



THE GOOD NEWS

from the Belfry



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

SEPTEMBER

in the year 2020 of our Lord



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

Dear Haddam and Higganum Friends,

I have always liked maps. Maps of the zoo that show where to find the elephants, street maps that show my street, old maps that speculate about the unknown: “Here be dragons.”

These days, I love my phone’s map function. I am old enough to remember adding up miles between cities on AAA maps to figure out how far I would be traveling, then dividing by 60 for an approximation of my travel time. Now I type in a destination and click “Start,” and I usually can know- often to the minute- when I will arrive, whether by car, bike, train, or feet.

Even better, when I am *en route* the map on my phone shows me where I am.

Some years ago, when even we who are highly invested in denominational life realized things were changing in a post-institutional world, it became fashionable to say “there are no maps” for the church today. This feels even more true in what some have christened “Coronatide,” this strange liturgical season of “virtual” worship, connection, and ministry.

The paper maps are outdated, and the digital ones keep saying “recalculating.” **We need something else to tell us where we are and where we are going.**

In our recent discussion of Baden’s book *Exodus: A Biography*, our little Monday study group learned how the narrative of departure from Egypt and arrival in the Promised Land has inspired generation on generation seeking freedom and opportunity. The book, and the biblical story itself, offered us landmarks and sustenance on the way.

Whether we feel stuck or speeding, our tradition- the Scriptures particularly, and also the stories of those who have blazed faith trails before- offer our souls guidance on the way.

Our gatherings- in-person and virtual- are rest stops where we fill our tanks and canteens,

bandage our blisters, and confirm our direction, (if not our ETA).

“Coronatide” will require ongoing “recalculating.” Nonetheless- no, **therefore-** I encourage you to click “Start” once again as this new program year begins, confident of the one who is Way, Truth, and Life.

Blessings, Pastor Michelle

INTERIM PROCESS

A colleague asked me this week with some alarm, “*How long have you been there?*” In case you wonder too: I have been serving as your Interim Pastor since February 2019. I am happy to report that Mark Soneson, Search Committee Chair, indicates the church profile should be completed this month. Several regional churches have searched and called new ministers despite the limitations of Covid19, so I am hopeful your churches will be moving toward the conclusion of this time of transition (relatively) soon!

SEPTEMBER OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Michelle will have digital office hours this month **Tuesdays from 1pm-3pm.** “Stop in” by clicking the usual Zoom link or using the Zoom telephone number. (You also may call Pastor Michelle at 860-597-4223.) Weather-permitting, Pastor Michelle also will hold **Friday “Outdoor Hours” from 2pm-4pm** on the patio at Lewis House at FCCH.

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Sign on to most church events (online worship, meetings, or office hours) during the appointed hours using the information below.

Join Zoom Meeting at:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3854472572?pwd=MXk3ODBFc0Vzei83d3hBOXRzVHNwUT09>

Telephone: +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 385 447 2572 Password: 536662

SEPTEMBER MEETINGS (By Zoom)

Phasing Forward Physical Reopening – Most Tuesdays and some Thursdays 8:30-9am

Quilt Show Planning – Wednesday, September 9th, 6pm

FCCH Prudential – Thursday, September 10th, 7pm (note change of date)

Merger Process Working Group – Friday, September 11th, 1pm

Joint Christian Education – Friday, September 11th, 6pm

Joint Diaconate – Monday, September 14th, 6pm

Joint Council – Tuesday, September 15th, 7pm

Joint Mission/Outreach – Wednesday, September 16th, 7pm

Bylaws Working Group – Friday, September 18th, 1pm

HCC Finance – Monday, September 21st, 7pm

2nd Hour Working Group and Search Committee Updates – Sunday, September 27th, 10:30am (after Zoom worship)

Open meetings (including Council at which all are welcome) use the Sunday Zoom sign on, but please contact Committee Chairs for agendas and any specific sign on information.



Under the heading of “you can’t make this stuff up,” please note the ‘extra’ attendees at a recent Zoom meeting. (We have confirmed that Alexa is indeed Professor McGonagall, and that Terry survived his encounter.)



Many thanks to Terry Smith for his follow up to the Church Council and Diaconate’s decision this summer to add a new sign board to the rotation at HCC.

“A Just World for All” is a United Church of Christ motto and reflects our hope for and commitment to the foundation of true peace.

