



Celebrate the Light!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

WORSHIP with NATIVITY TABLEAU, 10:30am

&

CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS, 5:00pm

Special Musical Prelude by our Center Church

Soloists starts at 4:40pm,

just prior to the 5:00pm service.

Free well-lit parking available at the Travelers Plaza Garage just 1 block east of the Meeting House on Prospect Street (next to The Hartford Club) until 7:30pm.

CHRISTMAS EVE IS A SUNDAY THIS YEAR! That means several things for the life of the church about which you will read in this newsletter. One of them involves our weekly Sunday dinner for those in need in our community. The dinner will still happen, now a little earlier (2-5) so the guests can attend our Christmas Eve service if they wish! Our dinner coordinator, Dani Soto, and her family are cooking, but could use some help. If you can, come and volunteer before you come to worship! Help some folk who really need a little Christmas to have some this year!

CHRISTMAS EVE IS A SUNDAY THIS YEAR, PART II! That means SCHEDULE CHANGE, or rather, Worship content change! **Our usual Nativity Tableau service, which usually happens in the evening, will be happening at the 10:30am SERVICE this year!** Our evening service will be a Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, with special music from our choir. Come for either or both services, and be filled with the hope and joy of Christmas.

WE NEED YOUR HELP SOON!

On Thursday, December 7, the City of Hartford will begin operating a no-freeze shelter plan that includes Center Church! On Wednesdays-Sundays from 4:00pm-7:00pm, we will be a Triage Center where those without homes can come to receive help connecting with safe and warm places to sleep as well as a meal. The meal is where you come in. We need volunteers to prepare a meal (food will be supplied) Wednesday-Saturday evenings from December to April! (Sunday dinners are already covered under our regular meal program). That's a lot of dinners! Until we hire a new Warburton Outreach Director (we hope by January), we will need someone who can lock up on Thurs, Fri and Sat. nights. **If you can help with any of this, please contact Shelly or Bill Warner-Prouty ASAP!** Thanks!

UPCOMING EVENTS!

SUPPORT A LOCAL STUDENT! July Leon is a local high school student whose Senior Capstone project involves social justice, and particularly, educating people about issues in the LGBTQI community, including the dangers of “conversion therapy.” July is sponsoring a workshop at Center Church from 9:00am-Noon on December 2, especially for church folk, and especially for straight church leaders to learn more! As part of our status as an Open and Affirming church, please support July and attend all or part of the workshop on December 2!

HEALING CHRISTMAS SERVICE DECEMBER 17: Perhaps you experienced a death in your family this year, or financial challenges, personal illness, or conflict. Perhaps the issues of the nation and world feel overwhelming, and the “fa la la’s” feel hollow, and you wonder if you can even celebrate Christmas this year. If this describes you or someone you know, join us on Sunday, December 17 at 6:00pm in the Chapel of the Church House for a quiet service we call “A Healing Christmas.” Gentle music, prayer, and healing readings will offer a balm for the soul in this service.

HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE: Once again this year, Center will host the Memorial Service for those in Hartford’s homeless community who have died. On Thursday, December 21, the longest night of the year, at 6:30pm we will gather in the Meeting House to sing and pray together. Please join us.

Night Angels and News from the Outreach Board

It was the day before Thanksgiving and the ground floor of the Church House was alive with the energy of 30 middle and high school volunteers from Hartford and environs, plus 15 adult cooks and supervisors, moms, and dads. All were preparing and serving a bounteous dinner to 114 guests in an atmosphere that rocked with the beat and the music of a volunteer DJ and his son. As one guest commented, “What do you have going here, a ‘Soup Kitchen’ or a ‘Club?’” While our guests were relaxing with snacks, pastries, coffee, and tea, they were each invited, by number, into the Warburton Room, where cold weather coats, scarves, blankets, hygiene kits, etc. were set out to “purchase” with the ticket given at the door. By 7:00pm, the place was cleaned and clear, and everyone left full, a little tired, but most importantly, fulfilled through an afternoon of shared hospitality, sanctuary, and cheer!

Also note that, between October 15 and November 19, with the kitchen/dining hall supervision of Ms. Danielle Soto, our Community Sunday Dinner program has served 269 friends and neighbors, with the help of the Newington UCC Youth Outreach Group, the Wish School Teen Outreach Program, the Connecticut Heat Girls Basketball Team, and our Center Church Faith Formation young people, along with the Rios family and friends.

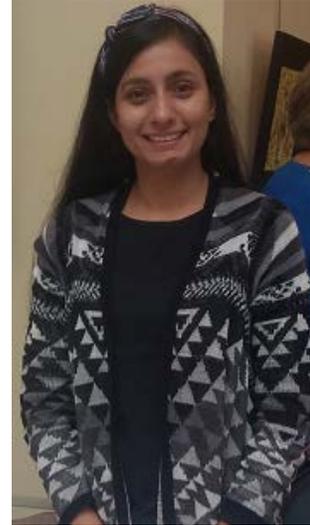
As the winter months come upon us, we hope to expand our compassionate hospitality and assistance through the Hartford No Freeze initiative and the help of a new Director of Outreach.



