



From the Pastor

By the time you read this, I will have been your Transitional Minister for almost a year. I want to thank all of you for being welcoming and helpful to me this year as I have tried to come quickly up to speed with the life and work of Center Church. I realize that my questions and queries may have seemed endless as I discerned my work priorities here.

One of the pieces of the spirit of this congregation I discovered early on is something most of you already know: this is actually not one congregation, but several. The congregations interact in some ways and not in others; you know each other sometimes, but not always.

There is the worshipping congregation on Sundays, which varies a little from week to week, but has a solid core of those in attendance regularly.

At the same time, there is the Sunday School congregation of children, youth, parents, and teachers led by Jana and Anne. They have a lively experience of learning, teaching, and community with one another in a separate building from the worshipping congregation most Sundays.

Then, there is the congregation of those who serve and whom we serve in mission at the Sunday dinners and the Warburton Center, led by Logan. This is a sizable group of people who are regulars at eating together and preparing meals, most of whom do not interact regularly with either the worshipping or learning congregations, with the exception of those who volunteer or come to dinner. I would include the Sunday Morning Coffee Ministry group in this congregation.

This summer, I have had the chance to interact with the Camp Asto Wamah congregation. Most of the campers and staff are not part of Center Church, though the core leadership is. Many of our Sunday School children and families attend camp at some point in the summer. With the exception of Camp Sunday on Memorial Day weekend or Camp Clean-Up Day, most of the other congregations do not interact with the Camp community.

Then, there is the congregation that the Capital Campaign Team called the "Diaspora." These are members and former members who are no longer in the area, but continue to be attached in some way to Center Church. I would include our several "shut-in" members in this group as well. Facebook has actually been an interesting way to connect with these folk.

This is now overlong, but as you think about Center Church and your place in it, consider how we actually reach farther than it might seem to whatever congregation(s) you inhabit here. Pray for us as we seek evermore to strengthen our community, that we might all be one in Christ Jesus.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister



LET'S CELEBRATE!

Our new steeple is revealed and as of this writing, the scaffolding is almost gone! Our congregational phase of the capital campaign is over with generous giving of approximately \$900,000 including the grants from Partners for Sacred Places and the CT State Historical Commission! Seems like a celebration is in order, so on September 9, during and after worship, we will have food and music and short speeches and thank-yous and guests. You will not want to miss this! Plan now to come back to the Meeting House at 10:30am on September 9!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUNDAY COMMUNITY MEALS THIS SUMMER

Would you be able to lend a hand this summer to help prepare a meal to feed those in need? Volunteers needed for June 3 and beyond! Your time commitment would be Sunday from 3:00pm till 6:30pm. Fun, fellowship, and the rewarding feeling of knowing that you've made a difference. Contact Logan Singerman to sign up!

PASTORAL CARE NEEDED? Do you or a family member need pastoral care in dealing with the impact of illness or other life concerns? Please remember to contact Rev. Shelly or the church office to arrange for a visit.



CPR/AED TRAINING RESCHEDULED

The CPR/AED Training Class has been rescheduled to **Saturday, September 22, 9:00am-1:00pm** at the Church House. The class is limited to 15 persons ~ any church member is welcome to participate. Cost: \$45. You will be American Heart Association certified for a two-year period. Contact Marie to register.

SUMMER DROP-IN CHOIR CONTINUES!

Join in! Anyone who likes to sing is invited to join our Summer "drop in" choir. No previous experience necessary! We will sing and rehearse on the remaining **Sundays, August 5 and September 2**, with rehearsal at 9:15am to sing at the 10:00am service. Any questions, please email Bob Gilbert or call his cell: (860) 966-3920.

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

At the end of June, delegates to the Connecticut Conference UCC (including Shelly and Kathryn Lewis) met with delegates from Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and voted to take the major step of combining our conferences! This process must be approved by the UCC General Synod next Summer, so it will not become a reality until 2020, but we have already begun to work together fruitfully!

In other business, the CT Conference delegates adopted resolutions condemning the separation of families at the border, recommending working together to end bullying, calling for anti-racism and racial justice training for all clergy, denouncing acts of violence, hatred and racism carried out in the name of neo-Nazi and white supremacist ideologies, and urging members to become more informed about energy infrastructure projects in their areas with a call for transparency of information. More information on all resolutions can be found at www.ctucc.org.



THANKS TO OUR JUNE/JULY COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

Efrain & Olga Agosto, Bryan Denman, Richard Jacques, Catherine MacLean, Dennis Morin & David Owens, David Reynolds, Jamaly Rios and family, Jeff Thomas and family, and Bill Warner-Proudy



UPDATES

Baptisms, Weddings,
Confirmations, Births, Deaths, Membership
Transfers: None

Joined (6/10):
Alicia Akers
Richard Jacques
Lynn Manning
Danielle Martin
Logan Singerman



PUBLICATIONS DEADLINES

September Newsletter: Friday, August 24
Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday
Sunday Bulletin: Each Tuesday

2018 CHURCH MEMBER DIRECTORIES

...are available for pick up after Sunday Worship Services during the summer months. Please consider the environment and request an e-directory by emailing Marie Ferrantino at mferrantino@cchartford.org.

SUNDAY SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Through September 2, we continue to meet each Sunday at 10:00am at the Church House (60 Gold Street) in the air-conditioned second-floor parlor. As always, free parking is available in the Travelers Plaza Garage on Prospect Street next to The Hartford Club.

WORSHIP ON FACEBOOK LIVE!

