



The First Church of Christ in Hartford

Embracing God's Presence,
Serving the City,
Building Upon Our Heritage

NEWS

Volume XXX, No.4

July/August, 2014

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,
8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Summer Office Hours:
Monday thru Friday,
9:00 am to 3:00 pm
(July thru Friday before Labor Day)

Phone: (860) 249-5631
FAX: (860) 246-3915

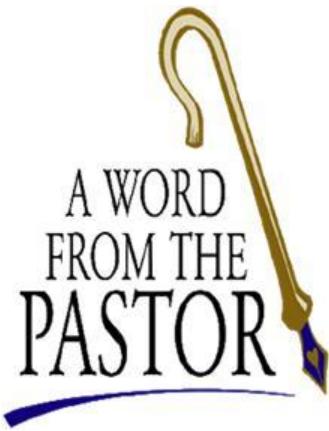
www.centerchurchhartford.org

Sunday Worship Service:
10:30am
Summer Worship Service:
9:00am & 10:00am
(First Sunday in June through
the Sunday before Labor Day)



Each Sunday through August:

9:00am Taizé Service
in the Meeting House
&
10:00am Worship Service in the
Church House's air-conditioned
second-floor parlor



Dear Family,

The sun is shining, the flowers are blooming, the breeze is warm, the garden is planted. What an amazing season, full of new life and possibilities. Would our tomatoes be as good as last year's? Would the peppers do well? I forgot to plant kale! Plenty of cantaloupe and beets.

In the midst of resurrection and the return of the beautiful hostas and perennials, we've experienced the hardest three-to-four weeks in the last two years. We said goodbye to four dear members. It has certainly been an extremely sad and difficult time for the congregation. Our hearts are heavy with sadness, still feeling the absence of Greg Sanders, Edgar French, Edward Turner, Jr. and Edmund Foxall.

Nonetheless, during these difficult times, our love and commitment became stronger. I watched as you came together with love and support time and time again. Your love for each other was palpable and overwhelming. As I think about what we have been through, my mind goes that wonderful hymn,

"Let not your heart be troubled, Christ's tender word I hear, and resting on God's goodness, I lose my doubt and fears; Though by the path God leads me but one step I may see: God's eye is on the sparrow, and I know God watches me(US)..."

"Why should we feel discouraged?" You were all a source of inspiration and strength in times of trouble and need. As we look at the summer ahead of us: **Rest in God's love and do not stay away.** In addition to our regular services, come to the Wednesday noontime concerts during the month of July. Bring your pet for "The Blessing of the Animals Sunday" on July 27th. Come to Sunday Taizé services at 9:00 a.m. in the Meeting House. Bring the children.



I would be remiss if I did not share with you that our work in the community continues. In addition to our Outreach activities, our relationship with Grace Academy is strong, and we were able to provide their graduating class with a small scholarship (*photo left.*) Fifteen out of the eighteen graduating girls went on to private high schools.

Also, I had the privilege to give the invocation at the graduation of the "Beat of the Street Academy" at Charter Oak Cultural Center last month (*photo right.*) The Beat

of the Street Academy is housed at the Center Church House. This was their second graduation. We are excited to continue to be partners in community with both Grace Academy and the Charter Oak Cultural Center.

I pray that your summer is restful. Take the time to enjoy the fruits of your gardens. Let go of those things that are obstructing your joy. Practice patience, acceptance, and forgiveness. And until we see each other again...don't forget to be awesome!

