



THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



a Monthly Newsletter of the
First Congregational Church of Haddam
and the Higganum Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



in the year 2020 of our Lord
THE LENTEN SEASON



First Congregational Church of Haddam
Higganum Congregational Church
Returned mail to
P.O. Box 215
Haddam, CT 06438

Address Service Requested

Church websites: haddamchurch.org and higganumchurch.org

MARCH WORSHIP SERVICES – Sundays at 9:30 a.m. at First Congregational Church
Christian Education and Child Care provided during most Sunday Worship Services

Dear FCCH and HCC Friends,

“Remember you are dust, and to dust you will return. Repent and believe the Gospel.”

These words, spoken over the squeaky, gritty sound of ashes on skin, signal the start of the season of Lent for many Christians.

Are they a warning? A promise? Perhaps a kind of spiritual “to do” list?

Since “Gospel” means “Good News,” a lot depends on whether we hear the two sentences as complements or contrast. Is it “Good News” that we are mortal (“dust”), or is the Good News “good” because it overrules our death sentence?

Could both be true?

For me this year the words of Ash Wednesday come as a kind of relief. They speak the truth of many in our two congregations struggling with illness, loss, or worry. The ancient, repeated phrases seem to acknowledge the challenge it is to “turn” (“repent”) and to “believe” in goodness.

The first sentence comes as no surprise; the second offers hope. We already walk in awareness of our frailty. In this season of Lent we will be reminded we do not travel alone—and that our destination is Resurrection.

Our eyes will move from the dust at our feet to a rolled-away stone in a garden. When we say and sing “Alleluia” again on Easter, the syllables will come with morning’s joy after this night of weeping.



We are invited to keep a Holy Lent. May our fasting be a feast for our souls, our prayer sweet and deep, and our giving cheerful.

Blessings,
Pastor Michelle

INTERIM CORNER

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee is in the final stages of the Local Church Profile creation. It should take one or two more meetings to complete it. After vetting by Mary Nelson at the UCC, it will be posted on the UCC website.

-MarkSoneson, Chair

HIGGANUM MEETING HOUSE 175TH

July 23, 2020 will be the 175th anniversary of the dedication of the Higganum Congregational Church Meeting House, the oldest continually-used house of worship in Haddam.

If you would like to be part of planning the ***dodransbicentennial*** (!) celebration, please contact Pastor Michelle.

PARISH PAPER

Thanks to the Connecticut UCC's new association with Massachusetts through the Southern New England Conference, our members now have access to *The Parish Paper*, a monthly church leadership newsletter.

The March issue on the Emerging Church is attached as the last page of this newsletter (hard copy) or viewable at:

https://www.sneucc.org/files/files/parish_paper/2020/pp+++3+++2020+---what+is+the+emerging+church.pdf



Elemental Lent

Join First Congregational Church of Haddam (FCCH) and Higganum Congregational Church (HCC) for worship, prayer, and learning this spring as we engage an “Elemental Lent.”

Worship. During our 9:30am Sunday Services at FCCH and HCC we will explore **Essential Elements** of the Lenten Journey through and to Resurrection:

- Sit in the **Wilderness** with Jesus as your fingers trace a track in **Sand**. (March 1st, FCCH)
- Reflect on **Sacrifice** and place a **Stone** of remembrance. (March 8th, FCCH)
- Experience the **Refreshment of Water** (March 15th, FCCH),
- and the **Healing of Light** (March 22nd, FCCH).
- Seek **Connection** with God’s **Love** (March 29th, FCCH)
- and join in the **Expectation of Change** (April 5th, HCC).



Prayer. Each Sunday we will introduce a **devotional theme and scripture** verse for the coming week. (These also will be emailed on Mondays to our mailing list.) Instructions and materials for “**Resurrection Gardens**” to be grown at home will be provided beginning March 1st.

At **Noon on the Wednesdays** in Lent Pastor Michelle or one of our Deacons will toll the bell and then lead a brief (10 minute) service of psalms and prayer in the Memorial Garden at Higganum Congregational Church. (If the elements are *too* daunting, we will move into the Meeting House.) Dates: February 26th, March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th, and April 1st.

