

Church News

The Congregational Church of Eastford

"To Know Christ and Make Him Known"

May 2026

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CARE NOTE:

**"COME AND SEE
WHAT GOD
HAS DONE!"**

PSALM 66:5

Rebuild Updates:

<https://cceastford.org/rebuild/>



Daily Bible Reading

MAY			
1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Judges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 18
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:1-14
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 19:15-29
		Romans	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:1-15
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 20:16-30
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:1-16
7		Reflection	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 21:17-31
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	12-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:1-16
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	14-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 22:17-29
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:1-18
		Ephesians	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 23:19-35
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 24:1-22
14		Reflection	
		1 Samuel	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 24:23-34
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:1-14
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 25:15-28
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:1-16
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 26:17-28
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:1-14
21		Reflection	
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	20-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 27:15-27
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	23-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:1-14
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	26-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 28:15-28
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	29-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 29:1-14
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Philippians	<input type="checkbox"/> 29:15-27
		2 Samuel	
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 30
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 31

Congregational Church of Eastford

4 County Road, PO Box 177

Eastford, CT 06242-0177

Email: cceastford@gmail.com Website: www.cceastford.org Phone: (860) 974-0294

Pastor: Mike Moran mltamoran@gmail.com

Assoc. Pastor: Evan Burgess evan.cceastford@gmail.com

Office Manager: Deb Torcellini office@cceastford.org

Download "The Church App" on your phone or tablet (white background, gray cross). Search for Congregational Church of Eastford or by zip 06242. You can access upcoming events, livestreams, blog, giving, social media, website, and more!

From the Pastor's Pen

Greetings in the Name of Jesus!

Having grown up in the sun belt and then living in California, at the age of 28 and upon my departure from the U. S. Navy, I had a great career opportunity in Connecticut. My job interview was in the first week of May. Coming from life in a dry place, the New England spring green I beheld when I arrived – the grass, the new leaves on the trees – was overwhelming. It was almost like a cake that is too sweet. What beauty God hath wrought! This is a great time of year to refresh our sense of God's ability to bring life, abundant life, and to make all things prosper and grow, grow and grow!

If you attended our children/youth worship service on April 26, I imagine you were blessed. I certainly was. All the kids, all the life, all the happy sounds and the more formal moment when we dedicated so many littles – all remind us of the vision God gave us years ago. He spoke to us through the words of Isaiah 54:2 which begins, "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out..." The picture is of a head of a nomadic family being told to get ready for a bigger family. We heard that word years before the fire, now just three years ago. And we took it seriously by attending to the basics – the Word of God, prayer and love for one another. We now are seeing the Lord move us into His vision. We have new land – for growth – and our building is coming together. We have so many new people, new young families, and yes, children. This growth is ongoing, and all of it is from the Lord. Our bit is to be faithful and to serve Him by serving people. He is doing His part. It is a good time to be reminded about our part. We must stay focused on the basics.

I'll say this again as we move into summer – but the seasonal changes in the patterns of life can disrupt our time with the Lord. Our time with the Lord in His Word, in prayer, under instruction and communing with Him is as essential as the air we breathe. Read the Book! Pray! Lean into Him!

And our lives lived in love are likewise essential.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (John 13:34)

Is our life together lived in love? Are we caring for one another? How about our new people? Are we caring for them? Do we take the time to get acquainted and spend time with them? On the flip side, do we neglect our old timers? We know Jesus loves them all, both old and new, and He pays attention to them as He cares for them. We must join Him.

And what is the quality of our love? Are there fractures, breaches of trust, brokenness in our relationships? Given that we are every one of us sinners, of course there will be relationship rubs. The question is, do we allow schisms between us to go unaddressed? Do we allow them to stand? We must not.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

And finally, this perspective. For our tent to grow, it is not only about numbers. Are we growing in Christ individually? How about you?

