



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

# NEWS

Volume XXXI, No. 2

March/April, 2015

## 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:  
9:00am & 10:00am  
(First Sunday in June through  
the Sunday before Labor Day)



**"LENT IS A TIME FOR REPENTANCE,  
OF COURSE, FOR FACING THE WAYS  
WE ARE BROKEN AND HAVE BROKEN  
OTHERS AND THE WORLD.**

**THE WORLD, OUR CULTURE, MAY NOT  
LIKE THE WORD 'SIN,' BUT IT IS  
VERY MUCH MARKED BY IT, AND  
SO ARE OUR OWN LIVES.**

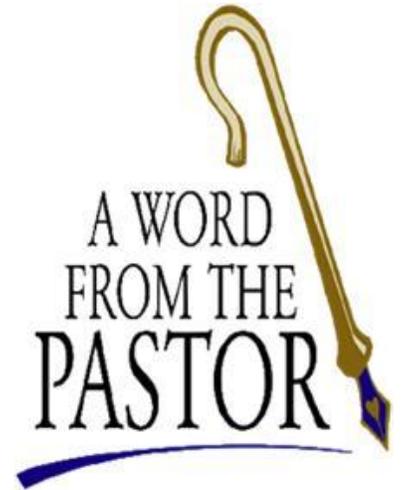
**STILL, THE PROMISES ARE  
EVERLASTING, AND GOD IS WITH US,  
ALWAYS,  
CALLING US TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE."**

~ SOURCE: WWW.UCC.ORG

Dear Family,

I am pleased to be writing to you as your settled pastor. We had successful congregational and Annual Meetings -- both were very celebratory, positive, and invigorating. It was a joy to hear applause and cheers throughout the meetings. God is certainly Still Speaking.

As we enter this Lenten Season, I invite us to take some time for silence and introspection. I also invite us to count our blessings. Let us take the time to write a thank-you note to someone you appreciate. Say thank you to someone with whom you work, a neighbor, a church member, an acquaintance. The power of gratitude is transformative. It changes our optics and it gives us hope and strength to move into the future.



In the Spirit of gratitude, I want to give thanks for a couple of things:

- **BLACKLIVESMATTER Banner.** We recently received a very meaningful gift from our Conference Minister, the Reverend Kent Siladi -- a banner which displays the logo of the United Church of Christ and the message BLACKLIVESMATTER. It is important to note that this gift was very intentional. Reverend Siladi had a limited number of banners. He chose us, Center Church, to be a recipient because of our commitment to racial justice. For this, I give thanks.
- **iQuilt.** I give thanks for the iQuilt project. We have not always felt gratitude as it relates to iQuilt; rather, we have felt challenged and threatened. However, I invite us to begin to re-frame our thinking. First, we will be in the middle of Bushnell Gardens. The Bushnell Park gate will be adjacent to our Meeting House and the green spaces will surround and frame our Church House. In essence, we will be in the center of what it promises to be one of the most vital projects in the City of Hartford in recent years. I, for one, think this will provide us with many opportunities *to serve the City, Celebrate God's presence, and honor our heritage.* We have worked hard to reach what I consider to be a reasonable and successful compromise. Think about the possibilities!

As we go through Lent, let us re-focus. Perhaps we may find something to be thankful for in the most challenging and difficult circumstances. What if what seems uncertain might bring us a future filled with unexpected blessings?

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damaris D. Whittaker".

(Rev.) Damaris D. Whittaker,  
Minister



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 3/2 Alvin Thompson
- 3/2 Ruth Fortune
- 3/4 Gladys Hernandez
- 3/5 Roderick Jones
- 3/6 Michelle Jones
- 3/7 Connor James Thomas
- 3/9 Cheryl Sanderson
- 3/9 Roberta Roy
- 3/13 Damaris Whittaker
- 3/14 Margaret Allegrini
- 3/17 Julia Thompson
- 3/17 Olivia Otte
- 3/19 Andre Keitt
- 3/21 Anakin Piattirios
- 3/27 Mary Esoian
- 3/29 Thomas St. Amant
- 3/30 Jane Foxall

