



The First Church of Christ in Hartford

Embracing God's Presence,
Serving the City,
Building Upon Our Heritage

NEWS

Volume XXX, No. 2

March/April, 2014

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:
9:00am & 10:00am

(First Sunday in June through
the Sunday before Labor Day)



**LENT begins
ASH WEDNESDAY
March 5**

Distribution of Ashes
12:00pm-1:45pm

Ash Wednesday Service
5:30pm

*(followed by refreshments & fellowship. Learn about
volunteer opportunities throughout Lent and beyond.)*

From the Minister

*"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched
to everything else in the Universe."
(John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra*)*

Dear Family:

We have begun this year with a bang! We had an amazing Epiphany Sunday with the celebration of *Dia de Reyes* - Three Kings Day. The service was full of energy and visitors, and it was permeated with amazing musical offerings from Carlos Hernandez Chavez and our volunteer choir. We closed the month of January with a very meaningful and exceptional service in Remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr.



February began with *Sacrament Sunday*, when we celebrated a baptism, received seven new members into the life of the church, and had a most extraordinary worship and communion experience. The children's participation in ALL of the sacraments, from blessing the water of baptism to serving communion and co-leading the reception of new members, instilled hope and excitement in all of us.

At the annual meeting, we made a crucial decision this year. We decided to live. Life often seems like the obvious choice; however, it is not. We decided to live not because we do not have any choice, but because we do. We decided to live because we believe that God is Still Speaking at Center Church, and God's presence is still with us. We decided to live with great enthusiasm and pride. We decided to live by standing up as a sign of a pronounced commitment that runs deep into our core. What an exciting time!

The decision to live is often follow a series of difficult decisions. So, let us prepare ourselves for what is to come. We have certainly made many difficult decisions in the last 18 months I have been with you. But, hold on ~ this is only the beginning!

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ is adopting a new vision—a vision of Interdependence. This vision challenges our assumptions, and is propelling us to realize that we can work together and perhaps create opportunities to move from autonomy to collectiveness; and yes, dependence. We have mastered the art of independence, but perhaps we are strangers to interdependence.

As we move towards the future here at Center Church, let us not forget that we depend on each other. We need to rely on each other now more than ever. So, I invite us to reflect on what would it mean for us to adopt a culture of interdependence. How would that change the way we work within the church? How would that change our boards and committees? How would that change the way we work with our partners in the community? What opportunities and possibilities can we create if we worked interdependently?

I pray that we can begin to see the great potential that exists when we open our minds and hearts to work more interdependently. I pray that God leads us to give interdependence a home in our hearts and our understanding, and to wake up together to this concept.

(Rev.) Damaris D. Whittaker
Minister



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/2 Alvin Thompson
3/4 Gladys Hernandez
3/5 Roderick Jones
3/6 Michelle Jones
3/9 Cheryl Sanderson
3/9 Roberta Roy
3/13 Damaris Whittaker
3/14 Margaret Allegrini
3/17 Julia Thompson
3/19 Andre Keitt
3/27 Mary Esoian
3/29 Thomas St. Amant
3/30 Jane Foxall

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/1 Priscilla French
4/2 Susan Hayes
4/2 Katherine Markham
4/5 Abel Tangarone
4/13 Tucker Salls
4/14 Jorgette Peroza
4/15 Rosemary Arcieri
4/15 Dectora Jeffers
4/16 Nancy Maclean
4/19 Alice Norsigian
4/21 Geoffrey Smith
4/24 Robinson Buck
4/28 James Thomas
4/30 A. Harry Sanders

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

3/21 Abel & Serafina Tangarone

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

4/5 A. Harry & Sabrina Sanders



IN OUR PRAYERS

Curtis Anderson, Marilyn Beste, Carolyn Bidwell, Debbie Downes, Robinson Buck,
Jayne Chase, William Cornwall, Edgar French, Hulon Geter, George & Gladys Hernandez, Cecelia Jackson,
William Jackson, Pamela Libby, Janice Lombardi, Christine MacDonald, Susan Parker, Anna & Jeff Rathnam,
Lita Rathnam, Gabriela Smith-Rosario, Sally St. Amant, Greg Sanders, Sabrina Sanders, Alicia Selders,
Norman Stanley, Victoria Ververis, 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

CHURCH MEMBERS & FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Births, Weddings: None.

