church office is now a Family Bathroom. We have a new diaper changing station installed there for our growing families. The Men's bathroom is now a Unisex bathroom for all to use.

The steeple project continues. Next step is an assessment from Henry Osowiecki & Sons. We will keep everyone updated as we figure out how to fix the steeple.

The cabinets in the kitchen have safety latches installed. This is to keep our youngest members safe. Please be aware. Thanks Trustees

Thank you to all our generous volunteers who give countless hours maintaining our beautiful church. Your energy and commitment is amazing!!!!

Mary Beth Johnson, Trustees



Submitted by Merv LeMasurier

Merv introduced Rick Wilson who was invited to attend the meeting as a prospective future team member.

Treasurer of Collections Report

Team members reviewed the February 2019 YTD Income Report that shows the following:

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
Operating income	\$31,586	\$30,528	\$1,058

Treasurer's Report:

The team reviewed the detailed February YTD Profit and Loss report which showed actual operating expenses of \$27,967 vs budget of \$ 35,165.

The Permanent Fund Team Report:

The February 2019 YTD report showed the following:

Beginning balance:	\$ 328,364
Disbursements:	(1,300)
Fees:	(1,013)
Market value gain:	<u>21,746</u>
Ending balance:	\$347,797

New Business:

Pastor Marcus shared that Council is trying to identify future church leaders in hopes to identify potential new council members to replace current council members who's terms will expire after 6 years of service on council. Council will be looking to stagger the election of new council members.

Marcus also shared the following future goals 1) to increase the number of church members and Christian education students. 2) Remodel / update the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and Family restroom to be accessible to people of all ages.

Merv noted that the church should be thinking about a needed capital improvement that could be submitted to the Thomaston Savings bank for a grant application by June.



Through the Outreach Committee, our congregation continues to support Campus Crusade for Christ, ICM- The Snells, Lion of Judah, Mitimingis, Kids Alive International Ministries, Compassion International, Acts 4, Child Care for our nursery, and weekly advertising in the Waterbury paper. Outreach has also added a monthly donation to the Thomaston Community Pantry.

Our church Outreach helped supported Noah Hulton with an Intervarsity mission trip to Puerto Rico for Hurricane Relief.

If anyone would like a copy of the Jesus Film for adults or children, please let outreach know. We will supply the film that can be passed on to a friend.

The mission trip with Kids Alive is still in planning stages. Jay is looking at the week of Nov. 11th or 18th. The trip will be 7 days and includes 2 of traveling. Church Outreach will help support anyone who commits to the trip. Kids Alive provides Christian Care for young girls who have been sexually abused and shelters them from continued abuse.

PLEASE read the Outreach notices that are posted on bulletin board right outside of the office wall. There will be information about the November Mission trip to KIDS ALIVE.

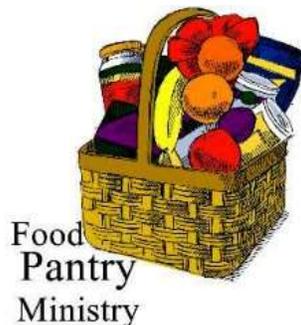
Outreach will supply ice cream for the social after the May 4th Hymn Sing.

Outreach is also prayerfully gathering information on other domestic missions for 2020. Underground CT. is under consideration as well as mission trips sponsored by the 4C's. We are waiting on the LORD with what will be right for our church family.

Our next meeting is on Monday April 8th @ 7:00.

Bless you all for all you do in the name of the LORD,

Respectably submitted, Mary Ellen, Chair of Outreach



Please remember BASKET OF BLESSINGS April 14th

The Outreach team will be collecting non-perishable items on Sunday, April 14th during "Gifts and Offering"

BASKET OF BLESSINGS What is it?

On the second Sunday of each month, Outreach team members walk behind the ushers collecting offering, with a large basket. They are collecting non-perishable items to be given to the Thomaston Food Pantry to help folks in our area who may be struggling. Any donation is very much appreciated. Thank you for helping us, your Outreach team show our love to the community.



Women's Fellowship will begin our monthly meetings on Monday, April 15th. We will start with a potluck at 6:00 pm followed by a business meeting at about 7 pm. All women of the church are invited to participate. Please plan to attend; this is a great way to get to know the ladies of the church. We have a busy season in front of us and would love your help. For more information, please call Linda Ferrier at 860-283-4520.

The CFC Ladies (Cleaning/Crafts/Fellowship/Coffee) meets on Tuesday mornings, weather permitting. This group consists of ladies that help around the church & then takes time for coffee. If you're interested, just show up on Tuesday morning around 9:30am and they will put you to work!



Our Spring Tag Sale will be on Saturday, April 27th from 9am – 2 pm.

You can drop off your items in the auditorium anytime now. We will be setting up the week before and volunteers are always appreciated that week to sort and price the donations.

Please no **large furniture or electronics**. The money raised from our tag sale allows us to help support our church events/projects and several community organizations.

Thank you in advance for your contributions that allows us to help Thomaston and Beyond!

Friday Morning Prayer
(Fridays from 8:30-9:30am in the Sanctuary)



Join us on Friday mornings from 8:30 - 9: 30 am in the sanctuary. We'll be offering another way for you to connect with God. During our time together, we'll be praying for our church, our community, and for each other.



Below are a couple ways to participate in the renewal of your spirit during this Lenten season.