Faithfully,

(Rev.) Damaris D. Whittaker,
Minister





JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/2 Amy Salls
7/2 Douglas Lombardi
7/4 Obed Fonder
7/5 Peter Piatti-Rios
7/8 Theodore Vietzke
7/11 Bradley Boisvert
7/15 Lita Rathnam
7/18 Luciano Valles, Jr.
7/19 Elena Sanderson
7/21 Gordon Smith
7/23 Sabas Whittaker
7/24 Beverlee Sipes
7/25 Gertrude Tatro
7/26 John Chen
7/28 Samuel Chen
7/28 Joseph Lopez
7/29 Brendan St. Amant
7/31 Vanessa Nieves

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/1 Earl Sanderson
8/2 Tina Bobbitt
8/2 Jalena Diaz
8/4 Patricia Anderson
8/12 Melani Norsigian
8/12 Richard Markham
8/13 Xaniyah Sanders
8/16 Donald Gourlie
8/20 Steven Lombardi
8/24 Lisa Thomas
8/28 Lesley Thompson
8/29 Jim Oliver
8/30 William Wurts
8/31 Anthony Sanders

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/10 Nilsalynn & Reagan Wagan
7/24 George & Gladys Hernandez

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/13 Susan & Patrick Hayes
8/15 James & Mary Ellen Jacobs
8/16 J. Alan & Joan McLean
8/18 William & Kathleen Gourlie
8/20 Julie & Patrick Hurley
8/25 Thomas & Sally St. Amant

Save the date!

Outdoor Worship Service & the Blessing of the Animals
Sunday, July 27, 10:00am

+

IN OUR PRAYERS

Curtis Anderson, Marilyn Beste, Carolyn Bidwell, Debbie Downes, Robinson Buck, William Cornwall, Hulon Geter, George & Gladys Hernandez, Cecelia Jackson, William Jackson, Margo Johnson, Pamela Libby, Janice Lombardi, Scott Macomber, Christine MacDonald, Susan Parker, Anna & Jeff Rathnam, Gabriela Smith-Rosario, Sally St. Amant, Sabrina Sanders, Alicia Selders, Norman Stanley, Victoria Ververis, the City of Hartford, the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, the First Church of Christ in Hartford, and the State of Connecticut

CHURCH MEMBERS & FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Births, Baptisms, New Members, Weddings: None

Deaths: Gregory Sanders (5-24), Edgar French (5-30),
Edward Turner, Jr. (6-13)

Transferred at own request: George Francis (4-30)

Family Camp in August!

All Center Church members are invited to take part in Family Camp at Asto Wamah in August. Family Camp is a unique and treasured opportunity for the Center Church community to spend time together at Columbia Lake.

This year, the 2-weeks start at Noon on Aug. 17th and end on Sunday, August 31st at Noon. You are welcome to sign up for the entire two weeks, just a day, or anything in between. What a wonderful way to relax and enjoy the final days of summer: swimming, boating, fishing, walking the Nature Trail, reading a book, etc., all in the company of the Center Church family. For more details contact Nancy Maclean at: ntmaclean@gmail.com or call (860) 649-8614 or (860) 798-8098.

Thank You

Dear Center Church family,
I am very grateful for the scholarship that you awarded me. This money will help a lot with the large expenses of college. Thank you.

~ Tucker Salls

MUSICAL NOTES

By Jason Charneski



Summer Noontime Outdoor Performance Series: Wednesdays, during July, in the Ancient Burying Ground

I hope you will attend some or all of the programs we have on the docket for this summer's offerings on the Noontime Outdoor Performance Series. It's an opportunity to enjoy your lunch while enjoying some great music and making community! The performances will be given in the Ancient Burying Ground on Wednesdays in July, from 12:10 – 12:50 p.m. (in the event of inclement weather, the programs will be given in the Meeting House).

We will open the series on July 9 with a group from Playhouse on Park. They will perform excerpts from their current show, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. It's always good for us to make connections with other arts organizations, and we're happy to make friends with this successful outfit!

The series will continue on July 16 as we welcome back our good friend, Carlos Hernandez Chavez, and his band of musicians for a sampling of some of the wonderful folk, jazz, and dance music from Latin America. Then, on July 23, we will welcome Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker (for many years the choir's soprano section leader) for a journey through the Cole Porter Songbook. Then, the series will conclude on July 30 with a time of Americana offered by the Eastside Ramblers Dixieland Jazz Band.