Baptisms: Roderick Jones (2-02-14)

New Members: Led Baxter, Nancy Baxter, Ruth Fortune, Roderick Jones, Garrett Rapsilber, David Reynolds, & Sabas Whittaker (2-02-14)

Funds Available for Hartford Hospital Expenses

This is a reminder that Center Church is the beneficiary of “bed funds” for the payment of Hartford Hospital expenses, including those of its Dental Clinic. These funds are available not only to church members, but to any person designated by our Pastor or her authorized representative (in this case, Marie Ferrantino, our Office Administrator.) It is important to remember that bills of Hartford Hospital only are eligible for payment. Not eligible are separate bills of physicians, radiologists, pharmacies, etc., even though incurred while a patient at Hartford Hospital, as well as bills of Connecticut Children’s Medical Center.

We urge you to keep these funds in mind whenever you, a family member or an acquaintance are a patient at Hartford Hospital. For further information or for assistance in accessing these funds, please contact Marie at the Church Office.

Friendship Circles (FC)

Meet new people in the church. Deepen your ties with others. Have a fun evening!

Here's how it works: You will be randomly put in groups of 8 or 10 members of the congregation as your Friendship Circle. Your FC will schedule a brunch, a dinner party, a meal with a theme, a simple buffet, or whatever you want! Everyone will bring a dish to contribute to your event. Now just sit down, eat, visit, and have a great time!

Friendship Circles will begin in April! Please sign up in the Green Book in the foyer of the Meeting House, or call Marie Ferrantino at (860) 249-5631 (ext. 11) or send an email to marie@centerchurchhartford.net.

More info will follow once your FC is formed!



FIRST THURSDAY TAIZÉ

Come to the Meeting House on Thursday, March 6 and April 3 for meditative Taizé services. Our monthly Taizé services include prayer, silence, and candle lighting. Services run about thirty minutes in length. We will begin at 6:00pm. The Meeting House will remain open until 7:00pm for silent prayer and reflection.



ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

**Sundays at 8:45am
in the Church House Parlor**

On March 2, the Adult Class will finish the second of two sessions on the Epistle of James. In March, April, and May, there will be two new series:

March 9 - March 30: "**Wrestling with Womanist and Mujerista Theologians**"
[Series led by Rev. Damaris Whittaker]

April 6 - May 25: **"Religion & Spirituality"**
[Series led by Joe Bradley]

There will be no class on Easter Sunday, April 20.

If you have questions, please contact Alvin Thompson or Joe Bradley.

MUSICAL NOTES

By Jason Charneski



Conclusion of Sabbatical Leave and Return to You

The last report about my doings while on sabbatical leave concluded with an account of my visits on Sunday, January 5 to Saint Augustine's and Our Lady of Sorrows churches in Hartford. I had two weeks remaining, of which five days were to be spent in Naples and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with the remainder at home in preparation for my return to you.

The “unexpected” happened when, while in Florida, I began to read *The Art of Possibility* by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. The book had been given to Rick by a mutual colleague of ours, and, upon his having finished reading it, he proffered that I might enjoy it. I more than enjoyed it – I ravished every word, every story, every idea put forth. It provided a framework for me to view my time with you for twelve years prior to the sabbatical leave, the experiences I had and the time of thinking (a copious amount, given many hours traveling to and from the many churches I visited] and rest offered within the sabbatical period, and how I would view my time with you upon my return.

So, here it is, in its simplest form: I will revel in the possibilities rather than succumb to the fear of the challenges.

