

# NEWS

Volume XXIX, No. 1

January/February, 2013

**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](http://www.centerchurchhartford.org)

Sunday Worship Service:  
10:30am

Summer Worship Service:  
10:00am

(Early June through the  
Sunday before Labor Day)

The Center Church Staff  
wishes you  
and your loved ones a

**HAPPY & HEALTHY  
NEW YEAR!**

**2013**



# From the Minister

Dear Family,

“*Life is a journey.*” We often say these words as we ponder the many changes that life brings our way. Certainly, we experienced the transitional elements of a journey here at Center Church last year. But, how wonderful it is to start this year with a heart full of gratitude, and a hopeful outlook to what will come this year. In Puerto Rico, people use an expression, “Borron y cuenta nueva.” It literally means “*erase and start a new account.*” It alludes to a fresh start or a clean slate. So, we are starting anew!

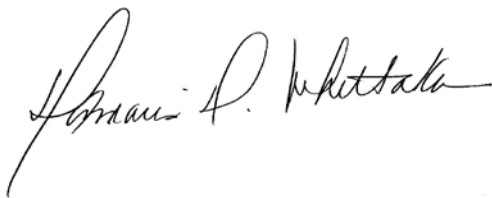
If the Advent and Christmas season are any indication of what is to come, I am excited about our possibilities. The Advent Festival was the most-attended festival in over five (5) years. *Lessons and Carols* was an expression of our excellence and talents. The Christmas Eve Tableau Service tripled in attendance from last year, and *First Night* was a “blow out,” with Center Church being one of the best, if not *the* best, venues, with excellent performances and large audiences.

As we all know, 2013 presents many challenges to us, but we are already embracing them with grace and enthusiasm. We are working diligently in strengthening our Christian Education Ministries. The Adult Education Class will receive two special lecturers this season. The Outreach Committee is expanding the Community Breakfast to three Saturdays per month. Growth and Vitality has wonderful plans ahead. The library is being revamped with new books and materials. We will receive our consultants from *Holy Cow Consulting* this month with their findings and recommendations. We are moving in full force with the Grace of God!

We often wait for what God has in store for us. But this year, I invite us to consider -- what can we give to God? What are our gifts, and are we willing to use them for God’s service? In the past four months, I have been so inspired by the commitment of so many of you to the work of this church. I thank God every day for the opportunity to serve a community of faith who cares about each other and the community around them. I invite those of you who may be thinking about involvement possibilities to surrender your gifts to God. They will be well received in this community, and God will multiply them as we continue to grow.

May the year 2013 be a year of peace, transformation, commitment, and growth for you, your family, and our beloved Center Church.

Feliz Año Nuevo,



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## With Gratitude...

- ❖ **THANK YOU** to all of our volunteers who assisted at November’s Community Meals: Joyce & Harold Buckingham, Dennis Morin, Erda Koehn, Enid Negron, David Owens, Rebecca Richards, and Reverend Damaris!
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## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan 6 Gregory Norsigian  
Jan 8 Richard Piatti-Rios  
Jan 16 Bruce Bidwell  
Jan 17 Sandra French  
Jan 23 Xyon Iyomi Sanders  
Jan 31 Sarah Gale

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Feb 4 Josephine Newell  
Feb 6 Mark Fisher  
Feb 11 Paul Bobbitt  
Feb 20 Jonas Otte  
Feb 25 Peter Fairbairn  
Feb 27 Curtis Anderson  
Feb 27 David Maclean

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Jan 23 Kathleen & Robert Davidson

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 4 Richard & Sara Markham  
Feb 18 David & Nancy Maclean  
Feb 21 Van & Lucille Parker

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## IN OUR PRAYERS

*Curtis Anderson, Mary BeBisio, Carolyn Bidwell, Robinson Buck, Riet Buma, David Cruz, Rabbi Stephen Fuchs, Hulon Geter, George & Gladys Hernandez, Mary & George Howell; Robert Irving, Cecelia Jackson, William Jackson, Pamela Libby, Janice Lombardi, Christine MacDonald, Diana Mateo-Perez, Lincoln & Debbie Rathnam, Madeline Simonson, Gabriela Smith-Rosario, Sally St. Amant, Sabrina Sanders, Norman Stanley, Jeffrey Thomas, 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*



## 2012 ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Calling all board and committee chairpersons! Kindly submit your 2012 Annual Report **by Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Please submit your report electronically to Marie Ferrantino, Office Administrator, at [marie@centerchurchhartford.net](mailto:marie@centerchurchhartford.net). Thank you!