These concerts are offered free of charge! So, come, make a day of it.

Volunteer Choir on August 3, 10, and 17

A volunteer choir will offer music in the 10:00 a.m. worship service on August 3, 10, and 17. This is an opportunity for anyone and everyone to raise their voices as part of a smaller ensemble. We will gather each of those mornings at 9:00 a.m. in order to learn an anthem and the day's service music.

So that I may make provision for sufficient materials, please let me know if you plan to join the group. Encourage friends to join you. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Open and Affirming: 20-Year Anniversary Events

October 24 and 26

Please mark your calendars now for what promises to be Spirit- and community-filled events on Friday, October 24 and Sunday, October 26, to celebrate Center Church's 20 years of being an Open and Affirming congregation.

On Friday, October 24, at 7:00 p.m. (tentative hour), we will present in concert Well-Strung, a string quartet (whose members are gay), that has garnered national attention for its innovative programming that combines classical, pop, show, and movie tunes around the narratives of the members' lives. Well-Strung has performed on *The Today Show* and *Good Morning, America*, and at many LGBT events nationwide.

Admission to this event will be via tickets, with a range from \$15 for students and seniors (general seating) to \$40 for premium seating. Please invite your friends to what will be an evening of good music, entertainment, and community.

(Musical Notes continued)

On Sunday, October 26, we will be honored to have with us in worship and in the pulpit The Reverend Mel White. Mel was for many years Jerry Falwell's assistant, all the while struggling with being gay, married to a woman, and a father. Mel's journey is chronicled in his book, *Stranger at the Gate*. Mel was for many years a leader of SoulForce, a group of gay and lesbian Christians who visited campuses of evangelical colleges as a means of supporting young men and women at those institutions who wanted a safe vehicle through which to come out. Most recently, Mel and his son, filmmaker Mike White (a graduate of Wesleyan University), were a team on CBS' *The Amazing Race*.

Please plan to be a part of this celebration weekend!

Congratulations, Mark!



Church member Mark Fisher celebrated his exhibit entitled *The Intimate Landscape* at the Miranda Vineyard in Goshen in May. Mark lends his diverse talents to many areas of the church, including serving on the Music and Arts Committee and the Growth & Vitality Task Force. Congratulations, Mark!

(Photo [L-to-R]: Bruce Bidwell, Van Parker, Lucille Parker, Lesley Morgan-Thompson, Alvin Thompson, Mark Fisher, and Luciano Valles, Jr.)

Bring Back Our Girls

Our church recently expressed support for the missing Nigerian girls and the #BringBackOurGirls campaign. We will hold these girls and their loved ones in our prayers until the situation is resolved.

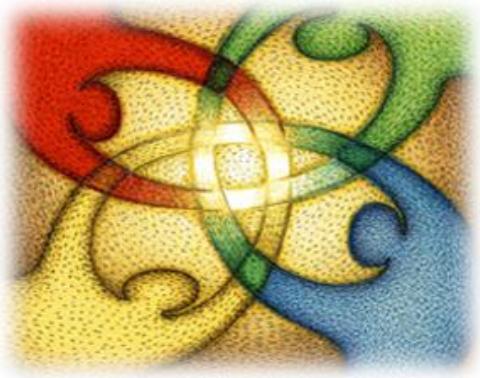


UCC Youth Revival

Our Church School youth attended a UCC Youth Revival in New Haven on May 18. All had a fabulous time and energized their spirits!



Update from the Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries



Dear Outreachers,

The past two months have continued to be filled with action, learning and growth when it comes to Center Church outreach and the needs of our neighbors.

On May 4, the “Purple People Pheeders,” a defunct Walk Against Hunger team name formerly used by Center City Churches, were revived as the Center Church Walk Against Hunger team. Altogether, 15+ members and friends of the church walked for the Purple People Pheeders, raising \$2,000 altogether. A huge thanks to everyone who walked, raised, and donated for the team, and a special thanks to my co-conspirator, Enid! We’re already planning for how we can make next year even better...

