



The First Church of Christ in Hartford

NEWS

Volume XXVIII, No. 2

March/April, 2012



Let us Journey to Easter Together!

We will offer Lenten Services each Wednesday at 12:10pm
throughout the Lenten season.

Refresh yourself by stopping by to take a few minutes
each week to feed your Spirit!



A NOTE FROM REVEREND PAULO

Dear Friends,

Church growth has been very much on the minds and in the hearts of our church members these days. As Center Church prepares to celebrate its 380th anniversary this year, it has become clear to our congregation that we cannot keep doing business and ministry as usual. Instead, our whole church is working faithfully to embrace new ideas, to take intentional steps to implement changes and to spend quality time reflecting on the reasons why we hope and want to grow.

Socrates once said, “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*” This bit of wisdom applies not only to individuals, but also to congregations. Center Church’s aspiration and desire for sustainable, innovative, transformative and Spirit-led growth will not come to fruition until we have tested and understood what lies behind our earnest efforts at congregational growth. We have to examine, evaluate, review and understand our motivations to be a growing church so, when growth does begin to happen, we will not try to fit the new into old patterns and outdated concepts of what it means to be a mainline UCC congregation in downtown Hartford. What will make joining Center Church worth doing has to come from our honest commitment to invite people to a purpose-driven life and not merely to be part of a historic institution. When visitors come to Center Church, they have to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are serious about translating our faith in God through Christ into real opportunities for hospitality to the stranger, peacemaking, socioeconomic justice, racial reconciliation, and a passionate engagement with the city. Our outreach, our music, our ministries, our partnerships, our worship services and our communal life cannot be anything less than the manifestation of our authentic faith and love for life. After all, as St. Irenaeus of Lyons put it: “*The Glory of God is a man [a human being] fully alive, and the life of a man is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation already brings life to all living beings on earth, how much more will the manifestation of the Father by the Word bring life to those who see God.*”

In the Gospel, when the rich, young ruler asks Jesus: “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” - first Jesus tells him to look carefully at his own life. Then Christ invites the young man to break free from all that is holding him back so he may experience a life that is worth living. During this season of Lent, we will do well if we ask ourselves what is keeping Center Church from bursting into full life. Taking time to think critically about whether our intentions to grow stem from our fear of congregational decline or the ardent desire to offer the world a life that is worth living will determine our future. We cannot forget that only those who are willing to lose their lives for the sake of the Gospel will receive the gift of the new and resurrected life Christ promises. Our growth hangs on our willingness to let the old life die and to believe that a new and more meaningful one is about to emerge at Center Church as we share God’s vision for humanity with the city.

Let us go through Lent, our time of dying to the old ways and patterns, trusting that Easter is surely coming to Center Church! Alleluia!

Faithfully,

(Rev.) Paulo Gustavo Franca, Minister



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3-1 Allen Ackerman
3-2 Alvin Thompson
3-4 Gladys Hernandez
3-6 Michelle Jones
3-7 Connor James Thomas
3-9 Cheryl Sanderson
3-9 Roberta Roy
3-14 Margaret Allegrini
3-17 Julia Thompson
3-17 Olivia Otte
3-18 Maryanne Sanderson
3-27 Mary Esoian
3-29 Dorothy Tuthill
3-29 Thomas St. Amant
3-30 Jane Foxall



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3-21 Abel & Serafina Tangarone

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4-2 Susan Hayes
4-2 Katherine Markham
4-4 Luke Salls
4-5 Abel Tangarone
4-13 Tucker Salls
4-13 Ariella Wagan
4-14 Jorgette Peroza
4-15 Rosemary Arcieri
4-15 Dectora Jeffers
4-16 Nancy Maclean
4-16 Leila Sipes
4-19 Alice Norsigian
4-21 Geoffrey Smith
4-23 William Jeffers
4-23 Jade Peroza
4-24 Robinson Buck
4-25 Zachary Smith
4-28 James Thomas
4-29 Amy White
4-30 A. Harry Sanders

