



The GOOD News!



January 2016

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Haddam
"An Open and Affirming Church"



Lectionary Readings:

January 3, 2016

Second Sunday after Christmas

Jer 31:7-14 or Sir 24:1-12

Ps 147:12-20 or

Wis of Sol 10:15-21

Eph 1:3-14

John 1:(1-9), 1-18

Where Is The Child

January 10, 2016

The Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 43:1-7

Ps 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Affirmed By Love

January 17, 2016

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 62:1-5

Ps 36:5-10

1 Cor 12:12-31a

John 2:1-11

Extravagant Sign

January 24, 2016

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Ps 19

1 Cor 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

Good News, Good Ways

January 31, 2016

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jer 1:4-10

Ps 71:1-6

1 Cor 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

Prophet on the Edge



Pasta Dinner Fundraiser

All proceeds to benefit The Livingston Family.



Friday, January 29th
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Haddam
905 Saybrook Road, Haddam

\$10 Adults \$5 Children (under 12)
Tickets available at the church office or
purchased at the door!

*For more information or to donate,
call (860)345-2742.*




MISSION OF THE MONTH PROJECT

This month it has been suggested that we collect new socks for men and women who are homeless. Clean cotton socks are badly needed at this time of year. When people do not have facilities to do wash or do not have safe dry places to rest, clean dry sock are really appreciated. If you are able to pick up a package or two of socks, place them in the basket in the vestibule. We will bring them to St. Vincent de Paul at the end of the month.

From the Interim Pastor

“Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt” (Matthew 2:13b)

Virtually every nativity scene I'm familiar with includes a wide cast of characters: animals (donkeys and oxen and sheep); one (or more) angels; Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus; Palestinian shepherds; and Persian magi (sometimes with their camels).

The animals and angels and shepherds are drawn from Luke's Christmas story (Luke 2:1-20); the magi are drawn from Matthew's nativity narrative (Matthew 2:1-23). What we think about the magi is largely drawn from the beloved carol “We Three Kings of Orient Are.” We know from Matthew that they brought gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh to the Christ child; from the carol we know what these gifts have come to symbolize in Christian tradition (Jesus as King, as God Incarnate, as Suffering Servant).

There's another segment of the story of the magi that we are less familiar with: how their encounter with King Herod in Jerusalem almost led to the death of the child Jesus. When Herod told the magi that he wanted to go and pay homage to the child, what he really meant was that he wanted to know precisely where the child was to be found, so he could send his soldiers to kill him. Fortunately, both the magi and Joseph were warned in dreams about Herod's evil intentions: the magi did not return to Jerusalem, and Joseph and Mary and Jesus became refugees in Egypt.



Matthew's Gospel says nothing about what refugee life in Egypt was like for Joseph and Mary and their little son. Two thousand years ago, national borders and national security concerns were nothing like they are today, so I surmise that the experience of the Holy Family in Egypt was unremarkable—even though their ethnicity and religious identity made them strangers in a land that had once enslaved their ancestors.

*Luc Merson, “Rest on the Flight into Egypt” (1879)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

Today's global community is facing an international refugee crisis on a scale not seen since the end of World War II in Europe. Today's global community is also facing an international terror threat from the so-called Islamic State and its far-flung sympathizers. Today's refugees from Syria and Iraq are caught between a rock and a hard place: fleeing terror and violence in their home countries, they often face suspicion and hostility in their host countries.

The truth of the matter is that any refugee family accepted for resettlement in the United States or Canada has undergone the most thorough and rigorous background checks of anyone seeking to travel to north America. This is one of the many reasons why I've been participating in a growing coalition of faith-based and service-based organizations whose goal is to work closely with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) to co-sponsor three refugee families in Middletown.

The Middletown Refugee Resettlement Coalition, as we're calling ourselves, still has a lot of preparatory work to do before we can help refugee families resettle. In the meantime, let's all be thinking of the kinds of clothing and household items we could donate to help furnish apartments in Middletown for refugee families, who will arrive in this country with little more than the clothes on their backs. Let's continue preparing ourselves to show hospitality to refugee families, regardless of their ethnicity or religious identity.

Christmas and Epiphany Blessings!

Pastor Doug

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UPDATE

The 5th Yuletide Quilt show was held on December 4, 2015. IT WAS A SUCCESS!! Thank you to everyone who helped with this event. Special thanks to Dena Liedke who organized the arrangement of the quilts in the sanctuary. There were 107 quilted items on display. The bold colors and bright designs presented a visual feast for your eyes. Check the churches web site for photographs of this event. Thank you to Ann Buracchi, our wonderful secretary, who is able to take information and make it into art work. She worked on the posters, the letters and the booklet for the show. Thank you to the Bread Ministry who provided the bread for the lunch and for sale. Thank you to everyone who made soup and pie and everyone who helped in the kitchen. Thank you to Nancy Soneson who has talent for decorating and to everyone who helped to decorate the sanctuary and the fellowship hall for this event. The final thank you is to everyone who took time during this busy season to come to the event. This quilt show is a community event open to everyone. The money raised from this event will be used throughout the year for mission activities locally and world-wide.



There was a raffle at the quilt show. The first prize winner of the Red Birds Fly Home quilt made by Dena Liedke was Kim Goodison, Haddam, the Spirit of the Season afghan knitted by Ginny Evensen and June Lamoureux was won by Ed Little of East Haddam, and the quilted pillow donated by Jane Sperry was won by Eric Lichter, Haddam.