THANKS TO OUR FALL COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*Led & Nancy Baxter, Choir volunteers,
Mark Fisher & Luciano Valles, Jr.,
Andre Keitt, Chris & Catherine Maclean,
Catherine MacLean, Jennifer Otte, Jamaly
Rios & family, Joe Readon & family, Larry
Roeming & friends, Luke & Tucker Salls,
Bill Warner-Prouty, Jeff Thomas & family.*

MEET MEENU SHARMA!



Meenu Sharma coordinates the Beat of the Street education program held Wednesday and Friday mornings in the basement Church House dining area. Meenu was one of many representing urban outreach programs at this annual event sponsored by Hands on Hartford and held at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

Giving Tree Gifts: December 15
Ministry of Poinsettias: December 15
January Newsletter: December 22
2017 Annual Reports: December 29

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

None

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.

*Free, well-lighted parking is available at the
Travelers Plaza Garage on Prospect Street next to
The Hartford Club, just one block east of the
Meeting House. Just tell the attendant you are a
Center Church guest upon entry.*

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thanks to you, we have passed the \$500,000 mark in donations. With the \$250,000 grant from Partners for Sacred Places and \$50,000 from the State of CT Historic Preservation Office, we are now at \$800,000! Hallelujah! However, our project will cost over \$1.8 million, so we have a ways to go! As we prepare to ask Foundations and Corporate giving offices, we need to say that we have donations from nearly 100% of our congregation. If you have not yet made a donation or pledge to the campaign, PLEASE do so soon. Even small amounts make a difference. You will receive more information soon. Thank you.

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.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

12/1 Roberta Peroza
12/3 Marilyn Watson
12/4 Zuadin Gagnon-Jace
12/4 Devalin Gagnon-Jace
12/8 Jonathan Otte
12/8 Jelissa Valdes
12/8 Calvin Gale
12/9 Makayla Thaxter-Grant
12/10 Frances Burton
12/12 Clara Buck
12/13 Anne Ostberg
12/15 Pamela Haller
12/20 Theodore Ververis
12/21 Ingrid Tangarone
12/23 Norman Stanley



12/7 Roberta Roy & Bruce Bidwell
12/17 Robinson & Clara Buck



*Christmas Greetings to Center Church
in 1917 from one of our members
fighting in France during WWI.*

ADVENT FESTIVAL, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

**Come to the Church House after Worship for this
Joyous annual event for everyone!**



Make your own wreath (BYO clippers & frame)
Baked potatoes with ALL the fixings
(please bring a salad or side dish to share!)
Holiday gift shopping from SERRV
Holiday Crafts, Fellowship, Carol Sing, & much more!

YALE WHIFFENPOOFS CONCERT: A GREAT SUCCESS!



*On Sunday, November 5, we welcomed over 200 guests
for a rousing concert by the Yale Whiffenpoofs! Thank
you for your support of this wonderful event!*

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION CLASS AT 8:45 a.m.
October 31, 1517 ~ 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

For the last few weeks we have been discussing Reformation basics and the role of the Bible. Our study guide refers to the following three things as “Reformation Basics”:

1. The Sovereignty of God
2. Salvation by Grace
3. The Priesthood of All Believers

With respect to the Bible, our study guide observes that the Reformation found energy and inspiration in Scripture. In our discussion of “Sola Scriptura”, one of the questions asked in our study guide is: Do you think that Scripture is the only way to learn about God, the first and foremost way, or not a way at all?

If you are interested in learning more about Martin Luther but are unable to come to class, you may be interested in watching a PBS documentary. If you search for “Martin Luther – PBS documentary” on YouTube, you will find Part I and Part II of this documentary. Each part is approximately 55 minutes long.

For more information or questions, please contact Joe Bradley, Alvin Thompson or Bill Warner-Prouty.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS! Give a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one! The cost is \$15 per plant. Submission deadline is Friday, December 15. These plants will be given to church members and friends who are homebound. See your Sunday bulletin or call the church office for an order form.

YEAR-END PLEDGE PAYMENTS AND 2018 INFO. It is once again that time of year when we must remind you of the cut-off date for receiving your pledge payments in order for them to qualify for Year 2017 tax deductions. According to the IRS guidelines, all payments must be dated in 2017 and received or postmarked by **December 31st** for them to qualify as 2017 deductible charitable contributions. That means that **Sunday, December 31st** is the last Sunday that you can put your pledge payments in the plate and have them count for 2017. All pledges received must be **postmarked by December 31st** to be posted as received in Year 2017. As always, thank you for your generosity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE IN 2018: Beginning February 4, the Mission and Outreach Board invites members of Center Church to shop for and prepare dinner for our Sunday afternoon guests on the first Sunday of each month! That’s twelve times a year we have the opportunity to be personally involved in this important mission. We will make it as easy as possible, with a menu and shopping list up on the Website soon. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Meeting House soon. Recruit family or friends and get together a crew of 5-6 people. Our dinner coordinator, Dani Soto, and our new Outreach Director (TBA) will be there to guide you. Why should groups from other churches have all the fun?! Look at the calendar now and be ready to pick your date!

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

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us...” ~ John 1:14a