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18)

I firmly believe that the Lord has positioned us to be used by Him in powerful ways, way beyond our goals, our vision, and our imagining. He is the God of the impossible. He has no limits. As we lean into Him, trust Him, and worship Him with all our beings, we can expect the unbelievable.

In Him, and serving alongside all of you,

Pastor Mike



ANNOUNCEMENT

The members of the Congregational Church of Eastford are hereby notified of and invited to attend the Annual Meeting to be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the First Congregational Church of Pomfret.

The meeting will be preceded by a Potluck dinner at 6:00 PM.

The business to be transacted at this meeting will include:

The receiving of reports from the Officers, Boards and Teams of the church

The election of Officers and Board members

The adoption of the 2026/2027 Budget

Voting on motions proposed by the Church Council and any other business proper to come before said meeting.

This warning is per order of the Church Council in compliance with the church Bylaws.

Johanna Wolfe, Church Clerk

Dated at Eastford, April 19, 2026

Please note: Only members can vote, but non-members are invited to attend the potluck and annual meeting as well!

From the Associate Pastor's Pen

Pastor Mike and I started two new sermon series this past month—he in the book of Daniel, and I in the letter to the Galatians. These books of the Bible are quite different from each other, both in their genre, context, and historical moment. However, both books have divine wisdom for us in how we are to live as God's people in this world. It is important for every church to learn what it means to be "in the world but not of it." Yet I believe it is extremely relevant to CCE right now, as we are on the cusp of moving from meeting at the school and into a new building.

On Jesus' last night with His disciples, He prayed for them (and us) in John 17. He prayed for us to live this identity out:

"¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." - John 17:14-18

To balance this vision of Jesus, we must avoid two pitfalls. As followers of Jesus, we must not fully separate ourselves from the world. John the Baptist, when talking about Jesus, points out that it is ultimately His role at the end of time to separate the wheat from the chaff (Matt. 3:12). To be in the world, we must not go off on our own with zero life or interaction shared with unbelievers. This is what makes the wisdom of Daniel extremely valuable. It gives us a picture of how we can be in 'Babylon' as exiles in a way where both we and the Babylonians around us prosper.

If you think about our last three years since the fire, the Lord had us clearly planted in the world, as we've gathered every Sunday in a school gym. As the time draws close for us to move out of the school, we must be careful we are not moving ourselves out of the world. As followers of Jesus, we play an important role in the world, though we do not belong to it. Well, what is our role then?

The other pitfall for us is to be in the world and be OF the world. In other words, it is possible for churches, in their attempt to be in the world, to allow the world and its ways to shape and rule them, rather than God and His ways. You do not have to travel very far to see churches where this has happened. We are not of this world. Our lives, minds, and hearts are not to be ruled by the world, nor should they depend on it. We belong to another master! Paul reminds of this in Galatians, as he calls out the believers in Galatia for being deceived by a gospel of man, a gospel of the world's making, rather than clinging to the gospel of God in Jesus Christ.

Ever since I arrived at our church, I've been humbled, grateful and proud by our church's commitment to Jesus and His message. Each and every Sunday, I've heard our church unashamedly preach this message from a pulpit in a space representative of our world – a public school. The relationship our church has with the school is unique on multiple levels, so much so that when I tell other pastors about it, they are blown away! We are able to serve and love on the school without having to waver on our gospel messaging. It has been a season of our church clearly ordained by God and an important opportunity for us to reach the school, as well as practice living out our identity as God's people from one of the world's key spaces.

So, how can we continue to live this out as we move out of the school and into a church?

We must be intentional to live out the role God calls us to live out. The Bible has much to teach us on this, best seen in Jesus' lived out example. So first and foremost, we must spend time reading and meditating on the Gospels, as Jesus shows us the Way.

We must also take seriously His teachings on the subject. Jesus describes our role in the world in three ways:

We are to be the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).
We are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16)
We are sent out as sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16, Luke 10:3)

I recently read a book by Jacques Ellul on this subject, titled 'Presence in the Modern World.' I will end this newsletter with his explanation of Jesus' teachings, and I pray it challenges you, encourages you, and provides a clearer vision for us as a church in this exciting season.

