

NEWS

Volume XXXII, No. 4

July/August, 2016

**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

Sunday Worship Service:
10:30am

Summer Worship Service:
Taizé, 9:00am &
Traditional, 10:00am
(First Sunday in June through
the Sunday before Labor Day)



July:

Taizé Service (readings, chant, & silence)
at the Meeting House, 9:00am;

Traditional Worship Service

at the Church House, 10:00am
(60 Gold Street, 2nd-floor parlor [air conditioned])

August through September 4:

Open Door at the Meeting House (prayer and
meditation), 9:00am-9:45am;

Traditional Worship Service

at the Church House, 10:00am
(60 Gold Street, 2nd-floor parlor [air conditioned])

**Come & worship!
All are welcome!**

“May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world...for I carry the marks of Jesus branded in my body.” ~ Galatians 6:14, 17b



Dear Friends,

Happy Summer! I hope you are taking advantage of the beautiful days to *forest bathe*.

I am writing to you on the heels of celebrating *one year* of marriage equality here in the United States. Congratulations to all of our same-sex couples—we rejoice in you!

Friends, it has also been a season of much pain. We have had yet another mass shooting in this country. Forty-nine people, mostly Latin@, mostly LGBTQI, lost their lives as they danced and had fun at the Pulse Night Club in Orlando, Florida. There is a pain in our hearts that cannot be soothed. So, I am wondering...how are things with your soul? How are you dealing with an injurious political campaign season? How are you dealing with the sadness in the world?

Here at the church, we are trying to do our best to *hold spaces* for one another and the wider community. We held two vigils in ten days. We continue to reflect on the question: How can we be the church of Jesus Christ in the world **today**? That is a question that continues to summon more reflection. However, one thing I can offer for now: to be the church of Jesus Christ in the world requires courage. It takes courage to work zealously for justice and peace. It takes courage to speak truth to power. It takes courage to live in the margins, like did Jesus. Those of you who have can, perhaps, show the scars of your wounds. But, we find comfort in knowing that “the wound is the place where the Light enters you.” (Rumi)

This summer, I invite you to pray these words with me. They come from composer and singer Mercedes Sosa:

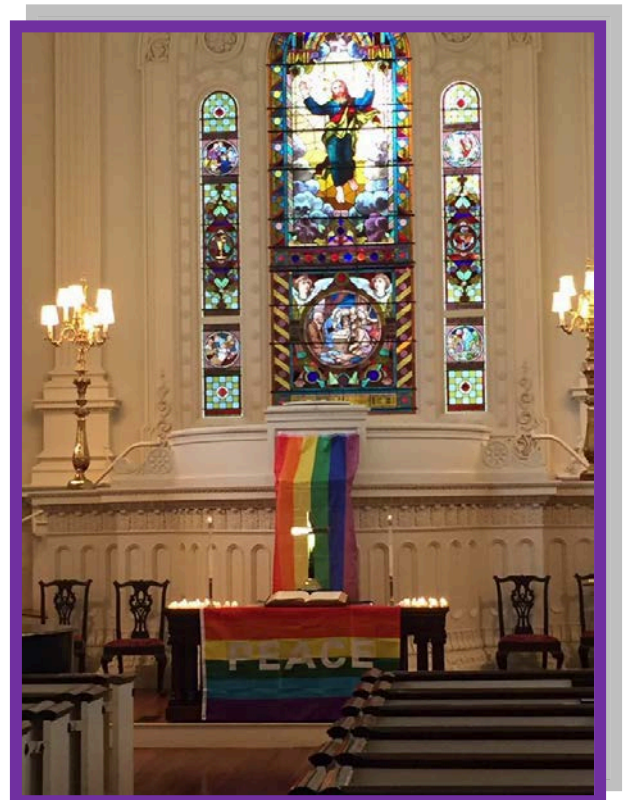
Sólo le pido a Dios
Que el dolor no me sea indiferente
Que la resaca muerte no me encuentre
Vacía y sola sin haber hecho lo suficiente,

*I only pray to God,
That I do not become indifferent to pain and suffering,
That death with its dryness does not find me
Empty and alone for not having done enough.*

Amen.