St. Thomas Passion Play 2019

The first presentation of the 2019 St. Thomas (Southington) Passion Play is Saturday, April 14th, at 7:30 pm at St. Thomas School, on Bristol St. in Southington. The presentations continue on Palm Sunday afternoon, April 15th, at 3 pm, Monday, April 16th, Tuesday, April 17th, Wednesday, April 18th, and Good Friday, April 20th, all at 7:30 pm. There is no performance on Maundy Thursday. Tickets are **free**, first come, first seated, and are available from Carol and Heather Pytel. Please see us if you are interested in attending, or you can go to the website: stthomassouthington.org/passionplay and go to "Tickets".

Heather Pytel is directing the Pit Chorus and Band, and has arranged much of the music for this 41st annual presentation of our beautiful Lenten Prayer. Each year, the play is refreshed - scenes changed, added or deleted, and new music is added to replace songs that have served their time in the play or are brought back because of their message. Even if you've seen it before, you need to see it again, because it's different every year!! I am singing in the pit chorus, a small group of women who add harmony with the gift of our voices. This is my 24th year of being a part of this wonderful prayer, and it is truly a joy to have my daughter be such a major part of the production!!

The play opens with the celebration of the birth of Jesus, and moves through Holy Week, with a full presentation of the events of that week, and including Jesus' death on the Cross and subsequent Resurrection. The music is awesome!!

Be sure to come and be a part of the exciting, excruciating, yet exhilarating events of that week; contact me for the free tickets, either on Sundays, or at carolp1079@gmail.com. Directions are available. Hope to see you there. You'll be blessed – we promise!!



Please join us on Friday evening April 5, in the sanctuary for a prayer meeting with the Covenant Church from 6:30 – 7:45 pm.



Easter

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Memorial Flowers

We will once again adorn our alter on Easter Sunday with flowers in memory of a loved one.

*The Flower Fund has increased so that we are able to contribute to your memorial donations!

Please submit orders by April 8th. Please place orders and payment into the offering basket. Orders may also be submitted to the church office or call 860-283-5765. You may bring your own plants if you wish during church office hours of Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday 9:00 am to noon. Please leave flowers in the kitchen with a note with your name and in whose memory they are given. Thank you for your generosity!

Number of Lilies _____ at \$5.00 per plant*

Number of Tulips _____ at \$5.00 per pot*

Total Order \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: First Congregational Church
Note in memo: Easter Flowers

Easter flowers this season are in praise and honor of Jesus Christ our Lord, and in loving memory of:

Given by:

I will be taking my plant(s) home: yes no

April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30-7:30 pm Yoga in auditorium	2 6:30 am Men's Life 9:30 am Ladies CFC (Cleaning/Fellowship/Coffee) 7 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	3	4 6:30 am Men's Ministry 9:30 am Ladies Bible study in Lounge  Mark O'Brien, Sarah Kincaid	5 8:30-9:30 am Prayer time in Sanctuary 11am-12:30pm Ladies bible study in chapel 6:30 pm Sr. Youth Group (grades 7-12) 6:30 pm Prayer Meeting w/ Covenant church	6
7 8:45-9:45 am Bible Study 10 am Worship Service (Communion) 11:15 am All Church Gathering	8 7 pm Deacon's Meeting 6:30-7:30 pm Yoga in auditorium	9 6:30 am Men's Life 9:30 am Ladies CFC (Cleaning/Fellowship/Coffee) 7 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	10 6:30-8 pm Lenten Soup Supper	11 6:30 am Men's Ministry 9:30 am Ladies Bible study in lounge 7 pm Kid's Church teacher training	12 8:30-9:30 am Prayer time in Sanctuary 11am-12:30pm Ladies bible study in chapel	13  Rick Wilson
14 Palm Sunday 8:45-9:45 am Bible Study 10 am Worship Service & Kid's Church (Basket of Blessings will be collected) 4-5:30 pm Bible study in lounge 4-5:30 pm Jr. Youth group (grades 4-6)	15 6 pm Women's Fellowship Pot Luck/ 7 pm Business Meeting 6:30-7:30 pm Yoga in auditorium	16 6:30 am Men's Life 9:30 am Ladies CFC (Cleaning/Fellowship/Coffee) 7 pm Worship Team rehearsal 7 pm Small Group Leader Training  Carolyn Poley	17 6:30-8 pm Lenten Soup Supper  Kathy Hazelton	18 6:30 am Men's Ministry 9:30 am Ladies Bible study in lounge	19 8:30-9:30 am Prayer time in Sanctuary 11am-12:30pm Ladies bible study in chapel 6:30 pm Sr. Youth Group (grades 7-12)	20  Lucille Lillian
21 8:45-9:45 am Bible Study 10 am Easter Worship Service & Kid's Church	22	23 6:30 am Men's Life 9:30 am Ladies CFC (Cleaning/Fellowship/Coffee) 7 pm Council Meeting SET UP FOR TAG SALE	24 6:30 pm Bible Study In lounge 7 pm Worship Team rehearsal SET UP FOR TAG SALE	25 6:30 am Men's Ministry 9:30 am Ladies Bible study in lounge SET UP FOR TAG SALE	26 8:30-9:30 am Prayer time in Sanctuary 11am-12:30pm Ladies bible study in chapel 6:30 pm Sr. Youth Group (grades 7-12) SET UP FOR TAG SALE	27 9 am - 2 pm TAG SALE
28 8:45-9:45 am Bible Study 10 am Worship Service & Kid's Church 4-5:30 pm Bible study in lounge 4-5:30 pm Jr. Youth group (grades 4-6)	29	30 6:30 am Men's Life 9:30 am Ladies CFC (Cleaning/Fellowship/Coffee)				