



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



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,

Psalm 97:1, 11-12

*The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad;
let the distant shores rejoice.*

*Light shines on the righteous
and joy on the upright in heart.*

*Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous,
and praise his holy name.*

As most of you probably know, we gained two small dogs as family members earlier this year. They are a warm and delightful chaos of joy.

Because we are not yet confident of the pups' homing instincts or response to their new names, they go out only leashed, even in our mostly-fenced yard. Thus, I regularly am outside at late/early hours I didn't used to be.

In the winter, I noticed the quiet of the frozen world in our midnight walks. The sounds of crunching snow, jingling tags, and breath had little competition from traffic or other noise.

These first April days it has been the morning light shining on beads of melted frost and the green of the earth returning to life that have struck me. Spring may not be all the way "sprung," but nature feels poised to present its astonishing annual performance of renewal.

I feel a sort of wariness about spring this year. It seems dangerous, somehow, to join fully in the exuberance of the season. The discontented winter of Covid19 is not yet over, and I somehow appear to expect the physical world to restrain itself as its human children must for yet a while longer.

It is good and right, though, in this time and in all places for God's creation to offer its surging praise. The grass grows and the flowers open as a sign and reminder of the wider context of God's activity.

The same irrepressible force that tilts our side of this planet once more toward the sun and directs the birds in their morning chorus is the



strength of care, hope, and commitment upon which we draw in this and every season.

The blessings of Easter to you and yours,
Pastor Michelle

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 an individual Zoom chat, telephone call, porch, or other visit with the Pastor, contact her at the number above or mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com.

On Wednesday, April 7th, Pastor Michelle plans to attend the Yale Youth Ministry Institute's lunchtime program "Adventures in Space-Making" with the Rev. Phiwa Langeni, and between April 18th and 21st, she will participate in Ecumenical Advocacy Days. These are virtual programs.

Please keep our Pastoral Search Committee in prayer as they continue 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](#).

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

APRIL MEETINGS (By Zoom)

Joint Diaconate – Monday, April 12th, 7pm

Physical Reopening – Tues., April 13th,
8:30am

Golf Tournament Planning – Sunday, April
18th, 7pm

HCC Finance – Monday, April 19th, 7pm

Joint Council – Tuesday, April 20th, 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.

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



SAVE THE DATE:

May 22nd

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Thursday, May 20th, 6-7pm **Tent set up**

Friday, May 21st

3pm **Many hands needed**
3pm-dark **Drop off (and stay to set up!)**

Saturday, May 22nd

7:30am **Volunteers arrive**
9am **Sale begins**
2pm **Sale ends**
2-3pm **Clean up (trucks needed)**

If you have a truck and are willing to pick up donations from members unable to lift/carry, please contact Ginny Evensen ASAP. If such volunteers are available, we will provide instructions on how to request them in next month's Belfry newsletter.

PHASING FORWARD

Our 9:30am Sunday worship services will be in online only format through at least April 18th. The Physical Reopening Team will meet again on April 13th at 8:30am to review current data and make a decision on returning to in-person worship beginning April 25th. 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.



Our Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet virtually for work and fellowship on **Wednesday, April 7th, at 10am** using the Sunday Zoom sign on.

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

CHOIR RECORDING SESSION

It was wonderful to hear our Combined Choir at the Easter Sunrise service and in recordings for Palm Sunday and Easter. Members of the Combined Choir are invited to gather at FCCH on **Saturday, April 10th, from 5-5:30pm** to record music for our online services on April 11th and 18th.

Please watch your email or contact Eric Lundin for music to review in advance, and plan to warm up your voice in your car on the way over since our time together/inside will be limited to recording.

(Plan to mask and distance by household as previously.)



APRIL 9:30am SUNDAY SCHEDULE

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!