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

4-5 A. Harry & Sabrina Sanders

+

IN OUR PRAYERS

Carolyn Bidwell, Hulon Geter, George & Gladys Hernandez, Robert Irving, Yvonne Iuli, Cecelia Jackson, William Jackson, Elsie Kosovich, Janice Lombardi, Christine MacDonald, Diana Mateo-Perez, Pat Renfro, Madeline Simonson, Gabriela Smith-Rosario, Norman Stanley, Dorothy Tuthill, Dana Geter-Walker, 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

Thursday, March 1st, 7:00pm
Taizé Service
in observance of
World Day of Prayer
(at the Meeting House)

We're on facebook!



Remember to visit our website at
<http://www.centerchurchhartford.org>
...and "friend" us on Facebook
(we are listed as
"The First Church of Christ
in Hartford.")



*"Lord when was it that we saw
you hungry and gave you food, or
thirsty and gave you something
to drink?" Matthew 25:37*

The **Outside Coffee Ministry**

Coordinator for March is Enid Negron. Please see Alvin Thompson if you are willing to serve as the coordinator for April or May. Also, please sign up in the Green Book if you are willing to help out during March or April.

MAY/JUNE
NewsLetter
DEADLine

is Friday,
April 20th!

CHURCH MEMBERS
& FAMILY NEWS
BULLETIN BOARD

Births, deaths, new members, baptisms &
weddings: None.

MUSICAL NOTES

By Jason Charneski



Thank You!

Thank you, Center Church, for your many words of appreciation, inspiration, and kindness offered me upon completing ten years as your director of music and the arts. The rendering of “Happy Anniversary to You” after worship on January 8 was quite a surprise and the choir’s celebration on February 1 caught me off-guard. I was rendered almost speechless.

I pray that our song – the musical and artistic ways we worship and point to God – will continue to expand and strengthen in these next ten years. Thank you for the opportunities to do so.

CONCERT 1: Women Composers Festival -- Choral Concert on Sunday, March 4

The Opening Concert – choral – of the Women Composers Festival of Hartford will be given in the Meeting House on Sunday, March 4, beginning at 3:00 p.m. Major composers to be featured include Gwyneth Walker, Emma Lou Diemer, and Alice Parker. Admission (at-the-door) will be \$20 general, \$10 student/seniors. For more information, please visit www.womencomposersfestivalhartford.com.

CONCERT 2: The Jolly Beggars – Celtic-themed Program on Saturday, March 24

Join us on Saturday, March 24, beginning at 7:00 p.m. for a program of Celtic songs and dance tunes that will delight all ages. The Jolly Beggars are based in the Hartford area, most of them being recent graduates of the Hartt School who now teach music in local schools. Admission will be \$10, at-the-door; of which \$5 will benefit the Warburton Choral Scholars program of Center Church. *Please see the flyer printed elsewhere in this newsletter.*

CONCERT 3: The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross – Performed by CONTINEO on Sunday, April 1

This masterpiece of the string quartet repertory (the composer’s – Franz Josef Haydn – own reduction of the version for full orchestra) will be performed by CONTINEO, a newly-formed ensemble of recent graduates of the Yale School of Music. This performance, beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 1 (Palm Sunday), will be given amidst the glow and shadows of candlelight as the sun sets. A suggested donation of \$10 will be received at the door. *Please see the flyer printed elsewhere in this newsletter.*

CONCERT 4: Canticles for Choirs -- Two Choirs’ Concert on Sunday, April 29

The Center Church Choir and the Chancel Choir of New Britain’s South Church – in addition to preparing for their weekly duties – are rehearsing for a combined choirs’ concert. This major performance will be given Sunday, April 29, beginning at 4:00 p.m., at South Church, New Britain.

