



FROM THE PASTOR

A couple of weeks after Easter, I will be leaving you for a week to journey with 9 nine colleagues from the Connecticut Conference on a visit to our Partner Churches in South Korea! Center Church has been invited to consider entering into a partnership relationship with a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK, the UCC's partner denomination in Korea) just outside of Seoul, in Suwon, a city of over a million people. I will be traveling on an exploratory mission to get to know them and tell them about us (I will be preaching there April 22). We can discuss whether or not we want to enter into a relationship in which we would exchange news and prayer requests on a regular basis, host visitors every few years, and perhaps send a delegation ourselves in the future. I will be staying with a host family from this congregation.

This invitation came to me as a surprise a couple of weeks ago! I have learned to pay attention to opportunities that arise in unexpected ways, as often the Spirit is at work. My trip does not commit us to this partnership, but I hope we will discuss it between now and April. Center Church engages in much powerful ministry right here in Hartford, and that has been pretty much our total focus for some time. South Korea, a country I have visited before, right now is in a very challenging time. The Olympics may make it seem that all is perfect, but the people of Suwon live maybe an hour from the border with North Korea. The people live in the very real possibility of nuclear or conventional war erupting around them any time. I look forward to standing in solidarity with them, to hearing their concerns and struggles, to experiencing their deep faith as well as their fears. I also look forward to sharing with them the joys and challenges of urban ministry, perhaps learning some things from them that might give us new ideas. I will give you more details on the trip as the time approaches. In the meantime, here's an introduction to Suwon. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suwon>

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse



MINISTRY OF EASTER FLOWERS

Easter is on its way! 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, the cost is \$15 per plant. Please find an order form in the Sunday bulletin, or call the Church Office to make arrangements. (Submission deadline is Wednesday, March 28.)



Capital Campaign

We are about to enter the “Public” phase of our Capital Campaign as we seek to raise as much as possible to pay for the \$1.8 million repair of our steeple! This month, we hope to have the clock and bell working once again, with all work projected to be completed sometime in May, weather permitting! We also will do major repair to the front steps. When we approach Foundations and Corporate Giving offices, it helps us if we can say that 100% of our congregation contributed. Even \$20 helps! Please pledge or give this month.

NEW LOGO NEEDING DESIGN!

We would like to create a new logo for Center Church! Do you know a graphic designer with whom we might work to design a new reflection of our image for the world? Contact Shelly.

STAFF CHANGES

We are delighted to welcome Ileia Belton back to the Center Church staff as the Church House cleaner.



JESUS AND JUSTICE INTERCHURCH CONVERSATIONS

Join us each Thursday in Lent to look at the Sermon on the Mount through the eyes of Jesus and his work for Justice as it illuminates our own. Light snacks available. The schedule is as follows:

March 1: Center Church. *Salt and Light: Justice Evangelism.*

March 8: Faith Church (2030 Main St., parking available): *Loving Enemies*

March 15: Asylum Hill (814 Asylum Ave. parking available): *Right Relationships*

March 22: Immanuel (10 Woodland St. parking available): *Treasures in Heaven*

WARBURTON RESOURCE, OUTREACH, AND COLLABORATION CENTER (“THE WROCC”)

DROP-IN HOURS

Wednesdays, 10:00am-1:00pm

Thursdays, 1:00pm-4:00pm



THANKS TO OUR FEBRUARY COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

Jennifer & Jonathan Otte, Joe Readon & family, Larry Roeming & friends, and Jeff Thomas & family



TERRENCE FRENCH, TAWFG

Terrence French, the teenage version, has enrolled in a terrific Connecticut Conference UCC program called Thinking About Working for God (TAWFG)! What this means is that Terrence will be exploring what serving in a church is all about. The program requires him to be part of three worship services this Spring, as well as to be involved in other aspects of church life. We celebrate that Terrence is in this program and that the Conference sees the value in mentoring young leaders.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark May 6 on your calendar for a possible Congregational Meeting on our by-law revision!

