CENTER CHURCH

The First Church of Christ in Hartford

NEWS

Volume XXVIII, No. 5 September/October, 2012

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:
10:00am
(Early June through the Sunday before Labor Day)

RALLY SUNDAY is September 9th

A special invitation to Center Church School Families ~
Let's gather at 9:30 for a light breakfast in the Chapel!

& our Sunday Worship service returns to 10:30am in the Meeting House!

Welcome, Reverend Damaris!

Dear First Church of Christ Members,

After much prayer and work, we are happy to announce and welcome The Reverend Damaris Whittaker as our minister effective August 31, 2012. Approval for the transition committee and the designated minister path was voted at the June 17, 2012 congregational meeting. The Transition Committee and Reverend Ineke Mitchell, from the UCC Regional Conference Ministry, unanimously approved Reverend Whittaker as our minister. A congregational meeting was held on July 29, 2012; at this meeting, the congregational members voted to approve Reverend Whittaker as Minister of the First Church of Christ in Hartford.

When you get a chance, please take a moment to thank the Transition Committee and Ineke Mitchell for their prayers, wisdom, and discernment in helping us identify our new minister. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will continue to pray and work together on our guiding principles as we welcome, support, and love our sister in Christ, Reverend Damaris Whittaker. Please read the brochure (elsewhere in this newsletter) for an overview of Damaris's excellent ministerial and administrative background, experiences, and gifts. We are truly blessed and grateful to have her as our minister.

Shalom,
Luciano Valles, Jr.
Moderator

MEET REVEREND DAMARIS

The Growth and Vitality Ministry would like to invite you to *"Happy Hour with Damaris Whittaker"* at the home of Mark Fisher and Luciano Valles on Friday, September 21st, 6:30-9:30 pm. This will be a great chance to get to know Damaris a little better and connect with your church family after the summer. Wine, beer, soda, and light hors d'oeuvres will be served. Please sign up in the Green Book or email Marie so that she can add you to the attendance list. We hope you can come out and visit with Damaris and the rest of your church family.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/02	Joyce Peroza
9/02	Deborah Tuthill
9/05	Bryan Denman
9/06	Peter Austin
9/07	William Jackson
9/08	Joyce Buckingham
9/13	Lawrence Roeming
9/20	Gail Canzano
9/20	Gregory Sanders
9/21	Joseph Bradley
9/27	Valerie Thaxter-Grant

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/01	Angela Taveras
10/04	Janice Lombardi
10/09	Sara Markham
10/09	Jennifer Morales
10/11	Erich Faust
10/12	Dana Geter-Walker
10/13	Shepherd Holcombe, Jr.
10/13	Lynn Schwartz
10/15	William Gourlie
10/16	Jane Macomber
10/18	Willie Mae Geter
10/21	Kathleen Davidson
10/21	Edgar French
10/23	George Hernandez
10/29	Shirley Sanders

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

9/02	Deborah Tuthill & Sarah Schneiderman
9/08	James & Lisa Thomas
9/11	Harold & Joyce Buckingham
9/16	Dennis Morin & David Owens
9/17	James & Jane Macomber
9/27	Anthony & Karen Sanders

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/01	Timothy & Maryanne Sanderson
10/04	Sarah & Michael Gale
10/09	Katherine Markham & David Feldman
10/12	Gordon & Sally Smith

Dear Center Church friends,

Since retiring from the Windsor Public Schools last year, I have been looking into possibilities of living and teaching outside of the United States, figuring if I were ever to have such an experience, the time would be between my 65th and 70th year. I was working through an excellent placement company, "Search Associates," an online and job fair service that helps to connect international schools and teachers seeking overseas positions. Sue and I returned from a Search Associates job fair in Bethesda, Md., feeling positive about the process, but not expecting anything to come about for at least another year.

Well, a connection was made. Liceo Ingles in Pereira, Colombia, had a last-minute need to fill a position with someone they felt could teach two 5th grade Geography classes, two 7th-grade Ancient World History classes, and one 9th- grade American History class. Part of the mission of the school is for all instruction to done in English, so that students will become bilingual by the time they graduate from high school. But -- I will be working on my Spanish! I'd had a series of phone and Skype interviews, looked closely at the school's profile, and done some discerning…and I feel that living and teaching in Colombia is a life opportunity I can't deny. Sue is supportive, thankfully. We're learning to Skype, and I will be home for three weeks at Christmas.

But, I'm sorry to leave at such an exciting time in the life of Center Church. I will miss you all and ask that you keep me and Sue in your prayers. I will be finding ways to communicate my experiences, and know that God will be present with us all.

