

*The North Branford a
Congregational Church, UCC
Parish Visitor*





¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17 (NRSV)

John 3:16 is no doubt one of the most widely-quoted verses of scripture, but the verse that follows really must be read with it. Together, they speak of Resurrection, of new life; and, of not being judged, but instead, being saved. New life which, if we take a pause from all the trouble that surrounds us, we'll discover also surrounds us: rabbits scurrying across the roadway, daffodils sprouting up, peepers again beginning their springtime chorus, robins returning, days growing longer, a church continuing to worship together even if we're physically apart. These and so many other signs of life are God's assurance that we and all creation are not perishing. In this present time of struggle, as in so many times before, Jesus reminds us that he came so we “may *have life*, and may *have it abundantly*.” (*John 10: 10*)

I was recently reading a commentary on John 3: 16-17, which suggested that the verses only applied to our present living and not to eternity. I don't agree, since I see the first verse as speaking about life ever after, and the second verse speaking about life here and now. So, it's not “either/or”; it's “both/and”! And that's truly the Resurrection story, “both/and”. When I was a child, I remember how I saw Easter as the time of Jesus' resurrection, and how through Jesus, we too were promised eternal life after our physical deaths. It was only later in life, and coming through some challenging circumstances, that I began to realize more and more that resurrection can happen to anyone at any time of our lives. A colleague once shared with me how Martin Luther saw his life as a series of crucifixions, deaths and resurrections. How true, as we face our death-like struggles, which then can be followed by life-renewing experiences. As the Psalmist recounts, we walk through the valley of the **shadow** of death, but then we again emerge into the sunlight where the shadows disappear. Or, as one of our members once observed, we return to worship each Sunday to hit the “restart” button for our living, to learn from the pain and trials of the past week, and to move into a new week brimming with hope and possibility. Not to say Christians have any less struggles and “deaths” than others, but we do have very powerful ways to respond to whatever we face.

And present circumstances give us the chance for a powerful Christian response! Yes, let's not lose sight of the promise of Resurrection – it's all around us; and, it's in us. It's about Jesus; and, it's about you and me. It's about forever and ever; and, it's about today and tomorrow. It's an annual celebration; and, it's a daily reminder and possibility. God through Jesus Christ has us covered, both for the short-term and the long-term. And nothing – absolutely nothing – can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

A blessed Easter to you, NBCC Family & Friends – renewal is there for all of us! After all, we are a Resurrection People!

Love,
Vance



North Branford Congregational Church

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STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

March 6, 2020

Dear Church Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Church and the Stewardship Committee, I want to thank all of you who have responded to our Pledge Drive this year. You have pledged a total of \$44,000 dollars to support the church and its mission during 2020. You have been extremely generous in your responses and I want you to know it is greatly appreciated.

I know there are many among you who felt, for good reasons, that they should not pledge at this time, but that they will be supporting the church with offerings in the plate throughout the year. We understand and extend our appreciation and thanks to them.

While we can feel blessed and even proud with the success of our pledge request, there is just not enough income to balance our budget. We will have to supplement the income with approximately \$22,000 from reserves. We are very thankful to Pastor Vance for using his wisdom and skills to generate funds through creative real estate transactions and cooperative partners. These funds will be used to replenish our reserves. We will have the money necessary to balance the budget this year and for a few years more. But we are not in a sustainable position. The reserves will only last for so many years, and then they will be gone again. We must start now to take corrective action. The longer we wait, the harder it will be. There have been many generations before us who established our church (in 1724) and then have maintained it ever since. It is now our turn.

From Stewardship's point of view, the answer is not for people to give more. It is for more people to give. *WE MUST GROW OUR CONGREGATION*, or our church will not survive for many more years. We must have a church in which young people with families will want to participate. That *may* mean some changes. If it does, then we will have to be responsive, creative, and receptive.