Working Groups

The Working Groups and the Pastoral Search Committee will share updates following our online worship on **Sunday, September 27th.**

Chairs may contact Pastor Michelle to schedule any needed Zoom meetings.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT for our CHURCHES

FCCH has an online contribution option accessible [HERE](#). Mailing addresses are:

Higganum Congregational Church
23 Parsonage Road, Higganum, CT 06441

First Congregational Church of Haddam
P.O. Box 215, Haddam, CT 06438

“MIDWEEK” SERVICES

“Midweek” worship services will continue to be offered Fridays in September (no service 9/4) at 10am at Higganum Congregational Church. These services are planned for **outdoors in the Memorial Garden (September 11th and 25th)** and **indoors in the Sanctuary with instrumental music from Music Director Eric Lundin (September 18th).**



9:30am SUNDAY WORSHIP

To accommodate the greatest number of our members and friends, our 9:30am Sunday Zoom worship services will continue through September. (See the summary of the recent Reopening Survey on page 6 for more info.)

On **Sundays September 6th and 20th**, these services will incorporate an **outdoor in-person worship opportunity** for those able to attend. Members and friends are invited to gather in the lower parking lot of HCC following the guidelines detailed below.

A worship reminder email will go out at 8:30am verifying the outdoor service will be offered; in case of inclement weather, worship will be offered on Zoom only. (Be sure to check your email before leaving home!)

Our plan is for those at home and in person to be ‘in’ the same service:

- experienced by those at home as what has become our “typical” Zoom worship, but with leadership from the church campus
- experienced by those worshipping in person as a service being broadcast on Zoom.

Worship
with us
from
HOME

OR join us for



Outdoor Worship

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SCHEDULE

- 9/6 Outdoor Worship, HCC Parking Lot (simultaneous service on Zoom)
Holy Communion with own elements
- 9/13 Zoom Worship
- 9/20 Outdoor Worship, HCC Parking Lot (simultaneous service on Zoom)
2020 Rally Day Service
- 9/27 Zoom Worship

IN-PERSON HCC PARKING LOT SERVICES

Before attending our in-person Sunday services outdoors, please review the information below:

- You will need to print out your copy of the worship bulletin at home and on Communion Sunday bring your own Bread and a Cup (individual cans of grape juice for each household will be available at the service).
- Chairs will be placed by the Deacons (wearing gloves); you are welcome to bring your own chair instead and/or to move chairs closer together for your household. Chairs will be taken in later in the day after being disinfected; please leave them in place at the end of the service.
- If you arrive early, please wait in your car until 9:15am when the Deacons will begin seating.
- Facemasks should be worn throughout the service, except when Communion is being received.
- Individuals/household groups are asked to follow physical distancing guidelines (minimum of 6 feet).
- The in-person service may incorporate instrumental music, but will include minimal or no congregational singing. Please listen for and comply with any instructions.
- There will be only emergency access to bathrooms; please speak with a Deacon if you need access.
- The service time will be limited, and participants will be asked to leave promptly following the service. (Consider joining our members at home by Zoom for fellowship at this time if your technology permits!)



Sunday, September 6th John 21:4-14
 Hybrid Worship (In Person Outside & Zoom)
Worship with Holy Communion
“on the beach” with the Risen Lord

When gathering on September 6th at HCC for in-person worship, please remember to bring:

- 1) Printed worship bulletin
- 2) Bread and Cup for Communion
- 3) Your mask
- 4) A beach towel to decorate your chair (for our ‘beach party’!)

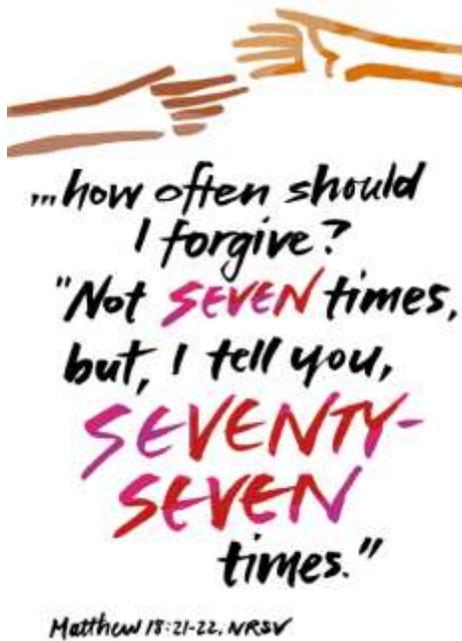
Do not attend in person if you aren’t feeling well or have a known exposure to Covid19.