Faithfully,

(Rev.) Dr. Damaris D. Whittaker,
Minister





JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/2 Amy Salls
 7/2 Douglas Lombardi
 7/4 Obed Fonder
 7/5 Peter Piatti-Rios
 7/8 Theodore Vietzke
 7/11 Bradley Boisvert
 7/15 Lita Rathnam
 7/18 Luciano Valles, Jr.
 7/19 Elena Sanderson
 7/23 Sabas Whittaker
 7/24 Beverlee Sipes
 7/25 Gertrude Tatro
 7/26 John Chen
 7/28 Samuel Chen
 7/28 Joseph Lopez
 7/29 Brendan St. Amant
 7/31 Vanessa Nieves
 7/31 Victoria Seurattan

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/1 Earl Sanderson
 8/1 Haley Reis
 8/1 Katelyn Reis
 8/2 Tina Bobbitt
 8/2 Jalena Diaz
 8/4 Patricia Anderson
 8/8 Niome Chaney
 8/12 Melani Norsigian
 8/12 Richard Markham
 8/13 Xaniyah Sanders
 8/15 Led Baxter
 8/16 Donald Gourlie
 8/20 Steven Lombardi
 8/24 Lisa Thomas
 8/28 Lesley Thompson
 8/29 Jim Oliver
 8/30 William Wurts
 8/31 Anthony Sanders

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/10 Nilsalynn & Reagan Wagan

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

8/6 Efrain & Olga Agosto
 8/13 Susan & Patrick Hayes
 8/15 James & Mary Ellen Jacobs
 8/16 J. Alan & Joan McLean
 8/18 William & Kathleen Gourlie
 8/20 Julie & Patrick Hurley
 8/27 Thomas & Sally St. Amant



CHURCH MEMBERS & FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Births, Deaths, Weddings: None

New Members: *Kathryn Lewis (June 26)*

Transferred at own request: *Lori Beste (May 22)*

Baptisms: *Emily Mae Merkent (June 12)*

NEW NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Beginning in September, we will return to a monthly newsletter format. We hope that this will make it easier to communicate activities and events to you in a more timely fashion. In keeping with the busy-ness of life, the new format will be information driven ~ shorter, informative, and concise. Our weekly E-News mailings will continue. Please take the time to read through our publications to learn about and celebrate the diverse and amazing ministries we offer to the community. If you have any questions, or wish to offer a submission, please contact me at mferrantino@cchartford.org. All the best to you for a relaxing and restorative summer.

Marie Ferrantino,
Church Administrator

+ IN OUR PRAYERS +

*Curtis Anderson, Arline Baum, Paul Bobbitt, Gladys Hernandez,
Martha Keitt, Marjorie F. Paust, Michael Plankey, Lita Rathnam, Sally St. Amant,
Earl Sanderson, Norman Stanley, Dianna Woodard, the City of Hartford, the Connecticut
Conference of the United Church of Christ, the First Church of Christ in Hartford, the State
of Connecticut, and victims of violence and natural disasters*

Family Camp in August!

All Center Church members are invited to take part in Family Camp at Asto Wamah in August. Family Camp is a unique and treasured opportunity for the Center Church community to spend time together at Columbia Lake.

This year, the two weeks start at Noon on August 14th and end on Sunday, August 28th at Noon. You are welcome to sign up for the entire two weeks, just a day, or anything in between. What a wonderful way to relax and enjoy the final days of summer: swimming, boating, fishing, walking the Nature Trail, reading a book, etc., all in the company of the Center Church family. For more details, please contact Nancy Maclean at: ntmaclean@gmail.com or (860) 798-8098; or Sue Thomas at: suemthomas@comcast.net or call her at camp at (860) 228-3489.

Warburton Resource, Outreach, and Collaboration Center
(The WROCC)

60 Gold Street (Church House) ~ Hartford
(Please enter through side door on Lewis Street)

DROP-IN HOURS:

Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1:00pm-6:00pm

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED BY THE WROCC
February through May, 2016

	Four Month Totals
Wednesdays	144
Thursdays	<u>167</u>
Combined:	311

POSTPONED

COMMUNITY MAPPING EVENT POSTPONED

The after-Worship Community Mapping Event & Lunch originally scheduled for Sunday, July 10, has been postponed till the Fall. We'll keep you posted as to the new date!



Do you receive our weekly E-Newsletter?

Church life can often change fast and furiously! Be sure you are on the distribution list to receive our weekly *E-News*, sent each Thursday afternoon. If you would like to be added to the list, please email Monique Young, church receptionist, at myoung@cchartford.org. Thanks for keeping in touch!



Every Sunday morning during the summer months from 9:00am to 10:00am, Center Church volunteers offer hot coffee, tea, or juice, and nourishing snacks, to our neighbors from the streets. We thank and recognize the following members and friends who have taken on this caring ministry over the past three months:

June

- June 5 - Bill Warner Prouty, and Marilyn Watson
- June 12 - Drew, and Alvin Thompson
- June 19 - Dectora Jeffers, Anne Ostberg, and Frances Burton
- June 26 - Bryan Denman, and Larry Roeming

July

- July 3 - Joe Bradley, and Dectora Jeffers
- July 10 - Nancy and Led Baxter
- July 17 - Don and Shirley Sanders
- July 24 - Nancy and Led Baxter
- July 31 - Efrain and Olga Agosto

