

Volume XXXV, No. 1

NEWS! for January, 2019



+ *From the Pastor* +

You will read this after the new year, but I am writing this a few days before Christmas. I am acutely aware every year at this time what a gift I have in my co-workers here at Center Church. I want you to be aware as well of all that your staff here do to serve God in ministries of many kinds here at your church. For example, in order for our worship services to happen each week, Tom and Ileia clean both buildings and make sure everything is in order, and Tom is in the Meeting House every Sunday to help people use the lift or deal with last-minute emergencies. Logan makes sure there are supplies for the Coffee Ministry on our front steps and connects with people in need who show up nearly every Sunday at our services. Nada has worked with teachers to prepare our faith formation program for our children and teens. Marie has laid out and printed the bulletins and any extra materials, and communicated with our reader and other leaders. Monique sits in the office of the Church House to open the door for all coming for the Indian Church's worship and our children. Bob has worked with the choir and practiced his organ or piano music or arranged with extra soloists for the music of worship. Charlotte processes the contributions that come in and keeps the books so we keep the lights on. And I have worked with Bob beginning weeks before any Sunday to plan the service and then implement those plans. In the midst of it all, we try to stay open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. And we rely on help from the Worship Team, Faith Formation Team, Resource Team, and you as you volunteer to be part of the service in some way.

No Sunday morning "just happens." Take a moment, as you reflect on the variety of wonder that our Advent and Christmas services brought, to say thank you to **all** who had a part in it. To the glory of God and the love of all of us.

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,  
Transitional Pastor



**NEW MEMBER  
INFO SESSION!**

Are you, or is someone you know, interested in officially becoming a member of Center Church? Shelly will be holding an information session for those considering membership on Sunday, January 27 following worship. As you talk to our visitors, remember to invite them to become members!

## THANK YOU!

To all of you who gave of your time, talent and love to make our Advent and Christmas celebrations so meaningful. Staff, musicians, teachers, students, readers, ushers, cookie bringers, decorators, poinsettia contributors, general helpers: you brought blessings!

## PAT ANDERSON MEMORIAL SERVICE

We will remember long-time Center member Pat Anderson in a memorial service on Sunday, January 20 at 1:00pm at the Meeting house, with a reception to follow at the Church House.



## STAFF & LEADERS TAKE ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING

We want to let you know that our staff, Cheryl Thomas (Moderator), and Bill Warner-Prouty (choir) joined staff and members of Asylum Hill and Immanuel UCC for a session with a Hartford Police Officer to learn about what to do if an active shooter incident happened at our church. The time was exceedingly helpful. Without wanting to alarm anyone, we do want you to know a couple of things we learned that are critical to saving lives.

- The most important thing to do is to get out of the building if at all possible. Do not think that hunkering down is ever a good idea, especially in the Meeting House.
- Use your cellphone ASAP to call 911; don't assume someone else has.
- If you must shelter in place, turn the sound off on your cellphone so your position is not given away by a call.
- When you exit the building, go to either the Church House or the Meeting House (the opposite building from where you are) so all may be accounted for. If police are there, raise your hands and do not hold anything in them. Leave all items behind. Only take phone if you can put it in your pocket.
- Assist children and those with movement difficulties if at all possible.

If you would like to know more of what we learned, please speak with one of us. Despite the constant news making it seem this happens every day, it is still a rare occurrence in a church. However, there is power in being informed.



## THANKS TO OUR DECEMBER COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*Led & Nancy Baxter, Catherine MacLean,  
Richard Jacques, Anne Ostberg,  
Jeff Thomas & family, and  
Alvin Thompson and Andrew Thompson.*

## WE NEED EVERYONE TO COME: MARCH 2 ALL-CHURCH RETREAT!

To our second All-Church Retreat: *Dream Big, Dream Specific!* Saturday March 2 from 9:00am-1:00pm (lunch included) at Newington UCC Church. There will be a stimulating children's program at the same time and place. We were charged at last year's Annual Meeting to bring some big ideas to the table by 2019's Annual Meeting (which will be March 24). We need every single member and friend of Center to discern the work of the Spirit among us as we shape the future of Center Church in every aspect of its life. We need you! Put it on your calendar now!



## MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Baptisms, Confirmations, Births,  
Membership Transfers, Joined,

Weddings: None

Death: Patricia Anderson (11/30)



## PUBLICATIONS DEADLINES

*February Newsletter: January 24*  
*2018 Annual Report: February 15*  
*Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday*  
*Sunday Bulletin: Each Tuesday*



- 1/3 Sierra Cicero
- 1/6 Gregory Norsigian
- 1/8 Jean-Luc Reynolds
- 1/16 Bruce Bidwell
- 1/17 Debra Rucker-Grumley
- 1/17 Sandra French
- 1/23 Xyon Iyomi Sanders
- 1/29 Dimekwan French
- 1/29 Adalina Valdes
- 1/30 Nataliya Cicero
- 1/31 Sarah Gale
- ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥
- 1/23 Kathleen & Robert Davidson