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



**Sunday, April 11th
ONLINE WORSHIP
Second Sunday of Easter**

John 20:19-31

"Believing with Thomas"



**Sunday, April 18th
ONLINE WORSHIP
Third Sunday of Easter**

Psalm 4, John 21

"Responding with Peter"



**Sunday, April 25th FCCH (Tentative)
In Person with Live Stream
Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Good Shepherd Sunday

Psalm 23, John 10:11-18



MIDDLESEX ASSOCIATION PRAYERS

April 4th. Please pray for the congregations of the Middlesex Association Churches that the Easter good news that Christ has risen and the "Comforter" has come will never leave us, but will cling to our hearts as our days move forward.

April 11th. The Rev. Alan Froggatt of the United Churches of Chester asks us to pray that as we return to in person worship, that we resist the temptation to go back to what was the tried and true methods of worship, but that we embrace the new and lively surprising future into which the spirit of God is leading us.

April 18th. First Congregational Church of Haddam and the Higganum Congregational Church ask us to join them in offering thanks for the goodness of God's creation and praying for the health of waterways like the beautiful Connecticut River. (Earth Day is April 22nd.)

April 25th. As churches of the Middlesex Association of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ we are asked to pray for our Executive Conference Minister, The Rev. Darrell Goodwin, that he will have wisdom, faith, hope, and love, as he leads our Conference in these challenging times.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who contributed to last month's "One Great Hour of Sharing" Offering. FCCH received \$85, and HCC \$515 which will "let love flow" in development, refugee assistance, and emergency aid in the US and internationally.



MISSION/OUTREACH NEWS APRIL 2021

THANK YOU to everyone who donated food items for the Haddam/Killingworth Backpack program. This program provides supplementary food items for children on the weekend. The BACK PACK for the April vacation will include extra nutritional items for the week when school is not in session.

A TAG SALE is planned for May 22, 2021. This is the day of the Town Wide Tag Sale. There was a planning meeting on April 5, 2021; see Page 3 for some details, with more to follow in the coming weeks. We will need lots of help to set up the sale, sell stuff and clean up using COVID guidelines. Watch for the online Sign Up Ginny Murphy is creating.

CWS SCHOOL BAGS- now is the time to sew the bags. The pattern and fabric were available on March 27th when flowers were picked up and will be available at the churches when we begin meeting in person. We will fill these bags in late July when school supplies are on sale.

The Bread for Heat Ministry will start up and bread will be available the beginning of June at the Higganum Farmers Market on Fridays.



MATE Housing Ministry allows volunteers to assist Maine residents with housing needs. A group from our churches met earlier this year to discuss youth and adults organizing a summer mission trip with MATE.

If you are interested in participating or in learning more, please join us for a follow up meeting on Tuesday, April 13th, at 7pm by Zoom. For more information, please contact Lori Chadwick.



LOOKING AHEAD

Solnit Center Sports Equipment

With spring arriving and weather warming, sometimes our thoughts turn to sports. The Solnit Center which houses 13-17 year olds has expressed a need for outdoor and indoor sports equipment. Their campus is divided into East and West, and the needed items are specific to each area. Examples are dodgeballs, basketballs, wiffleballs, badminton sets, and air pumps. Due to the pandemic, a donor was unable to contribute this year. Our Christian Outreach Committee is looking at ways our church community can help fill this need. More specific information coming soon.

Diaper Drive for Mother's and Father's Day

As everyone knows, the bottom line for parents is that you need LOTS of diapers for babies and toddlers! Celebrate Mother's and Father's Days this year with a monetary donation to our Mission/Outreach Committee's Diaper Drive.

This will be a virtual drive, and all donations will be made to the Diaper Bank of Connecticut which supplies diapers of all sizes and shapes across the entire state through their partnership with more than 50 agencies.

They distribute more than 75,000 diapers a week, but that is less than 20% of the need.

Please STAY TUNED for more details on this drive to help supply basic help and keep all children and families clean and healthy especially in these difficult times.