"To be the salt of the earth refers specifically to Leviticus 2:13, where we are told that salt is the sign of the covenant. This means that Christians stand before humankind, within the world's spiritual reality as the visible sign of the new covenant that God has made with this world in Jesus Christ. Christians must be a true sign, however: their life and words must manifest this covenant to humankind. Otherwise, 'the earth feels itself bereft of covenant. It no longer knows where it is headed and lacks any possible self-understanding or certainty as to its preservation. This fact of being the salt of the earth is the primary way by which Christians are involved in the world's preservation, much more than by any material activity.

To be the light of the world: the light appeared in the darkness, but the darkness did not overcome it.' Christians are this light in Christ. The statement has a twofold meaning. First, light is what dispels darkness, separates life from death, and provides the criterion of goodness (this is why in the biblical text a reference to good works directly follows this sentence). Apart from this light, we cannot strictly know what is a good work or the good in itself.

In another sense, this light of the world is what gives meaning to the world's history, what orients and explains it. As a mere sequence of events, the course of history reveals no logic or certainty. The logic emerges through the church's presence, as odd as this may seem. This is why Christians, by being light, are a factor in the world's life. In addition to their work of preserving the world, Christians are instruments of revelation and bear witness to salvation.

As sheep among wolves: here again Christians are the sign of the reality of God's action. The lamb of God is Jesus Christ, who takes away the sins of the world. But all Christians are treated as their master is, and all Christians receive from Jesus Christ a share in his work. They are sheep not because their action or sacrifice has a purifying effect on the world, but because in the world's midst they are the true, living, and ever renewed sign of the sacrifice of the lamb of God. In the world, everyone seeks to be a wolf; no one is assigned to play the sheep's role. Yet the world cannot survive if no one bears living witness to this sacrifice. This is why it is essential for Christians to guard against being wolves spiritually, that is, spiritual dominators. Christians must accept others' domination over them and daily sacrifice their lives, reflecting in this way the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

These biblical expressions should not be understood as similes or special terms to use when

speaking of Christians. They are not figures of speech or pretty pictures. We are much too inclined to see only fine phrases and poetry. Nor are they a sort of accident that can happen to Christians, a possibility; we speak too easily as though Christians happen to have this quality but could have others.

Instead, these biblical expressions convey a stark and unavoidable reality. Jesus Christ brings us face to face with the Christian's particular function - and we can have no other. Christians cannot be otherwise; they do not have the choice. If they are not like this, they are not fulfilling their role and are betraying Jesus Christ and the world also. Christians can always strive to do good works and exhaust themselves in religious or social activity, but this will signify absolutely nothing if they do not accomplish the one mission that Jesus Christ charges them with specifically-to be, first, a sign.”¹

May God help us, through the example, teachings, and power of Jesus, and the indwelling of His Spirit in us, live this out.

Love y’all!
In Christ,
Pastor Evan

¹ Jacques Ellul, Presence in the Modern World, trans. Lisa Richmond (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1989), 3-4.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD
ROOTED youth

Sunday, May 3, 2:00-3:30PM, EBC
Sunday, May 10, 2:00-3:30PM, EBC
Friday - Saturday, May 15-16, Rooted Youth Campout - 12 Trepal Drive, Eastford

Please check with Ben and Laura Barlow for updates regarding times and locations - 989-280-1539

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD
ROOTED youth

End of Year Camp-Out!
Friday - Saturday May 15-16th (Rain date June 19-20th)
6th-12th Grade - 12 Trepal Drive, Eastford
5pm Friday - 10am Saturday (or 10pm pick-up for those not camping)

**SWIMMING / KAYAKING
BOATING / TUBING
GAMES / FOOD
CAMP-FIRE / FRIENDS
FUN!**

Contact Ben or Laura Barlow for details: 989-280-1539 / designbylb@gmail.com

National Day of Prayer
Thursday, May 7, 2026
7:00 PM

Meet at the flagpole
Eastford Elementary
12 Westford Rd

Office Manager
out of office
May 20 - 27
Please plan ahead.
Contact elders for urgent matters.