- 4/1 Priscilla French
- 4/2 Susan Hayes
- 4/2 Katherine Markham
- 4/4 Luke Salls
- 4/5 Abel Tangarone
- 4/10 Amiyah Jones
- 4/13 Tucker Salls
- 4/13 Ariella Wagan
- 4/14 Jorgette Peroza
- 4/15 Rosemary Arcieri
- 4/15 Dectora Jeffers
- 4/16 Nancy Maclean
- 4/16 Leila Sipes
- 4/19 Alice Norsigian
- 4/21 Geoffrey Smith
- 4/23 Jade Peroza
- 4/24 Robinson Buck
- 4/25 Nancy Baxter
- 4/25 Zachary Smith
- 4/28 James Thomas
- 4/30 A. Harry Sanders

## MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

## APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

3/21 Abel & Serafina Tangarone

None

### **Hartford Intermodal Triangle Project Construction Updates**

Below is a link to an interactive map showing construction activity associated with Hartford's Intermodal Triangle/the iQuilt project (including the relocation of Gold Street.)

<https://sites.google.com/site/hartfordtrafficalertupdates/>



## CHURCH MEMBERS & FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Deaths: George Hernandez (1/28)

New Members: Efrain Agosto, Ivan Edafiogho,  
Graeme MacKenzie, Diana Woodard (2/8)

Baptisms, Births, Weddings,

Transferred at own request: None

+

## IN OUR PRAYERS

*Arline Baum, Joe Carcaud, Gladys Hernandez, Pamela Libby, Michael Plankey, Scott Macomber, Christine MacDonald, Gabi Smith-Rosario, Sally St. Amant, Norman Stanley, 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*

## 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.



**at Camp Asto Wamah  
Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>  
from 9:00am 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 2015 season!

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



*Thanks to our Community Meals volunteers!*

January

Adam Bulmash  
Nate Fox  
Deckie Jeffers  
Stefan Keller  
David & Nancy Maclean  
Dennis Morin  
David Owens  
Mira Sinanan  
Carmen Vidot

February

Adam Bulmash  
Nate Fox  
Deckie Jeffers  
Dennis Morin  
Enid Negron  
David Owens  
David Reynolds

... and a special thanks to Janet Bermudez who gave us assistance with the meal!

# EfforTZ Foundation

Providing an Education for Tanzania's Children

## From the Board of Outreach

(..that is, Deckie Jeffers, Nate Fox, Alan McLean, Holly Wells, Marilyn Watson, Bill Warner-Prouty, Stefan Keller and Adam Bulmash)

Last year (you remember 2014), we learned about a group called EfforTZ4Kidz, an organization that provides scholarships for education for orphan boys and Maasai girls in Arusha, Tanzania. The organization began with its four founders who were eager to assist young people in that part of the world in gaining an education, securing a job, and a better life in their communities. The nonprofit is run entirely by volunteers, with an office located in East Falmouth, MA. Two of its four Directors live in Amston, CT. To give you a feel for the kind of student that applies for help from the Effortz Board of Directors, please read the following statement written by a 14-year-old Maasai girl, hoping to be awarded an EfforTZ scholarship:



*“In our boma (yard), we have only a mud house with a corrugated iron roof and one grass-roofed hut which we use as a kitchen.*

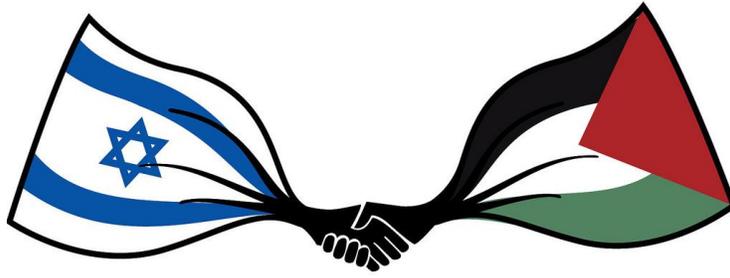
*”I was already engaged when I was three years (of age). My mother refused my engagement. This made her quarrel with my father. She had to support me to get my primary education while quarreling with my father every day and on some days, she was bitten by him. I am grateful that she allowed me to study. I wish to study hard through secondary school and even college.*

