



THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



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



October

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,

At the beginning of the pandemic I remember historians encouraging everyday people to keep a "Covid diary" for the sake of posterity. Looking back at some notes I made in March and April I realize they were right: it feels so long ago that I had forgotten many of the details. (Who knew that obtaining vanilla extract could elicit such excitement?)

Now we hear from [those familiar with long-term disasters](#) that the six-month mark often is accompanied by an increased sense of distress, a predictable pattern. They encourage us to [be kind to ourselves \(self-care\)](#) and to [extend understanding to others](#). They also offer the encouraging word that this stage passes- in a few weeks this particular cloud should lift and our spirits be renewed.

If your energy permits, I would invite you to do a bit of journaling/writing this month by way of taking stock. In this unexpected year:

- *What have you learned about yourself?*
- *What have you wondered about God?*
- *Where have you found support?*
- *How have you served others?*
- *What have you experienced as blessing?*
- *What has challenged you (physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually)?*
- *What are your hopes?*

These are just examples of questions that might stir your reflection. If you are comfortable sharing what you write, I would love to read it and talk with you. If enough participate who are willing to share with the congregation (by name or anonymously), perhaps this project will develop into a sort of devotional resource.

The God of History is the Creator, Savior, and Sustainer of us all. May we continue to experience and proclaim God's care and love here "in the midst"- where Good News is so needed.

Blessings, Pastor Michelle

INTERIM PROCESS

The Pastoral Search Committee has submitted their draft of the Church Profile to Rev. Mary Nelson for her review and suggestions; after the Profile is finalized we will schedule an opportunity for members to see it and celebrate this milestone in the Pastoral Search Process.



See page 10 for updates from Working Groups.

All members and friends of our two congregations are invited to join Pastor Michelle for Saturday ZoomTable discussions during the fall. Please read the topic article (links provided below- or request a print copy from the Office at fcchaddam@gmail.com), then sign on using the usual Sunday link:

Saturday, October 17th, 9:30am
"The New Math of Church Mergers"

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2019/december-web-exclusives/new-math-of-church-mergers.html>

Saturday, November 14th, 9:30am
"The Value of a Pastoral Relations Committee"

<https://churchexecutive.com/archives/the-value-of-a-pastoral-relations-committee> and https://www.churchleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PRC-Effective_and_Ineffective.pdf

OCTOBER OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Michelle will hold scheduled 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.) To arrange for an outdoor home visit, private Zoom chat, telephone call, or other visit with the Pastor, contact her at the number above or mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com.



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

OCTOBER MEETINGS (By Zoom)

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

Joint Diaconate – Monday, October 12th, 6pm

HCC Finance – Monday, October 19th, 7pm

Joint Council – Tuesday, October 20th, 7pm

Bylaws Working Group – Friday, October 23rd, 1pm

Joint Mission/Outreach – Wednesday, October 28th, 7pm

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.

FROM THE DEACONS

Recent Sunday Attendance:

	<u>Zoom</u>	<u>In Person</u>	<u>Total</u>
August 30	41		41
September 6	18	16	34
September 13	42		42
September 20	28	22	50
September 27	46		46

As we prepare for in person worship, it does take a village to cover Deacon duties and Zoom. We welcome your assistance in providing smooth transitions. Let Sue, Terry or Pastor Michelle know.

-Sue Craffey

MUSIC MINISTRY



At our first virtual choir gathering in September, we enjoyed singing and music together and planned for special music for worship in the coming weeks. Singers and instrumental musicians are invited to join Music Director Eric Lundin for our next (Virtual) Choir Rehearsal on **Thursday, October 15th, at 7pm.**

ALL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY



Prepare the pumpkins!
All ages are invited to "bring a friend" and join us using the Sunday Zoom link.
Costume creativity welcome!

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

PHASING FORWARD UPDATE

Our 9:30am Sunday Zoom services (including streaming to Facebook Live) will continue for the foreseeable future, offering a completely “distanced,” safe opportunity for weekly worship.

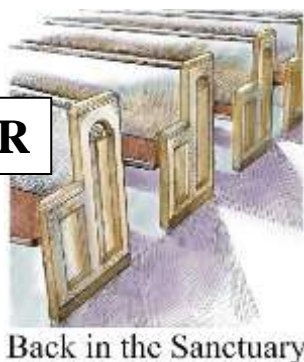
Beginning **Sunday, October 11th**, we also will offer a **simultaneous in-person indoor worship opportunity**. (October services are scheduled for FCCH.) Those planning to attend in-person worship should familiarize themselves with the procedures and guidelines described below, and check email the week and day of service for any additional updates.

