

Keeping In Touch

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

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear members and friends of Second Congregational Church,

In terms of the calendar, this is a rather unique church year, for sure! Why am I saying this? Well.....Unlike most years, Easter will be arriving before we even get to the month of April. This year, we will be celebrating this wonderful feast on Sunday March 31, with Holy Week preceding it as it begins with Palm Sunday on March 24.

Now, what is important is that as we ready ourselves to celebrate the wonderful day known as Easter, what we also need to consider is that important week that comes before we are ready to break out the Easter eggs and candy! As you well know, what I am talking about here is HOLY WEEK.

I encourage you, if it at all possible, to consider participating in the services we will be offering during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday. Listed below is information about the Holy Week oppor-

tunities for worship during that significant week prior to Easter.

This includes the following:

- MARCH 24- PALM SUNDAY (also known as Palm/Passion Sunday)- Worship at 9:30 am- We will be receiving palms.
- Wednesday March 27---Holy Week prayer service on my Facebook page., which goes by Robert La-Rochelle.
- Thursday March 28- The TRIDUUM (The Three Days) begins with our Maundy Thursday service at church at 6 pm.
- Friday March 29- NOON- Good Friday worship at Stafford Springs Congregational Church. I will be delivering a message during the service. The service includes reflection on what are known as Jesus' 7 Last Words. Clergy from many different churches in Stafford will participate in this ecumenical
- Saturday March 30-A prayer service of about 15 minutes in length which will be posted on my Facebook page. This will be posted on HOLY SATURDAY morning.
- SUNDAY March 31- Our celebration of Easter Sunday in our church!

Now, if you do NOT access Facebook, you will be able to participate by getting printed copies of the services that are available online during Holy Week. You can receive a PRINTED COPY of the service and you can use that copy as a resource for prayer at home. Those materials will be available as we draw closer to the specific dates.

As we join together for worship during this Lenten season, we look forward to that outbreak of joy which is so integral to the experience of Easter. As we prepare for those days, may we seek to do our best to immerse ourselves in the reality of LENT. We do so through reading and reflecting on the Scriptures of the season. Suggested Bible readings are available in our worship bulletins as well as by checking out the postings on my Facebook page. May you find in these last few weeks of length varied ways to reflect on the meaning and purpose of this unique season, a season that leads us into the amazing and incredible JOY that goes by the name EASTER.

In Jesus always,
Pastor Bob

TREASURER'S REPORT

Category	Year-To-Date	Budget-To-Date	Percentage
R21—Freewill	\$ 48.00	\$ 125.00	38%
R22—Pledges	\$ 838.00	\$ 1,583.33	53%
R23—Contributions	\$ 100.00	\$ 437.50	23%
R24—Fund Raising	\$ 164.53	\$ 866.67	19%
Capital Campaign	\$ 173.00	\$ 250.00	69%

Thru January 31

CHURCH COUNCIL

Church Council met on Tuesday evening the 21 st at 6:30 and discussed numerous items the following are some of interest:

- Pastor Bob's report included his plans for the Lenten season with in person and online services.
- He has been meeting with members in person and / or phone or email.
- He has been pleased with attendance at the monthly educational program he offers.
- In the near future he will visit the Sunday School classes during worship.
- On March 3rd Rev. Isaac Lawson our conference minister will join us for worship.
- During Holy Week Bob will offer both online and in person services hope to see you all there.
- The treasurer reports he had to move money from invested funds to the check book to pay bills. This was necessitated by receiving the bill for our insurance for the annual amount of \$7000.00. The good news is we won't receive further bills for insurance until next year.
- He also reports all bill are current and paid and we have \$3021.29 in checking.
- The deacons discussed the fact that there are only 4 members so there is a possibility that there may only be 1 deacon present on a Sunday to serve. They have a contingency plan that would enable one deacon to cover the service. They could also ask a former deacon in the congregation to assist.
- It was mentioned that we may have a Saint Patrick's Day breakfast on Sunday March 17th, watch for details!!
- Trustees report that the boiler inspections for both buildings are complete.
- The water softener had its yearly maintenance.
- Exit signs emergency lights and smoke detectors were checked and those that had issues were addressed.
- Looking ahead food for thought; the parish roof is 24 years into a 25-year life and the parish furnace was installed in 1998 and has needed some repairs done for the last 3 years.
- Financial Secretary reports that so far in 2024 we have taken in \$3828.00 compared to the same period in 2023 when \$4909.98 was received.
- Christian Education committee reports they are looking to have a movie night sometime in March.
- Information on our summer camp Silver Lake was sent out as well as an email stating that the church would be interested in helping with some of the tuition for those children that might want to attend.
- Pastor Bob will be visiting classes on March 10th.
- In April they will be reaching out to shut-ins to see if anyone needs help spring clean up.
- They will be visiting the Crystal Lake Food Pantry to see where our food donations go.
- The Nursery is open for anyone who needs it.