The major work on the program will be Jean Langlais’s *Messe sollonelle* for choir and two (yes, two!) organs. David Westfall will be at the “grand organ” of New Britain’s South Church, which, in this piece serves to provide important non-choral musical material, commentary, and reflection. I’ll play a portative organ, which functions to support the choral forces. Langlais was organist for many years at the Basilica of Ste. Clothilde in Paris (Charles Tournemire and César Franck preceded him).

The program also will include C. H. H. Parry’s famous setting of Psalm 122, *I Was Glad*, Welsh composer Paul Meallor’s setting of *Ubi caritas* (commissioned by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge for their wedding in Westminster Abbey on April 29, 2011), Herbert Howells’s *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis* [the “St. Paul’s Cathedral”

settings], San Francisco-based composer Conrad Susa's setting of George Herbert's paraphrase of Psalm 23, *The God of Love My Shepherd Is*, and Sir William Walton's *Jubilate Deo*. The men of the choir will sing David Hogan's setting of the ancient Greek evening hymn, *O Gracious Light*, and the women will offer Paul Drayton's setting of the medieval *Corpus Christi Carol*. In addition, I will play Herbert Howells's *Psalm-Prelude*, which uses as its inspiration the fourth verse of Psalm 23.

The choirs' combined rehearsals will begin on March 21, which will include a pre-rehearsal potluck supper in the Church House. We then will go our separate ways for two weeks in order to focus on music for Holy Week and Easter. We will connect again for combined rehearsals on Thursday, April 12, Wednesdays, April 18 and 25, Thursday, April 26, and Saturday, April 28.

This is a must-attend program! Tickets are available for purchase (\$20 preferred, \$15 general, \$10 student/senior): please see me, give me a call (860-249-5631, ext. 19), or send me an e-mail (jasoncharneski@centerchurchhartford.net). Another option is to call the Music Series at South Church at 860-224-7500. Please invite friends and family to join you for what promises to be "...a happening!"

ADULT EDUCATION SERIES: Mondays, April 30, and May 7, 14, & 21

Being Open and Affirming in the Context of Sacred Music

Many churches now reflect a diversity of cultural, ethnic, and national heritages. How might these churches honor and encourage a deepening experience of respective styles and functions of sacred music? This series will feature guest speakers – all practicing church musicians – who also have become known as leaders and educators helping to guide churches and those studying the liturgical arts into the wealth of resources that are available. This survey of styles and possibilities for their use in congregational life is educational. The schedule is printed below. All four programs will be given in the Church House.

Monday, April 30, at 7:00 p.m.

Session 1 -- The World Wide View: The Role of Music in a Congregation's Worship and Communal Life.
Presenter: Dr. Patrick Evans, Associate Professor in the Practice of Sacred Music, The Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University.

Monday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m.

Session 2 – American Views, Part 1: Latin-American Sacred Music Traditions

Presenter: Dr. Carolina Flores, Instructor of Music, Manchester Community College.

Monday, May 14, at 7:00 p.m.

Session 3 – American Views, Part 2: African-American Sacred Music Traditions

Presenter: Mark Miller, Lecturer, The Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University; Director of Music, Christ Church (UCC), Summit, New Jersey.

Monday, May 21, at 7:00 p.m.

Session 4 – Looking to the Future: Education and Encouraging New Voices

A round-table discussion with

Marguerite Brooks, Associate Professor (adjunct) of Choral Conducting and Coordinator of the Choral Conducting Program, Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University; Director of Music, Church of the Redeemer (UCC), New Haven; Director of the Yale Camerata.

Gabriel Löfvall, Director of Music Ministries, Saint Patrick/Saint Anthony Church, Hartford; Artistic Director, Joyful Noise and Gaudeamus, Torrington.

Dr. Patricia Snyder, Associate in Organ at The Hartt School, University of Hartford; Director of Music at Storrs Congregational Church (UCC), Storrs.