Eastford School
Rocket Workshops

Thursdays
May 7, 14, and 21
3:45 - 4:45 PM

See Pastor Mike to help.

Missions Update

The Missions page on the CCE Website has links to all of our supported missions and missionaries plus their most recent newsletters and updates. Here is the latest...

Nomads – Ben Barlow and Ryan Pitts completed their short-term mission trip to Abu Dhabi, returning safely to the US on March 31st. Thank you for your prayers for their personal safety and for the Lord's hand on the missionaries and the migrant labor workers they serve.

Caring Families (ChloeCare) has opportunities for volunteers to serve in the following areas: Spanish Translator, Board Member, Cleaning/Maintenance (at their Willimantic office), Church Champion (here at CCE), Social Media Posting. For more information, contact Caring Families at <https://www.carefamilies.org/> or call the office at (860) 786-1124.

Jen McCormick (UW Sports Ministry) – Jen and the UW ministry team are heading full steam into the 2026 sports season. Coaches training is scheduled for the week of May 25th. Camp officially begins the week of June 1st. Pray for Jen and the rest of the UW staff to have energy and wisdom as they get to know and work with the interns who will be coaching camps across the country this summer.

This year's coaches (15 in total!) are profiled on the UW website. Meet the coaches at <https://www.uwsportsministry.org/coaches/coach-bios/>.

His Mansion – Work Group season is arriving soon! This is an opportunity to participate in what God is doing in the lives of the men and women at His Mansion. Individuals and teams can join the His Mansion family to help with projects and tasks that keep the ministry moving. For more information, go to the His Mansion website or click on this link: <https://www.hismansion.com/workgroups>

We are looking forward to a visit from His Mansion executive director Courtney Jones at CCE on Sunday June 14th. It will be exciting to hear how this ministry impacts the lives of men and women through the redemptive love of Jesus.

Gideons – Tom Trowbridge is the new area director for all of eastern CT. His focus will be on membership. Pray for new members to join the camps in Eastern Connecticut.

Fundraising

Submitted by Sue Leavitt

As you may know, I have stepped down as team lead for the Fundraising Team. My first priority is to thank the wonderful team who worked hard to help raise awareness and create opportunities toward reaching our goal. The team includes John Leavitt, John Buell, Jonathan Budd, Casey Jolin, Dot Cote, Jen Barlow and Nancy Ethier. We also had help from Mallory Selfridge, Annie Barlow and Bonnie Souvigney during our two years. It was a difficult journey because it was unclear for a very long time just how much money needed to be raised. We have secured a couple of grants, thanks to Dot and Casey's hard work which will help raise the numbers on the thermometer.

Despite my stepping down, I am still interested in the progress of the growth of the rebuilding fund toward our modest goal of \$300,000. We really understand just how difficult these times are during this time of uncertainty, but please know that the need is still there and our Lord will provide with your help. Won't you please consider helping with the final push toward completing our wonderful new church building?

Thank you so much for your confidence in me and the team. It has been a privilege to serve in this way.

