



## THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church  
*A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action*  
Fall 2024

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## Pastor's Page

### MEET PASTOR CAROL, PROSPECT'S MIDSTATE COORDINATOR

Greetings Friends!

For those of you who I have not yet met in person, let me introduce myself. I am Rev. Carol Bloom (Pastor Carol), Cooperative Parish Coordinator of the CT MidState Cooperative Parish and the pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Southington.

There have been significant changes for Prospect UMC (and many other churches) as of July 1st. Certainly, the change most significant and obvious to each of you is that Prospect no longer has an appointed pastor. The second change is that the cooperative parish lines were re-drawn in a number of places. Prospect UMC, Asbury UMC, and Plainville UMC joined with Cheshire UMC, Yalesville, UMC, First Wallingford UMC, Grace UMC, Middlefield Federated and the United Churches of Durham in what is now known as the CT MidState Cooperative Parish. So what does all this mean for you? First and foremost, it means that Prospect is cared for by the clergy and lay servants of the cooperative parish.

I am scheduling your pulpit supply (preaching) and pastoral care coverage. Using a combination of retired Elders and Elders in extension ministry settings, we are ensuring that you have Holy Communion each month, typically on the first Sunday. Preaching for the remaining Sundays is filled by Elders and Lay Servants. Rev. Ken Kieffer (Pastor Ken) and I are sharing responsibility for your administrative committees. Right now, he is covering Staff-Parish Relations and Finance; I am covering Trustees and Church Council. Some of that will change as of January 1st — more about that later. The remaining clergy in the cooperative parish are rotating through providing pastoral care coverage.

So, let's talk about the elephant in the room: why don't you have a pastor? The answer is both complex and simple. Prospect made a request to move from a full-time appointment to a half-time appointment. It is very difficult to find Elders who are willing to serve in a part-time setting. There are licensed local pastors who are willing to be appointed half-time but they are not subject to the same itineracy requirements as

Elders - most of them need to remain in specific locales in order to be close to their secular employers.

The other contributing factor is that we have a severe clergy shortage. So, the bad news is that you do not have your own exclusive-to-Prospect appointed pastor; the good news is that you have six Elders and quite a few lay servants caring for you.

The CT MidState Cooperative Parish is an active parish, full of active and committed lay persons. The Cooperative Parish Council meets monthly and looks for ways to build relationships between the churches in the parish. This might be through fun activities or ministry opportunities. There is also a Committee Chair Meet and Share (trying saying that three times quickly!) in which the chairs of committees from each church get together to share ideas and learn from one another (ex. the Finance Chairs will meet, the Council Chairs will meet, the SPRC Chairs will meet, etc.).

As of January 1, 2025, Prospect's committee structure will be changing. At the Church Conference on October 27, your leadership voted to move to a single-board model for the church. This alleviates some of the difficulties of a small membership church in trying to fill so many committee slots and cuts down on the number of meetings (reducing the strain on the folks serving on multiple committees). It will free up people to focus more on the true work of the church — making disciples of Jesus Christ. It will be an adjustment but we will make our way through it, trusting that the benefits on the other side are worth whatever confusion may come as we adjust.

I am enjoying meeting you and getting to know you!

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Carol



## GOD IS CALLING YOU

*"Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"*  
(Psalm 106:1, NIV)



Every Autumn we focus on stewardship; we reflect on the year and God's blessings. As Christians, we are called to be good stewards of our time, talent, and treasure, and to share these gifts to help others in the name of Jesus. We are reminded of a verse from 1 Peter: **"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."** (4:10-11, NIV). This is the time of year when we reflect on God's call to share our financial resources to maintain the ministries of Prospect UMC here in Bristol, and as part of the United Methodist Church in the world.

While there was not a half-time pastor available to be appointed to us in July, we have been blessed by our United Methodist Connection at work! We have received support from the CT MidState Cooperative Parish, retired clergy, and Lay Servants. In the words of the hymn, "I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together" (UMH 558). Even without an appointed pastor, we are still Prospect United Methodist Church; our ministries continue, and new ministries are being created!

As you consider your stewardship and participation in the ministries of the church, please think about how you would describe "What Prospect UMC means to me." We encourage you to consider writing your answer down and sharing it with us by sending it to the church office at [prospectoffice@snet.net](mailto:prospectoffice@snet.net) or placing it on an offering plate. Anyone is welcome to share "what Prospect UMC means to me" for a stewardship moment during worship.

If you would like to share, please include this desire when you submit your statement. In the coming weeks, other stewardship information and financial projections for 2025 will be shared by the Finance Committee. Please know that your stewardship is critical to the ministries of Prospect UMC. Every donation helps and your commitment helps connect people with the Love of God.

Please prayerfully consider completing a pledge card for 2025 and return it to the church office or place it in an offering plate as soon as you are able. While pledge cards may be returned at any time, a stewardship gathering and blessing of pledges will occur during the Thanksgiving Sunday service on November 24th .