## CHURCH MEMBERS & FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Births, New Members, Weddings: None.  
Deaths: *Shepherd Holcombe, Sr.* (November 28),  
*Patricia Renfro* (January 3)  
Baptisms: Jesse Sipes (November 11)

**TRUE COLORS HOLIDAY POTLUCK**  
**SATURDAY, JANUARY 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**1:00PM-5:00PM**  
**at the Church House**

*All are welcome to attend and volunteer!*  
*Please contact Deborah Tuthill for details.*



*We got an "A" !*

The City's Board of Health has awarded the Church House's downstairs kitchen an "A" rating for cleanliness! Our thanks to all of you who share the kitchen for our Community Breakfasts, Potlucks, and other events for keeping us clean and neat as a pin!

**Our Newest CD recording!**  
**Canticles for Choirs**

**The Choirs of Center Church, Hartford,  
and South Church, New Britain,  
recorded live in concert on April 29, 2012.**

**Jason Charneski and Richard Coffey, conductors  
David Westfall and Jason Charneski, organists.**

**I Was Glad – Parry    Jubilate Deo – Walton  
The God of Love My Shepherd Is – Susa  
Psalm Prelude: Psalm 23: 4 – Howells  
Messe Solennelle – Langlais  
Hymn: God Is Love! Let Heaven Adore Him – Rees/Taylor  
Ubi caritas – Duruflé    Corpus Christi Carol – Drayton  
O Gracious Light – Hogan  
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (St. Paul's Service) – Howells**

**\$ 12 for one, two for \$ 20.**

**Please see Jason Charneski to purchase CDs.**

**CALL TO THE 380<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

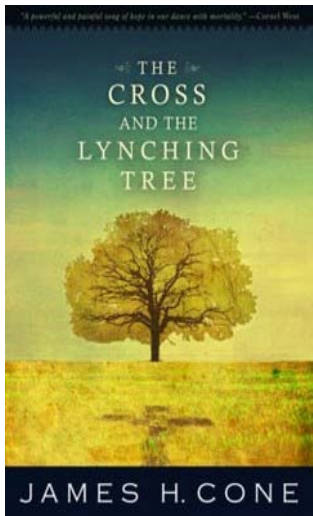
The **380th Annual Meeting** of The First Church of Christ in Hartford/Center Church will be held on Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 immediately following a Potluck Luncheon and the reading of the year's History.

The purpose of this meeting is:

- to receive and act on reports and a proposed 2013 budget;
- to elect officers and leaders for the coming year; and
- to transact any other business to come before the meeting.

~ Kathleen Gourlie,  
Clerk

# NEW SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES!



Classes meet at 8:45 a.m. in  
the Church House Parlor

**NEW SERIES BEGINS  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 6!**

**"The Cross and the Lynching Tree"**  
Led by The Reverend Edwin Ayala

"The Cross and the Lynching Tree" is written by James H. Cone, Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, who is widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians in America.

Bill Moyers has written about this book:

*"Once again James Cone demonstrates why he is indispensable as an interpreter of faith, race, and the American experience. Growing up in the shadow of the lynching tree, he reminds us how that darkness falls across our political and cultural landscape today – and how, nonetheless, there is redemption in remembrance."*

The schedule is as follows:

January 6: Introduction and Chapter 1.  
January 13: Chapter 2  
January 20: Chapter 3  
January 27: Chapters 4 and 5

If you have any questions, please see Alvin Thompson. Also, if you would like a preview of what is in the book, you can find Bill Moyers' interview of Professor Cone on the PBS website.

*(continued on next page)*



**February 3 and 10, 2013**

## **Continuation of "You Are Accepted"**

On December 16, as part of "The Great Sermons" series, we discussed "You Are Accepted" by Paul Tillich. In the course of our discussion, we identified several interesting questions, which we did not have time to discuss. We will discuss those questions on February 3 and 10. Tillich wrote the following about grace striking human beings:

*"Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: "You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know.*

*Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted!" If that happens to us, we experience grace. After such an experience we may not be better than before, and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed. In that moment, grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement. And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual presupposition, nothing but acceptance."*

Please join us as we discuss the challenges and the implications of simply accepting the fact that you are accepted.

