



Volume XXXIV, No. 11

NEWS! for December, 2018



+ From the Pastor +

On the front of section C of the November 18 *Hartford Courant*, a picture looking south on Main Street shows our church steeple. Next to the steeple is this quote by Christopher Swift, chairman and CEO of The Hartford: "An economic revival, however, will require everyone's efforts. Get involved by volunteering for or donating to the non-profits that are driving positive outcomes for the people they serve."

We are certainly one of those "non-profits!" And, we work closely with several others in Hartford. This is an exciting time for the city of Hartford, and we are right in the Center of it. Literally. We have the opportunity also to be at the heart of it, with a message of justice and love, caring and equality. The trick is, we are in some ways the best-kept secret in the city!

We need to be ambassadors for Center Church ~ all of us. To invite people to come and worship and/or volunteer with us at a Sunday meal or Coffee Ministry. To tell people about what happens here in Faith Formation or music or mission. To show up at rallies and marches representing Center Church's values.

Our theme for our all church retreat next year is "Dream Big, Dream Specific!" Start imagining now how we can be not only two buildings at the geographical center of Hartford, but also a congregation deeply at the center of making this city, and our world, a just, caring, loving place, as Jesus calls us to do.

Advent is a great time to make Center Church and its events visible in the community. Bring friends and neighbors. Don't be shy about talking about why you love your church. Let your and our light shine!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse

~~P.S. ~ Please join me for a casual Christmas Open House at my apartment, 5 Whitman Court, on Sunday, December 16 from 2:00-4:00pm. (cancelled)~~



**CALLING CHRISTMAS
 COOKIE BAKERS!**

Our annual Christmas Nativity Tableau will be on **Sunday, December 23 during our 10:30am service!** Following worship, the Worship Team would like to have a Christmas Cookie Potluck for our hospitality time! If you have a favorite cookie, please bring a dozen or so, and we will share them with one another! If you can, bring the recipe as well so people can see what is in them. Thanks!

BUDGET MEETING RESULTS

The 35 people gathered for our Annual Budget Meeting passed the budget for 2019. Details are available from the church office for those who missed the meeting. The budget has a shortfall of just under \$100,000. At the meeting, we were all called to wrestle with where this money will come from. Please share your ideas with the CET, and if you have not yet made your 2019 pledge, we hope you will do so before the end of the year!



THANKS TO OUR NOVEMBER COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*Terrence & Priscilla French & family,
Richard Jacques, Jamaly Rios & family,
and Jeff Thomas & family*

COATS, HATS, AND GLOVES STILL NEEDED!

We are trying to build up a supply of coats, hats, and gloves which we can distribute at Coffee Ministry and also through the WROCC during the week. Can you pick up a hat and/or gloves to add to the collection? Thank you!



POINSETTIA MINISTRY

Would you like to help decorate the Meeting House for our Christmas celebration by purchasing a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one? Poinsettia order forms will be included in the first two December bulletins, as well as linked to our weekly Thursday *E-News* mailings. You may also contact the office to request a form. Please note that the submission deadline is Friday, December 14th.

SECURITY TRAINING

On December 4, members of our staff, Worship Team, choir, and Coordinating Executive Team (along with leaders from Immanuel, Asylum Hill, and Faith UCC Churches) will receive training in dealing with Active Shooter emergency situations. While no one wants to think we need to do this, recent events have made us feel it is prudent. We are thankful to Officer Mike Chauvin of the Hartford Police Department for his help. We will let you know who has had this training so that you may look to them for leadership in any emergency situation in our church buildings.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

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

Wedding: Logan Singerman &
Danielle Martin, November 3



DECEMBER WORSHIP EVENTS

December 2: *First Sunday of Advent:* Advent Festival after Worship service

December 9: *Second Sunday of Advent:* Learning how to Fill the Manger.

December 16: *Third Sunday of Advent:* The choir shares the Saint-Saens *Christmas Oratorio*

December 23: *Fourth Sunday of Advent:* Our Annual Christmas Nativity Tableau in our morning worship service! Cookie potluck to follow.

December 24: Christmas Eve Worship Service, 5:00pm (free parking @Gold Building Garage until 7:30pm sharp!)



PUBLICATIONS DEADLINES

January Newsletter: December 20

Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday

Sunday Bulletin: Each Tuesday

Celebrations

- 12/1 Roberta Peroza
- 12/3 Marilyn Watson
- 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
- 12/23 Norman Stanley



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



OUTREACH NEWS: THANKSGIVING WEEK

We had a busy thanksgiving week here at Center Church! On 11/17, we partnered with Night Angels to deliver turkeys and other Thanksgiving dinner items from Foodshare to 50 families in the greater Hartford region. On the following Saturday, Night Angels and a team of 15 volunteers collaborated with Center Church to put on their 5th Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner, which included music from a live DJ, participation in a gift card raffle, and distribution of winter clothing items. One of the volunteers who came was a girl in elementary school. She started a club at her school called *The Caring Club*. Every month, she and some friends find an opportunity to care for their community. For this month, we and all of the guests got to benefit from their generosity. If you are looking to be part of the Center Church "Caring Club," see items needed listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

STILL TIME TO PLEDGE

If you are involved in/affected by/dedicated to any part of this church's life, we need you to pledge your financial support to make sure we can continue to serve in these important ways. Music lovers and makers; Faith Formation participants, worship attenders; those with a heart for mission! We have heard from less than half the membership to date. Have we heard from you? If you lost your pledge card, contact the office or go to the website to pledge online!

YEAR-END PLEDGE PAYMENTS

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 2018 tax deductions. According to the IRS guidelines, all payments must be dated in 2018 and received or postmarked by **December 31st** for them to qualify as 2018 deductible charitable contributions. That means that **Sunday, December 30th** is the last Sunday that you can put your pledge payments in the plate and have them count for 2018. All pledges received must be **postmarked by December 31st** to be posted as received in Year 2018. As always, thank you for your generosity.



Christmas Oratorio

by C. Saint Saens

Sunday, December 16

at

Worship, 10:30 AM

ADULT FAITH FORMATION OPPORTUNITY:

Come, Lord Jesus!

Sundays, December 2, 9, 16, & 23

8:45am at the Church House (1st-floor parlor)
We will use the UCC's 2018 Advent Devotional.
Contact Pastor Nada for more info!



**My Neighbor's Tree*

by Steven Garness-Holmes

All summer my neighbor's tree offered its leaves
And the summer sun filled it with light
Then it offered itself makes
And the moon filled it with light.
Now my neighbor sets up a ladder
And fills the tree with light.

Fill me, God,
In whatever way you will.

~ November 26, 2018 entry

In this season of light and expectation, trees often become a more central part of our awareness...we notice their structure and shapes without their leaf cover; we decorate them and light them up with all sorts of bright and shining items: ornaments, strings of lights that blink or share colors or just that brilliant white. Don't ask too much of yourself this Advent season. Look for the trees which are all around you (said this lover of trees). May you seek for God's "filling" and marvel at the possibilities which come to those who wait and watch and get to be filled to overflowing with the peace that the world cannot give.

~ Pastor Nada,
Acting Director of Faith Formation
*Found at www.unfoldinglight.net



Spiritual
Direction

Have you considered spiritual direction to enhance your faith journey? To learn more, contact the Church Office or email info@cchartford.org.

SAVE THESE 2019 DATES!

March 2: Follow-up All-Church Retreat: *Dream Big, Dream Specific* (snow date: March 9)

March 24: Annual Meeting of Center Church: Elections, Program Planning

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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Meeting House Photo on cover page: The Rev. Rochelle A. Stackhouse