From time to time this summer, while we are in the Church House where there is WiFi, we will broadcast worship on *Facebook Live*. Go to the church FB page (The First Church of Christ in Hartford) and tune in if you can't be with us in-person!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|------|----------------------------|
| 8/1 | Earl Sanderson |
| 8/1 | Haley Reis |
| 8/1 | Katelyn Reis |
| 8/2 | Tina Bobbitt |
| 8/2 | Jalena Diaz |
| 8/4 | Patricia Anderson |
| 8/5 | Johnny Rosario |
| 8/8 | Niome Chaney |
| 8/12 | Melani Norsigian |
| 8/12 | Richard Markham |
| 8/13 | Xaniyah Sanders |
| 8/15 | Led Baxter |
| 8/15 | Danielle Martin |
| 8/19 | Rochelle Stackhouse |
| 8/20 | Steven Lombardi |
| 8/24 | Lisa Thomas |
| 8/28 | Lesley Thompson |
| 8/29 | Jim Oliver |
| 8/30 | William Wurts |
| 8/31 | Anthony Sanders |
| | ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ |
| 8/6 | Efrain & Olga Agosto |
| 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 |
| 8/27 | Thomas & Sally St. Amant |



WORSHIP TIME CHANGE?

As we continue to try to maximize the parking available to us, we are considering moving the worship time on Sundays to 10:00am so that we might more likely use spaces near the Atheneum. Staff and Deacons would like to hear from you what you might think about this change. Take a minute and drop us an email, or give us a call or talk to us on Sunday.

SERVING AT THE WROCC

On any give Wednesday or Thursday, you, as a volunteer, can touch the hearts of those who are most in need in Hartford. Cornell West referred to our guests as "The Precious Poor." Jesus called them "Beloved." It is an honor for us to be of service where we can.

What kind of problems come to us and what can a volunteer do? For example, a mom and adult daughter come in with housing needs. They were both employed in low-wage service jobs at the hospital. Sometime in the past, they both purchased their own homes, but now due to summer lay-offs and ballooning mortgages, they run the risk of losing these homes unless we can bridge the mortgage payment gap or refer them to someone who can. We do their forms and try to impart confidence while Logan does the heavy lifting.

Another example: A single gentleman arrives at the door. He has just been given his first bed in a shelter. He had lived in an empty building till that morning. However, when the building's owner unexpectedly decided to board up the windows at 5:00am, he had to escape quickly out an open window, leaving all his identifying information behind. How could he recoup his identification cards while continuing to work? Above all, he needed something as simple as a bike lock, as public buildings in general do not provide bike space. Logan knew just the right referrals to make. We filled out a short registration form, chatted, and served coffee. He left with resources and knowing one place in town that was safe and comfortable.

How can a volunteer help? Logan will show you how to fill out basic paperwork to get guests registered. In the meantime, through the ministry of relationship-building, you can try to put our guests at ease by chatting just a little with them and offering light refreshments. One guest told us "it feels like home here."

Meanwhile, Logan goes to town scoping out the right agencies, making the right phone calls to resolve eviction problems, medical resource issues, food stamp problems through Bev Peterson, dental needs, housing problems, and transportation problems; all while making it possible for our guests to solve their own problems through taking advantage of his referrals to other agencies.

As Officer Barrett described last year, "There is no other place like this in Hartford." (We served him a few cookies!) We are honored to be of help at the WROCC for two or three hours a week. Stop in and see if you would like to help also.

~ Led & Nancy Baxter

REFLECTIONS ON JUNE 9 RETREAT

Nearly fifty of us gathered at Hands on Hartford on June 9 to take some time to discern God's leading for our church. We looked back to the early church and discerned that the most important parts of church at that time were eating together, praying, sharing resources, sharing faith stories, teaching, making disciples, giving to the poor and hurting, and love, among other things. We imagined what it might be like today to start a faith community from scratch; what would we want to be sure to include? What would that community look, feel, smell, taste, and sound like? Many answers arose (some of which you can find on the "fish" in the upstairs parlor). Common themes included: Passing on the message of Jesus, Gathering with people from the community for fellowship, Teaching love, Food and Fellowship, Joyful sounds (music, laughter), Care for those in need, Acceptance of everyone, Sharing our own faith stories and how we serve God, Use social media in creative ways, Resource people to live out faith in daily life, Prayer as central, Creativity in worship, Teaching and being taught, Sharing our resources. We closed with an extended time of listening for God in silence to discern where God might be leading Center Church.

Our thoughts from this retreat will inform how we structure time and space to consider future initiatives and the basis for decision making, and you can look for an Annual Meeting in 2019 that includes some creative space to build on what we have done. You also asked for another retreat! We will look at planning something for the winter. Thanks to all who participated and the superior planning team (Rev. Shelly, Alvin Thompson, Lesley Morgan Thompson, Richard Markham, and David Reynolds.)



TEAM BUILDING PROCESS

Remember when we passed new by-laws in May? Now is the time to begin to implement them. If you have signed up for a team, you will be contacted in mid-August about a meeting for all teams together. If you have not, we are adding some teams and hope you will step forward (Personnel, Music and the Arts, Congregation Sharing [formerly Stewardship]). If you have an idea about a team, let Cheryl Thomas or someone on Prudential know. **WE ALSO ARE LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE FOUR AT-LARGE POSITIONS ON THE NEW COORDINATING EXECUTIVE TEAM!** If you are interested, contact Nancy Maclean or Cheryl Thomas.

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.

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