



# THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



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



The Year of Our Lord 2021



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

Address Service Requested

Church websites:  
[haddamchurch.org](http://haddamchurch.org) and [higganumchurch.org](http://higganumchurch.org)

*“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”  
-Jeremiah 29:11*

Dear Haddam and Higganum Friends,

This morning I read about the “[third quarter](#)” effect. This is a dynamic where folks approaching the anticipated end of a period of extended isolation experience increased anxiety and irritability. Apparently, Antarctic researchers and submariners know all about it!

With vaccines providing a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel we entered last March, we may find others or ourselves similarly affected. As with other aspects of the pandemic, this experience invites us into personal and spiritual reflection.

I wrote last fall about [Dr. Aisha Ahmad’s](#) description of the six-month “wall” in a sustained trauma, when folks feel exhausted, are unsure about what is to come, and wonder if they will be able to keep on. The coping strategy recommended was to be patient: to “keep on keeping on” while practicing self-care. We held onto the truth that God is faithful.

“Third quarter” agitation may arise from a more complex and unconscious set of feelings and fears. I picture us as prisoners about to be paroled or patients returning home from a long stay in rehab.

Having grudgingly grown accustomed to the limits placed on us, and having found what seems like every possible way to “make lemonade” out of the lemons handed us, we now begin to anticipate the demands that come with greater freedom and interaction. It is what we have been waiting for, longing for- but it is **more change**, after we have adjusted and readjusted so many times.

As we know, change involves grief. Weirdly, after so much time in this pandemic wilderness, the return to something-like-normal will be a **loss** of something that has become familiar. We do not- cannot- desire any extension of a time with such widespread

physical, economic, and emotional suffering, yet we may feel unsettled and uncertain, as well as excited, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel grow brighter.

According to those who have experience with the emotions of the “third quarter,” “**focusing on the mission**” helps.

We can use this approach:

- in the pandemic- *by keeping on with masks and distancing to protect ourselves, our neighbors, and the health care system;*
- in our churches in transition as the PSC moves into an active search mode- *by leaning into unfinished tasks of the interim time in its own ‘third quarter’;*
- and in our individual lives- *by honoring the sense of purpose God has placed and strengthened within us.*

*God will remain faithful in these new times, too.*

Blessings,  
Pastor Michelle

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### INTERIM PASTOR’S SCHEDULE

Pastor Michelle will continue to 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 a private Zoom chat, telephone call, porch, or other visit with the Pastor, contact her at the number above or [mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com](mailto:mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com).

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Please keep our Pastoral Search Committee in prayer as they begin receiving and reviewing candidate profiles.



Search Committee members are Mark Soneson (Chair), Candy Casale, Amy Harlow, Sue Henehan, Ralph Livieri, Sabine Nyenhuis, and Lindamae Peck.

Read the FCCH/HCC Ministry Opportunity Listing [HERE](#).



# LENTEN SERMON SERIES

They were on the  
road, going up  
to Jerusalem...

-Mark 10:32

## On the Jericho Road

1st Sunday in Lent	Feb. 21	Joshua 2	Rahab
2nd Sunday in Lent	Feb. 28	Luke 2:41-52	Mary & Joseph
3rd Sunday in Lent	March 7	Luke 19:1-10	Zacchaeus
4th Sunday in Lent	March 14	Mark 10:46-52	Bartimaeus
5th Sunday in Lent	March 21	Luke 10:25-37	Good Samaritan
6th Sunday in Lent	March 28	Mark 11:1-11	Palm Sunday

## 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

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## MARCH MEETINGS (By Zoom)

Physical Reopening – Thursday, March 4th, 8:30am (rescheduled from 3/2)

Joint Diaconate – Monday, March 8th, 6pm

Service/Outreach – Wednesday, March 10th, 7pm

HCC Finance – Monday, March 15th, 7pm

Joint Council – Tuesday, March 16th, 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.