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Baptisms, Births, Weddings, Joined, Deaths, Confirmations: *None*

Transfers of Membership:

Monika and Sonal Agwani



UPCOMING DEADLINES

April Newsletter: Friday, March 23

Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday

MUSIC News

COMING UP IN MARCH

Music and Arts Concert: *The Nat Reeves Jazz Trio*

Sunday, March 11, 4:30pm
in the Meeting House
Free, with reception to follow

Palm Sunday Morning, 10:30am Service

Choral Presentation: *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Th. DuBois

Presented by the Center Church Choir
Soloists with Harp and Timpani

THE "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" CHALLENGE CLASS

We have been having large groups and lively discussions as we continue our Lenten series on the challenges to Loving Our Neighbors. We will continue our White Privilege curriculum for one more session on March 4. March 11 will feature guest speaker Donna Schaper on our immigrant, undocumented neighbors. March 18 will feature a presentation on our transgender neighbors. We hope to continue in April, so stay tuned! 12:00pm-1:30pm, in the Church House, with lunch provided.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 3/2 Alvin Thompson
- 3/2 Ruth Fortune
- 3/5 Roderick Jones
- 3/6 Michelle Jones
- 3/7 Connor James Thomas
- 3/8 Angie Smith
- 3/9 Cheryl Sanderson
- 3/9 Roberta Roy
- 3/12 A'drea Parkes
- 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



BACK IN THE DAY!

March is Women's History Month, or better still: March is Women's *Herstory* Month! Imagine the stories Julia Isham could have told about driving around Hartford in her 1903 curved-dash Olds! It was one of the first automobiles registered in Connecticut. Julia and Charlotte Isham lived at 211 High Street, and you can see their Italianate house from I-84. They were members of Center Church. Today the house is owned by Connecticut Landmarks.

~ Roberta L. Roy,
Church Historian

"CHRIST THE REFUGE" CHURCH WORSHIPS IN CHURCH HOUSE

On Sunday, February 18, we welcomed a South Indian congregation, Christ the Refuge Church, to worship in our Church House Chapel. They will worship each Sunday from 10:00am-12:00pm, and their children will have a program down in the basement dining room. We will have a three-month trial period to see if this will all work out. If you see them, please welcome them!

THOMAS HOOKER HAS A...BREWERY?

Indeed, Hartford boasts a brewery named after the founder of our church (who undoubtedly drank beer as it was safer to drink than the water in those days)! As winter turns to spring, let's get together just for fun to discover this watering hole (and there are beverages other than beer to purchase, as well as food) on Wednesday, March 14, anytime after 6:00pm. Shelly will snag some table space, so come join her for a relaxing evening. Hooker Brewery is located at 140 Huyshope Ave and parking is available. 21 and over only, please. Check out their website: <https://hookerbeer.com/colt/>

FROM THE WARBURTON DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH MINISTRIES

I have officially completed my first month here at Center Church and I am blown away by the amount of good this church does. Did you know that in my first 30 days here, this church helped 26 people with their dental bills? Or, that we gave out 184 clothing items and logged a combined 300 volunteer hours, serving over 400 meals? I sure didn't know that before working here and I feel that most people don't. So, go us! If you are looking to contribute to this stunning amount of good, we are still signing up for triage meals in March and accepting donations for clothing. We always need men's winter hats and gloves, t-shirts, and underwear.

~ Logan Singerman

DENTAL "BED FUNDS" AVAILABLE

We discovered recently that many of our members do not know that we have a very old endowment with Hartford Hospital that allows people to receive assistance in paying for dental work through the Hospital. Please contact Logan Singerman if you have questions or would like to apply for these funds!



SPECIAL WORSHIP EVENTS IN MARCH

March 4: Guest preacher and worship leader, Dr. Efrain Agosto! Dr. Agosto, a professor at New York Theological School, is a Center member and we are delighted to have him bring the word!

March 11: Guest preacher the Rev. Dr. Donna Schaper. Rev. Schaper is the pastor of Judson Memorial Church in New York City and one of the leaders of the New Sanctuary Movement concerning undocumented immigrants. She is a prolific author, teaches regularly at many schools, including Hartford Seminary, writes for the UCC Daily Devotionals, and has been an outspoken leader in many social justice movements. She is also Shelly's friend of many years. We are honored to have Donna speak and lead our adult faith formation class following worship.

March 25: Palm Sunday! Our usual procession following worship, returning to refreshments and egg dyeing for all at the Church House.

March 29: Maundy Thursday. Worship at 7:00pm including Holy Communion and Tenebrae Service (reading of the story of Jesus' last hours ending in darkness and silence). One of the most beautiful services of the church year.

March 30: Community Good Friday Procession and Service. Stay tuned for more detailed information about this event: 12:00pm-3:00pm.

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, 9:30am to 11:30am, Sunday 9:45am to 10:45am, or by appointment.

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