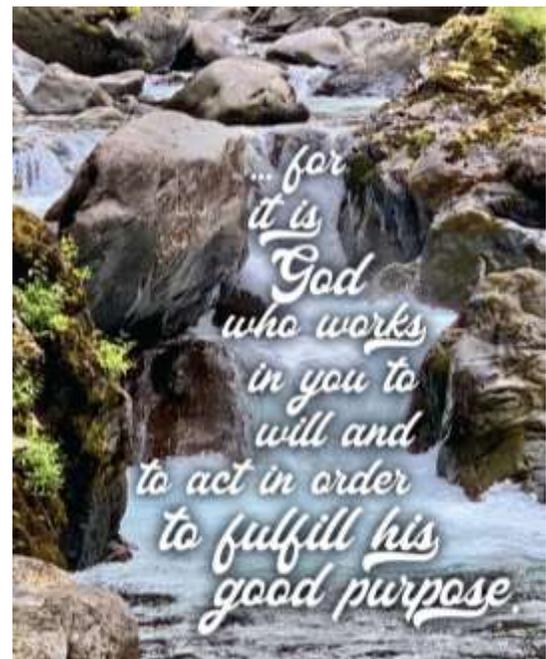
Sunday, September 20th Matthew 20:1-16
 Hybrid Worship (In Person Outside & Zoom)
Intergenerational Rally Day Worship

When gathering on September 20th at HCC for in-person worship, please remember to bring your **mask** and **printed worship bulletin**.

Do not attend in person if you aren’t feeling well or have a known exposure to Covid19.



Sunday, September 13th Matthew 18:21-35
 Zoom Worship



Sunday, September 27th Philippians 2:1-13
 Zoom Worship

Reopening Survey

Last month, the Joint Diaconate administered an online and telephone survey to gather data about our members and their preferences regarding returning to in-person worship.

We were pleased to receive 69 responses representing 79 individuals. There were roughly the same number of responses from each of the two congregations.

The survey information was presented to the Joint Church Council on August 25th. Some excerpted data graphs from that report are viewable [HERE](#), and a more detailed copy of what was shared is available to members by request from the Office or Moderators.

Significant survey findings for the Joint Church Council and Deacons' fall planning:

*Over 65% of surveyed households indicated they include one or more persons at increased risk of serious Covid19 complications.

*This includes 15 individuals who indicated they would nonetheless plan to attend in person worship if it were offered right now (48% of potential in-person September attendees), and 25 who would not be willing to attend until later this fall or after a vaccine is widely available or another safety benchmark is met (e.g. schools open full time).

*Over 30% of households responding include someone at increased risk of exposure to Covid19.

*Nine individuals included in these households say they would attend worship immediately (29% of potential in-person September attendees). Twelve persons would plan to attend only later this fall or after a vaccine is widely available or another safety benchmark is met (e.g. schools open full time).

*A majority of the Deacons would prefer to return to in-person worship later in the fall or once a vaccine is readily available. Two

Deacons' responses indicated they would attend in-person worship only when assigned to serve, but would prefer Zoom at this time.

*10 households, or almost 15% of those surveyed, have not accessed our virtual worship services. Of these members, two indicated they would attend in-person worship immediately if it were offered, and two others later in the fall.

*Of the remaining 85% of respondents who have accessed online worship, only one has participated solely via Facebook Live or through Facebook later in the week, and only two solely by telephone. Most (78%) households access the service live with Zoom audio and video.

*When in-person worship resumes, more respondents would like a synchronous Zoom worship service to be available (50%) than a postponed higher-quality recorded service (28%).

*Favorite elements of Zoom worship are being able to see others, convenience, safety, and specific elements of the worship (sermons, Christian Education segments). The most frequently reported negatives are sound problems (static or other distortion) and internet connectivity issues.

Reflecting on this data and desiring to safely accommodate as many of our members' needs as possible, the Joint Church Council decided against moving to in-person INDOOR Sunday worship in September.

Instead, the Council scheduled two in-person OUTDOOR Sunday opportunities with synchronous Zoom for Sundays September 6th and 20th, and Zoom-only worship services on the 13th and 27th.