Fortunately, we have a very able replacement in Luciano Valles, Jr. as Church Moderator. I am confident that Center Church is in good hands, as the Rev. Damaris Whittaker's new ministry takes hold. So, until the Christmas holidays -- vias con dios!

Bill Warner-Prouty

Update: At the August 12, 2012 Prudential Committee Meeting, the committee voted to move Luciano Valles, Jr. from his role as Assistant Moderator to Moderator.

Allen Ackerman, Mary BeBisio, Carolyn Bidwell, Hulon Geter, George & Gladys Hernandez, Robert Irving, Cecelia Jackson, William Jackson, Pamela Libby, Janice Lombardi, Christine MacDonald, Diana Mateo-Perez, Pat Renfro, Madeline Simonson, Gabriela Smith-Rosario, Norman Stanley, Jeffrey Thomas, Dana Geter-Walker, The City of Hartford, The Connecticut Conference of The United Church of Christ, Center Church, and the State of Connecticut

CHURCH MEMBERS& FAMILY NEWS BULLETIN BOARD

Births, New Members, Deaths, Baptisms, Weddings: None.

THANKS to our August Community Meals Participants!

Carolyn Arvidson, André Keitt, Erda Koehn, Dennis Morin, David Owens Lesley Morgan-Thompson, and Marilyn Watson

We were joined by *Hands on Hartford's* Barbara Shaw, and her godson, Anthony. Thanks to everyone who participated. To learn how you can volunteer, please call the Church Office.

MUSICAL NOTES

By Jason Charneski

Welcome Back, Choir!

The Center Church Choir will resume its ministry with the its first rehearsal of the season on Wednesday, September 5 and its first Sunday on September 9 (Rally Sunday). We will welcome to the choir Philippe L'Esperance, a sophomore at the Hartt School, who will serve as the section leader for the tenors. In addition, we welcome as Warburton Choral Scholars two students from Central Connecticut State University: soprano Christina Kershaw and tenor Alex O'Neil. We have two Warburton Choral Scholars positions open (as of this writing – August 16). If you know of a college student who attends a school in the area and might be interested in singing with the Center Church Choir this next season, please have them contact me. *Important: they need not be a music major; rather, we seek students with musical ensemble experience and the ability to read music.*

Wonder and Wisdom in the Windows:
Autumn 2012 Midweek Musical Meditations

Our Midweek Musical Meditations (Wednesdays, 12:15 – 12:30 p.m.) this autumn will be based on the subjects and events depicted in the church's stained-glass windows. Please see a flyer printed elsewhere in this newsletter and invite people to come each Wednesday noontime for some spiritual refreshment through visual and aural art!

New Choir CD Recording Almost Ready

The recording of the concert presented in April by the Center Church Choir and the Chancel Choir of South Church, New Britain, is in the final stages of production. Please keep an eye (and ear) out for an announcement about when it will be available for purchase (exact pricing t.b.a.). Consider it to be on your list of gifts to be given…Christmas is but a few months away!

2012-2013 Season of Music and the Arts at Center Church

Mark your calendars for the following events on the 2012-2013 Season of Music and the Arts at Center Church

Sunday, October 28, 2012, at 3:00 p.m.
Baroque Beauty
Douglas Worthen, flute; Maryse Carlin, harpsichord
Works by J. S. Bach and Joseph Bodin de Boismortier
Dr. Worthen is on the faculty of Southern Illinois University. Ms. Carlin is a member of the faculty of Washington University in Saint Louis and performs with the Saint Louis-based Kingsbury Ensemble.
Admission: Donations received at the door (suggested $10 per person).

Sunday, December 16, 2012, at 4:00 p.m.
A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols with the Center Church Choir
Admission: Free. A freewill offering will be received to help support the MANNA programs of Hands on Hartford

(Continued on next page)

Sunday, April 21, 2013, at 4:00 p.m.
CANTUS -- the Minneapolis-based all-male professional chamber choir

We're thrilled to welcome CANTUS, recognized by *Fanfare* as the "…premier men's vocal ensemble in the United States," to the series. This Minneapolis-based group is comprised of ten professional singers whose repertoire spans period and genre, including chant, Renaissance music, contemporary works, art song, folk, spirituals, world music, and pop. Admission: Tickets ($40 premium seating, $25 general seating, $15 student/senior) available for purchase now!

Wednesday, May 1, 2013, at 7:30 p.m.

The Center Church Choir

2013 marks the 100th birth anniversary of Benjamin Britten and 90th birthday of Ned Rorem, two major composers of the 20th century who, in many ways, eschewed the atonal angst of the period by keeping melody paramount. We'll honor them and other melodists past (including J. S. Bach, Maurice Duruflé, and Felix Mendelssohn) and present (including Center Church's own composers Robinson Buck and Benjamin Rauch) in a diverse program that will pique the ear, heart, and mind. Admission: Donations received at the door (suggested $10 per person).