The next council meeting is scheduled for March 19th at 6:30

Bruce Ladr Moderator

TRUSTEES

Banner Water came February 19th to do our yearly maintenance. They will test our water March 1st and annually to follow. The Boiler Inspection happened through our new insurance company on February 1st, 2024. We had to replace the safety relief valve on the boiler. Williams Oil replaced that and we passed inspection. Otherwise everything is in working order. Everyone has been mindful of the lights being left on, doors being left unlocked, and the heat being left on. Thank you everyone for that. The Trustees continue to try to save money everywhere we can. Thank you

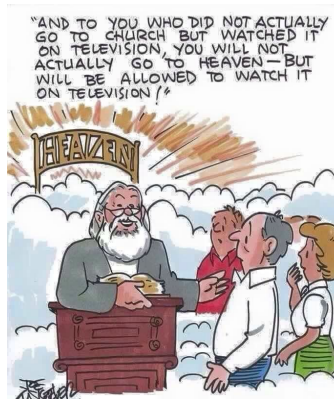
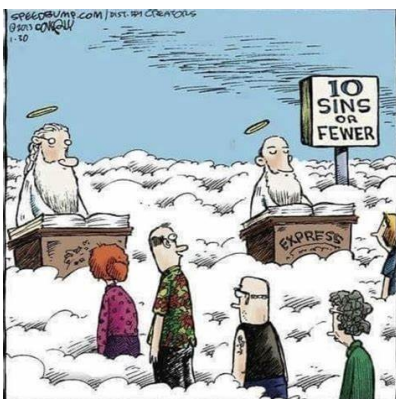
Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Greaves, Board of Trustees Chair

IN AND AROUND THE CHURCH ...

Our Hearts and Prayers reach out to our Brothers and Sisters who have various needs and struggles: prayers for Janet and Rich ... prayers for the family of Martin Burke ... continued prayers for Sarah, Lucy, Donna and Doris ... prayers for Pat and Ann ... prayers for Eddie Breton ... prayers for a former classmate, Maggie, to afford tuition for college ... prayers for Karen that she is healthy and well ... continued prayers for Alan Gowdy ... prayers for my 5 year old grandson who had a stroke ... prayers for peace ... prayers of safe travel for Linda ... prayers for good health for Auntie Bethany during her final month of pregnancy ... prayers for my Sunday School friends and my parents ... prayers for my friend Mary Jo who is battling addiction and losing her family because of it ... prayers for Bertrand and Claire ... prayers for Janet on the passing of her husband Rich ... prayers of safe travel for Bruce and Peg ... blessings to the Coyne Family and baby Jamie ... God bless the Bedford/Dickson families and baby Ivy ... prayers for George and family ... prayers for Gabe Benet's back ... prayers for Josie who is on Chemotherapy ... prayers for world peace and all people suffer from war ... prayers for Bob Campbell ... prayers for my fiancé in Hartford Hospital ... prayers for my mom in heaven ... prayers that all wars will come to an end so there will be peace on earth ... prayers for Cory Crawford undergoing chemo therapy and waiting for a transplant ... prayers for Jeff who has been sick ... prayers for Gabe's back problems ... prayers for family and friends battling cancer ... prayers for cousin Elsie Cross ... prayers for Victoria going through some health issues.

Celebrations: grandson Ethan celebrated 7th birthday ... a joy for Kim, Becky and family for the new addition to their family ... Doris celebrating 103rd birthday ... Rosie celebrating her sixth birthday ... Joy! Rebecca, Bill, Zoey and gremmie Kim welcome healthy Ivy Kim Bedford on 2/2/2024 ...

A LIGHTER MOMENT. . .



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

March Birthdays

March	2	Kara Heofle
	4	Mettie Ostrowski
	7	Ellen Lancaster
	9	Lisa Banach
	9	Rebecca Nash
	18	Debbie Perko

March Anniversaries

None

MISSIONS

The food pantry at Crystal Lake is again this year offering the items that make up a family dinner to folks who are in need of some help this Easter. The food tags have been taken and the NIN jar is out receiving your monetary donations for the purchase of Big Y gift cards to be used by the families to buy their Easter hams. All donations need to be brought to Fellowship Hall on or before Sunday March 17th where the dinner items will be bagged up and taken to the food pantry for distribution. Thank you all for your generous giving.

Our Lord's Blessings to all.
Judy, Michele and Linda

ST. PATRICK'S DAY BREAKFAST

Following the service on Sunday March 17th we will be having a breakfast. We have enjoyed doing this the last few years. We probably won't do the heating trays so if anyone wants to bring fruit, muffins, yogurt, along with crockpot items like oatmeal or eggs let Sarah know! We will have a few things prepared in the kitchen i.e. toast, pancakes or waffles, bacon or sausage etc. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you all!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Hey everyone! We have some fun lessons planned this Lent and we are excited to see such a great attendance weekly. On Easter we won't have Sunday School as it is a family service. We welcome everyone to sit in and decorate the cross and enjoy the Easter Service. We will be having a movie night for the kids and families on Friday March 15th at 6 pm either in Fellowship Hall or the conference room. Pastor Bob will be visiting the classroom's on March 10th.

Gracefully submitted,
Christian Ed

SAVE THESE DATES

Spring Flea Market — May 10 & 11
Duck Race — July 13
Fall Flea Market — September 6 & 7

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Worship Service 9:30 AM	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Worship Service 9:30 AM	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Worship Service - 9:30 AM Food Bank Sunday St. Patrick's Day Breakfast	18	19 Church Council 6:30 PM	20	21	22	23
24 - Palm Sunday Worship Service 9:30 AM	25	26	27	28 Maundy Thursday - 6 PM	29 Good Friday - 3 PM	30
31 - Easter Worship Service 9:30 AM Safe-Net Sunday						