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## GIVING INFORMATION

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

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## SAVE THE DATE:



## PHASING FORWARD

Our 9:30am Sunday worship services will be in online only format through at least March 21st. We are planning for an in-person outdoor Sunrise Service at Haddam Meadows at 6:30am and an online Easter Sunday Celebration with Home Communion at 9:30am on Easter Sunday, April 4th. The Physical Reopening Team will meet again on March 4th at 8:30am to review current data and discuss further recommendations. Please contact Terry Smith or Sue Craffey (Diaconate), Greg Shields or John Edmondson (Moderators), or Interim Pastor Michelle with questions or to join our Reopening Team.

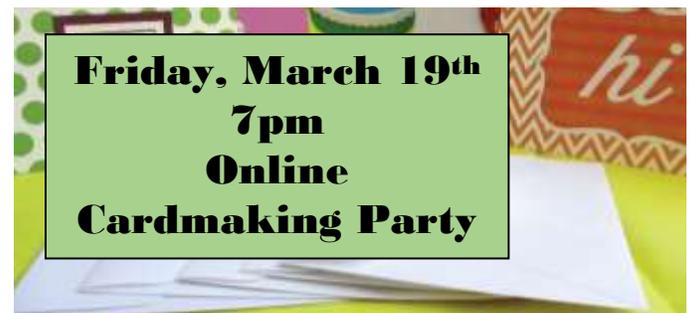
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Our Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet virtually for work and fellowship on **Wednesday, March 3rd, at 10am** using the Sunday Zoom sign on.



For materials or more information, please contact Carol Ricker or Edie Williams.

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Join over ZOOM at 7pm on Friday, March 19th using the usual Sunday sign on, for a fun evening making and addressing spring greetings for our members and friends.

Pick up card materials outside Lewis House Office during the preceding week, or use what you have at home. Templates and art will be available by email.

Listen for additional information during upcoming services.

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# MARCH 9:30am SUNDAY SCHEDULE



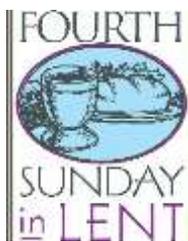
**MAUNDY THURSDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE**  
Join us online at **7pm on Thursday, April 1st** for our annual candlelit service of "Shadows" featuring special music and a remembrance of Christ's Passion.

**Sunday, March 7th**  
*Zoom Worship*  
*with Home Communion*



**Third Sunday in Lent**  
*Remember to prepare*  
*Communion elements.*

**Sunday, March 14th**  
*Zoom Worship*



**Fourth Sunday in Lent**



**Sunday, March 21st**  
*Zoom Worship*



**Fifth Sunday in Lent**



**Sunday, March 28th**  
*Zoom Worship*

**Palm Sunday**

Weather permitting, pick up Palms and Easter plants on **Saturday, March 27th between 10-11am at HCC parking lot.**

## GOOD FRIDAY

On **Friday, April 2nd**, our members and friends are invited to participate in an online Good Friday and Seven Last Words of Christ Service offered by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. A link to the service will be sent out by email and available on our Facebook pages.

## SUNDAY, APRIL 4TH



### COMMUNITY EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

**6:30AM at  
HADDAM MEADOWS**

All are welcome as we gather in person outdoors to greet the Risen Lord!



We ask that you wear a face mask and practice "social distancing" by household. For more information, please contact Pastor Michelle or one of the Moderators or Deacons.

### 9:30AM EASTER CELEBRATION with HOME COMMUNION

Join us online at 9:30am for a service featuring joyous music and the 'big reveal' of our Easter Mosaic, followed by Coffee Hour fellowship.

