



SAVE THE DATE!

First Church of Christ in Hartford's
**ANNUAL MEETING,
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4,
 FOLLOWING WORSHIP.**
 Important for all members to attend!



KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN JOINING CENTER CHURCH?

Shelly will be putting together an informational meeting for those interested in becoming members of Center Church in January or early February. Have you seen someone in worship who might join? Suggest they speak with Shelly!



FROM THE PASTOR

As some of you know, I am a huge Star Wars fan. Yes, my kids' names are Luke, Leah, and Ben (all Bible names, and Leah's is pronounced, but not spelled, like the Princess). So, you can imagine our family's excitement as we went to see the newest film together just before Christmas. We enjoyed it immensely, and I found it to have a depth at times that was, dare I say, *theological!*

One line in particular stood out for further reflection. The new character, Rose Tico, says "We win not by destroying what we hate, but by saving what we love." One might argue that there are things out there that need to be destroyed, all those "-isms" that continue to wreak such havoc on so many. But ultimately, I think she is right, we *win* by a focus not on destruction and hate, but on love, on saving. It strikes me that this sums up the life and teaching of Jesus in many ways. He came wielding not a light saber, but the challenge to love fully, to love enemies, to love neighbors, to focus so strongly on the difficult way of love that hate and destruction are unnecessary. This is much harder than learning to use a weapon.

As I ponder 2018 and its blank pages ahead of me, I challenge myself to focus more on love. Muscular love, as Krista Tippett likes to say, not a weak thing at all, but the strongest force on earth. Let us not turn into what we hate by letting our minds dwell on hate and destruction. Let us save this beautiful earth and the beautiful creatures who live on it by the power of love. Blessings to all of us for the new year!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse

WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY

EPIPHANY/THREE KINGS SUNDAY: On January 7, in song and story, we will remember the arrival of the Magi to Bethlehem.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WEEKEND: On January 14, we will remember the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as we share his words and consider his challenge to the church today.

GUEST PREACHER: On January 21, Shelly will be away and the Rev. Meredith Jeffers will be our guest preacher.

...and THANK YOU...

...to all who made our Advent and Christmas services such blessings! Bob and the soloists and choir! Jana, Catherine, children, parents, and all helpers with the Tableau! Deacons, ushers, and readers! Bryan, Thomas, Deckie, Larry, and Shelly who decorated! Larry on sound! The construction company for freeing up our front porch! Robin and Dennis for the crèche displays! All who helped with Advent festival! The entire church staff! Glory to God in the highest!



STEEPLE PROJECT UPDATE

As you can see, the scaffolding has been pulled away from the front entrance, but the rest remains! All the painting work is now on hold until the temperature once again rises regularly above freezing. However, we anticipate other work continuing over the next couple of months. The clock works and new bell system should be installed by mid-February. If all is well, the project is anticipated to be wrapped up sometime in April.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The good news is that we have raised over \$800,000 in pledges from the congregation and friends, including the two grants! We are ready in the new year to begin the process of reaching out to foundations and corporations, with the help of Partners for Sacred Places. The challenging news is that the projected cost of the project nears the two million dollar mark! So, if you have not yet made a pledge or gift, we hope you will! Any amount will help us as we go to outside sources, so we can say to them that 100% of our members support this project.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

February Newsletter: Thursday, January 25
2017 Annual Reports: Now (send to Marie!)
Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday



THANKS TO OUR DECEMBER COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*Jamaly Rios & family, Joe Readon & family,
and Jeff Thomas & Family*



CENTER'S PART OF HARTFORD NO-FREEZE PROGRAM

As you have heard, Center Church is the host for 5 days a week for the Triage Center for this program. That means that Wed.-Sun. each week through March, from 4-7pm, case workers meet people in need of shelter in our downstairs dining room so they can link them with safe places to spend the night and other services they may need. Our role, in addition to providing the space, is to provide a very simple meal to feed 30-40 people, using food supplied by the city (supplemented occasionally by the cooks), to be served at about 5pm. Sundays, the usual supper program provides that meal. Deckie Jeffers will keep the schedule until our new Outreach Director starts, so if you and friends (it really takes about 3 people to set up, keep coffee going, cook and serve and clean-up) want to take an evening, contact Deckie. Right now, Wednesdays are most in need of help. Thanks to David, Dennis, Holly, Deckie, Shelly, Kathryn Lewis, Catherine Maclean, Richard, Dani, Alan, Anne, and various friends and family who have already cooked and served. Ask us for more info!

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Baptisms, Births, Weddings, Joined,
Transfers, Confirmations,:

None

Deaths:

Ingrid Tangarone (12/1/17)



MUSIC & THE ARTS UPCOMING EVENT

The 12th Annual Greater Hartford Handel's Messiah Community Sing (Christmas portion & Halleluia Chorus)

Sunday, January 7, 4:00pm at the Meeting House
Singers from the Greater Hartford Area join forces with the Center Church Choir to present this Timeless Masterpiece; reception to follow.

**SOPRANO SOLOIST MICHELLE FIERTEK
LAST SUNDAY**

Our soprano soloist/section leader Michelle Fiertek will be stepping down from her position after January 14 to spend more time with her family. Please come out on January 14 to say "thank you" to Michelle for her 4 years of service to Center Church.

