

Faith Makes a Difference...



Imagine What We Can Do!

Hello Friends,

Have you ever heard the story of the little boy saving starfish, one at a time? “It made a difference to that one!” I’m writing to share another story with you. This story is about a church, but it’s not just any church. It’s OUR church...

Once upon a time, there was a church in the center of town at the corner of Center Street and South Main Street in Wallingford. It had a long history of presence in the community having been founded over 340 years ago. It was very proud of its historic legacy of faithfully living out the call of God. As followers of Jesus Christ, the church shared the Good News of Jesus, a Way of life that impacts people, the community, and the world, transforming lives for the better.

The church experienced cycles of growth and decline due to various circumstances, and the stewards of the church in each generation knew when it was time to rebuild for a new day. The church is now on its fifth sanctuary building as a result. The adaptive spirit in their DNA is a good thing since the Church (with a capital C) has always faced times of adaptation and change. Today, the church on the corner continues to be a relevant and positive voice for the power of faith in the lives of people.

This blessed church has a reputation of being a community church, a church that is open and welcoming, and one that will assist people in their faith needs, especially in times of celebration and crisis. The church connects with its neighbors through a variety of mission projects and outreach. And by neighbors, I mean the world, because this church doesn’t keep its faith to itself.

It offers three different inspirational worship services at different times each week. It records the services so that others may watch on local TV and be inspired. It hosts Community Dinners at the major holidays, open to all. It offers inexpensive clothing and housewares through its annual rummage sales. It supports the local shelter for the homeless.

The church provides much needed funds to DCF to aid local children in need. It also gives those children the joy of school backpacks loaded with supplies, Christmas gifts, and Easter baskets. It has worked on repairing the homes of countless people in need through mission trips and recently played a major part in the transformation of fifty-four homes in its own community of Wallingford.

The church offers a variety of music programs and other celebrations of the arts. It offers a festive atmosphere for the sharing of many talents via its annual church fair, a community event that marks a joyful entry into the holiday season.

The church has birthed and sponsored a worldwide coffee ministry benefitting the brave men and women who serve our country and the chaplains who provide ministry for them. The church has been a leader in the BAWA Health Initiative, providing funds and leadership towards the creation of a medical clinic in the village of Bawa, Cameroon, West Africa.

The church has long made ministry for children and youth a high priority. Many have dedicated long hours to creatively educating the children and youth across generations. The church continues this priority by offering a variety of opportunities for young people to learn about and live out their faith.

And...there is so much more! So, this story doesn’t have an ending... only new beginnings!



Friends, it is almost impossible to briefly tell of this church without leaving something crucial out. But, here is the good news of this story...although written in past tense, the story of this church... OUR CHURCH... isn't over yet. It has a rich past. It is creating new stories in the present every day. And... it certainly has a vibrant story that continues into the future!

Here's the even better news! God is not done with this story. In fact, imagine how God is currently at work to make this church an even more amazing group of people who gather to grow spiritually, support one another, and live lives of faith that truly make a difference!

I am so excited to find out the next chapter of the story.... And guess what? YOU get to be a part of the story, too! Help us decide how we live out our faith, how we answer God's call, how we continue to help faith make a difference in the lives of our neighbors and our world. **Imagine what we can do, together!**

Here's how you can help:

Pray: for the church and our ministries together.

Discover: how your interests and passions intersect with living out your life of faith.

Seek: opportunities to serve in meaningful ways, enriching your life and making a difference in the lives of others.

Participate: regularly in the life of the church through worship, study, and experiences that will enhance your personal spiritual growth.

Build: relationships that provide companionship and support.

Join: us for the many **FUN** activities that the church offers throughout the year.

Create: tapping into your imagination to help us innovate, birth new ideas and engage new possibilities.

Honor: our rich historic legacy and traditions woven through generations.

Serve: with a spirit of hospitality, open welcome, loving acceptance, and gratitude.

Offer: your time, talents, and resources generously to provide the volunteer and financial support our church needs to continue to make the greatest impact as a community of faith.

I want to personally say THANK YOU to each and every one of you as you contribute to the life of our church in all the ways listed above and beyond! Know that your generosity and giving *make a difference* in your life, the life of others, and on behalf of building up the kingdom of God, sometimes in ways that we cannot even see. But God knows....and God knows what is yet to come!

I am grateful and blessed to be in ministry with you. Please partner with us as we celebrate all the many ways that our **Faith Makes a Difference. Imagine What We Can Do!**

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K".

The Reverend Kathleen T. Cunliffe, Senior Minister
First Congregational Church, UCC, Wallingford