On a very practical, immediate level, this means enjoying the exploration into and the decisions about doing things in different ways, and then seeing the results through rekindled or new sparks of fire in you. Let’s consider things on the docket for the next two months:

- March 2: Terrance French, trumpeter and church member, playing in worship to provide a Mardi Gras/New Orleans “flavor” in advance of the Lenten Pep Rally with pancakes-and-sausage lunch.
- March 9: The First Sunday in Lent, for which we will offer for the season new congregational musical responses to the Words of Assurance, the reading of scripture, and the presentation of the gifts and tithes.
- March 16: The Second Sunday in Lent, for which the choir will offer in worship an “old chestnut” (Stainer’s *God So Loved the World*) at a much quicker tempo in order to capture anew the energy and good news in those well-known and hope-filled words found in John 3.
- March 30: The Fourth Sunday in Lent, for which the plan is to have members of the new student orchestra in training at Charter Oak Cultural Center offer in worship some of what they have learned and mastered.
- April 6: The Fifth Sunday in Lent, which will include the premiere of a new anthem for choir by Edward Tyler (a setting of “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” that will offer, *possibly*, a new melody you will have in your ears and your heart all week) AND music for three flutes!
- April 13: Palm Sunday, beginning with a procession, led by trumpeter Terrance French (let’s make some noise and be as weird as, if not weirder than, Jesus’ followers on that first Palm Sunday)!

(continued on next page)

April 27: The Second Sunday of Easter, at which in both worship and an afternoon concert we will be brought into the colors and energy of the Broken Reed Saxophone Quartet. The choral music that day will point toward Earth Day, with two movements from Paul Winter's *Missa Gaia*.

On a longer-term level, it means looking at the possibilities of new ways to "do" outreach through the Music and the Arts concerts programs. We are starting to plan for the Summer Outdoor Series; one possibility is to include a jazz group on that series that also could offer their music in worship on the Sunday of the Hartford Festival of Jazz.

There is so much more to say; however, I leave you to think about the areas in which you have interest or commitment within the church and to *revel in the possibilities rather than succumb to the fear of the challenges*. Yes, the challenges always will be there; the question for us is how we approach them. Consider the possibilities – such induces life and produces energy.

A friend of mine, upon sensing my enthusiasm about my sabbatical and of my return to Center Church remarked, "Your reset button has been pushed." It has, indeed. I hope your "reset buttons" have been pushed, too!



Please Mark your Calendar for

**Camp Asto Wamah Work Day
Saturday, April 19th
From 9AM to Lunch.**

Bring work gloves, a rake,
and a happy heart!

Join the fun and the community of workers
as we ready Asto Wamah
for the 2014 season!

RSVP (Nancy [860] 649-8614)
so sufficient lunch supplies
can be purchased.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS !



On Sunday, February 2, 2014, we welcomed seven new members into our church family. We are blessed to share in the life and gifts of our new members! May God bless them as they embark on their new journey at Center Church.

(Photos: L-to-R: Ruth Fortune, David Reynolds, Garrett Rapsilber, Nancy Baxter, Led Baxter*, Roderick Jones, and Sabas Whittaker.)*

*Associate member

Center Church is DISCOVERING THE “WoRM”

The WoRM, or Workshop Rotation, is the church school model that we are piloting during Lent for six Sundays, March 9-April 13.

This is an exciting, experiential, hands-on learning that makes the Bible story come alive. For each of the six weeks, children will experience the story of Holy Week and the Journey to Easter in six unique ways.



“The “Workshop Rotation Model” in a nutshell:

1. Classrooms are redesigned into creative, media-inspired, kid-pleasing workshops that teach Bible stories.
2. Classes or groups rotate to new workshops each week for 3-6 weeks, the “rotation” period. Workshop teachers do not rotate. They stay put in the workshop, repeating the lesson to a new group of children each week (with some age-appropriate modifications).
3. During that 3-6 week period, only one Bible story is taught. The entire rotation---every workshop, every week---is focused on learning that one Bible story.

During Lent 2014, the Workshop Rotation will have six workshop stations where the story will be told, and a project or activity will reflect the message of the story in a developmentally age-appropriate way for K-7th grades. The youth class, 8th-12th grades, will also be involved as shepherds and helpers.