August

- August 7 - Jamaly Rios and family
- August 14 - Joe Readon and family
- August 21 - David Reynolds and Ruth Fortune
- August 28 - Dennis Morin and David Owens

September

- September 4 - To be announced



**As the Fall months of September and October arrive, you can help.
Call Alan McLean at (860) 798-8190
(on behalf of the Outreach Committee)**

Center Church Outreach Committee votes Freedom School Scholarship

At its May meeting, Center Church's Outreach Committee met with Cori Mackey, Executive Director for the Christian Activities Council, to hear about plans for the Adventures in the City Freedom School. It's a new approach based on a design developed by the Children's Defense Fund's Marian Wright Edelman. Here's what the program will look like:

- 100 children will participate for six weeks at the Thurman Milner School
- The children are guided by college-age Servant Leaders
- Servant Leader interns are young adults with at least one year of college experience and will be primarily from Hartford. They receive a week-long curriculum training from national CDF staff in TN
- Freedom Schools literacy curriculum is award winning and uses culturally relevant books that students get to keep for their home library
- Nationwide, students engaged in Freedom Schools experienced gains in their reading level when most children from low-income communities lose about 2 months of learning
- The afternoons are filled with fun learning enrichment opportunities like dance, art, yoga, karate, painting and exciting field trips
- All scholars receive a healthy breakfast and lunch as part of the program

Interest in the program was high and after Cori left, it was decided that we would direct \$1,200 of our budget to provide the complete summer Freedom School Program for one child, 8am to 3:30 pm, Monday thru Friday for the six week duration. Further information about the CDF Freedom Schools is available at www.freedomschools.org. Check it out!

An Outreach Committee Mid-Year Update

As the Center Church program year has drawn to a close, the Outreach Committee realized it has much to be thankful for:

1. With the adept leadership of our Outreach Director, Nate Fox, The Warburton Resource, Outreach and Collaboration Center for Social Justice (aka, Warburton Center/WROCC) is open and helping a growing number of people to navigate the Social Service System to access services in a welcoming environment.
2. Our Connecticut School of Social Work intern, Stephen Haynes, and our now full-time VISTA worker, Melinda Knebel, continue to provide able assistance.
3. The Sunday early evening Community Meals continue to serve a healthy Sunday Dinner to people in need of a place to relax for a while and enjoy a good dinner provided by a range of area UCC churches and Nate's supervision and the part-time assistance of Danielle Soto.
4. Two of these churches, Rocky Hill and South Glastonbury have each donated \$1,000 toward the work of the Warburton Resource Center, as plans are being developed for ways to meet the needs of the homeless and marginally housed during cold weather months. These gifts will make it possible to staff another VISTA worker for the coming year.
5. Through a special Outreach offering, over \$500.00 was raised in March to help our UCC efforts to alleviate the Flint, Michigan water crisis.
6. The Effortz4Kidz Educational Foundation in Tanzania was brought home to us through the efforts of Deckie Jeffers and Bebe Dudley of the Buckingham Congregational Church.
7. Our May 1st Hunger Walk raised slightly over \$1,000 for the benefit of Hands on Hartford.
8. Sunday morning coffee and breakfast bars continue to be served through our "Coffee Ministry," now ably coordinated by Alan McLean.
9. Carolyn Arvidson continues to coordinate weekly food donations to Hands on Hartford's Food Pantry.
10. Chef David and Maitre d'Dennis continue to muster us for monthly Manna Meals at Christ Church Cathedral on the first Tuesday of the month.

Yes, there is much to celebrate about our efforts to reach out deeply and effectively around Main, Gold, and Lewis Streets, as we seek to be agents of Christ-like compassion.

~ Bill Warner-Prouty, Co-Chair, Board of Outreach

Highlights from Mission Moment Presentation Made During Outreach Sunday by Anne Ostberg, Connecticut Program Director, Corporation for National & Community Service, June 12, 2016

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the federal government agency that oversees national service programs – all programs that are like the Peace Corps, but that operate in the United States. Our two primary programs are Senior Corps and AmeriCorps. Senior Corps engages people age 55 and older in volunteer service. Nationally, 270,000 volunteers serve through one of three Senior Corps programs: the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, or RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, or the Senior Companion Program. AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 people in service across the country. AmeriCorps programs include AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps), and AmeriCorps VISTA. VISTA, which stands for Volunteers in Service to America, began in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

Here in Connecticut, approximately 3,300 individuals serve through Senior Corps and AmeriCorps, and in Hartford, close to 700 people serve in Senior Corps or AmeriCorps at 70 sites. Hands on Hartford sponsors the multi-site Hartford Thrive! AmeriCorps VISTA project, which places approximately a dozen VISTA members with community organizations to build capacity for economic opportunity and food security initiatives. VISTA members are addressing critical community needs in housing, homelessness, financial literacy, and food security issues.