The Leadership Board is considering the creation of a "Finance Committee" to find ways to help balance the budget. You might have some ideas for them or would like to be on that committee. If so, let Connie Miessau, our Moderator, know.

These are just the thoughts of the Stewardship Committee. I am sure there are other ideas, and I hope that you will share them.

Sincerely,

N. H. "Skip" Borgerson, Jr.,
Chairperson



Since we cannot come together for Easter service let us try and come together in another way!

'Our Easter Flower Cross'

On Saturday, April 11th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, on the front steps of our church, we will be filling our Easter Cross with flowers and we invite everyone to join us. Unfortunately, we may not be able to come together for Easter Sunday Service in our church, but we can all place flowers on our Easter Cross so on Easter Sunday morning the front of our church will show all its beauty and glory as we Celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord!!!!

You may bring your own flowers or we will have flowers for you.

For all those who wish to join us we have set up special instructions for your safety and for the safety of all of our Church Family. They are as follows:

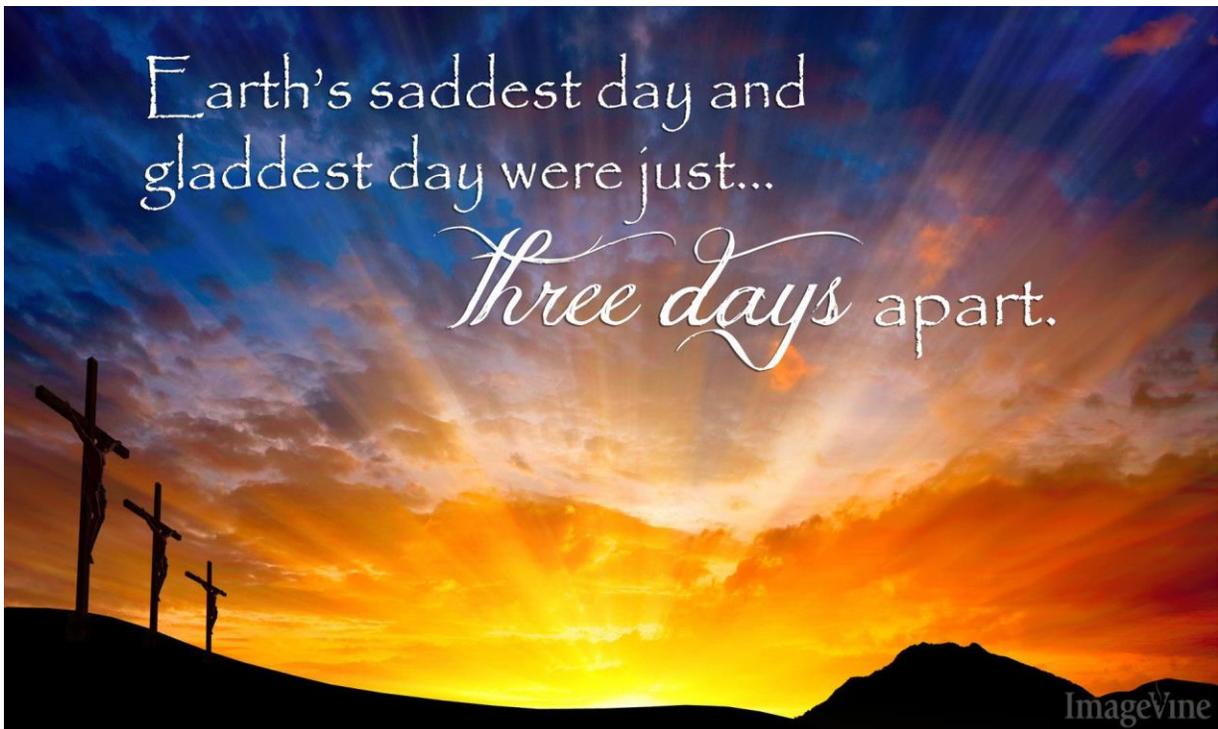
1. All cars will enter from the traffic light on Route 1 and come around onto Church Street to line up along the curb aside the church - **Please stay in your car.**
2. We will come to your car and invite you to come out to place flowers on the cross.
3. After the people from the first car in line have returned to their car and have pulled away, then the next car in line will move up and we will invite them to come out to place flowers.
4. **Please wear gloves and a mask.**

If you do not feel comfortable attending, please know we are keeping all our church families in prayer.