The workshops and teachers are:

- **Drama:** Kathy Gourlie, Beverlee Sipes
- **Music:** Nancy Maclean, Claudine Constant, Marilyn Watson
- **Bible Games and Activities:** Chris and Catherine Maclean
- **Service and Prayer:** Lori Beste, Claudia Hernandez
- **Storytelling:** Andre Keitt, Lisa Thomas
- **Creative Arts:** Ileia Belton, Priscilla French, Lita Rathnam

Two workshops will run each week -- one for the primary class and one for the middle grades class. As usual, the children will begin in worship with their families in the Meeting House, and after the Children’s Message, adjourn to the Church House for the WoRM.

Please see the following page for the March 9-April 13 schedule.

If you have any questions, or are just curious about what our children will be doing, ask Rev. Barb Frey, Faith Formation Consultant - barbbikes1@gmail.com.

Journey to Easter 2014

Primary Class	Teachers	Middler Class	Teachers	
Week 1 March 9	"Guess Who's Having Dinner with Jesus" Experience the Last Supper using "frozen picture" drama technique	Kathy Gourlie Beverly Sipes	"Make A Joyful Noise" Create instruments and your own unique rockin' Holy Week Sound	Nancy Maclean Claudine Constant Marilyn Watson
Week 2 March 16	"Make A Joyful Noise" Create instruments and your own unique rockin' Holy Week Sound	Nancy Maclean Claudine Constant Marilyn Watson	"Guess Who's Having Dinner with Jesus" Experience the Last Supper using "frozen picture" drama technique	Kathy Gourlie Beverly Sipes
Week 3 March 23	"Lenten Game-Fest" A sampler of games, team activities, and active experiences to understand each day of Holy Week	Chris and Catherine Maclean	"Praying from the Heart" Prayer is a cool way to talk to God. A sampler of prayer using art, music, thought, written words..	Lori Beste Claudia Hernandez
Week 4 March 30	"Praying from the Heart" Prayer is a cool way to talk to God. A sampler of prayer using art, music, thought, written	Lori Beste Claudia Hernandez	"Lenten Game-Fest" A sampler of games, team activities, and active experiences to understand each day of Holy Week	Chris and Catherine Maclean
Week 5 April 6	"Storytelling" A time to wonder, imagine and discover how the story of Holy Week reveals how God so loved the world..	Andre Keitt Lisa Thomas	"Palms Galore and More" Use palms, clay and eggs as art tools to create parts of the story of Palm Sunday and Holy Week	Ileia Belton Priscilla French Lita Rathnam
Week 6 April 13	"Palms Galore and More" Use palms, clay and eggs as art tools to create parts of the story of Palm Sunday and Holy Week	Ileia Belton Priscilla French Lita Rathnams	"Storytelling" A time to wonder, imagine and discover how the story of Holy Week reveals how God so loved the world	Andre Keitt Lisa Thomas



Easter Sunday, April 20th ~ Come for an early breakfast for fellowship, followed by a Spirit-filled and Joyous Family Worship at 10:30am! After Worship, there will be a children's Easter Egg Hunt.



BACKPACK FOOD DRIVE

The Trustees of Warburton Chapel and Center Church are co-sponsoring our second annual food drive for Hands on Hartford's **Backpack Nutrition Program** for low-income Hartford school children. Many low-income Hartford school children depend on getting breakfast and lunch at school Monday through Friday. The Backpack Nutrition Program helps their families to have enough to eat over the weekend. Each Friday, backpacks for approximately 200 children are prepared with 3 to 4 pounds of "kid friendly" and healthy food. The backpacks are distributed to children in several Hartford elementary schools. The backpacks are returned on Monday to be cleaned and repacked for the following weekend.

The Trustees of Warburton Chapel and Center Church will collect food on Sunday, March 30th through Sunday, April 6th. Bring your contributions to the Meeting House or to the Church House, where you will find collection boxes. **Cash/checks** may be donated if that is easier for you. There are *Backpack Food Drive* envelopes in the back of the Meeting House. The envelopes may be placed in the offering plates during church, or given/sent to Marie in the Church Office. Make checks payable to *Center Church* with "Backpack Food Drive" noted on the memo line.