Learning. Our 10am Monday Adult Class will continue its study of the scriptures of **Handel’s Messiah** using the Kerygma “Hallelujah” curriculum. This class meets in the Lewis House at FCCH. Newcomers and periodic attendees are welcome! Dates: March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th, and April 6th.

Following worship on **Sunday, March 15th**, four of our church members will present about their recent work at **Back Bay Mission** on the Gulf Coast.



On **Tuesday, March 24th from 7-8:30pm**, the community is invited to Higganum Congregational Church for a special program “**Ask a Chaplain.**” The Rev. Peg Lewis, retired Director of Religious Ministries at Yale New Haven, will answer our questions and share about spiritual support resources available when you or a loved one are hospitalized or undergoing treatment.

Holy Week. Our **Palm Sunday, April 5th**, intergenerational worship service with Palms and Communion at HCC will transition into a second-hour program, “**A Visit to Ancient Jerusalem,**” a hands-on learning experience of Bible times that will include breakfast, crafts, and music.

On **Maundy Thursday, April 9th**, we will offer a solemn service of Communion and Tenebrae at **7pm at First Congregational Church of Haddam.**

Easter. Friends and neighbors are invited to gather on **April 12th for Sunrise Service at 6:30am at Haddam Meadows**, followed by refreshments at First Congregational Church of Haddam.

Our **9:30am Easter Worship Celebration** at Higganum Congregational Church will feature special music and be followed by a traditional Easter Egg Hunt during our fellowship time.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Ash Wednesday. As Lent begins, we are invited to join the members of the **Congregational Church of Killingworth** on **Ash Wednesday, February 26th**, at **7pm**, for a service of worship at the church at 273 Rt. 81, Killingworth.

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY SCHEDULE

The Committees responsible for hosting the fellowship hour after Sunday worship service for the upcoming are as follows:

- March 2020** FCCH Christian Education and Prudential
- April 2020** HCC Outreach



To be sure there will be coffee and treats after each service, members of the assigned committees are asked to update the sign-up sheet in the normal places at each Church

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

If you are available on a **Tuesday or Thursday afternoon in March**, please consider volunteering to cover the desk at the Church



Office. Work will include answering calls and greeting any visitors, plus folding or other light duties. (Those with computer skills may be invited to help with additional projects.)

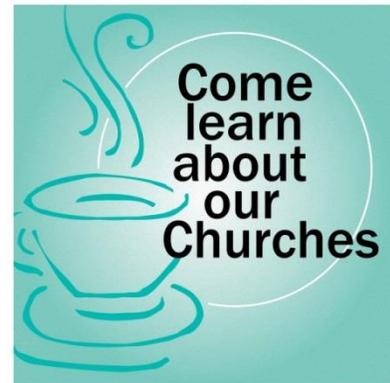
A sign-up sheet for the dates needed is available Sunday mornings.

MEMBERSHIP INQUIRY CLASS



On **Sunday, March 8th**, at **10:45am**, after our worship at FCCH, Pastor Michelle and the Deacons/Membership Working

Group will offer an inquiry class for any with interest in or questions about church membership. Childcare is available. Speak with Deacons Terry Smith or Sue Craffey, or with Pastor Michelle for more information.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Prayer Shawl Ministry – Tuesday, March 3 at 9:30am at HCC

Joint Diaconate Meeting – Monday, March 9 at 7pm at FCCH

HCC Board of Finance Meeting – Monday, March 16 at 7pm at HCC

Joint Church Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 17 at 7pm at HCC

2nd Hour Working Group Updates Meeting – March 29 10:30am at FCCH

Council meetings are open to all Church members, however only members of the Council may vote.



SAVE THE DATE

HK Relay for Life will take place **Saturday, June 27, 2020** from 12 noon - 10pm at the HKHS track. More information to come... any questions see Sue Craffey.