The Music and the Arts annual fundraising campaign will begin in mid September. Please keep an eye out for this information and consider how you can help us to build upon a 191-year history and heritage of offering great music and art to the city and region!

A Brief Report on the American Guild of Organists' 2012 National Convention

I had the distinct honor of being in Nashville, Tennessee, the week of July 2 for the national convention of the American Guild of Organists. Held biennially, these conventions draw between 1,500 and 2,000 organists to experience a panoply of instruments, gather with colleagues and make new friends, hear and sing or play new music (always a highlight – getting a sense of the overall scope of what's being composed and published!), and hear top-level organists and choirs perform.

The top performance was that by the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, under the direction of their relatively-new conductor, Stephen Layton. The concert was flawless: perfectly in-tune *a cappella* singing, incredible range of dynamics, and a choice of program that honored the diverse treasury of sacred music old and new. Many readers of this newsletter may recall that we presented the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, here at Center Church in September of 2002 and that it, too, was a stunning, highly inspirational happening.

The organ was, of course, featured throughout t the week. Instruments that stand worthy of mention are the perfectly-balanced Lively-Fulcher in Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal) and the Fisk in the brand-new Covenant Presbyterian Church (a neo-Gothic campus on the southwest edge of the city). The most interesting program was that for organ and percussion, featuring – as its framework – the performers' transcriptions of many movements from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst.

Though the Convocation featured a wonderful, thoughtful sermon by The Reverend Dr. Anna Carter Florence (Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia) based on the story of David dancing before the Lord and a lovely new choral setting, by Eleanor Daley, of Robert Bridges' "Christ Hath a Garden" [on the to-be-ordered-for- the-Center Church Choir-list], there was a level – for me, at least – of "something amiss." I won't go into detail here (speak to me if you want to know more). I'll summarize it by stating it has to do with context and location.

ITEMS NEEDED at Hands on Hartford's MANNA PROGRAM!

- pasta
- spaghetti sauce
- tuna
- peanut butter
- canned tuna
- cereal
- canned beans
- canned ravioli
- toiletries (especially shampoo, toothpaste, & bar soap)

Food Pantry
Donations Needed

Please Update Your Church Staff Email Contact List!

The church staff has been experiencing multiple technical issues in using their latest email accounts ending in ".org". Therefore, we have returned to using our former email addresses ending in ".net". This is effective immediately. Please update your contact list as follows:

Rev. Damaris Whittaker, Minister:	dwhittaker@centerchurchhartford.net
Jason Charneski, Director of Music & the Arts:	jasoncharneski@centerchurchhartford.net
Marie Ferrantino, Office Administrator:	marie@centerchurchhartford.net
Charlotte Cardone, Bookkeeper:	charlotte@centerchurchhartford.net

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CONGRATULATIONS, EVAN & EMILY!

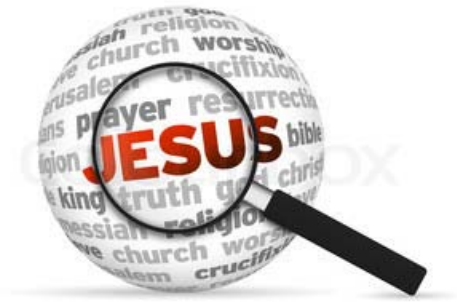
Former Warburton Intern Evan Harrison and his wife Emily, welcomed a baby girl, Natalie, on June 29th. Natalie was a healthy 7lbs; 8 oz; 22 inches! You may send congratulations to Reverend Evan c/o: Sunnyside Presbyterian Church, 3997 Sunnyside School Road, Fayetteville, NC 28312.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASSES

will resume at 8:45 a.m. on September 16!

"The Difficult Sayings of Jesus"

We will be discussing some challenging statements by Jesus, which are discussed in *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus*, by William Neil. Professor Neil was one of Scotland's best known Bible teachers.



"The problem Professor Neil addresses . . . arose before the words of Jesus were ever committed to writing. Even during his ministry, what Jesus said was often misunderstood by his hearers ....

Not every saying classified as "difficult" is perplexing for the same reasons. Sometimes Jesus' meaning seems clear enough . . . until one tries to apply what he said in a particular case. What does it mean to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's? How are we to live out Jesus' warning to Peter that all who take the sword die by it? When must we turn the other cheek?

For Professor Neil, understanding Jesus' words is not a question of solving a puzzle to satisfy idle curiosity. As is evident on every page of this book, understanding the difficult sayings of Jesus is but the first step to a new appreciation for the challenge of Christian faith. In a real sense, when we understand the difficult sayings of Jesus, our difficulty has just begun."

