



PENTECOST
The birth of the Church
June 9 - 2019



**POST-RETREAT UPDATE:
FUTURE & CENTER
CHURCH**

The Vision Team has been hard at work and will soon be ready to present some scenarios to the congregation which take the priorities decided by the congregation at the retreats and Annual Meeting and explore the following: what we might look like as a church if we began to live into them, what we need to do so, and what we don't need that we might shed. Watch for a call to house meetings to discuss these scenarios and then begin implementation in the Fall. These scenarios will address every part of our life as a congregation, so it will be important for every member to be part of this conversation! More here →

+ From the Pastor +

*Living Into Our Mission ~
Next Steps*

After two major retreats and other smaller meetings, book studies, etc., the congregation identified that our mission priority going forward is to be a **Center for spiritual, social, moral, and ethical connection and collaboration with people, programs, agencies, faith communities, and neighbors of all kinds in Greater Hartford, while developing a vibrant, creative, nurturing, diverse worship life.**

The Vision Team has taken these choices and developed a plan to get to specific Next Steps to live into this mission. **YOU (seriously, all of you!)** are invited to continue being involved in formulating these, because we heard loud and clear that transparency and participation by as many people as are interested was critical to making Center a strong community. Here's what's happening over the summer.

- In order to strengthen our relationships within the church and get to know each other better, as well as discerning the needs of the current congregation, we invite everyone to do **5 "One-on-Ones"** over the summer with others in church. A One-on-One is a focused conversation (more than chit-chat). We'd love you to connect for at least a half hour and discuss "How do you discover and nurture what gives your life meaning?" Make some notes to guide our worship and spiritual life.
- You will be invited to participate in at least **1 House Meeting** this summer. At that time, you will be presented with issues around which we need to formulate specific steps for the congregation to take to move into making Center Church into a place that is a Center for spiritual, social, moral, and ethical connection and collaboration with people, programs, agencies, faith communities, and neighbors of all kinds in Greater Hartford with a vibrant, creative, nurturing, and diverse worship life. You will discuss and propose very specific steps for you to take in teams, CET, and as members.
- We are also exploring opportunities in worship and a potluck to work on these as well, so that we can ensure that **every member of Center Church is able to be part of planning these steps**, because some of them may mean **significant changes** in the way we operate at Center Church.

If there was ever a time NOT to assume that "someone else will take care of this," it is now. Own your church! Use your imagination and your voice. Let's move into the mission we have discerned that God has set out for us!

~ Shelly





OUTREACH UPDATE from Logan Singerman

The above picture was taken at 9:30pm on May 16 in front of the Hartford Public Library. The feet that you see are that of a woman carrying all of her belongings, who had no where to stay for the night. For the sake of this article, we will call her Cathy. Pastor Shelly had met her the day before walking on the street and told her about the WROCC. Cathy was sunburned and concerned about getting an ID. When she came to drop-in hours, she spoke of how she had spent two nights in the hospital – one, because she had a serious sinus infection that was impacting her lungs, and the other because she had nowhere else to go. A kind woman at the hospital was gracious enough to let her stay. Cathy told her story of how she had ended up in CT from Pennsylvania. She was crying, clearly at her wit's end, not sure of who she could trust after so many difficult setbacks. She called 211 and was given an intake appointment two weeks later. That meant that unless she was verified by an outreach worker she would have to wait two weeks before she would even be considered for a shelter bed. That verification happened when this picture was taken. An outreach worker from Salvation Army was able to call, get her in a shelter, and now is working with her to get an ID.

As I write this article, Cathy is in the drop-in center at the Church House. She is greeting people as they walk in, asking them if they would like anything to drink. Cathy is serving people coffee and talking with another woman about helping to organize our clothing donations. Cathy is also a gifted writer and wants to make contributions to a street newspaper. She is currently researching how other cities have allowed people to set up tent cities in designated areas. Cathy has found an article from *The Atlantic* and is now showing it to me. What a difference having a roof over your head and a good night's sleep can make. What remarkable generosity from a person from whom much has been taken or lost. How fortunate that she ran into Pastor Shelly. How sad that if she hadn't, she would probably still be sleeping outside as you read this article.

Let us pray for Cathy. Let us pray for all of the other Cathys who are waiting for their intake appointments or waiting for a shelter bed after completing their intake appointment. And let us push for more shelter beds, so that people don't have to depend on the kindness of hospital emergency waiting rooms. There must be a better way.



THANKS TO OUR MAY COFFEE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*Led & Nancy Baxter, John Conley,
Terrence French & Family,
Richard Jacques & daughter, Lisa
DeThomasis, and Joe Readon & Family*

CHURCH MEMBER DIRECTORY

The 2019 Church Member Directory will be published at the end of this month. Have you changed your email address, mailing address, or phone number? Would you like to submit a new photo for the directory? Please send all info to Marie in the Church Office by Friday, June 21. Thank you!