*“In my family we are twelve siblings. Five girls and seven boys. My mother is good but my father is harsh to his daughters because he wants us to get married for a dowry to pay for my brothers’ education.*

*Among the things which I hate most and which are tiresome are farming, building mud houses, fetching firewood. I wish to study until Form VI (about eighth grade) and I wish to have my own job one day so that I may help my mother. I will study very hard and I hope God will help me. I do not wish to suffer again the way I suffered in the village.” (by Nashipai)*

Last year, Outreach was able to sponsor one-half of a full scholarship (\$800). We look forward to developing our relationship with EfforTZ4Kidz, perhaps encouraging communication between Tanzanian students and our own. Deckie plans to visit the East Falmouth office this coming summer.

## ADULT EDUCATION SERIES



# “HEALING THE HOLY LAND: PROSPECTS FOR GENUINE PEACE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE”

**Guest Speaker: Yehezkel Landau, D. Min.  
March 22 and 29, 2015  
Noon - 1:30 p.m.  
Church House, Second Floor Parlor**

On March 22 and March 29, Yehezkel Landau, D. Min., will speak to us and engage us in a conversation about conflict and peacemaking in Israel/Palestine. Dr. Landau holds the following positions at the Hartford Seminary: Associate Professor of Interfaith Relations; The Abrahamic Partnerships Chair; and Director, Building Abrahamic Partnerships Program.

Dr. Landau is a dual American-Israeli citizen who lived in Jerusalem for almost 25 years. He has worked for decades to build bridges rather than walls between Israelis and Palestinians.

On **March 22**, Dr. Landau will concentrate on history and ideology. He will talk about how Americans can adopt a dual narrative perspective, without favoring either side and help others to do the same.

On **March 29**, Dr. Landau will focus on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of the conflict and its transformation: how to transform fear to trust, anger to forgiveness, and grief to compassion for the suffering of others. He will talk about how what we all need, whether in Jerusalem or Hartford or Ferguson or New York or Paris, is a holistic conception of holiness in which we are all blessed by God -- and also how inclusive justice and reconciliation of embittered hearts are the key underpinnings of any genuine, lasting peace . . . anywhere.

A light lunch will be served. (Thanks in advance to Timothy Otte.)

On **April 19**, the Adult Class (meeting at 8:45 a.m.) will discuss and reflect on what we learned from Dr. Landau. This discussion and reflection will continue on **April 26** in the Adult Class and, in addition, there will be a discussion of the resolution by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ adopted in October 2014, “Resolution of Implementation Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”.

If anyone is interested in having an additional discussion session after worship on either April 19 or April 26, please contact Alvin Thompson.

# ***INSide & Out*** ***#AFFIRMED***



## **5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL** **CTUCC YOUTH REVIVAL**

**SUNDAY, May 3 at 3 PM**

*A Sacred Conversations on Race Ministry Event*

**Rev. Da Vita 'Day' McCallister preaching**

First Congregational Church in Bloomfield at 10 Wintonbury Avenue

For more information, contact Debby Kirk

[debbyk@ctucc.org](mailto:debbyk@ctucc.org)

860-377-2675

[www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org) #CTUCCYR5 #affirmed



# UPDATES FROM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



## Graduating Soon?

Are you graduating from high school, college, or post-secondary training or education? Please notify Jana Priestley, Director of Faith Formation, to be honored in worship for your achievement! Email: [jana@centerchurchhartford.net](mailto:jana@centerchurchhartford.net)

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## Rekindling The Flame

SHARON (02/04/2015) -- How do you notice, name, and nurture youth who have gifts for ministry? Last weekend 14 youth and adult mentors from Bridgeport, Canterbury, Center Church in Hartford, Middlefield, and Woodstock met at Silver Lake Conference Center for the annual retreat of high school youth who are "Thinking About Working for God for a Living." The Connecticut Conference's "TAWFG" signature program aspires to support young people considering authorized ministry as a vocation.