*A MOMENT
TO PAUSE*

Easter: a new beginning to walk into the sunlight of a glorious day to ask the Risen Christ.... "I am here, what is it you need me to do? I am here." ~*fran v. giambalvo*



Earth's saddest day and
gladdest day were just...
Three days apart.

ImageVine



Maundy Thursday

Poem written by – Margaret Holcomb

I wonder...

Did the moon shine brightly on that fateful night in the Garden of Gethsemane? Christ and His disciples left the upper room and wandered to that garden to pray. Did the moonbeams light their way along the dark streets into the garden, among the trees, where Jesus knelt to pray in His despair?

Ah, His disciples fall asleep. Christ prays alone. He knows what is to come. He prays for a change in God's plan, yet, "Thy will, not mine, be done"...

Behind dark clouds the moon hides. The moon's light cannot save Him from His ultimate demise. Tonight, we leave the Communion Table thinking on our Lord, of this terrible fate. We go out into the night in silence, in awe, in prayer, lit by the brilliance of the moon and stars twinkling down from above.

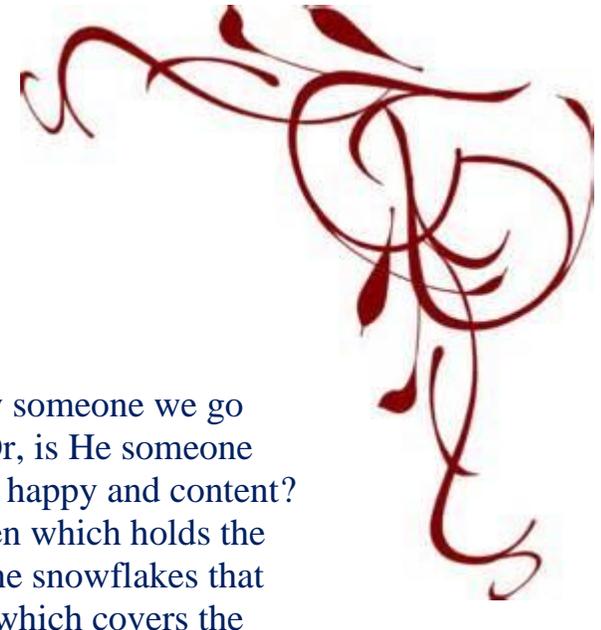
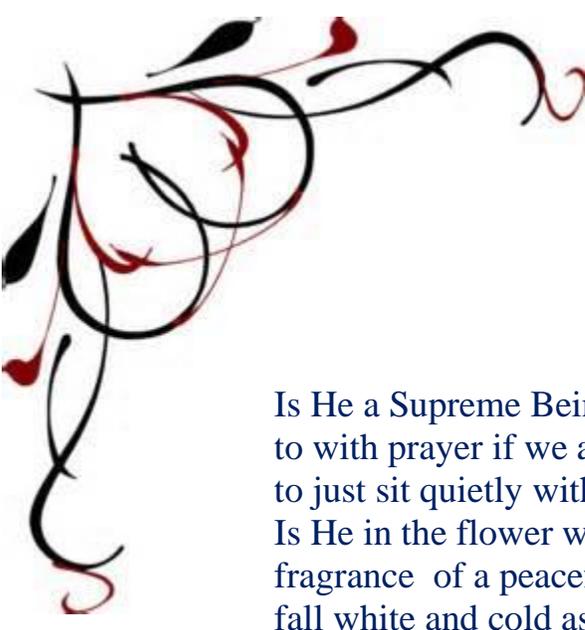
I wonder...