### OUTREACH NEWS: ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

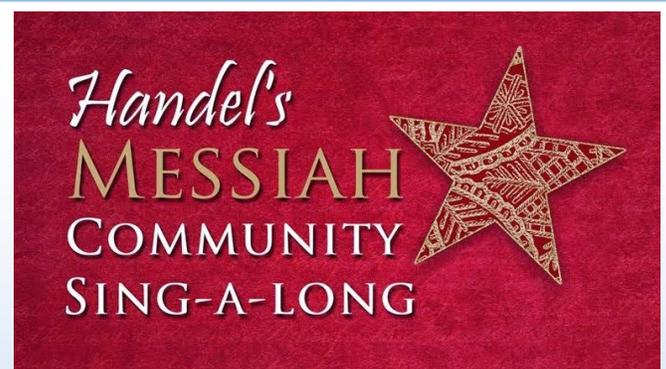
"Giving Tuesday" came and went, a day where many people make year-end contributions towards organizations creating change. Our Outreach Committee had a Giving Wednesday at Panera Bread where we decided to donate a little over \$4,000 towards numerous organizations. In an era where borders are being shut down and families separated, we are contributing towards *CT Students for a Dream* which helps undocumented students access higher education, and *Unidad Latina en Accion*, which fights for immigrant rights and helps provide sanctuary for people in danger of deportation. In an era where some are calling for isolation, we are giving globally. We contributed towards the *EfforTZ Foundation* which will allow Nekoko, a 17 year-old girl in Tanzania to finish her last year of high school, and to *Church World Service* and their work to create safe spaces for the LGBTQ community in Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa. Understanding the issues members of the LGBTQ can face in our own country, we are also contributing towards *True Colors* and their powerful work with LGBTQ youth. We are giving to other organizations that also support Hartford families. We are supporting *Family Life Education*, which provides families with education and resources that lead to healthy families, as well as *Hands on Hartford* which helps support our neighbors fighting food, housing, and economic insecurity. Finally, we are supporting the *Christian Activities Council* and their grassroots efforts to work with Hartford residents to address the injustices they face, knowing that we are not only called to acts of charity, but also justice. May this help result in a more compassionate and just world!

### CHURCH HOUSE KITCHEN DEEP CLEANED!

Many thanks to Logan Singerman, Kyle Singerman, Scott Singerman, Catherine Maclean, and John Border for an amazing accomplishment of doing a deep clean of our kitchen before our re-certification visit. That kitchen is central to our work of loving our neighbors. Remember, we are responsible for the meal there the first Sunday of every month; contact Logan and let him know you'd like to help out in this clean kitchen to cook for our hungry neighbors.

### ARE YOU A FLUENT, OR EXCELLENT, SPANISH SPEAKER?

The New Sanctuary Coalition Caravan (<https://www.sanctuarycaravan.org/>) is seeking Spanish speakers to come to the border to assist the hundreds of immigrants and asylum seekers as they wait to navigate the slow and difficult process of seeking to come to the US under the current crisis at the Mexican border. If you don't speak Spanish, you can donate to the efforts! Check out the website!

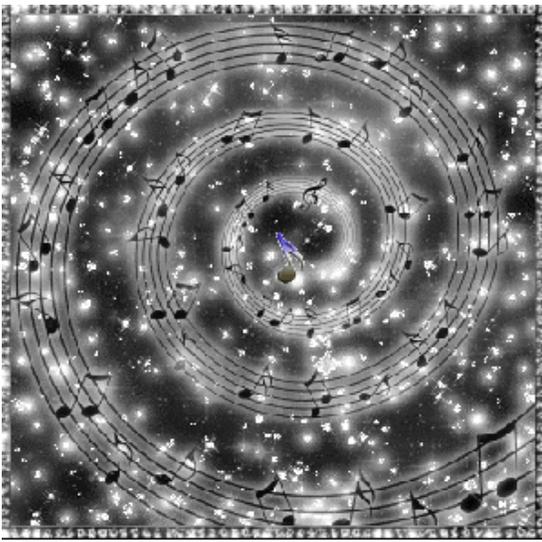


**Thirteenth Annual Handel's  
Messiah Community Sing  
Sunday, January 6 at 4:00pm**

**~ All are welcome! ~  
Free parking at the Travelers' Plaza  
Garage (Prospect Street.)**

### 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Since our next Annual Meeting will not take place until Sunday, March 24, the 2018 Annual Report will not be published until early March. Please email your annual report to Marie by Friday, February 15.



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### SAVE THE DATES!

January 20: Worship Service with reflection on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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

March 6: Ash Wednesday/Lent begins

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

*A seed knows how to wait.  
A seed is alive while it waits.  
Each beginning is the end of a waiting...*

- Hope Jahren in *Lab Girl*, page 30, 31

I must confess that I have never been very good at waiting... I am the eldest of three daughters, and my mother and grandmother used to tell me how I started walking before my ninth month of life, and once I got started, my spindly little legs used to take me EVERYWHERE and very fast!

Decades of wear and tear have slowed me down a bit, but that's not the only thing that has persuaded me to pause, and to linger, in waiting. When you get right down to it, there's a whole bunch of waiting in life: waiting for your name to be called, waiting for transportation, waiting for events to begin, waiting in line, waiting for the chance to act and to be a part of change, waiting for someone else, like picking up the kids.

There's also the waiting for graduation, the waiting of an engagement, the waiting in relationships past and emerging, the pregnant waiting for new life, or new opportunities, the waiting for the Spirit's prompting and the waiting to end the waiting with a new beginning! See what I mean?

The waiting of Advent, which is unfolding into Christmastide, brings the revelation of Jesus, fully enfleshed, calling all of us to the end our lively waiting, because there is a new beginning! What does that beginning look like for you and for our church? How will we continue forward, together?

~ Pastor Nada,  
Acting Director of Faith Formation



### Spiritual Direction

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

### NEW YEAR NEW LOOK!

Be on the lookout: We will unveil our new church logo soon, and begin a reworking of our website early this year!

## *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, 10:00am-Noon, or by appointment.

P 860.249.5631 ★ F 860.246.3915

[www.centerchurchhartford.org](http://www.centerchurchhartford.org) ★ [info@cchartford.org](mailto:info@cchartford.org)

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