MIDSUMMER NEWSLETTER

We will publish a Midsummer newsletter at the end of July (combining July and August.) The submission deadline is Friday, July 19.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Baptisms, Confirmations, Births,
Membership Transfers, Deaths, Joined:

None

♥ Weddings (both 5/25) ♥

Congratulations to

Graeme MacKenzie & Emily Blanchard

Michael Sieger & Margaret Lloyd



PUBLICATIONS DEADLINES

*2019 Member Directory: **June 21***

*Midsummer Newsletter: **July 19***

Weekly E-News: Each Tuesday

Sunday Bulletin: Each Tuesday

Celebrations

- 6/1 Hope Hassock
- 6/2 Sophia French
- 6/8 Suzanne Thomas
- 6/8 David Reynolds
- 6/8 Margaret Lloyd
- 6/9 Jennifer Otte
- 6/10 Jonathan Geter
- 6/12 Jeffrey Thomas
- 6/12 Catherine Maclean
- 6/13 Rashawn Jones
- 6/13 Maleeah Rios
- 6/16 Dennis Morin
- 6/19 Timothy Otte
- 6/19 Bailey Sudell
- 6/20 Heidi Thomas
- 6/20 Richard Gooden
- 6/21 Joel Gonzalez
- 6/26 Terrence French
- 6/27 Mary Hawkes
- 6/27 Emily Markham
- 6/30 David Owens
- 6/30 Catherine Maclean



- 6/24 Anne Ostberg & Peter Bender
- 6/27 William & Dorothy Wurts

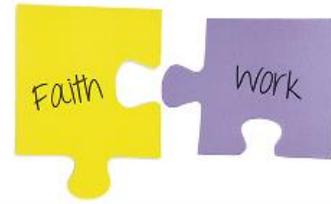
Center Church Celebrates "FAITH & FAMILY DAY" at Dunkin' Donuts Park



Yard Goats Baseball Game, Saturday, August 24 Game begins at 6:05pm

We have a supply of 25 tickets available at \$13 each (field box.) Please make checks available to "The First Church of Christ in Hartford", write "Yard Goats" on the check memo, and send to Marie's attention at the Church Office.

Join in for this memorable day!



CONVERSATIONS ON FAITH & WORK

For seven Wednesday beginning June 5, from 7:00pm-8:30pm, you are invited to join in a small group study on "Connecting our Spiritual Lives with our Work in the World." **This study is particularly geared to people who are working or volunteering regularly in some setting.**

Questions to be explored include: Who or what has most influenced the work you do today? Where do you find meaning in your work? What does being faithful look like for you at work? What obstacles prevent you from integrating your life of faith with your life in the world? Our first meeting will take place in the Church House Parlor, but after that, we will gather in each other's homes. If you are interested, please let Shelly know so she has enough books on hand for everyone.

SUMMER SERIES: SAFETY AT CHURCH

Part 1: Why We Need Safe Conduct Policies

On February 24 of this year, a group of parents, guardians, teachers and staff gathered in the parlor of the Church House for a review of Center Church's *Safe Church Policy*. For some of us, the notion that a congregation such as ours needs to be equipped at such a level - namely, guidelines in place to promote safety in our life together and in preparation for times when behaviors cross boundaries such that people suffer - might be troubling...

What is "safe church" about? Is this something new that churches are doing or has something changed in the realm of church organizational policy?

Welcome to the first in a three-part series I'm calling *Safety at Church*. Please take some moments each time you receive this newsletter over the next few months to review what I hope will be concise, but important, highlights concerning the way our church is committed to improving the safety of all people who are a part of this spiritual community.

"Safe Church" awareness and terminology have developed over the past twenty years or so in response the stunning lack of preparation many churches have demonstrated when it comes to cultures of secrecy and power. This has allowed varieties of abuse to thrive; the use or neglect of power that results in physical, emotional, and/or psychological abuse has no place in the church, and so, congregations and their insurance boards have sought to shape guidelines for conducting our life together which reduce the possibilities for hidden misbehavior.

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SUMMER SERIES: SAFETY AT CHURCH (*continued*)

The term *Safe Church* has come to refer to the guidelines and policies by which church programming, staffing and leadership is shaped. This term has more recently been copyrighted by one particular insurance agency, and in the United Church of Christ, we are now shifting to use of the term *Safe Conduct*.

Center Church has begun updating its April, 2009 "Safe Church Policy" to reflect the policies and procedures needed to ensure a safe and caring community, where everyone can enjoy safe space, free of verbal or physical abuse of any kind, including any type of sexual misconduct or harassment. We do this by way of written agreements to screen all volunteers with criminal background checks, as well as provide mandatory annual training for all those who work with minors and other vulnerable groups. Our current policies are being expanded to include specific instructions about ensuring our extravagant welcome to all people includes precautions for those who have committed sexual offenses and are now purposefully moving into new and faithful living within our church community.

Our Safe Conduct Policy includes levels of preparation for all of us: adults with children, minors with minors, group activities offsite, and situations where boundary crossing may occur. They are designed both to anticipate and train for possible problem areas, as well as to provide instruction on what to do if an offense occurs. Stay tuned for the next newsletter when I'll share some specific definitions with discussion about why it matters that all of us are equipped to contribute to a safer community.

~ Pastor Nada, Acting Director of Faith Formation

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

This Summer, we will worship around the theme "*God is Still Speaking Through...*" We will Worship in the Meeting House throughout June at 10:30am. During July and August, we will meet upstairs at the Church House **at 10:00am!** We encourage children and youth to join us, and we will have an area where they may play quietly when we move to the Church House. Watch the weekly email for more details! The schedule is as follows:



JUNE

2 Through love
9 Through the Spirit (Pentecost)
16 Logan leads worship
23 Through companions (a cappella Sunday!)
30 Through us

JULY (Worship moves to Church House @10:00am)

7 Through Sacraments
14 Through the Bible
21 Through Jesus: **Christmas in July**
28 Through Music (hymn sing)

AUGUST

4 TBA
11 Through rest (Sabbath)
18 Through politics and the messiness of the world
25 Through mystery

SEPTEMBER

1 Through labor: Blessing of work

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 (July through Labor Day): Monday thru Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm

Library Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00am-Noon, or by appointment.

P 860.249.5631 * F 860.246.3915

www.centerchurchhartford.org * info@cchartford.org