In addition, the Council decided to continue to offer 10am Friday worship (outdoors on the 11th and 25th, and inside with instrumental music on the 18th).

The Deacons will reach out to offer assistance to those who indicated they have had technology issues that interfered with participating in Zoom services.



Singers and instrumental musicians are invited to join Music Director Eric Lundin and Interim Pastor Michelle for our first (Virtual) Choir Rehearsal of the new year on **Thursday, September 24th at 7pm by Zoom** (use the regular Sunday link).

By that date we hope to have a sense of our upcoming worship plans. We will enjoy music and fellowship, and we will plan for the coming weeks of musical service leadership.

AMELIA VON WALTERS

If you missed her this summer, click below to meet Amelia Von Walters, time traveling journalist, as she interviews Katherine Von Bora, William Brewster, and Augustine of Hippo. (Links should work even if you do not have Facebook.)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1002986706823880&extid=DLd1mIs0V1i5XTSE>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=766616594092708&extid=2JVjnAhRbuiYjgUm>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2675062976099175&extid=BKSKZiBzTmu6wGHa>

FROM THE DEACONS

Sunday Zoom Attendance:

6/28	47	8/2	39
7/5	33	8/9	32
7/12	40	8/16	40
7/19	39	8/23	39
7/26	45		

Hopefully, our Deacons have made recent contact with their sheep, keeping you all up to date with our re-opening strategies.

I encourage those who are able – to pick some extra fruits from your garden/orchard to share. If you are a baker, gardener, or are able to help with household chores – reach out to help those who would not ask. Recent storms, hot weather, COVID 19 and stress – make this even more important!

If you have a need...sheep...please reach out to your shepherd or Terry or Sue as well as Pastor Michelle. Be Safe, Be Well!

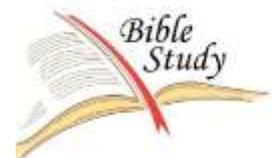
-Sue Craffey



Join us for worship in-person or by Zoom on **Sunday, September 20th**, as we start up a new program year! Stay tuned for more info!

MONDAY MORNING ADULT STUDY

Our Monday morning adult education class will resume at **10am on September 21st (in person and online)**, likely using a UCC curriculum on the book of Job. Please speak with Pastor Michelle for more information or with additional study topic requests!



SEPTEMBER 2020

MISSION/ OUTREACH NEWS

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE SCHOOL KITS

Thank you to all who contributed items for our Church World Service School Kits collection. With your help, we were able to put together 37 bags!



COLLECTION for CALCULATORS

Our annual back to school “underwear project” for primary students will take a hiatus as HKYFS is collecting only supplies this year. They suggested another way we could help. The 6th, 7th and 8th grade students will need a particularly type of calculator for their math classes. As they cost less than \$8.00, our Mission/Outreach committee decided to purchase 20...YFS suggested between 15-25. Each church has monies to help, however, if you would like to support this project, please send your donation to either church, and write YFS in the memo.

See Carol Matregrano or Ginny Evensen with questions. Thank you.



OFFERING ENCOURAGEMENT

One of our members learned about a new Covid19-era organization organizing delivery of letters of encouragement to isolated seniors. Visit <https://www.lettersagainstisolation.com/> to learn more about the program.

If you would like to be involved in a similar local ministry, consider sending a greeting to one of our members at home or those on our birthday and anniversary lists. (Contact the Office if you need a copy of our church directory!)



BREAD MINISTRY

The Bread Ministry is doing well at the Higganum Farmers Market. The market opens at 3:30 pm on Friday afternoons at the old Haddam Elementary School. We are at site #1 as you come into the market. Each week we have been sold out in less than an hour. The Market has several interesting vendors. Stop by. Try our bread. See what our Market has to offer.





What: Our Annual Crop Walk....Virtual this year!

When: October 3 & October 4

Where: Wherever You Want!

We invite you to join us for our Virtual CROP WALK! Register on-line at www.crophungerwalk.org/haddamct, and then start getting those sponsorships! Friends and family can support you through your on-line Crop Walk page (created during registration). or paper collection envelopes can be gotten by contacting Ginny Evensen.

We will begin our Virtual Crop Walk with a kick-off on Sunday, September 27th, when we will be sharing a video of previous walks as well as information on the local charities supported by our Walk: Haddam Food Bank, Helping Hands of Killingworth, and the HK Backpack Program. On Sunday, October 4th, we will have a blessing of the walkers, and on Sunday, October 11th, we will have our Closing Celebration.