Until further notice we will have to put our Bible Study on hold. Please look for our May Parish Visitor next month or go onto our website at www.northbranfordcongregational.org for updates as to when we can once again come together as a group.





WHO IS GOD?

Is He a Supreme Being or man? Is He only someone we go to with prayer if we are sad and hurting? Or, is He someone to just sit quietly with when we are feeling happy and content? Is He in the flower we picked from a garden which holds the fragrance of a peaceful day? Or is He in the snowflakes that fall white and cold as a glistening blanket which covers the earth? Or is He the soft rain that pours down to give us a rainbow.

The list can go on forever when we ask, “Who is God?”

If we think about it, God is all these things and much more! Behind the scenes of our life, He has held our hand every step of the way. He never tired of walking beside us, never asked for anything in return or judged us. But, if we believe anything, it would be, that God not only loves us unconditionally, but also hopes that we recognize it was with His hand that we were led on this wonderful journey we call our life.

~fran v. giambalvo



Cherry Blossom Paint Night Fundraiser

Event Information tickets are which includes **\$35**:

Description

Cherry Blossom Canvas Paint Night Fundraiser

Thursday, April 30th from 6-8pm

Spring into the season with this blooming painting and a fun night out.

Includes supplies, materials and step-by-step art lesson to create your canvas painting. Snacks and water also provided.

Feel free to bring additional food and BYOB!

This event welcomes artists ages 18+

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Artistic instruction led by Donarumo Designs.

No need to print out tickets to the event, only a name is required at check-in.

Refunds/credits available only up until 7 days prior to the event.

Purchase your tickets at:

<https://cherryblossomnbcc.eventbrite.com>

Church News



Communion Sundays Are Family Sundays

Just a reminder that we are designating Communion Sundays as family Sundays, so there will be no Sunday School on the first Sunday of each month.

Would You Like To Become A Member

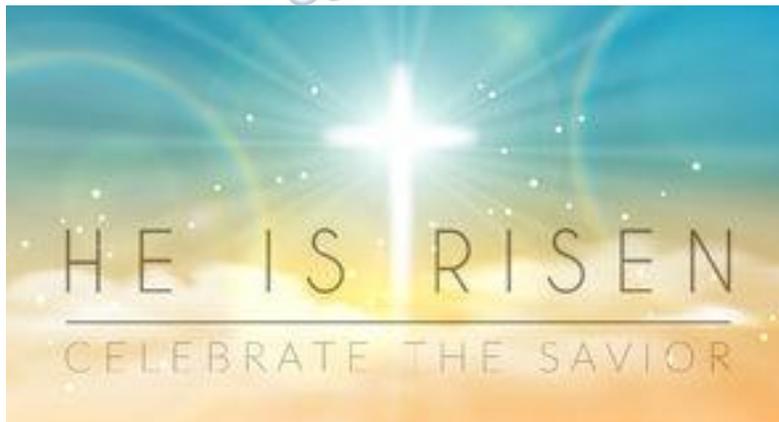
Anyone desiring to become a member of NBCC can do so by speaking to a deacon.

Find Our Weekly Worship On-Line!

We're now live-streaming our Sunday worship! Check out our Facebook page, and please share it with your family and friends, especially right before worship so they too can watch live! Or, you can always now find us afterwards on YouTube by searching "North Branford Congregational Church."

Speakerphone Access!

If you can't be with us in the pew, you can be with us on the phone, via a speakerphone connection, every Sunday morning. Call Vance at **860.480.3307** for details on how to call in.





Some of us have been blessed with so much
yet it takes so little to reach out saying
“I am here for you!”