FAITH IN PRACTICE: THE RICH TRADITIONS OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Pamela Morrison-Wolf is a Spiritual Director and President of the Board of Directors of the Spiritual Life Center in West Hartford. She is a graduate of that institution's Spiritual Direction Internship. She holds an M.A. from Virginia Tech and a B.A. from Rosemont College, and is a graduate of Hartford Seminary's Women's Leadership Institute. Pamela is looking forward to our explorations of God's active presence in our lives, and will be leading the following **Thursday evening** program series:

March 8: **Lectio Divina**, a time-honored practice that provides you with the opportunity to reflect on the Gospel and, through that reflection, hear what God is saying to you in the scripture.

March 22: **The Examen**, a traditional assessment at the end of each day. This provides you with the opportunity to examine the events of your day and identify where you felt most grateful, creative, free and open to how God might be at work in your life. You will also have the opportunity to document the results of your examen in Spiritual Journaling.

March 29: **Spiritual Direction** affords an individual or group the opportunity to become more deeply aware of the presence of God in everyday life. The group or individual is assisted by a spiritual director, who serves as companion and guide as we explore ways to be open to God in challenging and difficult moments as well as in joyful ones.

***** All programs will take place in the Church House at 6:30pm. To register, please sign up in the Green Book or call the Church Office at (860) 249-5631. *****



Ministry of Easter Flowers

Easter will soon be here! If you would like to contribute to the "*Ministry of Easter Flowers*" in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a cherished friend or family member, please complete this form (below) and send it with a check. \$12 per plant, payable to *The First Church of Christ in Hartford*, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, 06103, **by Wednesday, April 4th**. After the Easter service, plants will be distributed to the homebound. Thank you from The Flower Committee!

Easter Flower in memory or honor of (please print):

Given by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Dr. Michael D. Fox Elementary

Main Campus
245 Locust St.
Hartford, CT 06114
(860) 695-3600

Mark Twain Campus
395 Lyme Street
Hartford, CT 06112
(860) 695-3700

Irene Coe, Principal, Email: icoe@hartfordschools.org

Linda Leyhow, Assistant Principal

Richard J. Quinn, Director of Operations

February 6, 2012

Reverend Paula Franca
Center Church
60 Gold Street
Hartford, CT 06103

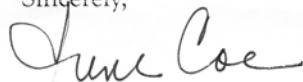
Dear Reverend Franca;

On behalf of the entire Dr. Michael D. Fox community I wish to extend my sincere appreciation for your parishioners' most generous gift of 120 cardigan sweaters. As I am certain you are aware, our school community has a significant number of families who are living day to day by a shoestring. Many have difficulty affording basic necessities. Your most generous gift of the sweaters has gone a long way toward aiding and comforting those families in need.

I am happy to report that we have taken great care in distributing the sweaters to the most needy of children in grades Kindergarten through grade 7. The children and families were extremely appreciative of your generosity.

Again, thank you for your support of the Dr. Michael D. Fox School community.

Sincerely,



Irene Coe
Principal

CENTER CHURCH

Music and the Arts

presents

THE JOLLY BEGGARS

in a program of Celtic Songs and
Dance Tunes that will delight all ages.



Jeff DesRosier



Chris Jasinski



Matt Torcellini



David Uhl



Christopher Vece



Greg Wilfrid

7 p.m. Saturday, March 24 \$10

Center Church

www.centerchurchhartford.org

675 Main St., Hartford

phone: (860) 249-5631



CENTER CHURCH

Music and the Arts

presents

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

by Franz Josef Haydn

string quartet version

performed by CONTINEO

Jae-Won Bang, violin; Jessica Park, violin;
Colin Meinecke, viola; Paul Dwyer, 'cello

7:00 p.m. Sunday, April 1, 2012
\$10 suggested donation.

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Center Church      [www.centerchurchhartford.org](http://www.centerchurchhartford.org)  
675 Main Street, Hartford      phone: (860) 249-5631