Easter Flowers

<i>Sue Craffey</i>	<i>In Memory of Family</i>
<i>Steve Bull</i>	<i>In Memory of Lisa, Judy Dell and Barbara Dolce</i>
<i>Iris Heit & Stacey Kinney</i>	<i>In Memory of Todd Kinney and his parents Dave & Barb, Ellis & Michael Heit, and Pablo's mother Rosa</i>
<i>Lori & Alan Chadwick</i>	<i>In Memory of Our Parents and Grandparents</i>
<i>The Madsen-Bibeau Family</i>	<i>In Memory of Donna Bibeau and In Honor of First Responders and Educators</i>
<i>Ginny Evensen & Richard Gault</i>	<i>In Memory of their Parents</i>
<i>Carol Ricker</i>	<i>In Memory of their Great Grandfather Bruce Ricker from Juliana, April & Wyatt</i>
<i>June Lamoureux</i>	<i>In Memory of Lamoureux & Dean Family especially George R. Dean</i>
<i>Alexa Flora</i>	<i>In Memory of Anabel & Harry Hooker In Memory of Deborah Kay & Jasper Odell In Memory of Hilary, Christopher & Sam Flora</i>
<i>Jen Lee</i>	<i>In Memory of Wong Shee Toy In Memory of Hom Shee In Memory of Ed</i>
<i>Candy Casale & George Sima</i>	<i>In Memory of Lillian & Charles Sima In Memory of Janet & Cecil Card In Memory of Priscilla Card O'Connell</i>
<i>Denise Bouchard</i>	<i>In Celebration of Pastor Michelle and In Celebration of the Church Choir In Celebration of our Joined Church Families</i>
<i>Eric Lundin</i>	<i>In Memory of Evelyn Lundin In Honor of the Combined Choir In Celebration of Pastor Michelle's ministry at HCC/FCCH</i>
<i>Sandy Nightingale</i>	<i>In Memory of Paul</i>
<i>Sue Henehan & Greg Shield</i>	<i>In Memory of Rita & Tom Henehan In Memory of Rosa & Ed Shields</i>
<i>Judy Hodgson</i>	<i>In Memory of My parents Raymond & Ellen In Memory of My sister Diane In Memory of My brother-in-law Tommy</i>
<i>John & Liz Anderson</i>	<i>In Memory of our parents: Wayne & Doris Freeman & Kermit & Annabel Anderson</i>
<i>Carol & Dick Matregrano</i>	<i>In Memory of Lieschen Seabeck In Memory of Ann Heiss</i>
<i>Jan & Don Berry</i>	<i>In Memory of Rob, Roxanne & Rhonda</i>
<i>Edie Williams</i>	<i>In Memory of Dick Williams, In Memory of Richard & Lillian Williams, Leroy & Ida Barton</i>



The Diaconate focused on two areas this past month:

1. Church Reopening: The congregation has indicated that they would like both in-person services along with Live Streaming. We need to determine when and how to provide this dual service capability. We hope to be able to provide this by April 25. Working with the Reopening committee and the Joint Council, this date will be firmed up soon.

2. Lenten Services: We have worked with Pastor Michelle to assist in providing meaningful Lenten services. This included, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday (including the Sunrise service which saw over 60 people in attendance) services.



CHURCH JOINING DIALOGUE

Thank you to John and Liz Anderson, Steve Bull, Alan and Lori Chadwick, Sue Craffey, Ginny Evensen, Barbara Fernandez, Alexa Flora, Jeanne Messick, Lindamae Peck, and Terry Smith for sending in their “Letters to God” for our March “Lenten Listening” process, and to all who engaged in paired discussions.

The “Letters” were read in full during and after worship services last month. Representative excerpts assembled by Pastor Michelle are included below.