Parish Visitors Outreach Ministry

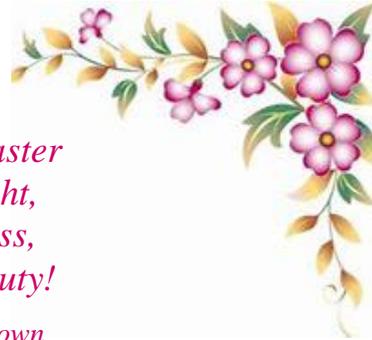
Helping our brothers and sisters in Christ! There are many members and neighbors who are in need of help, shopping, picking up prescriptions, or a ride to doctor’s appointment, etc. If you can offer your time and assistance to this program please call Gerry Borgerson at **203.483.1116**, the church office at **203.488.8456** or place your name and phone number on the sign-up sheet in church. Thank you.

Food Bank

The Food Bank is open every Friday from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm.

Help With The Midnight Run

We are in need of clean, used men’s clothing, shirts, jeans, tops, sweaters and also toiletries. We always need new socks and underwear (all sizes) can be dropped off at the church anything during the day. Bag lunches, fruit, bottled water and snack items are needed on a monthly basis and these item can be dropped on the night of the Run anytime between 6:45 and 7:15 pm in the church parking lot, or you may leave items inside the church earlier in the day. Please consider coming along with us.



*Let the Holy Spirit of Easter
fill our houses with light,
our minds with kindness,
and our works with beauty!*

unknown

Happy Birthday

APRIL

1: *Loren Lehr*

6: *Edna Hemstock*

14: *Wendy Tarry*

15: *Sean Doran*

23: *Christine Voos*

24: *Nancy Allen & Caroline Mulligan
& Fran Giambalvo*

28: *Madelyn Downer*



Forgotten anyone in our birthday list
please call the church office
and let Fran know!



CHILDREN'S PAGE

EASTER word search

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

Can you find these words?

EASTER	EGG HUNT	JELLYBEANS	RESURRECTION
BUNNY	BASKET	SPRING	SUNDAY
FUN	CANDY	GRASS	MARCH
HE IS RISEN	CHOCOLATE	GAMES	



APRIL 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 6:00 pm TOPS	2 7:30 pm AA	3 12:30-2:00 pm Food Bank	4 7:00 pm NA
5 Palm Sunday 10:00 am Worship	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8 6:00 pm TOPS	9 Maundy Thursday 7:30 pm AA	10 Good Friday 12:30-2:00 pm Food Bank	11 7:00 pm NA
12 Easter Sunday 10:00 am Worship	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15 6:00 pm TOPS	16 7:30 pm AA	17 12:30-2:00 pm Food Bank	18 7:00 pm NA
19 10:00 am Worship	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 6:00 pm TOPS	23 7:30 pm AA	24 12:30-2:00 pm Food Bank	25 7:00 pm NA
26 10:00 am Worship	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 6:00 pm TOPS	30 7:30 pm AA		

Everyday...

~ remember someone in your prayers ~

The North Branford Congregational Church, UCC

1680 Foxon Road, PO Box 410, North Branford, CT 06471

*The ministers of this parish are all of its members
Assisting them in their ministries are:*

Church Office ManagerFran Giambalvo

LEADERSHIP BOARD:

PastorVance Taylor
Moderator Jonathan Bodwell
Business ManagerConnie Miessau
TreasurerJennifer Ramsay
Recording Secretary Nancy Allen
WorshipLaurie Vincent

OFFICERS:

Financial SecretaryNancy Bodwell
Asst. Financial Secretary.....Ginny Montelius
Clerk.....Marcia Duenkel
Church Historian Lewis Reid

Church office hours are Wednesday—Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
(or with the Pastor at your convenience), 203.488.8456

Parish Visitor articles must be into the office by the 15th of the month
Please leave in the secretary's box in the office, or
e-mail to nobfdcong@sbcglobal.net, or fax to (203) 481-4822

Website: www.northbranfordcongregational.org

**No Matter Who You Are,
No Matter Where You Are On Life's Journey,
You are Welcome Here!**