**THANK YOU, CENTER CHURCH
MUSICIANS!**

I would like to thank all of our Center Church Musicians - Adult Choir, Joyful Noise Children's Choir and Instrumentalists - for their outstanding and beautiful contributions to our Advent and Christmas worship services. Center Church is indeed fortunate to have such talented and committed people who enhance worship on a weekly basis. It is a pleasure and privilege to work with all of you - thank you !

~ Bob Gilbert, Director of Music/Organist

WEEKLY ASSISTANCE COLLECTION

Each week, we collect food for Hands on Hartford's food pantry. Why not pick up an extra item when you do your regular shopping? Most needed are jars of spaghetti sauce, toiletries, canned fruit, canned meat, low salt soups and meals, cereals/oatmeal.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 1/6 Gregory Norsigian
- 1/8 Richard Piatti-Rios
- 1/8 Jean-Luc Reynolds
- 1/16 Bruce Bidwell
- 1/17 Sandra French
- 1/23 Xyon Iyomi Sanders
- 1/29 Dimekwon French
- 1/29 Adalina Valdes
- 1/31 Sarah Gale



- 1/23 Kathleen & Robert Davidson

**Annual Meeting and Annual Report
at Center Church in 1917: 100 Years Ago!**

In 1917, as in other years before and after, a Year Book was published. It was a combination of the 1917 Annual Report and Church Directory. It also included information on church staff, programs, schedules, committees, and their members.

Sunday worship was at 10:30 AM, but there was also a Vesper Service at 4:00 PM, and there was a regular Thursday night meeting. The Annual Meeting was held on the fourth Friday in January. The Minister (The Rev. Dr. Rockwell Harmon Potter) seemed to be on every committee and delegation. Many of the church officers and committees were the same as we have now, but two were different. There was a Church Seating Committee. We were still renting pews as a way to fund the church budget; so, it was important that people sat where they were supposed to. Pew rentals brought in \$11,350 that year. The total church budget was about \$45,000. Another committee was Decorations. Guess what? All the members were women; whereas, the church officers, deacons and other elected committee members were men. The church program was extensive: Sunday School, four women's groups, a young people's group (50 members), a men's group, the camp on Columbia Lake, and Warburton Chapel. It appears that all these programs had committees with officers, budgets, and extensive activities throughout the year.

The Year Book contained many facts and figures about church membership, benevolence offerings, and lists of delegates to special gatherings. The most important report in this 1917 Year Book was about the Great War (WWI). 69 Center Church men were already on active duty and both the U.S. flag and the service flag were displayed on our church buildings. The Meeting House was closed to save on coal; worship was held in the Church House. The women's groups sewed for the Red Cross, and special offerings were held to support French orphans. And, of course, there were sermons and programs related to the war.

In 1917, there was an extensive restoration program at the Meeting House. It was now 110 years old and needed a new slate roof, reconstruction of the portico, and removal of the white paint which had covered the brick for nearly 90 years. There was also work at the Church House and the Parsonage. The total cost came in under the \$25,000 budgeted.

Dr. Potter was on sick leave for nearly half of 1917, and it was during this time that the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA tried to entice him westward to become their minister. He stayed another 11 years with us. In 1917, we worshipped and looked to God for strength in that time of trouble. We served those in need and supported each other. One hundred years later, we are still called to be faithful servants. While much has changed, much has stayed the same.

~ Roberta L. Roy,
Historian

CALL TO THE 385th ANNUAL MEETING

The 385th Annual Meeting of The First Church of Christ in Hartford/Center Church will be held on Sunday, February 4, 2018, immediately following Worship and the reading of the year's History.



In order to allow time for review before the Annual Meeting, the 2017 Annual Report will be distributed via email approximately one week in advance of the meeting. In an effort to become more “green,” we ask that you print only as needed. Hard copies will be available at the meeting. Upon request, hard copies will be mailed to those without Internet access. Contact Marie in the church office for more info.

NEW WARBURTON DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH

We are excited to welcome Logan Singerman as the new Warburton Director of Outreach for Center Church! Logan will begin January 15. Logan has worked for several years in different capacities for AmeriCorps/VISTA, including a year as a VISTA volunteer working at Center Church. He has also interned as a youth ministry leader at the Wethersfield UCC Church. He has worked extensively in Hartford since 2013 and has deep connections in the city. Thanks to the search committee (Dennis Morin, Holly Wells, Pat Anderson, Priscilla French, Cheryl Thomas, and Shelly), who read numerous applications and interviewed three candidates. Watch for opportunities to meet and speak with Logan as he becomes part of our ministry at Center Church!

READ TO SUCCEED SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

On January 14, our Moment for Mission will be presented by representatives of Read to Succeed, the adult literacy class that has found a home with us in the Warburton Room after having to relocate again and again for the last couple of years. They are thrilled to have such a facility, and would like to thank you personally. They would also like to acquaint you with the history and methodology of the program and to describe the impact it has had on all involved. After worship on the 14th, please walk down to the Church House and enter via the Warburton Room stairway on Lewis Street to marvel at what has taken shape in our basement, to meet some of the people who participate in the program, and to enjoy some refreshments. If you find yourself interested in volunteering at some level (reader, tutor, teacher), please speak to any of the representatives, or to Deckie Jeffers, who has volunteered with the program since 2010.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HARTFORD

A member of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

CENTER CHURCH, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, CT 06103

Church Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 4:00pm

Summer Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm

Library Hours: Wednesdays, 9:30am to 11:30am, Sunday 9:45am to 10:45am, or by appointment.

P 860.249.5631 ★ F 860.246.3915

www.centerchurchhartford.org

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.