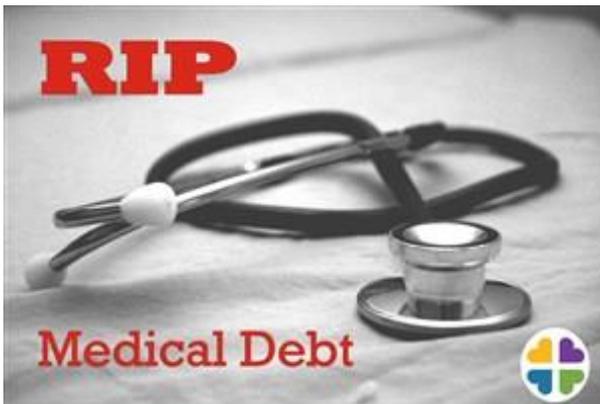
MISSION PRESENTATION

Following worship on Sunday, March 15th at FCCH, we will hear from Lori and Al Chadwick and Ginny and Jack Murphy about their recent mission work at Back Bay Mission on the Gulf Coast. Plan to attend to learn about continuing recovery and development programs our giving supports and to learn how to become involved.



PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM

On **Tuesday, March 24th from 7-8:30pm**, the community is invited for a special **“Ask a Chaplain”** program at HCC. The Rev. Peg Lewis, retired Director of Religious Ministries at Yale New Haven, will answer our questions and share about spiritual support resources available during hospitalization or treatment. Please think about friends and neighbors who might benefit from this program and share with them the **attached flier**.



The new Southern New England Conference is celebrating its birth with an initiative to erase medical debt. For more information on this initiative, visit:

<https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/conference-launches-drive-to-erase-medical-debt-13262728>

Or see the letter posted on the Christian Service bulletin board at FCCH.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

HADDAM FUEL BANK

The Haddam Emergency Fuel Bank has been in existence for more than 30 years. This program is managed by the Social Services department of the town. It is funded only by donations. The FCCH Bread Ministry has supported this vital service since it began under the direction of Rev. Michael Malone. Last year 49 families were given one-time grants to help with heating needs-oil, electricity, wood, natural gas and propane. Assistance with electricity is also available in the summer. About half of the people served are families with children, and half are elderly people.

Submitted by Ginny Evensen



To the First Congregational Church of Haddam

(Excerpt from February 8, 2020 letter from Kent J. Siladi, Bridge Conference Minister, Southern New England Conference, UCC)

We are grateful for your financial support in 2019 of the ministries of the Connecticut Conference and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. We are grateful for the ways in which we do more together than we can accomplish alone.

I want to thank you for submitting your church's Basic Support/OCWM for 2019, with a special acknowledgment to the increase in giving. Your giving as a church affirms our unity and interdependency and helps us to carry out God's mission and ministry in our time. I give thanks for your congregation and its ministry and mission and I look forward to continuing our partnership as members of the United Church of Christ.

-Rev. Kent J. Siladi



Pennies From Heaven

2020 Lenten Collection

benefiting

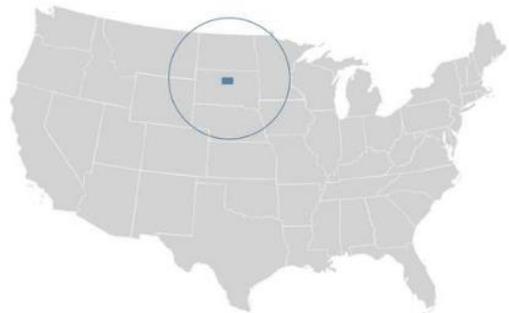
Simply Smiles Native American Initiatives



Many of us know of Simply Smiles and their work to assist the children and families living in poverty in Oaxaca, Mexico. You may remember the orphanage they built and continue to support. Or perhaps you remember hearing about the houses they built for the families living at the Oaxaca City dump. What you might not know is that Simply Smiles has expanded its mission to include assisting Native American children and families on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation.

The Place

Located in South Dakota, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (CRST) Reservation is an autonomous nation within the United States. Four bands of Lakota Indians, approximately 10,000 residents, live in this 1.45 million acre area (roughly the size of Connecticut.)