As our members and friends are aware, attending in-person worship carries an additional risk of Covid19 exposure or quarantine, a risk that individuals assume. If a person present for an indoor program subsequently is found to be ill, all those who attended may be advised to quarantine at home for 14 days.

As October begins it remains the case that we do not have an adequate/consistent source of disinfectant for weekly sanitizing of our sanctuaries. **We will rely instead on ventilation** (the windows will be open during worship) **and time** (the sanctuary will be closed for use Monday to Saturday) **to allow dispersal/degradation of any virus present**. Normal cleaning (dusting, vacuuming, not sanitizing) will be completed during the week. (Please note: If a midweek service were needed and we can arrange the timing to reduce the risk to our cleaners, we do have a small supply of sanitizing spray that can be deployed before and after.)

Worship
with us
from
HOME

OR



Additional safety measures for in-person worship will include:

- Wellness and Covid19 exposure screening questions and touchless temperature check for all participants outdoors on arrival
- Masks required on the church campus
- One-way traffic in the sanctuary (entering from rear at FCCH and side doors at HCC); exception for those who require ramp or elevator access
- 6-foot spacing (by household) before, during, and following worship
- Hand sanitizer stations throughout buildings
- Reduction in verbal participation by members of the congregation (including no indoor congregational singing)
- Elimination of passed/handled objects (doors propped or held, contact-free “Passing the Peace,” offering plates placed at the entrance/exit; hymnals, cards, etc. removed from the pews)
- Limited bathroom access (emergencies)
- Prompt departure at dismissal of service
- No indoor fellowship hour and no food or drink served
- Names and contact information of all present will be kept on record by the Deacons to assist with contact tracing

Our upper limit for attendance is determined by our spacing plan for 26 household groups at FCCH and 23 at HCC; we estimate being able to accommodate about 55 worshippers (including leaders) at FCCH and 50 at HCC. (This is significantly fewer than the number permitted by the State of Connecticut at this time. In Connecticut Phase 3, the number of persons in sanctuaries is limited to 50% of occupancy. The FCCH sanctuary capacity is 229, so this would mean 114 persons maximum; HCC capacity is 172, so 86.)

Though not anticipated, if the number of households present on a given Sunday exceeds the number we can accommodate inside, individuals who previously volunteered will be asked to return home to worship by Zoom. We are going to try this method rather than requiring pre-registration.

As with our previous hybrid services, 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

That said, there will be some differences between at-church and at-home worship.

- Indoor services will be approximately 30 minutes in length and include instrumental music, scripture readings, a sermon, and prayers. A worship bulletin will be provided (placed a few days ahead in the pews). On some Sundays the in-person congregation may be invited to participate in a congregational hymn outdoors.
- On October Sundays, weather permitting, in-person participants will be asked to assemble at 9:15am near Lewis House at FCCH in household groups (hula hoops will be placed to help with distancing). Deacons will screen each group and allow the congregation inside after announcements and opening music are shared outdoors.
- Our Zoom service will be slightly longer and always include a weekly opportunity for congregational singing.
- Those worshipping through Zoom should print or request a copy of the order of service; prayers, etc., will not be projected.
- The Zoom service will include a slide presentation of announcements (9:15am).
- At about 9:25am the Zoom Host Deacon will invite prayer requests to be relayed to the Pastor for inclusion in worship.
- A whole-group or breakout-room "Bring Your Own Coffee" Coffee Hour will follow the Zoom service, with the Pastor joining in as soon as she is able.

Following our Zoom Worship service on Sunday, October 4th, members and friends are invited to join Pastor Michelle and members of the Deacons and Physical Reopening Team for a time of Questions and Answers regarding these procedures and our planning.

When gathering in-person for any church program, please comply with the following:

- Do not attend in person if you aren't feeling well or have a known exposure to Covid19 (See "Questions to Ask" below.)
- Wear a mask throughout the time you are on the church campus.
- Move into and out of the church building promptly when asked, saving fellowship and conversation for outside spaces.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE ATTENDING IN PERSON PROGRAMMING/WORSHIP

- Do you have a fever over 100 degrees OR not feel well?
- Do you have signs of illness?



- Does anyone in your household have a fever or signs of illness?
- Have you been in close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with anyone who is confirmed to have COVID-19 within the last two weeks?