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**February 17 through March 24, 2013**

**Lenten Epistle: Studies in Paul's Letters**

**Led by Dr. Efrain Agosto**

**Professor of New Testament Studies,  
New York Theological Seminary**

This bible study series will explore the six lectionary passages from the Apostle Paul's Letters to the Romans, Philippians and Corinthians, respectively, that are being offered during this Lenten Season. The connection between Paul's teachings about Christ and our preparation for Lent and Easter will be the focus of our careful analysis of and dialogue about Romans 10:8b-13; Philippians 3:17-4:1; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Philippians 3:4b-14; and Philippians 2:5-11. Come ready to read and study together these well-known and not so well-known passages of Pauline theology and ministry.

## THE LIBRARY CORNER

Some notable books for 2012 from the *NY Times* purchased by the Center Church Library. These books may be borrowed for up to one month. Enjoy!

Library hours are: Wednesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM and Sunday 9:30 – 10:15 AM.

**Fiction** (synopses from the *NY Times* "Book Review" 12/2/12)

1. **AN AMERICAN SPY** by Olen Steinhauer (Minotaur): "In a novel vividly evoking the multilayered world of espionage, Steinhauer's hero fights back when his CIA unit is nearly destroyed."
2. **FLIGHT BEHAVIOR** by Barbara Kingsolver (Harper/HarperCollins): "An Appalachian woman becomes involved in an effort to save monarch butterflies in this brave and majestic novel."
3. **GATHERING OF WATERS** by Bernice L. McFadden (Akashic): "Three generations of black women confront floods and murder in Mississippi."
4. **SILENT HOUSE** by Orhan Pamuk, translated by Robert Finn (Knopf): "A family is a microcosm of a country on the verge of a coup in this intense, foreboding novel, first published in Turkey in 1983."
5. **THE TESTAMENT OF MARY** by Colm Toibin (Scribner): "This beautiful work takes power from the surprises of its language and its almost shocking characterization of Mary, mother of Jesus."
6. **THE YELLOW BIRDS** by Kevin Powers (Little, Brown & Company): "A young private and his platoon struggle through the war in Iraq but find no peace at home in this powerful and moving first novel about the frailty of man and the brutality of war."

### Nonfiction

7. **BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL FOREVERS: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity** by Katherine Boo (Random House).
8. **COMING APART: The State of White America, 1960 – 2010** by Charles Murray (Crown Forum).
9. **DARWIN'S GHOSTS: The Secret History of Evolution** by Rebecca Stott (Spiegel & Grau).
10. **FAR FROM THE TREE: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity** by Andrew Solomon (Scribner).



11. **HAND IN HAND: Ten Black Men Who Changed America** by Andrea Davis Pinkney (Disney-Jump At the Sun). Children – Middle Grades.
12. **KAYAK MORNING: Reflections on Love, Grief, and Small Boats** by Roger Rosenblatt (Ecco/HarperCollins).
13. **LITTLE AMERICA: The War Within the War for Afghanistan** by Rajiv Chandrasekaran (Knopf).
14. **ODDLY NORMAL: One Family's Struggle to Help Their Teenage Son Come to Terms With His Sexuality** by John Schwartz (Gotham).
15. **ON A FARTHER SHORE: The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson** by William Souder (Crown).
16. **ON SAUDI ARABIA: Its People, Past, Religions, Fault Lines – and Future** by Karen Elliott House (Knopf).
17. **THE PASSAGE OF POWER: The Years of Lyndon Johnson** by Robert A. Caro (Knopf).
18. **THE PATRIARCH: The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy** by David Nasaw (Penguin Press).
19. **THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE: My Climb Out of Darkness** by Karen Armstrong (Knopf).
20. **THOMAS JEFFERSON: The Art of Power** by John Meacham (Random House).
21. **WHEN GOD TALKS BACK: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God** by T. M. Luhrmann (Knopf).

*We continue to hold in  
prayer everyone affected  
by the Sandy Hook  
Elementary School tragedy  
on December 14.*