The Need

On the **CRST**, an overwhelming number of Lakota children are being removed from their homes due to significant safety concerns.

To assist and protect these children while still upholding the core tenet of the Indian Child Welfare Act (to keep Native children within their culture to be raised by kin and community), Simply Smiles is building and managing the first-of-its-kind **Simply Smiles Children's Village** in the Reservation town of La Plant.

The **Simply Smiles Children's Village** is a community of Native foster parents offering a child placement option to Native children who have been removed from their families. The Native foster parents protect, provide for, and help raise the most vulnerable children while staying within the Native community and close to family. The Simply Smiles website explains their objective, stating, " ... the mission of the Simply Smiles Children's Village is to foster Native children to become leaders, role models, and Lakota citizens of the world."

<https://www.simplysmiles.org/crst-childrens-village>

The Response

For Lent, make it your mission to help Simply Smiles in their quest to put more smiles on these children's faces. Each Sunday, bring in your spare change (or bucks!) and put in the **Pennies From Heaven** tube located on the church chancel. All donations will go directly to the Simply Smiles Children's Village. Your contribution *will* make a difference!



“The work of Simply Smiles instills hope and removes obstacles, empowering indigenous peoples to chart their own course to self-determination and a brighter future.”

Interested in checking out the effect Simply Smiles is having on the CRST Reservation? Simply Smiles has numerous mission trips planned this year. Information can be found in the church office or on their website, <https://www.simplysmiles.org/volunteer-crst>

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH LENTEN PROJECT

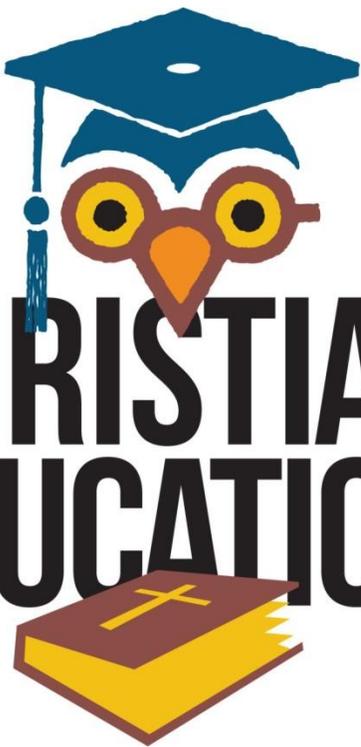
We will be collecting items for the Albert J Solnit Children's Center in Middletown. Abused and neglected youth between the ages of 13-17 from all over the state reside here, while receiving brief treatment and educational instruction.

Upon admission, the youth are given a “Welcome Basket” which contains the following: shampoo, toothpaste and brush, soap, body wash, wash cloth, crayons, journal, activity book, sugar free gum and playing cards.

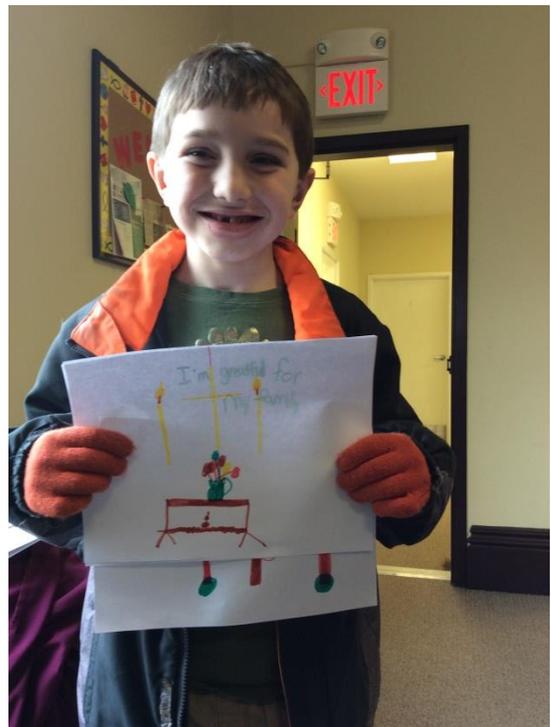
A poster, tags listing the items needed along with a sign up sheet will be available in the social room.