2026/2027 Operating Budget

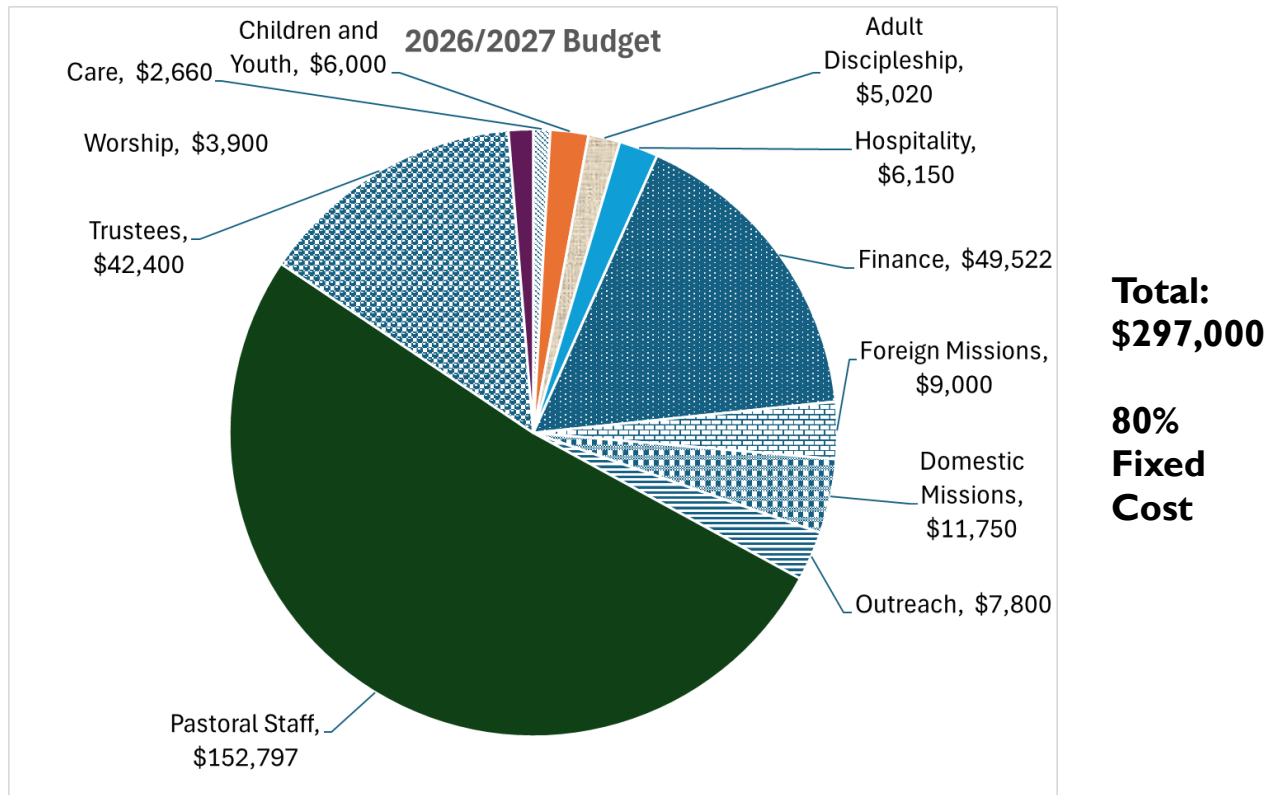
God has blessed us richly over the past several years. The generosity of Eastford Elementary School, Eastford Baptist Church and First Congregational Church of Pomfret has made it possible for our ministries to continue without interruption. Their willingness to share their facilities at no cost for rent, electricity, or heat has allowed us to operate on a significantly reduced budget for three years. It's easy to miss the impact their generosity has had on our expenses. The new building is anticipated to be more expensive than the old to maintain. A few examples: we will now have central air conditioning; there is more outside landscaping to manage and to meet code we have air recirculation in the HVAC and in the kitchen hood. Guessing the energy consumption is not easy when we have no history of it. Here is our best estimate compared to the current fiscal year budget:

- Propane: Up \$11,000. (for 11 months)
- Electric: Up \$15,100 (for 11 months)
- Insurance: Up \$8,700 (property and liability for two locations)
- Outdoor Maintenance: Up \$4,200
- Fire Monitoring Fee: New, at \$2,400

Other budget highlights are:

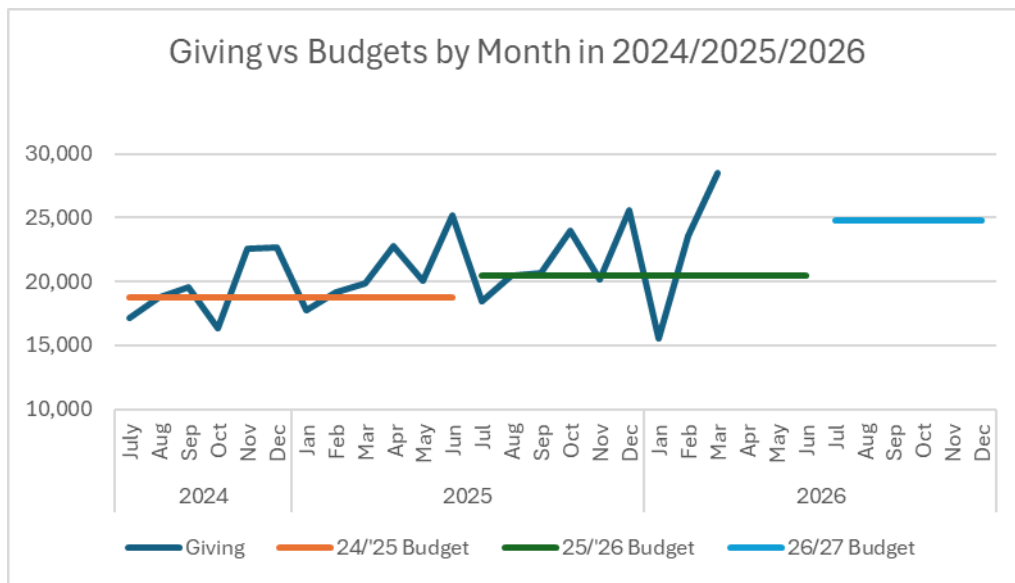
- Pastor Mike will generously continue to work at 50% of pay.
- No reductions were made to the requests from each leader of their ministry area.
- Though the Willimantic Ministry was removed, the \$4,000 that had been allocated there is distributed to existing organizations and His Oaks ministry was added.
- A 3% pay increase is included for staff.

The complete budget by line will be voted on at the May Church Council meeting. Here is a pie chart view as it stands now:



With these assumptions, expenses are forecasted to increase by 21% or \$51,000 over the past budget. Following the elders' prayerful guidance, giving is planned to support a balanced budget.

The increase in giving is unusual. Typically tithes and offering giving increases cover inflation and modest growth. This plan is "God-dependent." We cannot on our own see how the Lord will provide an additional \$51,000. There is one statistic that might give a clue. If we look at giving per attendee, we see pre-fire giving was much higher than post fire giving *per attendee*. For example, from 2016 to 2019 attendance ranged from 75 to 79 on a Sunday. Giving per person in those years was about \$210.00 per month. In the last 12 months, average attendance was 140¹. Giving per attendee was \$158.00 or 25% less per person. These are averages of averages,² but I think the opportunity is clear. If we had the same per-person giving now as pre-fire, the budget would be \$352,000 rather than \$297,000.



The chart above shows a wide variation in tithes and offering from month to month. Consistent giving throughout the year is a beneficial practice. When donations surpass monthly expenditures, the surplus is allocated to reserves, thereby enhancing our financial stability and enabling the finance team to plan prudently for anticipated and unanticipated costs.

Moving into a new building is a "threshold moment"—it's a physical expansion, sure, but it's primarily a spiritual and operational one. Preparing for those "financial realities" ensures that the excitement of a new space doesn't get overshadowed by the stress of new expenses. By increasing giving now, we ensure that our ministries remain strong and that our new home becomes a place where God's work continues to flourish.

This article covered the operating budget for member voting on May 27. Three other budgets—insured structure, uninsured land and site work, and building contents—relate to the fire and are updated weekly due to the overall project being a work in progress. For status, contact a Finance Team member. A summary statement would be we are \$111,500 short of the \$300,000 goal. As a result, all discretionary expenditures on the building and contents are on hold.