Stay tuned for information on the next phase in our churches’ conversation regarding joining. As initially discussed in the Joint Meeting following the Annual Meetings in January, Pastor Michelle is planning for a “fishbowl” discussion. Please be thinking about your willingness to be one of the 6-8 “center circle” dialogue participants. (In a “fishbowl” dialogue, a small group discusses a series of questions while an outer ring of silent participants actively listen and observe the dialogue and their own reactions.)

“Letters to God” Excerpts

“I think we must be open to changes in how we worship, outreach that inspires others. interaction in the community and other ideas that show our dedication and interest with what younger folks want as well as keeping some traditional values.”

“My point is, I see the need to be a successful united Church but a different one that either was in the past. In choosing this option a new minister must have the leadership required to help us achieve goals to survive indefinitely.”

“The best thing about getting the Churches together:

- *to infuse with new energy our joint mission projects and fundraisers;*
- *to strengthen the bonds of discipleship and interdependence between us as members of a Christian community, to support and care for each other and our community, particularly in challenging times in the future.*
- *to develop a stable fiscal structure for the combined church going forward that assures resources for its ministries.”*

“In our opinion, that experience over the past two years has proven that we can work together as one family to promote your will on earth and in our community.”

“Lord, we believe that officially combining our churches is not just a matter of sharing a Pastor and developing friendships, but a matter of survival for both churches, both financially and in terms of numbers of congregants. We believe that the time has come to take an official action and to act in accordance with majority or our members. Lord, if you agree, guide us as we go through that process.”

“The children’s song says we are not a building, we are not the steeple we are the church and we are the people. Some of us have experienced not having a building, and we became stronger as we worked to build a new place to worship.”

Both churches are cherished and historic properties. I hope we can soon commit to choosing one for our regular worship services and dedicating the other to a new purpose serving the needs of both the church community and the community as a whole.”

“Rather than risking the loss of active members by merging HCC and FCCH, the focus should be on engaging inactive members and growing membership. Both those positive steps are possible if the churches unite behind their shared new minister, which does not require that they merge to a single church.”

“Always remind us that HCC and FCCH exist today because current members have found their church as the place of unity with you and fellowship with others, and guide us away from actions that would deny them their church.”

“I think I’m ready, I think we are as ready as “we” will be and so I am taking off the weight of fear of the unknown and looking forward with eyes wide open, and hands ready to serve. I’m hopeful that “we” leave no one behind but I’m feeling that if we wait we will miss the windows that are opening.”

“I think the way for us to serve God and each other is to continue to focus on the things that unite us: love of God, faith and hope for our town.”

“Realistically we need to make a change. We could form a new church. We will need your help to let go of our current ideas and wisdom to develop new ways to service our town and the world.”

“Finances will eventually dictate that we change, in a very big way, how and where our home will be. In the big picture, where we serve You and our community, does not matter. To our members however, this is a very large issue, and we ask You to lead us to a peaceful and thoughtful resolution.”

“I look forward to when our churches can return to in person and become a strong, positive, visual presence to our community and support local as well as global mission, the effect will be seen by those who seek guidance or support.”

“The melding of the two churches into one, stronger and more vibrant one is my dream. This presence is not physically in a building, but more felt intrinsically. The building is the symbol and place to physically visit, but not required as this past year has proven to us during the pandemic.”

“I think the joining of our two churches to form a new church will enable the congregation to focus and concentrate our resources, e.g., human, financial and facilities, to more effectively and efficiently offer Christian services to our communities, both local and far.”



SHRED IT!

Time for spring cleaning! Do you have boxes of old papers you want to shred? Here is your chance. The Haddam Town Sustainability Committee will be hosting a shredding event on **May 8th from 9-12 by the Community Center.**

A \$5/box donation is suggested. All proceeds will benefit Haddam Social Services.

If you have an idea for a sustainable community project or are interested in joining the Sustainability Committee, contact Kristin Battistoni in the Tax Office at 860-345-8531 ext.207 or at Taxcollect@haddam.org.