This year, each household group plans its own walk. Be creative where you walk but please be safe - wear a mask and practice social distancing. If you want, you could just walk up and down your stairs or around your yard! But wherever you decide to walk, please take a picture of your group walking for our Closing Celebration (send to Nancy Soneson at nsoneson@sbcglobal.net). Here is a chance to "show off."

This project is very important this year. There are so many people here and around the world who are hungry. What we do here in Haddam will help to ease this distress.

Put on your walking shoes and get ready!

Clothing Donation at Goodwill Benefits All

A New St. Vincent de Paul Program Announced



“If someone you meet today needs clothing and that someone has no money where would you send them? “

St. Vincent de Paul of Middletown has partnered with Goodwill Industries in an attempt to answer that question.

Perhaps an easier question: Do you have items (clothing, shoes, and textiles) that you would like to get out of your house?

When you donate these items to Goodwill (accompanied by a specific St. Vincent de Paul Donation Card), Goodwill makes a record of the donation in St. Vincent de Paul’s account. Once a month, Goodwill will send St. Vincent de Paul vouchers for free clothing based on these donations. St. Vincent de Paul gives persons/families needing clothing the vouchers and they then can go shopping at their convenience. No cash changes hands.

It’s a win, win! You clean out your closets (still getting your tax credit!), you save the planet by recycling, and you’re helping the people in your community!

We will have the donation cards available at church services, from the minister, or from Ginny Evensen. In order for St. Vincent de Paul to get credit, one of these donation cards must accompany your donation.

Goodwill is located at 955 Washington Street, Middletown, the next light past Home Depot.



YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES FUNDRAISER

Who doesn't love pizza?

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH

Place your order with Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-663-2256) Killingworth or Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-345-2251) Higganum/Haddam between 4pm – 8pm and we will deliver your order to your door for a \$5 delivery fee. Delivery and (tips) benefit Youth & Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth



YOUR GIVING MATTERS!



Welcome to **God's Great Virtual Bake-Off Challenge!**

Break out the mixing bowls and oven mitts, it's time to get your bake on!

How Does This Work?

1. Pick your favorite recipes.
2. Bake anytime from *September 1st through October 19th*
3. Send a photo of your completed bake to Nancy Soneson (nsoneson@sbcglobal.net) on or before *October 19th*. One photo for each item baked.
4. Maximum 4 bakes per person. (They don't have to be baked at the same time!)
5. The photos will be compiled and people can vote online for their favorites. Paper ballots will also be available, if needed.
6. Suggested donation is \$1 a vote – paid by either credit card (VANCO on FCCH website) or mailed in check. All money donated goes to local community outreach programs.
7. Voting will last for two weeks: *October 26th - November 9th*
8. Anyone can vote, so ask your family and friends to vote for their favorite divine creations!

What Do You Get As A Reward?



The baker with the bake that receives the highest number of votes will be crowned *Star Baker* and win a \$25 gift certificate to any local restaurant or eatery of their choice!

On your marks, get set, BAKE!

**Announcing the
FIRST ANNUAL MEETING
of the
Southern New England Conference of the
United Church of Christ, Inc**

**Saturday September 26, 2020
8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Remote Meeting
using the Zoom webinar platform**

**Welcome to the Southern New England
Conference Annual Meeting!**

The pandemic may keep us from gathering in person, but it is no impediment to the Holy Spirit.

Our Annual Meeting will be woven through with vibrant worship. We will gather in small groups focused on shared ministry interests. And we will hear from the Search Committee about their grace-filled journey as we welcome, affirm and celebrate our first Executive Conference Minister.

Come and be a part of this formative moment!

Business to be Conducted:

- Adoption of Behavioral Covenant and Rules of Procedure for the meeting
- Action on the Nomination of Directors and Officers
- Action on the Nomination of the Executive Conference Minister
- Release of Executive Conference Minister Search Committee

Our Worship Theme will be Jeremiah 31:31-34, "The Days are Surely Coming..."

Registration for the Annual Meeting is available [on line here](#). The deadline for those who wish to participate in the Networking Breakout Groups is September 18th.

Zoom Practice Sessions will be held at the following times. You must register for a practice session in order to receive the Zoom link to attend it. Please register at your chosen link below.