Speaking of Foodshare, I have been working on formalizing our relationship as a “Partner Agency” over the past few months and I am happy to report that as of Monday, June 23, we are now official. “What does this mean,” you ask? In so many words, it means a whole lot of good for our outreach efforts, but more specifically it means we can:

- Purchase food for our food ministries through Foodshare, at a huge discount (many items are free, this week I have ordered 80 pounds of chicken for \$0)
- Receive “credits” on our account of up to \$1,000/year
- Apply for a \$1,500 equipment grant in 6 months
- Apply for a \$10,000 “building a movement” grant in 6 months

On a different front, I have been working with my teammates from Faces of Homelessness on a side project called “Walk a Mile in My Shoes.” When completed, the project will result in a documentary film depicting the everyday dealings and barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness in the greater Hartford region. Thus far, we have filmed 7 individuals at great length, with many more interested in participating. We plan to have 16 participants altogether, with each receiving a \$25 gift card and customized “Walk a Mile” t-shirt, and it is our hope to be finished filming by the end of the summer so we can edit and premiere the film in November. While the filming process has been a tremendous learning experience, it has been working with and learning from the people being filmed that has been the best part. The project has become more of an outreach effort than a documentary project, as we are committed to supporting the people who are participating – our work with each person carries beyond the day of filming.

Lastly, our partnership with Hands On Hartford and our Saturday & Sunday outreach ministries continue to be strong. I have begun buying half & half in bulk for Sunday Coffee, so don’t be surprised if you stumble across a fridge filled with 20 cartons! A special thanks to Alvin Thompson for his work with Sunday coffee and Alan McLean for his support with Saturday breakfast, and more love to Deckie Jeffers, who has been a tremendous support as chair of outreach, and to Deb Tuthill, who recently stepped down as co-chair of outreach, but continues to be a spiritual guide.

I look forward to bringing you more good news in 2 months, especially around plans to enhance our meal offerings with services and supports... But between now and then, consider lending a hand with Saturday breakfast or Sunday coffee? Blessings to you all for everything you do.

In service,
Nate Fox,
Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries

BIBLE SUNDAY

All Church School Students will be presented with their own Bible in worship

Sunday, September 28th

If you would like your child to receive their own, new, Bible for use at home and in Church School, please contact:

jana@centerchurchhartford.net

Or Call Jana

860-249-5631 (ext. 14)

CALLED TO TEACH?

Want to grow in your faith?

Want to help kids form their spiritual foundation?

Teaching Church School is simple!

- ✓ It only requires a TWO (consecutive) week commitment
- ✓ You will be teaching in "teams", with one or two other co-teachers
 - ✓ Simple Lessons and Activities
 - ✓ Share Your Own Gifts and Talents
 - ✓ Training and Support Provided

No previous knowledge or experience required!

Just excitement, a joy for sharing God's love and willingness to try new things!

More Info Contact Jana Priestley, Director of Faith Formation:

jana@centerchurchhartford.net

Rally Day

Food, Fun, Social!



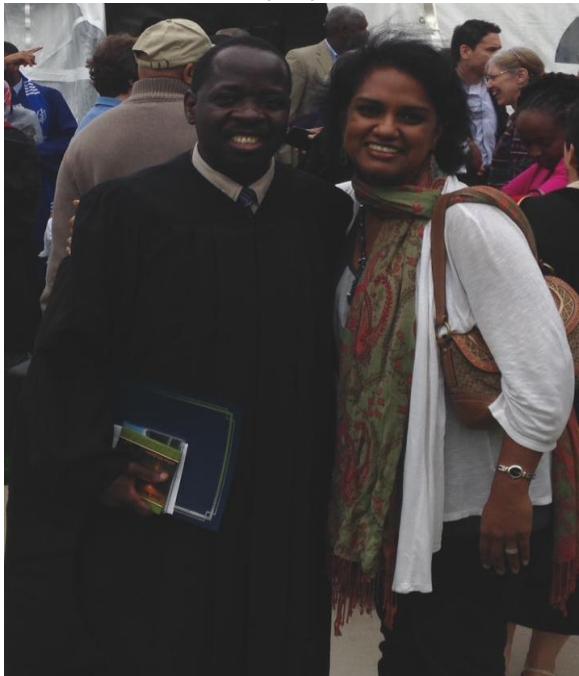
✓ Mark your calendars!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH 2014