Join us to **SECURELY DESTROY** your **UNWANTED PERSONAL DOCUMENTS** in a Shred-it® mobile shredding truck!

Event Name:
Town of Haddam Shredding Event to Support Social Services

Date:
5/8/21

Location:
Haddam Community Center
Donation \$5/box

Time:
9-12

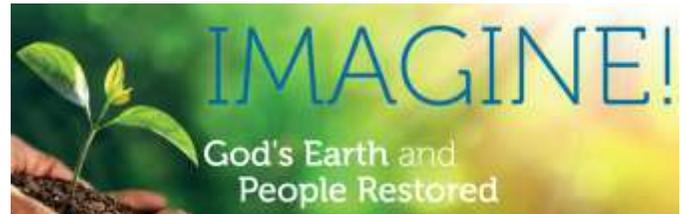


DO NOT place in shredder:

- ✗ Syringes
- ✗ Food, Glass, Cans, etc.
- ✗ Cardboard Tubes
- ✗ Ink Cartridges and Toners
- ✗ Hanging Folders
- ✗ Electrical Items
- ✗ Hard Drives
- ✗ Office Supplies, Hole Puncher, Staple Remover, etc.
- ✗ Nuts and Bolts

WARNING FIRE HAZARD

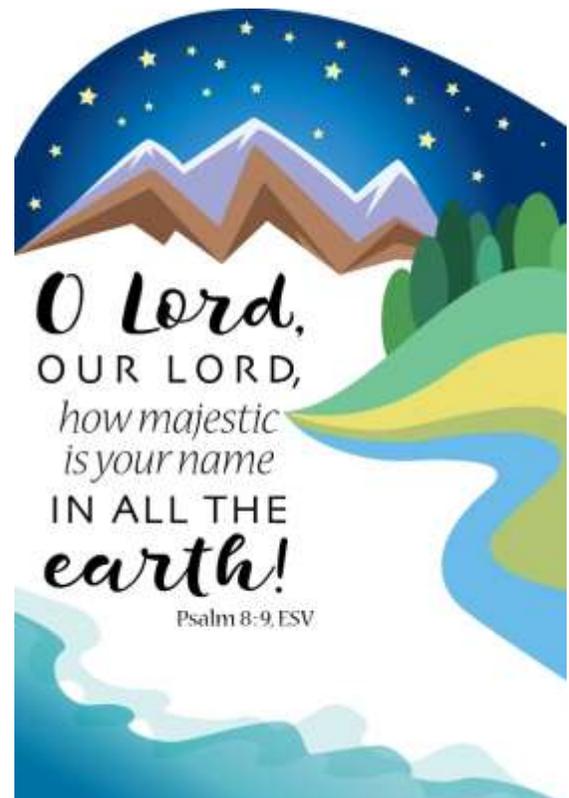
- ✗ Batteries of Any Type
- ✗ Large Metal Objects
- ✗ Electronic Devices



Ecumenical Advocacy Days is an annual gathering of Christian advocates and activists at which participants worship, delve deeply into the pressing issues of the day, and lift their voices by speaking truth to power on Capitol Hill.

The 2021 theme is “Imagine! God’s Earth and People Restored.” EAD 2021 is an opportunity to support this global movement centered on and led by the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts due to historic racial and colonial inequities.

EAD 2021 will be a virtual gathering from **Sunday, April 18th to Wednesday, April 21st.** Registration fees are modest relative to previous years, with no travel expense. To learn more, visit: <https://advocacydays.org/>





DONKEY'S DELIVERY

Our churches' Palm Sunday greeting, "Donkey's Delivery," portrays our friend the Donkey visiting local schools and businesses to offer thanks for their efforts during the pandemic. View and share the video [HERE](#).



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Click [HERE](#) for an online lesson on **NOAH'S ARK**. This class is about 30 minutes long and was provided by the SNEUCC as Children's Programming for the recent Super Saturday event. Check it out! (A second session is available to view [HERE](#).)