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Founded 1834

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### Save the Date

Join us for the  
Annual Bristol  
Interfaith  
Thanksgiving Service  
Sunday, November 24, 7 pm  
First Congregational Church



We will come together as a community of many faiths, joined in our gratitude for each other and for the blessings we share.

A collection of non perishables food items and financial donations will be taken for Zion Lutheran Food Pantry.

## EXCITING NEWS FROM CHURCH CONFERENCE

By Susan Powers, Co-Chair,  
Leadership Board Study Committee

Sunday, October 27, saw an historic vote by Prospect church members at the Church Conference held at Grace United Methodist Church in Southington. Since March 2024, there have been numerous church-wide meetings/conversations concerning the possible change in Prospect's long-standing committee structure.

The current structure has four separate committees for Trustees, Finance, Staff-Parish and Church Council. The UMC Book of Discipline allows for a simplified structure that combines those four committees into ONE committee — a Leadership Board — handling the combined responsibilities of the four committees.

A small committee (seven members) volunteered to study and discern the benefits of the change. The committee worked with two coaches - Rev. Gene Ott and Deaconess Deb Clifford from the Simsbury UMC. Their work concluded with a strong recommendation to make the shift as soon as possible. Working through Rev. Carol Bloom (Grace UMC), Midstate Cooperative Parish Coordinator, approval for the change was granted by the District Superintendent, Rev. Alpher Sylvester.

The Committee on Nominations and Lay Development secured the names of church members willing to serve on the new Leadership Board effective January 2025. The members are divided into three classes allowing for an annual rotation for new members onto the Board. The vote taken at the Church Conference unanimously approved the structure change effective January 2025. The members of the Leadership Board will include:

- Class of 2025: Susan Powers, William Thibodeau and Jeanette Baker;
- Class of 2026: Rita Fasci, Beth Provost, Don Workman and Mary Rogers; and
- Class of 2027: Gerry Lee, Jackie Palance, Tim Krauss and Christa Zaldivar.

The Resolution to Change the Congregational Organizational Plan to a Simplified, Accountable Governance Structure is available on the church's website and in the church office.

## Faith in Action

### ■ Brian's Angels Project Update



A monthly project began in August 2024 helping the clients of Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach that meets in the lower level of the Sunday School wing. During Fellowship time on the third Sunday of each month, Prospect volunteers are making 40 sandwiches, either turkey and cheese or ham and cheese. The makings for the sandwiches are provided. Two cases of water bottles and either individual bags of chips, fruit or hard boiled eggs are also provided.

There are several ways for you to help: — sign up to make sandwiches, put a monetary donation in the basket on the sandwich-making table, or donate to PUMC's Steward's Fund. The ministry costs approximately \$80 each month.

The sandwiches and other supplies are brought downstairs to Brian's Angels. Each client is given a bag containing a sandwich, a bottle of water, a bag of chips or piece of fruit or hard boiled egg when they leave the facility.

Please consider helping this ongoing ministry. Thank you to those who have volunteered and donated to date.

## PUMC NURSERY REOPENED ON SUNDAYS

Melissa Brown, SPRC Chair

The nursery was reopened with staff as of September 8. The Nursery will have one paid staff member, Joyce Martin, plus one volunteer each week. Considerable time was spent culling, organizing and sanitizing in advance of the opening. The folding door to the restroom was replaced with a curtain rod and curtain. A damaged rocking chair was repaired by the Bristol Senior Center woodworking shop. Curtain rod, curtains and cushions were donated.

A huge thank you to those who contributed some 20 man hours in advance of the reopening. The nursery will be open from 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. on Sundays. Stop in to say hello to Joyce and to see how much nicer and refreshed the nursery looks.

And, please consider volunteering to help staff the nursery. Sign up sheet in Sessions Hall or see any member of the SPRC committee.

## Education News

from Director Christa Zaldivar

### ■ UNICEF

On Sunday, October 27, during the church service, our Sunday School students dressed in their Halloween costumes and went trick-or-treating for UNICEF! They collected \$144.33

UNICEF is an organization that works in cooperation with governments and non-governmental organizations to save and protect the world's most vulnerable children, working to ensure child rights and providing health care, immunizations, nutrition, access to safe water and sanitation services, basic education, protection and emergency relief.

### ■ Giving Sunday 2024

The PUMC Sunday School children will be hosting a collection for Zion Lutheran Church's "Meals for Neighbors" Food Pantry on Sunday, November 17th.

Please consider contributing to help the less fortunate in our local community! We will be collecting the following items:

- Cereal
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Pasta/Rice
- Sauce
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Soup



**PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
99 SUMMER STREET  
BRISTOL, CT 06010  
Dated Material - Please Do Not Hold**

**Return Service Requested**