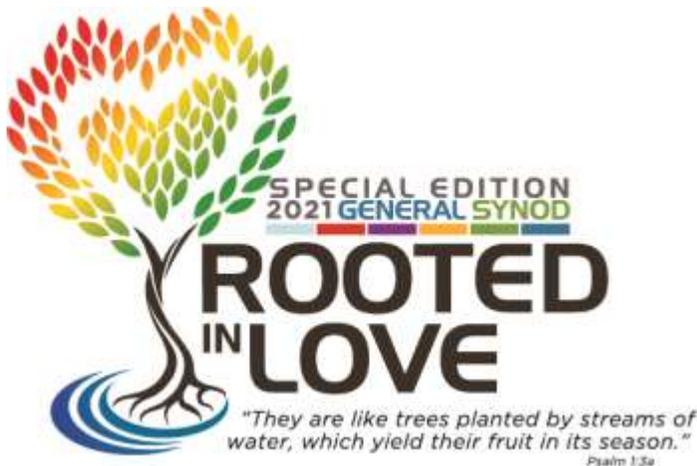




The Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ will host a Lenten prayer vigil on **Thursday, March 11th, at 7pm** to mark *One Year in the Wilderness*.

This will be a time of prayer, music, and reflection led by conference staff and local church leaders reflecting on this past year of isolation, uncertainty, and loss. Pre-register to receive your meeting link by clicking [HERE](#).

We are invited to read Rev. Matthew Crebbin's recent reflection on wilderness, "[It has been a long Lent.](#)"



To keep everyone safe, the 33rd General Synod will be held virtually. This means **EVERYONE** can attend! If you've always wanted to see our covenantal denomination in action- this is your chance!

**Save the Date: July 11-18, 2021.**

**Bookmark the website:**

<http://generalsynod.org/#UCCSynod>



### **INVITATION from REV. DOUG CLARK**

Are you concerned about the urgency of the climate crisis? Would you like to explore some faith-based resources for taking action? You're invited to join Jenna Van Donselaar, from Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, and Doug Clark, retired UCC pastor and environmental theologian, for a six-week podcast series around the theme of a "Fossil Fuel Free Lent." We'll be connecting the traditional Lenten practices of fasting and prayer with fasting from our use of fossil fuels and engaging in prayerful study of the creation narratives in the biblical book of Genesis.

To listen to the podcast, search "Creation Care Conversations" wherever you get your podcasts, or click [HERE](#).

### **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE RECORDING**

Our February 17th Ash Wednesday Labyrinth Worship Service remains available for your use on Facebook ([HERE](#)) or YouTube ([HERE](#)). If you would like a copy of the Illustrated Ministry resource emailed to you, please contact the Office at [fchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fchaddam@gmail.com).



## EASTER FLOWERS



Flowers may be ordered in honor or in memory of a loved one. Plants will be photographed in both church sanctuaries for use in our online services, and then be available for **pick up at HCC parking lot on**

**Saturday, March 27th**, between 10 and 11am to be enjoyed in your home. (You also may indicate that you would like the Deacons to pass along your flower to one of our members.

Order by mail by sending in a copy of this form to FCCH with payment or by contacting Sue Craffey (860-345-3908 or [jcraffey@snet.net](mailto:jcraffey@snet.net)). Orders must be communicated to Sue by **March 13, 2021**.

Choices: Tulip 6.5" \$8  
Hyacinth 6" \$8  
Lily 6" \$12

Plants are coming from a local business (Town & Country).

In Memory, Honor, Celebration (circle one) of

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In Memory, Honor, Celebration (circle one) of

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In Memory, Honor, Celebration (circle one) of

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Given by

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I have enclosed payment. **Total: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to FCCH.

Mail to: **905 Saybrook Road  
P.O. Box 215  
Haddam, CT 06438**

## DIACONATE CORNER

Dear Church Family,

As we travel through Lent this year, a year full of losses and change, may we reflect on the priorities that have sustained us during this difficult time. Family and faith top many of our lists.

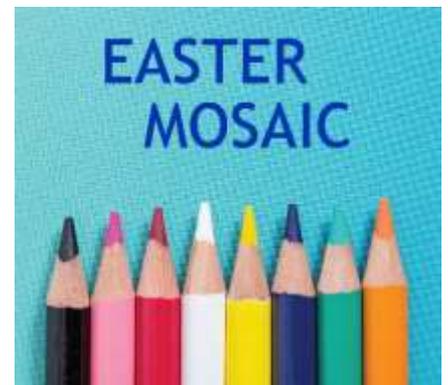
As Deacons, it has been our pleasure to serve you as the church's liaison between your home and our church home. We strive to make this experience smooth, although we too have had some bumps in the road.