Bruce Barlow, for the Finance Team,

John Buell, Josh Barlow, Lisa Kellerman, Gary Carabeau

¹John Leavitt (counts every week)

²We didn't track children and adults separately in the past. There are more children in attendance now.

Women's Ministry Bible Studies

Tuesday 8 AM group is still working though "Take Courage: A Study of Haggai" by Jennifer Rothschild. Always interesting stuff...you won't feel behind if you join in now! We meet bright and early in the church office. Coffee is always hot!

The Tuesday 6:30 PM group will be starting a new study this month called "Encouraging One Another" from the Women of Faith series. We will explore what Scripture has to say about the value God places on your life and how He notices all that you are doing. You will read passages that will lift your spirit as you hear God speaking His words of encouragement into your life. You will also discover that just as God lifts you up, He wants you to lift others up. This should bring us through the summer. Pop in whenever you can! We all know that attendance in the summer will be sporadic for each of us! Don't let that hold you back! We meet in the church office.

Contact Terri Warren with any questions regarding the Tuesday groups. trwarren2366@gmail.com or 860-576-0882

Check with Marissa Ciovacco about the **Monday evening study**.

Craft Night

May 20 at 6:00 pm
Terri Warren's home
99 Mill Bridge Rd #2, Eastford

Join other women from the church at Terri Warren's home on the **Third Wednesday (note day change!)** of each month for a craft night. You can bring your own project or pick one of the options available. Want to try something new? Let Terri know and she'll see what she can do. 6 pm 99 Mill Bridge Road, Eastford. Call if any trouble finding house 869-576-0882.



Upcoming Events



Event for entire congregation (those who RSVP'd)

The Women's Ministry Team is in the process of arranging opportunities for the women of CCE to get to know each other and most importantly, learn from each other and grow in Christ. More details to come!

There is a Facebook specifically for Women's Ministry News. If a search doesn't locate it, talk to Terri and she'll hook you up!! Don't do Facebook? There is an email list that can keep you updated...just let Terri know that is how you wish to receive news.

Brought to you by
 UW Sports Ministry
 Congregational Church Eastford
 Living Proof Church Ashford

Sports Camp (Ages 4 – 12)

cceastford.org/sports-camp/



Held at Eastford Elementary School, 12 Westford Rd, Eastford, CT
 \$65/camper (Email cceastford@gmail.com if financial help needed.)

Sign up by Sunday, July 5th to be guaranteed a t-shirt!



Congregational
 Church
 of
 Eastford

July 27 – 31, 2026 (8:30 am-12:15 pm)



Sports Camp 2026

Volunteers needed: <https://cceastford.org/volunteer/>

Register and pay for your campers (ages 4 to 12): <https://cceastford.org/sports-camp/>

**Childcare
 (Birth – Pre K)
 offered during the
 Worship Service**

**Questions?
 See Casey Jolin**

3	Linnea B, Casey J, Georgia B, Josh J (Door)
10	Dot C, Amanda K, Natallia K, Joe K (Door)
17	Kirstin B, Casey J, David B, Rachel B (Door)
24	Annie B, Deb T, Mia C, Johnny B (Door)
31	Rachel B, Jean B, Georgia B, James B (Door)

**Bible Explorers
 (Grades K - 4)
 dismissed after
 opening songs**

**Questions?
 See Jen Barlow**

3	Josh B, Deb T, Jericho H
10	Marissa and Dario C, Linnea B, David B
17	Amanda and Anthony C, Josh J, Mia C
24	Jen B, Chelsey B, Georgia B
31	Marissa and Dario C, Porter B, Jericho H



Family Music Spring 2026 – Next session in the new building!

Baby Bottle Campaign

**Mother's Day, May 10 -
Father's Day, June 21**



Caring Families
Compassion for Our Community