This project continues throughout the year. Cash register receipts from the Higganum Market are returned to the market and the church receives a portion of the total receipts. The amount is usually between \$30 and \$60 per month. The market owner, Mr. Ming is a great community activity supporter. Take a minute to visit the market. The meat is terrific and the sesame noodles are delicious. The Box Tops for Education are given to the elementary schools. These are returned and the proceeds provide for school supplies. The old eye glasses go to the Lion's Club. The empty ink cartridges are brought to Staples. Children's picture books are brought to Read to Grow who give them to families with young children. By recycling your trash you can help someone else and decrease the amount of trash in the land-fill.

FOOD FOR AMAZING GRACE

Each week we collect food items that are brought to the Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown. We collect tuna, mayonnaise, cooking oil, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned fruit and cereal. This month we had only 40 pounds of food. On a good month we have 70 to 100 pounds of food. This pantry is used by hundreds of people each month. Our little bit helps to feed hungry families.

When the month has a 5th Sunday, we collect paper goods for Haddam Public Health.

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN



There was \$37.00 in the Pennies from Heaven tube at the end of the month. This money will be sent to the Haddam Back Pack project. This project provides weekend back packs full of protein rich food and snacks for about 30 school children who are at risk of being hungry on the weekend.

If you have an idea of an agency that would benefit from small donations from this project please notify the minister or the members of the Christian Service committee.

Remember those who are less fortunate



FCCH Participation in Youth and Family Services Holiday Giving Program 2015

Thank you to all who brought in gifts for our Giving Tree Family. We delivered over 30 gifts to YFSHK – almost everything on the family's wish list!



Hat and Mitten Tree Collection

This year's hat and mitten collection was once again a big success. Deb Duval delivered over 40 hats and mittens to WIC of Middletown. Thank you to all who participated in this annual collection!

2015 Children's Christmas Pageant

"Manger Masterpiece"

A Christmas Musical

From high on a hill overlooking Bethlehem, Bernardo Da Vinci painted a beautiful masterpiece with the help of two innkeepers, two tired travelers (Mary and Joseph), two excited young girls, two angels, several shepherds and their flock, three Magi from the East, and a little baby boy.

Thank you to the children of both FCCH and HCC for giving our congregations such a wonderful gift this Christmas!





More pictures can be viewed on our Facebook Page and our website!

2015-2016 Confirmation Class



This year we have six youth in our confirmation program, two from FCCH and four from Higganum Congregational Church.



Our confirmands are:

Michael Barile
Stella Bragoni
Jordan Tupay

Sally Blodgett
Bridget Harry
Thomas Williams



MISSION PROJECT

Please bring in your saved pop-tabs, old eye glasses, box tops for education, & ink cartridges!

There are boxes for each item in the vestibule.



Alyson Campbell	January 6th
Audrey LaRosa	January 8th
Melissa Thompson	January 12th
Sadie Harlow	January 30th
Colton Soneson	January 30th



COMMUNITY QUILTING GROUP

The Community Quilting Group will continue to meet during the summer on the first Wednesday in the morning, 9:30-12:30 and on the third Wednesday in the evening, 6:30-9. Come and learn to quilt! This group will be helping with the Quilt show that will be the first Saturday in December.

This group is open to everyone!

Contact Ginny Evensen for more information
860-301-3964 or vrnevnsn@aol.com.

Help Decorate our Sanctuary this Summer!



A floral arrangement sign-up chart is posted in the vestibule. Please sign up to provide flowers for our altar on any Sunday this spring.

They can be in celebration of a special event or in memory of a loved one – any reason will do!

Higganum Congregational Church Presents:

**ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT
BAKED POTATO BAR
&
GRAB-BAG BOX AUCTION**



Saturday, January 16th at 6pm

\$5 in advance / \$6 at the door

(families pay for adults and make a donation for children under 10!)

Potato Toppings Include: Cheese, Butter, Broccoli, Onions, Mushrooms, Bacon Bits, Chili, Chives, Sour Cream, Salsa and More!

Beverages and Dessert provided too!

Grab-Bag Box Auction is a silent auction where you can bid on mystery boxes!

There are some great things and some goofy things...

TICKETS on sale following the service in Fellowship Hall (HCC) on January 3rd & 10th

Questions? Contact Betsey:
betseyandron@gmail.com or 345-8291

Middlesex Hospice Needs Volunteers

At Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care, volunteers are an integral part of our interdisciplinary team, reaching out to patients and families as they cope with the challenges of terminal illness. Volunteers can choose to work in homecare, on the Weiss Hospice Unit or in bereavement support after completing 40 hours of classes and a 12-hour mentorship. Our annual training runs from early February to mid-April 2016, and is held on four Saturdays and one evening. The program welcomes both male and female volunteers. Volunteers must be 18 years or older. To begin our fall application process, please contact Jackie Thurnauer, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, at (860) 358-6955 or jaclyn.thurnauer@midhosp.org, at your earliest convenience.

New! Medical Transportation to Middletown

Public Transportation for all ages serving
Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Haddam,
Durham, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme,
Old Lyme, Old Saybrook & Westbrook

Connections to Southeast Area Transit buses in New London,
CT Transit New Haven in Madison, Middletown Transit and
CT Transit Hartford in Middletown

Call 860-554-0551

www.9towntransit.com

9 Town Transit is Operated by the Estuary Transit District

The Smarter Choice for Care

MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL

Bereavement Support Groups

Middlesex Hospital
 Every first and third Monday
 5pm-6:30pm
 Conference Room A

One MacDonough Place
 Every second and fourth Wednesday
 10am-11:30am
 Please sign in at the front desk.
(This is the Hospital's assisted living facility on the corner of Main Street extension and MacDonough Place)

Essex Library
 Every first and third Tuesday
 2pm-3pm

Every second and fourth Tuesday
 5pm-6pm
 33 West Avenue, Essex
 860-767-1560

For more information contact:
 Chaplain Dennis McCann
 Hospital Chaplain, 203-640-5821