TAWFG retreat participants and mentors

*Photos by Debby Kirk*

The theme of the 2015 TAWFG retreat was "Rekindle the Flame," and the group took time to "try on" different spiritual practices. They engaged in compassionate listening, daily examen (or prayerful reflection), art exploration, testimony, worship, and journaling. Youth are reminded of a simple equation used to discern their vocation: they add their gifts and their passions, then "divide" those by the world's needs. This, as Associate Conference Minister for Leadership and Vitality the Rev. Da Vita McCallister has said so many times, will guide people to their call.

"Our definition of call is broad," said Debby Kirk, Connecticut Conference Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, "and we know that it is expressed differently in each person. You can be an ordained pastor to work for God, but you can also be a teacher, an artist, a chef, a doctor, a writer, or a farmer."

Silver Lake works diligently to create a safe place where a group can come together and be transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Retreat participants shared music, art, and healing words. They offered each other stories of consolation and desolation. "Our congregations are raising up youth with compassionate hearts," said Kirk. "As the CT Conference sets a focus on leadership development, we are intentional about nurturing the spirits of our amazing young people." In addition to Kirk, Program Associate for Racial Justice Ministry Isaac Monts and Jana Priestley of Center Church in Hartford assisted with leadership for the event.



Engaged in art exploration

*~ Debby Kirk is Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Connecticut Conference UCC.*



## **PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29**

**10:00am Palm Sunday Procession ~ come, experience this joyous event!**

**10:30am Worship Service marking the beginning of Holy Week**

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 2**

**7:30pm Holy Communion & Tenebrae Service**

## **GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

**12:10pm Service of Scripture Readings, Music, and Silent Reflection**

## **EASTER, APRIL 5 ~ "HE IS RISEN, INDEED!"**

**9:00am Resurrection Breakfast in the Church House! Don't miss out on yummy breakfast breads, juices, coffee, tea, and egg casseroles! After breakfast, children are invited to gather at the Meeting House at 10:15am to process into Worship with the choir, waving bright and colorful ribbons! Children will then join their families to enjoy a wonderful --**

**10:30am Family Worship Service (no Church School.) Following Worship, we invite the children to an Easter Egg Hunt ~ don't miss this joyous Easter celebration! (Church School families - if you have any questions, please email Jana for assistance.)**



# 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 the form below and send it with a check in the amount of \$12 per plant, payable to *The First Church of Christ in Hartford*, 60 Gold Street, Hartford, 06103, **by Wednesday, April 1.** 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: \$** \_\_\_\_\_



CENTER CHURCH

*Music and the Arts*

presents

# Southern Rail

**Bluegrass Music in Worship and Concert**



**Sunday, March 15, 2015**

**10:30 a.m. (worship) and**

**12:00 p.m. (concert)**

**Freewill donations will be received.**

**Center Church – 675 Main Street – Hartford**

**[www.centerchurchhartford.org](http://www.centerchurchhartford.org) phone: 860-249-5631**

*Free, secure parking available in the Travelers Towers garage;  
enter via the ramp down from Atheneum Square North.*

CENTER CHURCH

*Music and the Arts*

presents

# Mona Golabek



**Excerpts from *The Pianist of Willesden Lane***

**Holocaust experiences of Ms. Golabek's  
mother and grandmother, playing at Hartford Stage  
from March 26 through April 26**

**Sunday, April 19, 2015 10:30 a.m.**

*Offered to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the Armenian Genocide*

**Center Church – 675 Main Street – Hartford  
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*Free, secure parking available in the Travelers Towers garage;  
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The deadline for the MAY/JUNE 2015 ISSUE OF  
*CENTER CHURCH NEWS* is **Monday, April 20.**

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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  
Librarian: Bruce Bidwell  
Office Administrator: Marie Ferrantino  
Bookkeeper: Charlotte Cardone  
Office Assistants: Frances Burton, Rosemarie Martocchio  
Sexton: Thomas St. Amant