New Deacons: Liz Anderson, Jeanne Messick, Steve Bull, Glen Stebbins, Kate Rizzo and Sadie Harlow have joined our shepherds to tend our flock. Hopefully, we have extended a hand to guide you through this year's Lenten road. Feel free to reach out to any of the Diaconate or to your shepherd.

We will be providing palms and the opportunity to order Easter flowers to beautify our sanctuaries whether we view in person or via Zoom. Stay tuned for more information.

Respectfully,  
Sue Craffey

## MYSTERY MOSAIC



This Easter we will assemble a giant Easter mosaic banner made up of pages colored by our members and

friends at home. If you would like to take one of the pages to decorate, please contact the Office or Pastor Michelle. We would like to receive the colored pages back at our **Saturday, March 27th**, Palm and Flower pick up so we have a week for assembly and photography!

**MISSION/OUTREACH NEWS  
MARCH 2021**

The members of the joint Mission/Outreach committees met on February 10, 2021 to plan activities for the late winter and early spring. We explored different opportunities for mission that are possible with COVID-19 restrictions. Look for more information to follow on these activities:

1. **Tag Sale on May 22, 2021** to be held in the HCC parking lot. There will be an organizational meeting on **April 1, 2021**. Pam Crum will be chairing this event. The proceeds will be divided equally between our two churches. Clean house and box up your unwanted stuff; we will sell it to benefit our churches.
2. The **Bread Ministry** will again be active from the first week in June to early October. Here is a chance to learn to make bread, have fun selling it and help Haddam folks stay warm in the winter.
3. Our project for Lent will benefit the youngsters at the Solnit Center. They need sports equipment. More information on this project will be available in March.
4. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be taken in March.
5. We are planning a Spring Card night for **March 19, 2021**. You will have an opportunity to design spring cards that can be sent out to church members.
6. For Mother's and Father's Day we will support the state diaper bank. This bank has baby diapers, adult incontinence pads, and feminine hygiene supplies that are made available to people who need them.

We welcome new ideas. We need willing hands. We hope you would like to help.



Thank you for your generous gift to Back Bay Mission! Your gift to *Friends of the Mission* makes it possible to meet the most urgent needs of the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Your gift is already at work strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives. You're helping a homeowner stay in their home, providing homeless families with apartments, making sure people have enough food, and giving people the support they need to make their lives better.

Most importantly, your gift is making sure that Back Bay Mission is here to provide a safe and welcoming place for everyone who comes through our doors. Thank you for partnering with us through your generous gift. We – and those we serve – are ever grateful.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Alice Graham, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Vanessa L. Dorantes  
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES  
*Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities*



Ned Lamont  
Governor

On behalf of the youth and staff of the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center, I extend my sincere thanks and great appreciation for the beautiful hand-made holiday stockings!

During these trying times, we are even more appreciative of your time and generosity.

Sincerely,

Francis X. Gregory, PhD  
Superintendent

Donations of clothing for the Goodwill on behalf of guests of St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown as well as contributions of non-perishable food for the Haddam Food Pantry and/or HK Backpack program may be made at **HCC at the 10-11am Saturday, March 27th**, Palm and Easter Plant pick up. Volunteers will deliver your donations to the appropriate agency. For more information or to alert us to a large donation, please contact Ginny Evensen or the Office.





**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

One Great Hour of Sharing® is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries.

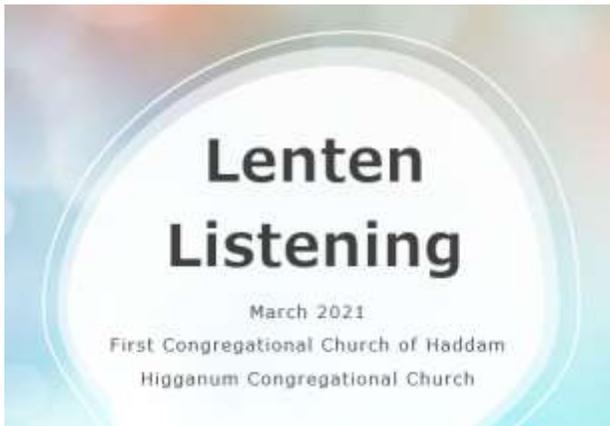
With congregations from many denominations, our churches will receive and dedicate our gifts for the OGHS Offering on Sunday, March 14th. Learn about how our gifts will be used during worship on Sundays, March 7th and 14th, and/or at [https://www.ucc.org/oghs\\_resources\\_frequently-asked-questions/](https://www.ucc.org/oghs_resources_frequently-asked-questions/).