Suggestions for food donations include the following items that are individually wrapped:

- juice boxes, granola bars, raisin boxes
- applesauce cups, cereal cups, pretzel packs
- soup cups/packs, instant oatmeal packs, fruit cups
- mac/cheese cups, trail mix packs, Goldfish packs

If you have any **questions**, please contact Robin Roy ([860] 523-3149) or Nathan Fox ([860] 249-5631 ext. 15.)

Hartford schoolchildren, Hands on Hartford, the Trustees of Warburton Chapel and Center Church thank you for your generosity.

Special Lenten Series

LISTENING TO THE DIVINE

Led by Cheryl D. Thomas, M Div.



Looking for a different Lenten experience, come join Cheryl and others for the series on *Listening to the Divine*. Cheryl, a member of Center Church and intern at the Spiritual Life Center in West Hartford, has offered to share some of what she has learned about deepening one's spirituality. Cheryl will introduce ways in which we can listen with the intent of looking for the Sacred/Divine in our lives, or put another way, explore our individual sense of encountering the Mystery called God, in deeper and perhaps new ways.

Cheryl will offer a two-part series, with each part being offered twice. The schedule is as follows:

Part 1 - Sunday, March 9, immediately following worship, with a light lunch

Part 1 - Thursday, March 13, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., with a light meal starting at 6:00 p.m.

Part 2 - Sunday, March 23, immediately following worship, with a light lunch

Part 2 - Thursday, March 27, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., with a light meal starting at 6:00 p.m.

For purposes of planning for meals, it will be helpful to know how many people are coming to each session. So if you are interested, please contact Alvin Thompson or Cheryl Thomas, sign up in the green book, or contact the Church Office. Also, please let us know if you will require childcare so that we may arrange coverage.



The Trustees of Warburton Chapel and individual donors have established a challenge grant to enable our Director of Faith Formation, Jana Priestley, to spend additional hours above and beyond her regular schedule to visit church families. The goal is outreach to church families and others who may be interested in becoming involved in Center Church's Faith Formation program.

The first \$3,000 of donations designated for Faith Formation Visitation will be matched dollar for dollar - we hope that you will be inspired to participate.

1. \$10 gift, matched by \$10 gives Jana about 1 additional hour in her work week for visitation;
2. \$125 gift, matched by \$125 gives an additional 5 hours this week and next
3. If we meet our goal of raising \$6,000 this will mean an additional five hours per week for the year of 2014 that Jana can invest in visitation and outreach.

The Warburton Trust was chartered in 1866 to erect and sustain a chapel and mission Sabbath school in the city of Hartford. This was Center Church reaching beyond its current membership to serve new immigrant populations arriving in the city. We have recent memories of staff visiting Church School families, learning of other needs and inviting additional family and friends. We know that some campers at Astro Wamah identify as Center Church members, but we don't see them in church. Let's reach beyond our two buildings again, and strengthen relationships with current and new families.

Through February 23, 9 gifts totaling \$1,799 have been received toward the goal of \$3,000. Please join this group and be a part of the future of Faith Formation at Center Church! Your contributions will make a difference.

Faith Formation Visitation

Please find enclosed my gift of \$_____

* *Thank you for your generosity!* *



Ministry of Easter Flowers

Easter will soon be here! If you would like to contribute to the "*Ministry of Easter Flowers*" in memory of a loved one, or in honor of a cherished friend or family member, please complete this form (below) and send it with a check. \$12 per plant, payable to *The First Church of Christ in Hartford*, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, 06103, **by Wednesday, April 16**. Please note "Easter Flower" on the memo of the check. After the Easter service, plants will be distributed to the homebound. *Thank you from The Flower Committee!*

Easter Flower in memory or honor of (please print):

Given by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

**The First Church of Christ in Hartford
“Center Church”
60 Gold Street
Hartford, CT 06103**

**The deadline for the MAY/JUNE 2014 ISSUE OF
CENTER CHURCH NEWS is **Wednesday, April 23.****

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Senior Minister: The Reverend Damaris D. Whittaker

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend J. Alan McLean

Director of Music & the Arts: Jason Charneski

Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries: Nate Fox

Director of Faith Formation: Jana Priestley

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