Hartford Thrive! AmeriCorps VISTA members serve at one of the following host sites:

- Hands on Hartford
- Journey Home
- Connecticut Association of Human Services
- The Village for Children and Families
- Hartford Community Loan Fund
- Community Solutions
- Center Church

While these VISTAs engaged in a wide range of service activities, a few examples include:

- Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau
- Faces of Homelessness Peer Outreach Group
- Weekend Backpack Program
- Community Meals
- Community Pantry
- Youth Money School
- Cold Weather St. Outreach/No Freeze Initiative

Since the Hartford Thrive! AmeriCorps VISTA project began in late 2014, the VISTA members have accomplished a great deal. The following stories represent just a sample of some of those accomplishments:

- VISTA Member Adam Bulmash, serving at Center Church from November 2014 to November 2015, helped launch the Warburton Resource, Outreach and Collaboration Center, which has assisted more than 300 people in need from February to May 2016.
- Hands on Hartford reported that during a three month period from July to September 2015, Child Nutrition VISTA Member Kyla Jones garnered more than 3,000 pounds of food donations for the Manna Food Pantry in downtown Hartford.
- VISTA member Mollie Greenwood, serving with Journey Home in Hartford, was an integral part of a team that implemented a 100-Day Campaign to Reduce Chronic Homelessness in Greater Hartford during 2015. The campaign goal was to house 100 chronically homeless individuals or families in 100 days. After 100 days, more than 200 formerly homeless households had received assistance in obtaining housing.

This year, VISTA members Melinda Knebel and Eric Angeles will serve at Center Church as part of Hartford Thrive! I'm honored to be a part of the AmeriCorps VISTA program and national service. If you would like to serve through one of our programs, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Anne M. Ostberg, Connecticut Program Director
Corporation for National and Community Service
aostberg@cns.gov



UPDATE from the Property Committee

The Property Committee met with Rev. Damaris, architect Tim Brewer of TLBA, and construction manager John Darrigan of LSI on June 8. We voted to endorse the Phase 1 revised scope of work outlined in the architect's memorandum of June 2, 2016 (see below.) The estimated cost is approximately \$2 million.

Lesser cost scopes of work were considered, but the overriding factor is the cost of staging, which is in excess of \$300,000. The committee felt that it doesn't make sense to need to have additional future fundraising and staging for future work.

The architect is proceeding to develop the revised plans and specifications required for application for the CT Historical Commission. The church's application will be presented by November, 2016. A grant of up to \$200,000 will be awarded in February, 2017. It is anticipated that construction will start March 1, 2017, to be completed by November, 2017.

Committee: David Maclean, Richard Markham, Jim Macomber, Timothy Otte, and Bruce Bidwell, Chair

Proposed Phase 1 of the Center Church Restoration Project *Architect's Statement*

A Preliminary Exterior Conditions Assessment and Preliminary Design Report, prepared by TLB Architecture, LLC and dated 1 April 2013 identify restoration, reconstruction and repairs required at the historic Center Church. Early in 2016, the following scope of work was established as phase I of the Center Church Exterior Restoration Project.

At street level, Phase 1 is envisioned to address re-pointing and caulking of the main exterior entry stair, painting and restoration of the ornamental iron rails and new Church sign. The primary thrust of Phase 1, however, is aimed at stabilization and restoration of the steeple, from the clock level up to the top of cupola and spire. Phase 1 will not include required restoration of the dentiled pediment, entry portico or main body of the church. Phase 1 will include complete restoration and reconstruction of architectural details adorning the Clock Level, Bell Level, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Balustrade Levels, the Cupola and spire. Structural integrity will be returned to the internal tower access stair and tower framing timbers, and a cable-restraint system will be installed at upper levels, to allow safe and timely inspection and maintenance of the tower in the future. The lighting protection system will be upgraded and new LED tower lighting will be installed. Finally, the iconic clock will be restored and bell ringing equipment will be upgraded.



The deadline for the **SEPTEMBER 2016** ISSUE OF
CENTER CHURCH NEWS is **Friday, August 19.**

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A member of the United Church of Christ (UCC)

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Minister: The Reverend Dr. Damaris D. Whittaker

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean

Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries: Nate Fox

Director of Faith Formation: Jana Russo-Priestley

Interim Director of Music/Organist: William Ness

Librarian: Bruce Bidwell

Church Administrator: Marie Ferrantino

Bookkeeper: Charlotte Cardone

Receptionist/Office Assistant: Monique Young

Office Assistant: Frances Burton

Sexton: Thomas St. Amant

Staff email addresses:

First initial + last name @cchartford.org

(e.g., dwhittaker@cchartford.org)