Our own DIG IN! online interactive sessions for this month will be on **Thursdays, April 15th, 22nd, and 29th, at 6:30pm using the usual Sunday Zoom**. Join us to learn about Jesus washing the disciples' feet, Jesus as the "True Vine," and the dramatic conversion of Paul!

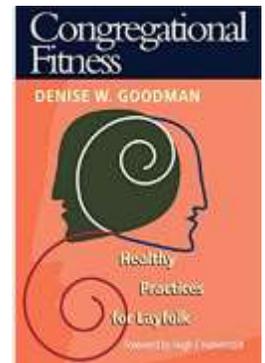
MIDWEEK STUDY

Our midweek study has completed our discussion of the "Where Your Heart Is" Devotional and plans for two additional six-session topics before a summer hiatus using the excellent Baylor University Christian Reflection curricula found [HERE](#). Join us for any or all of our upcoming sessions at **10am Tuesdays** by Zoom, watching weekly worship bulletins for that session's assigned readings. We will continue to offer Zoom access throughout, but listen for announcements later this spring for in-person outdoor or indoor gathering options as conditions permit.)

April 13th to May 18th "Apocalyptic Vision"
May 25th to June 29th Topic TBD

BOOK DISCUSSION

Our small-group study of **Denise W. Goodman's book *Congregational Fitness*** will begin (at last!) on **Thursday, April 15th, at 10am by Zoom** using the usual Sunday sign on. Copies are available digitally on Amazon; if you would like to participate and cannot access a copy of the book, please contact Pastor Michelle.



EASTER MOSAIC

Thank you to all who contributed colored pages to our Alleluia Easter Mosaic!



MANY THANKS



Many thanks to Kris Tupay who partnered with the Easter Bunny to help Miss Amy provide eggs for our church families at home!

**SILVER LAKE
SUMMER CAMPING**

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



Silver Lake Sampler - Spring Program Day

April 24, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Click above to learn more about a day program for children considering camp.



MEMBER'S CORNER

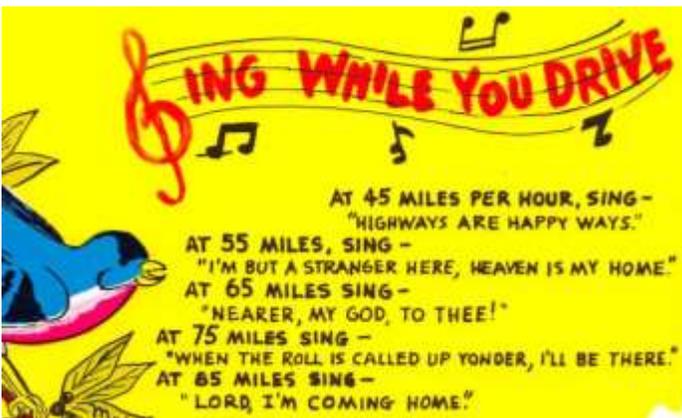
Do you have a special message to share with your Church family? If so, send it in for the Members' Corner!



Image from Amy Harlow

SING WHILE YOU DRIVE

Sandy Nightingale was going through a box this past month and found a business card from Earnest Hickman, an old friend of hers and Paul's.



- 3 Blair Craffey
- 4 Mona Johanson
- 6 Rachel Roberts
- 18 Jim Aduskevich
- 19 Elizabeth Ellsworth
- 20 Norm Manning
- 21 Alison Thayer
- 23 Jesse Ricker
Claire Madsen-Bibeau
- 22 Wayne Paradis
- 25 Mitchell Bragoni
Elizabeth Aduskevich
- 27 Kris Tupay
- 28 Evan Gras
Kelly Burns
- 29 Will Malave



- 10 Greg Shields and Sue Henehan
- 13 Ray and Maria Pierdomenico
- 16 Mike and Jill Barile

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