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, please do not attend in-person programming. Instead, follow quarantine protocols/contact your health provider.

If you become ill after attending an in-person program at FCCH/HCC, please contact the Pastor (860-597-4223), Church Office (860-345-2742), or one of the Chairs of Deacons (Sue Craffey or Terry Smith) so we can respond appropriately and offer you pastoral care.

OCTOBER 9:30am SUNDAY SCHEDULE



WORLD
Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 4th
Zoom Worship with Home Communion

Sunday, October 11th
*First Sunday back in the Sanctuary
Hybrid Worship (In Person at FCCH & Zoom)*



Sunday, October 18th
*Homecoming Sunday
Hybrid Worship (In Person at FCCH & Zoom)*
Join us to celebrate our long-term members and those marking significant anniversaries of their church membership.

Sunday, October 25th
*Neighbors in Need Sunday
Hybrid Worship (In Person at FCCH & Zoom)*



As your delegates from HCC, Dick and I along with Cherylann from FCCH, and Pastor Michelle attended the first annual meeting of the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ on Saturday, September 26 via Zoom.

We watched presenters, listened to beautiful music, and voted on issues, all orchestrated in a digital way over a period of 4 hours. The meeting was shortened because voting was faster and there were no breaks to visit vendors or to socially share a meal.

The worship theme was from Jeremiah, entitled “The Days are Surely Coming...”

The Rev, Stackhouse, from Center Church in Hartford spoke eloquently relating to the history of Hartford, Thomas Hooker, slavery and insurance companies’ role. She was accompanied by the music of John Legend - “One Day when the Glory Comes.”

Along with worship segments, we learned among other items: \$20,000,000 in medical debt has been retired; loss of \$600,000 due to Covid closing of Silver Lake and other camps; a digital minister will be added to the staff; \$1,000,000 from the Conference will be made available to congregations who are struggling; and many virtual programs are available, several relating to Silver Lake.

The final business before closing worship was to vote on the nomination of the Rev. Darrell Goodwin to be the new Conference minister. He had spoken earlier and answered questions with enthusiasm and knowledge, and the favorable vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick, Carol, and Cherylann, Delegates

OCTOBER 2020

MISSION/OUTREACH

The Bread Ministry has been successful this year. Thank you to everyone who sold bread or purchased bread at the Higganum Farmers Market. We have raised \$2,255 to date for the Haddam fuel bank, and there are still two markets for the year.

It will be “Christmas at the Market” on October 9, 2020. The booths will be decorated for Christmas. There will be gift items for sale. Christmas music to enjoy. Take a few minutes and stop by. The market is 3:30pm to 6:30pm at the former Haddam Elementary School parking lot.

We will not be having a Quilt Show this year because of Covid. Watch in the late winter and early spring newsletters for a possible quilt activity.

God’s Virtual Bake off will be happening this fall. Take a picture of items you have baked and send them to Nancy Soneson. Later in October there will be a contest to choose the most delicious “looking” item. We will not be tasting the items. For just \$1.00 you will receive a ticket to vote on your choice item. Vote as often as you like. Ask you friends and family to vote too. The winner who receives the most votes will receive a \$25 gift card to any restaurant in Haddam/Higganum.

The VIRTUAL HADDAM/KILLINGWORTH CROP WALK will occur on the first weekend in October. Each family group will choose where and when to walk. Sign up and get some sponsors. There is a poster available at services that provides information on how to sign up. All the proceeds of our walk will be used to provide food for people around the world and here at home. The Haddam Food Bank, the Killingworth Food Bank and H/K Back Pack program will receive 25% of money we raise. Let’s WALK TOGETHER.



Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

Our churches will learn about the work of Neighbors in Need throughout the month of October and will receive the Offering on Sunday, October 25th.





ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL



Online Sunday School has begun! Children on our rolls and who attended last year should have received a **Kit** in September that contains **everything needed for our virtual classes**. Students can participate live or by viewing the week's recording at their families' convenience. (Class recordings are available at an unlisted YouTube channel; parents/grandparents should contact the Office at fchaddam@gmail.com to receive specific sign on and viewing access information.) Church families will be asked to sign up to 'host' one or two weeks' classes this quarter at a time arranged with Miss Amy. ('Hosting' means participating in live online class.)

APPLE PICKING

September 20th was a beautiful day for our outdoor Rally Day service and apple picking caravan.