Please return your purchases to FCCH **prior to March 22**. Having congregations of generous givers, we hope to fill 20 baskets. Thank you in advance.

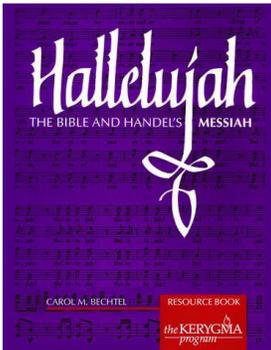




CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



WEEKDAY ADULT STUDY



Our weekday adult study meets on Mondays at 10am at Lewis House on the FCCH Campus.

During Lent, the group will be using the *Kerygma Messiah* study of the music and scriptures of Handel's most famous oratorio.

Join us for one or all of the sessions (March 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th, and April 6th).

Most current participants have purchased the *Kerygma* student book; if you would like a copy at a cost of approximately \$20 including shipping, please let Pastor Michelle know.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPERS

We continue to invite older youth and adults to speak with Christian Education Director Amy Harlow regarding being part of a rotation of assistants for our weekly Sunday School classes.



SUMMER CAMP AT SILVER LAKE



The summer brochure for Silver Lake summer camp is now available.

Visit <https://www.silverlakeect.org/> or pick up a copy at church.

Campership assistance will be available from our congregations and from the Middlesex Association of the United Church of Christ. Speak with CE Director Amy Harlow for more information.



On January 30 the confirmation class and chaperones Jill Barile, Joe Tupay, and I headed out to Silver Lake for a confirmation retreat. Our work during our stay included workshops involving acting, meditative sculpting, drawing, and collage making. We hiked outside and even prayed in the snow in the darkness. We met new friends, discovered new things, played new games, and made six word stories. Our kids made this six word story to describe our church: We are better together than apart. In my opinion, we should listen to our youth- they get it.

Over and over again our kids shined! They participated willingly and acted respectfully. I couldn't have been more proud of the work they did. We left Silver Lake much closer as a group; it doesn't get much better than that. A Special Thanks to my co-chaperones Jill Barile and Joe Tupay. You guys made the trip a breeze. Special Thanks to Kris Tupay for making each one of us a perfect snack bag to go. We loved them! Thank You to the kids- you did an amazing job!!! Lastly, Thank You to the congregation for all of your continued support.

Peace and blessings,
Amy



Super Saturday

March 14, 2020

"Super Saturday is, I believe, the most important wider church community building resource available at this time."

Come Explore Workshops,
Worship and More...

8:00 am—3:45 pm

Minnechaug Regional High School

Wilbraham, MA

Registration Deadline: February 29, 2020

Register Today - www.sneucc.org/supersatreg



Don't miss your workshop! Register Early!



RABBI ELAN BABCHUCK

Theologian, Writer, and Advocate fascinated by the Intersections of Faith, Justice, and Identity

Founding Director of GLEAN Network, an incubator and network for faith leaders who seek to reimagine the role of religion in an ever-changing world yearning for meaning, belonging, and justice. Also serves as the Director of Innovation at CLAL a think-tank focused on the future of faith in America .

SUPER SATURDAY

Super Saturday is a collaborative effort of the Southern New England Conference, UCC, with presenters and attendees from different states and denominations. Visit the link below to register, and speak with Pastor Michelle about carpooling to Wilbraham for this spring's event.

<https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/12792138>



(Selected) Workshop Topics:

"What are Your Five Wishes? A Unique Approach to Discussing and Documenting Care and Comfort Choices"

"Getting Started: The First 6 Months of a New Interim or Settled Call"

"Let's Market Your Church"

"Renting Your Church Facilities- Strategy and Benefits"

"Safe Conduct/Safe Church"

"Lighten Up: Convert Your Church to Solar Energy"

"Church Ministry to Veterans"

"Let's Talk About the Rainbow Flag"

"Building a Planned Giving Ministry"

Invest in futures

Give to One Great Hour of Sharing



One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis.