-- Note from The Publishers

For several weeks, we will discuss two sayings per class. The only reading needed to participate in the class will be reading the relevant Bible passages for that week.

If you have any questions, please contact Alvin Thompson.

CENTER CHURCH

Autumn 2012

Midweek Musical Meditations

WONDER AND WISDOM IN THE WINDOWS

Engage your eyes through the color and craft of the church's windows. Engage your ears, heart, and mind through music and words that relate to the subjects contained therein.

WEDNESDAYS, 12:15 – 12:30 P.M.
SEPTEMBER 12 - NOVEMBER 28

Center Church
675 Main Street, Hartford
www.centerchurchhartford.org phone: 860-249-5631

You're Invited!

GOLD STREET GALA

Saturday, October 27, 2012
5:00 – 8:00 PM
Church House Second Floor Parlor
Tickets: $10

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There will be:

A Live (and lively) Auction
Music from South America
Hors d'oeuvres, desserts & beverages
…and a great time, with lots of laughs!

Look for further details in upcoming church bulletins and in Center Church E-News blasts!
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What others are saying about Rev. Damaris Whittaker

"Some of Damaris' strengths are those of a leader with integrity and character. She is energized by new challenges that require creativity and team work. She is a determined person with strong convictions. An outstanding preacher."

Rev. Edwin Ayala, Christian Activities Council

"Rev. Damaris Whittaker is a community leader who has perseverance, initiative and intellectual creativity."

Fernando Morales, Deputy Director, Latino Community Services

"Damaris is a moving speaker, who touches the hearts and souls of all who hear her"

Imam Kashif Abdul-Karim, Muhammad Islamic Center of Greater Hartford—Mosque

Rev. Whittaker was a speaker at Annual Summit of Latino Faith Leaders in New Haven, 2012

Others References:

- Rev. Ed Horstmann, Immanuel Congregational Church, UCC
- Rev. Mark Diters, Flagg Road, UCC
- Rev. Josh Pawleck, Unitarian Universalist East

Rev. Damaris Whittaker

"I have found that gratitude is an agent of healing, liberation and transformation"

REV. DAMARIS WHITTAKER

Rev. Whittaker leading an Invocation at Hartford City Hall

Rev. Damaris Whittaker is currently the Director of Marketing and Development at the Christian Activities Council Congregational, UCC.

Rev. Damaris Whittaker served as the co-pastor at New Hope Hispanic Church, UCC from 2006 to 2010.

From 2002 to 2006, she served at Iglesia Camino de Salvacion, New Britain, CT.

She did her Theological Studies with the Assemblies of God and has a Master Degree in Non-profit Management and Philanthropy.

She is an active speaker and advocate on issues of domestic violence, women issues and healthcare.

Most recently, she serves as Co-Chair of the Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Healthcare of Connecticut, is a designee of the Governor's SustiNet Cabinet and is the chair of the Healthcare Ministry Team of the Connecticut Conference of United Church of Christ.

Other Ministerial Experience

- Rev. Whittaker began her ministry serving in other countries including The Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Mexico. She has also traveled to India for study.
- Rev. Whittaker has been trained as a counselor for victims of domestic violence.
- Rev. Whittaker was a Co-Founder of the Instituto Biblico Latino-Americano of Hartford, which is now a branch of the Latin American Council of Churches of New York.
- She is a co-founder of New Hope in Community, a grassroots organization formed in partnership with Latino Community Services with focus, at the time, to address the issues of the Latino Community as it relates to HIV/AIDS with a Spiritual Counseling component. St. Francis Hospital was a key partner in the initiative.

Rev. Whittaker, Imam Abdul-Karim and Rev. Pawleck testifying in front of the Governor's Cabinet

Recent Interfaith Speaking Engagements

- Muslim Coalition Annual Convention Interfaith Dinner 5/2012
- Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice Key Note Speaker—March 2012.

Awards

Rev. Whittaker is a recipient of the following awards:

- Interdenominational Alliance, Martin Luther King's Drum Major Award-2009, in recognition of her Interfaith/Multicultural work.
- Latino Community Services—in recognition of her leadership in the Latino/Faith Community on issues of HIV/AIDS

In the News

Most recently, some of Rev. Whittaker's work have been depicted in the news, as follows:

- **Op-Ed—Why I support the Affordable Health Care Act** ; http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/ctnj.php/archives/entry/op-ed_why_i_support_federal_health_care_act/#.T-iIMhBFlJ4.facebook
- **"Protesters target Cigna"** Hartford Courant, April 26, 2012
- **Advocates Applaud as US Supreme Court Upholds Core of Affordable Care Act** http://www.ctucc.org/news/20120628_aca.html