WEEKDAY ADULT STUDY

Our Monday morning adult education class is studying the biblical book of Job using the "Listen Up!" curriculum from The Pilgrim Press. We meet **Mondays at 10am on September 21st (in person in the HCC Sanctuary and online)**. Please speak with Pastor Michelle for more information.





First Congregational Church of Haddam's Prudential Workday, Friday, September 25th

WORKING GROUPS UPDATES

Updates from September 27, 2020

Church Diversity Statement

The following Diversity statement (Open and Affirming) has been adopted by both churches:

We, the First Congregational Church of Haddam and the Higganum Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, are committed to loving each other as God loves us, freely and unconditionally. We therefore covenant to welcome people of all gender identities and sexual orientations, races and ethnicities, mental and physical abilities, marital and socioeconomic status into the full life of ministry and leadership of this faith community. We are committed to the mission of Christ's teaching of all encompassing love, peace and justice for all creation.

Church Records

Both Church Clerks have documented what records are available for each church.

Church Name

The following names for a new 'Joined Church' have been suggested by congregation members:

- Consolidated Congregational Churches of Haddam
- United Congregational Churches of Haddam
- River Valley Congregational Church
- River Town Congregational Church
- First Congregational Church of Haddam
- Higganum Congregational Church
- First Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum
- United Churches of Haddam
- Haddam Congregational Church
- Haddam Community Congregational Church
- Community Congregational Church
- Riverview Congregational Church
- Covenant Congregational Church

Church ByLaws and Governance

This Group has met several times and expects the ByLaws for a new 'Joined Church' will be

ready before year end. These ByLaws will be sufficient to organize a new church, but a detailed review and update, as necessary, is recommended to be done soon after organizing. There are also draft policies that have been created but not approved. These should be considered for acceptance after church organization is complete.

Membership Working Group Summary

Members:

Sue Craffey, Candy Casale, Dave McComas

Summary of our achievements:

- Created Welcome Bags for each vestibule
- Updated pew cards (prayer request & visitor card)
- Name tags
- Welcome letter in pews
- Updated membership list
- In process of examining Revised Bylaw Draft for types of membership: Active, Inactive, Associate.
- Membership Termination process – or deemed inactive (2/3 vote)

SUPER SATURDAY

(Super Saturday is going Virtual!)

October 24, 2020 and October 31, 2020

Each spring and fall, the SNEUCC Conference holds a Super Saturday event - a full-day of skill building, networking and discussing best practices. Each event offers numerous workshops, a keynote address, worship, a marketplace of vendors and ideas and an opportunity for church leaders, both clergy and lay, to network with one another.

Please join us for our first Virtual Super Saturday - two days of worship, workshops and networking - October 24, 2020 and October 31, 2020. Sign up for one day or two, two workshops or four. It's up to you! The cost per workshop is only \$10. For more information and to register, visit:

<https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/12871453?month=10&year=2020&day=1&display=m>



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!



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!

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



Daylight Savings ends on Sunday, November 1st; remember to put your clock back or you'll be an hour early for worship!

A Prayer During This Pandemic

Filled With Life

I come to you, O great One, seeking renewal of my weary and worried spirit. Let me rest in you for a while and feel you surrounding me in safety and love. Then let that rest in you call forth new strength in me.

For others who are weary, I pray for comfort and peace. For others who are worried, I pray for solace and reassurance. For the desperate, I pray for relief and hope. Help us all set our priorities differently, so you come before all other demands in our lives. Only then, we know, O God, may we be filled with your life once again for the fullest living on this earth, even during days of darkness.

Hear my prayers and grant me your peace, in the name of Jesus, O Lord. Amen.

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

OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS



- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Paul Blodgett | |
| 3 | Kamilla Gardner | |
| 5 | Jonathan Williams Jr. | |
| | Ellie Pringle | |
| 7 | Elizabeth Craffey | |
| 9 | Alison Gilmor Cameron | |
| | Isabelle Wintsch | |
| 10 | Nancy Albert | |
| 11 | Carolyn Grenman | Emily Alger |
| 12 | Rebecca Williams | Clark Gardner |
| 13 | Katie Tucker | |
| 17 | Dawn Alger | |
| 18 | Jeanne Calhoun | |
| 19 | Caleigh Beecher | |
| 21 | Matt Morrill | Kaitlin Craffey |
| 22 | Ginny Evensen | Jeanne Messick |
| 23 | Pete Pringle | Erin Shields |
| 26 | Tommy Hansen | Hudson Beckman |
| 31 | Erik Kocsis | |



- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 7 | Joe and Kris Tupay |
|---|--------------------|