The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation.

For more information, visit:
https://www.ucc.org/oghs_resources_frequently-asked-questions

THE GREAT HOUR
OF SHARING



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

At FCCH and HCC, we will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on **March 22, 2020**.

FOLLOWING OGHS

Are you on social media? You can connect with OGHS at

[Facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc](https://www.facebook.com/onegreathourofsharingucc)

[Twitter.com/OFHS_at_UCC](https://twitter.com/OFHS_at_UCC)

[Instagram.com/oghsucc](https://www.instagram.com/oghsucc)

MATCHING PROGRAM

If your employer has a matching gift program, visit [ucc.org/matching-gifts](https://www.ucc.org/matching-gifts) to see how your contribution might be doubled!



A note from Sandy
Nightingale

Your kind expression of
sympathy is gratefully
acknowledged and deeply
appreciated

-Sandy

*Sandy thanks everyone for all the support and love
she has felt and continues to feel following the loss
of Paul.*



MEMBER'S CORNER

Do you have a special message
to share with your Church family?
If so, send it in for the Members'
Corner!

LOOKING AHEAD

Our Sunday morning worship
will return to Higganum
Congregational Church in
April.



Our Maundy Thursday worship at 7pm on April
9th will be at First Congregational.

WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS

In the event of severe weather, please visit
wfsb.com or tune to channel 3 for updates and
information on church closings.

Our Staff

Pastor Michelle Madsen-Bibeau mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com
Amy Harlow, CE/Faith Formation Dir. amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com
Church Office 860-345-4304

Belfry Editor
BelfryEditor@gmail.com

Church Office Hours
Tuesdays and Thursdays
from 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Please send your announcements to be included in the next
edition of the newsletter to BelfryEditor@gmail.com
by the 20th of each month.

MARCH CELEBRATIONS



- 1 Autumn Leavitt
- 2 Ray Pierdomenico
Owen Hill
- 5 Margaret Lewis
Andrew Tupay
- 8 Kari Johanson
- 10 Jonathan Williams
- 12 Hannah DuPree Barton
- 13 Neal L. Blodgett Jr.
- 17 Breck Crum
- 22 Amber Tucker
- 24 Karen Palmer
- 31 Walter Zanelli

WITH APPRECIATION

In February we bid farewell to Nicole
Dumpson, who had been serving as Church
Secretary and Belfry Editor since last summer.
We wish her well as she concentrates on
newly-expanded responsibilities at home and
in her continuing full-time work at CCSU.

Many thanks to all who have made themselves
available to pitch in with clerical tasks during
this transition, including former secretary
Stephanie Knopf who is doing occasional
contract work and several church members
who are volunteering time and expertise.

Pastor Michelle and a small group coordinated
by the Moderators and Finance folks of our
congregations will be working during March to
engage a new employee; it remains Pastor
Michelle's strong preference that the office
position be filled by a non-member.

If you have friends or neighbors with computer
and people skills who might be interested,
please direct them to this [LINK](#) for the job
description and application instructions.



“Ask a Chaplain”

Tuesday, March 24th

7:00-8:30pm

Community Program

at Higganum Congregational Church
23 Parsonage Road, Higganum, CT
Accessible Facility

When we or a loved one require hospitalization or treatment, it can feel overwhelming. Chaplains are there to help individuals and families cope with these challenges.

At this spring presentation, Rev. Peg Lewis, retired Director of Religious Ministries at Yale New Haven Hospital, will share spiritual resources for common issues people face and then respond to participant questions. Light refreshments will be served.

This community program is sponsored by the Diaconate/Pastoral Care ministry of the Congregational Churches of Haddam. Please contact us at fcchaddam@gmail.com or 860-345-0982 if **childcare** is needed or **transportation** would be helpful.

Rev. Peg Lewis received her Masters of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and served as chaplain, pastoral educator, and director of the Department of Religious Ministries at Yale New Haven Hospital for more than twenty years.

A life-long resident of Southington, Connecticut, Peg currently serves in pastoral ministry at her home church, First Baptist Church of Southington.