**Water is life. Water is love. Let love flow.**

Access to clean fresh water is vital for all of humanity, but for women in particular, water access means the difference between life and death for them and their families. The United Nations International Observance of **World Water Day** (March 22) reflects on the importance of water in our daily lives and remembers those who lack access to adequate drinking water supplies.

For women and girls around the world, it can be a 12 hour walk to the nearest water source to collect water to maintain basic needs and crucial hygiene practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With your support, 100 families will benefit from the Water Well project, sponsored by the United Church of Christ in Mozambique (UCCM). When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you invest in the hopeful future of women and girls around the world and serve as co-workers with God to build *a just world for all*.



Reflecting on the last two years' engagement by church Working Groups, members at the Joint Annual Meeting of FCCH and HCC indicated a strong desire to move forward with the process of making a decision regarding the joining of the two churches.

To include our whole community in this discussion as best we can in the pandemic, Pastor Michelle has been working to adapt to online use dialogue tools that usually would be engaged face-to-face in an all-church retreat setting. At the February Joint Church Council meeting, the Council delegated responsibility to finalize a plan to the Moderators and Pastor Michelle.

Preparatory to a more structured "Fishbowl" dialogue process during the Easter season, we would like to dedicate this time of Lent to intentional listening to one another's hopes and concerns.

### **Paired Conversations**

During February, FCCH and HCC members have been encouraged to pair up over the phone or Zoom with a partner from the other church for honest conversation about the current working relationship between the churches and what they expect going forward. Those in leadership positions were encouraged to undertake this dialogue with their counterparts, and all to speak with someone they did not yet know well to engage in conversation until they experienced both surprise and compassion.

### **Letters to God**

In addition and as a part of their Lenten self-examination, **members are asked to express and share their views in the form of individual letters to God.**

After time thinking about and clarifying for yourself ***"What does church mean to me?" and "What is FCCH and HCC's value for, responsibility to, and/or role in our community?"***, draw on your insights to write a prayer addressed to God reflecting your answer to or reflection on the question ***"What is the best thing that could happen on God's behalf in the mutual relationship of our two churches?" (Or, if you prefer: "How do we best serve God together?")***

Email or mail your letter to Pastor Michelle, who will confirm receipt and arrange for it to be **read aloud by a volunteer during or after our online worship services on March 7th, 14th, and 21st.**

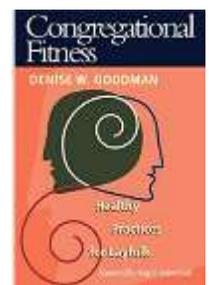
Authors will not be identified aloud- unless by the writer her or himself- when the letters are shared in our services, and listeners will be encouraged not to be distracted from the content by speculation.

To keep connection with those who do not attend online, we will include in the April *Good News from the Belfry* a list of those who contributed letters along with a general summary of letter content and (unattributed) excerpts as space permits. *(Please note: anonymous contributions may be read by leadership, but will not be shared with the congregation.)*

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### **BOOK DISCUSSION**

Also beginning in March, Pastor Michelle will be leading one or more discussion groups of [Denise W. Goodman's book \*Congregational Fitness\*](#). If you would like to participate, please let her know of your interest and preferred schedule [HERE](#).



## Super Saturday

Two Great Days of Virtual Workshops,  
Networking and Worship

March 13, 2021/March 20, 2021



**Special Guest**  
Rabbi Elan Babchuck  
Rabbi, Entrepreneur, and Ritual Designer  
fascinated by the Intersections of Faith, Justice,  
and Identity

Register for Super Saturday [HERE](#).