**WELCOME BACK TO CHURCH
SCHOOL 9/14**

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE FUN!

Congratulations to Hartford Seminary student *Yakubu Jakada*, who graduated in May! Yakubu has safely returned to his home in Nigeria. Please keep him prayer.





The True Church of Christ in Hartford



and

Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc.

present

Summer 2014 Noontime Outdoor Performance Series

**Wednesdays,
12:10 – 12:50 p.m.,
in the Ancient Burying Ground**

*(in the event of inclement weather, the program
will be given in the Center Church Meeting House)*

July 9

Playhouse on Park

*Excerpts from
The 25th Annual
Putnam County Spelling Bee*

July 23

**Kimberley Parsons-
Whitaker, soprano**

A Tribute to Cole Porter

July 16

Romance Tropical

Music from Latin America

July 30

**The Eastside
Ramblers**

Dixieland Jazz

www.centerchurchhartford.org

phone: 860-249-5631



CHORAL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR THE 2014-2015 SEASON

The First Church of Christ in Hartford, Connecticut, a.k.a. "Center Church," invites interested college students to apply for positions in the Center Church Choir for the period September 10, 2014 through May 17, 2015 (*no duties required during respective academic Winter recesses*).

Up to four Warburton Choral Scholars will be named (ideally one soprano, one alto, one tenor, and one bass), each carrying total remuneration of \$2,500 for the season. Interested persons need not be music majors to apply; rather, they need to have choral or instrumental ensemble experience, the ability to read music, and a willingness to work with and learn from professional and volunteer singers.

The Warburton Choral Scholars will be expected to participate in the weekly choral rehearsal (Wednesday evening) and Sunday morning service, as well as special services, community outreach activities, and concerts that occur during the traditional semester.

For more information or to request an application, please contact
Jason Charneski, Director of Music and the Arts,
via phone at 860-249-5631, ext. 19;
or e-mail at jasoncharneski@centerchurchhartford.net.

June 5, 2014



Thanks to our Purple People Pheeders ~ Walk Against Hunger, 2014!

RESTORATION UPDATE

Following a meeting with architect Tim Brewer and construction manager John Salvatore, they will develop a reduced restoration budget to be ready in July. This will include Phase 1 - restoring the steeple and front facade only. The balance of the work on the Meeting House proper is not such an immediate priority and will be included in Phase 11 in the future.

Because we accepted a CT HRF Grant in 2008 for repair of the Meeting House plaster ceiling , we have a 15-year preservation restriction against any alteration to the Meeting House exterior.

REVISED TIMELINE:

2015

- Working with consultants to determine the feasibility of our capacity for fundraising. This could require a year.

2016

- Fundraising organization, grant applications, church solicitation and community outreach;
- Apply for CT HRF Grant by October 31, 2016.

2017

- CT Grant award January 2017. Construction start March-December 2017.

Bruce Bidwell, for the Property Committee

The deadline for the SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014 ISSUE
OF *CENTER CHURCH NEWS* is **Wednesday, August 20th.**

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Senior Minister: The Reverend Damaris D. Whittaker

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean

Director of Music & the Arts: Jason Charneski

Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries: Nate Fox

Director of Faith Formation: Jana Priestley

Librarian: Bruce Bidwell

Office Administrator: Marie Ferrantino

Bookkeeper: Charlotte Cardone

Office Assistants: Frances Burton, Rosemarie Martocchio

Sexton: Thomas St. Amant