Sunday, Sept 20, 1-2 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qnwKb6AsT_aN-bZ24gJHvQ

Monday, Sept. 21, 7-8 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0xbMZJJcRHi_xjW5wCbRsQ

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7-8 PM

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-5xw182cQqqg_zr7ZXg9hQ

In response to much feedback about our commitment to environmental justice, Delegate Materials will be distributed electronically this year. There will be no automatic paper mailing of materials to any church or registrant. Those who need paper materials are invited to request them when they register – see the Accessibility section of the Registration form. In order to receive paper materials, you must register and request them no later than September 15th.

A Speakout is a 60-second opportunity for a delegate to address the Annual Meeting on a topic of their choice. As an adaptation to our remote format, Speakout opportunities will be assigned by lottery, and all Speakouts must be recorded and submitted in advance. More information may be found [here](#).

Further information and delegate materials are at the website [here](#). Additional materials will be added in the coming weeks.

We hope to see you on the 26th!



Mr. Ian Tosh, Moderator
For the Annual Meeting Planning Team



SNEUCC Executive Conference Minister Candidate Announced

The Rev. Darrell Goodwin – a pastor with experience in higher education and in varied ministry settings of the United Church of Christ – will be presented to Annual Meeting voters as the candidate to serve as the Southern New England Conference’s first Executive Conference Minister.

Rev. Goodwin currently serves the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences as an Associate Conference Minister, offering care and support to the pastors and churches in the Nebraska Conference and supporting the work of search and call across the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences.

"My desire to serve the people of the Southern New England Conference is inspired by your boldness to form a new conference with a mission and vision toward the marginalized," he said. "I hope to bring my commitment to justice which has been curated by the Holy Spirit, my love of God's people, and administrative gifts to propel this vision forward. This role is not a job, but rather a call to fulfill my purpose and honor my ancestors who could never have realized a role of this magnitude in a uniting and united church."

Read more at:
<https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/14231839>

We, The Connecticut Women of the UCC have assisted Rev. Cheryl A. Caronna in preparing a Survey. The results of this survey will help to guide our future planning. We have spent the last year in prayer, at monthly meetings, on retreat and throughout the pandemic, Zoomed together. We have been in this time of discernment and now would like to offer you a chance to be a part of our discernment.

As I was thinking of a Scripture Passage to use for this Introduction to our Survey, my mind was called instantly to, Isaiah 43:19 ***“See, I am doing a new thing!”*** We invite you to help us, *do a new thing!*

The Connecticut Women of the UCC and Rev. Caronna are looking forward to your input on our **Kitchen, Pew, Pulpit, What next? Survey**

We invite you to complete the survey by **Friday, September 18, 2020.**

With many Blessings,
Karen Gravino, President
Connecticut Women of the UCC

Click this link for the Survey:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9IISN07f_0RkGTvjX_3J9aRC0OCFVZclifHN0neWUAHYXA/viewform

Once you have completed the survey, please click on **SUBMIT** and it will be sent to the CT Women, and a copy will be sent to you via the email address you will be asked to indicate at the beginning of the survey. Thank you for your assistance - your input will be invaluable to our work going forward.

MEMBER'S CORNER



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



On Sunday, August 31st, members, friends, and neighbors visited outside with HCC Member Neil Blodgett, who celebrated his 99th birthday on August 30th. Congratulations, Neil!



SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS



- 5 June Lamoureux
 - 7 Washington Malave
 - 9 Jennifer Thayer
 - 10 Ron Alger
 - 15 Olivia Harry
 - 16 Eliza Williams
 - 20 Kenneth Roberts
 - 21 Bruce Kocsis
 - 24 Jordan Tupay
 - 26 Brian Thayer
 - 29 Catherine Morrill
- Danny Hollenbeck



- 4 Alan and Linda Hansen
- 7 Ken and Catherine Wendt

Prayer Request: *Please keep in your thoughts this month Sandy Nightingale, Edie Williams, and Carol Ricker, members widowed this year with September anniversaries:*

- Sept. 16 Paul and Sandy Nightingale
- Sept. 17 Dick and Edie Williams
- Sept. 24 Bruce and Carol Ricker

Please let the Office know at fcchaddam@gmail.com if there are omissions from or corrections to our birthday and anniversary lists.