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### MARCH 5TH VIRTUAL PAINT NIGHT



If you signed up for our virtual paint night with Denise Bouchard, you should have received your materials or have arranged for their delivery. If you would like to participate but haven't

signed up, please contact Amy Harlow ASAP to see if additional kits are available.

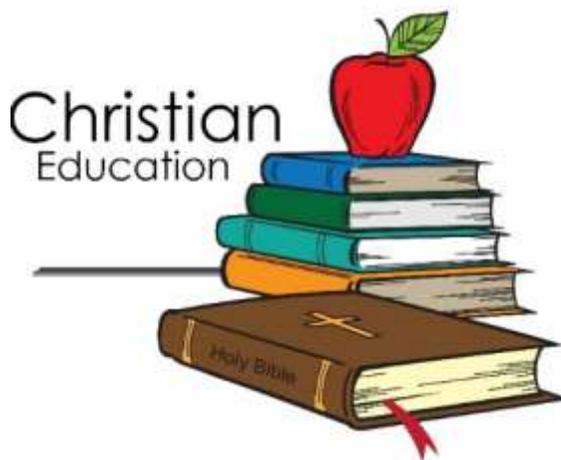
Then sign on ZOOM at 7pm on Friday, March 5th, using the dedicated link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86403234169?pwd=VDVTRmQ2VmpuR2FjNWlkaUpXNDdhZz09>

Meeting ID: 864 0323 4169

Passcode: 892115

Income over expenses will benefit "A Place Called Hope." Learn more about the work of this local nonprofit [HERE](#).



## Christian Education

Hello from Christian Ed! We have been busy finding out the answer to the question "Who does God say I am?" in the Dig IN Curriculum. In the lesson "God Gives Gideon Strength" (Judges 6-7), we learned that we are strong with God. In another lesson, "God Goes Ahead of David's Army" (2 Samuel 5:17-25), we learned that we need God's guidance and that he is happy to give us that guidance and friendship. Our most recent lesson, "Esther Has a Purpose," we read about how Queen Esther saved her people from the mean Haman! She had a purpose, to save her people! This lesson taught us that big or small we all have a purpose and that God gives us that purpose. I am very thankful for all of your continued support!

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### MIDWEEK STUDY

Our midweek study is discussing themes from the Lenten "Where Your Heart Is" Devotional. Join us for one or all of our sessions at **10am Tuesdays** by Zoom. (3/2 moved to 3/4)

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### SILVER LAKE

Silver Lake Summer registration is now open. View the brochure [HERE](#).

We will include a "Moment for Ministry" during our online worship service on **Sunday, March 21st**. Join us to learn more about current planning for a safe, fun summer.





We have obtained access for our members and friends to the 2021 Illustrated Ministry Lenten Devotional "Where Your Heart Is."

The Devotional spans the six weeks of Lent and Easter week, and can be used by youth and adults. It includes meditative coloring and written reflection pages, scripture texts, and applications.

Its weekly themes are:

- Week 1 Storing Up Treasures (Matt. 6:19-21)*
- Week 2 Sharing Our Hearts (Luke 2:41-52)*
- Week 3 Knowing the Good (Matt. 19:16-26)*
- Week 4 Consider the Lilies (Luke 12:13-34)*
- Week 5 Becoming Someone New (Matt. 14:45-46)*
- Week 6 Shifting Our Gaze (Mark 9:30-37)*
- Week 7 Sharing Our Treasures (Matt. 27:62-28:10)*

As with the Ash Wednesday materials, we are not able to send links to this material in the *Belfry* or weekly emails, only directly to individuals by email or in print form. Watch for an email with more information, or let the Office know ([fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com)) of your interest.



## MEMBER'S CORNER

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



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



- 1 Autumn Leavitt
- 2 Owen Hill
- 4 Ann Buracchi
- 5 Hollis Burr  
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
- 31 Laura Porter  
Walter Zanelli