



# THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



Monthly Newsletter of the  
The First Congregational Church of Haddam  
and Higganum Congregational Church  
Open and Affirming  
Members of the United Church of Christ



In the Year of Our Lord 2022



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](http://HaddamChurch.org) and [HigganumChurch.org](http://HigganumChurch.org)



Hello My Friends,

May the Joy of Christmas fill your hearts as you prepare for the year upcoming!

What a marvel it is to share the moments of creating Christmas for each other! It is amazing how the sentiments of the heart can be shared even when our traditions are disrupted.

As my children and I visited family and friends in New York City to share Yuletide cheer this year, we didn't go to Macy's nor Rockefeller Center. Nor did we see the Christmas lights at Saks Fifth Avenue. Nor did we go to Radio City to see the Rockettes in their Christmas Spectacular, nor any other Broadway show. Nor did we attend the Christmas at St. Patricks. We simply stayed in, admiring the cityscape through our windows, and avoiding all of the NYC events that have heralded and celebrated our Christmases of old.

And what a lovely and wonderful time we shared! Ever deepening circles of shared time converge to bring us to into this new moment of sharing together. Now, with Christmas behind us and a New Year ahead, I feel the full presence of God's mystery unfolding all around us.

I feel so very fortunate to be a part of this larger community of faith which has faithfully strived to "Be the Church" together over the centuries. From 1700 to now, our character, proved by history, is one of continual renewal and transformation. Before any of us discovered either of our churches, they were inspired by God and neighbor to build a community of Faith. We each entered this community in a different time and place, and by our adoption into this community, we share its collective history. We have come through a series of fires and meeting houses. We have

come through divisions that brought both minister and congregation to form a new community in Higganum in 1844. We have come through years of reunification discussions. And we have been steadily making our way through a pandemic that has changed our world's commerce and culture.

Now, on Sunday January 2, I will be beginning my New Year celebration by joining our churches. Though some might see this as the formal prerequisite of the United Church of Christ process of "Installation" of the new minister into the church of "Call", for me this is an important moment in our journey together. The search committee diligently searched, as did I. The congregation voted upon our mutual recognition of a match in faith. Now we have shared some time together, and I have experienced you as a community of faith. I have worshipped together with you and begun to share in your journey. This has prepared the way for me to formally and publicly join our larger community as a full member. In the UCC, the joining of any church is theologically considered to be a re-affirmation of one's baptism. It is recognition that one's faith and one's search for God's meaning and action in life is larger than one's own life or ambitions, and must be discovered and lived together in community with others. One affirms the fundamentals of belief and commits to the shared journey with others. One willingly promises to undertake the responsibilities that faith. Although it is a preamble to my being "Installed" as your minister, how could I be "your minister" if not first joining into your history and considering the community to be my own?

Each step along this journey allows us to pause to see ask for God's guidance, sanction, and support. Each step along this journey brings us more deeply into the shared history of the past. Each step along this journey prepares us to more fully envision and enact God's will as we shape our community's future.

I thank you all for the ever-flowing outpourings of welcome you have shared with me since my arrival. I thank you for the lovely flowers, foods,

Christmas gifts and sentiments that you have showered upon me. I thank you for the serious conversations we've shared about where you've been and where you're going. I thank you for sharing your personal hopes, fears, pains, and triumphs with me, and for all of the moments of sharing worship and fellowship together.

All of these moments bring me forward to this moment of joining the churches, and increase my capacity to support our shared journey toward unification.

May we "Be the Church" together in the New Year! May we continually revitalize our faith! May we discover new ways to experience and share God's Love together as one body of faith.

Amen,  
Rev. Hilary

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#### A NOTE FROM YOUR MODERATORS



The New Year always presents an opportunity to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the promise of the future. We as a congregation have much to be thankful for. The past year saw the two congregations work together in many different ways which gives us all much enthusiasm for the promise of the days ahead. The diligence of our Joint Pastoral Search Committee came to fruition with call to Rev. Hilary McClellan to be our settled pastor. We all look forward to the blessing of her leadership for many years to come. We have taken time to enjoy the blessings of season and will be energized to move ahead with the necessary steps. Also on our minds has been the Covid resurgence over the past few days. The Reopening Committee will be meeting soon to review our guidelines in the face of this latest setback. With that cautionary note, we wish everyone a healthy, safe, and productive New Year as our congregations move forward together.

Greg Shields                      John Edmondson  
Moderator HCC                      Moderator FCCH

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#### JANUARY 2022 MEETINGS

**First Light Bible Study "What's next?" Discussion** – Monday, January 3rd, 10am (FCCH Lewis House / Zoom)

**Physical Reopening Team** – Tuesday, January 4th, 9am (Zoom)

**Prayer Shawl** – Wednesday, January 5th 10am (HCC)

**Annual Report Submissions Due** – Monday, January 10th to fcchaddam@gmail.com

**Joint Diaconate** – Monday, January 10th, 7pm (FCCH Lewis House / Zoom)

**Pastoral Relations Committee** – Wednesday, January 12th 6:30pm (FCCH Lewis House / Zoom)

**HCC Finance** – Monday, January 17th 7pm (HCC)


**Joint Council** – Tuesday, January 18th 7pm (FCCH Lewis House / Zoom)

**February Belfry Submissions Due** – Thursday, January 20th to belfryeditor@gmail.com or fcchaddam@gmail.com

**Annual Church Meetings** – Sunday, January 23rd after worship at FCCH

Please contact Committee Chairs for agendas and details of meeting information.

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 Please use the Zoom login below for access to FCCH and HCC meetings, adult education, and fellowship programs that are available online.

**Meeting ID:**                      391 987 2707  
**Meeting Password:**                      90523

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All annual **report submissions** from Officers, Boards and Committees are due on or before **January 10th** to the Administrative Assistant [fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com)

**Annual Meeting Announcement**

The 178<sup>th</sup> **Annual Meeting** of the Higganum Congregational Church and the 322<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Haddam will be held on **January 23, 2022, following worship service at the First Congregational Church of Haddam.** The meetings will be held separately and the agenda for both churches is:

- The hearing of Officer, Board and Committee reports
- Waving of term limits
- The election of Officers, Boards, and Committees
- The adoption of the proposed 2022 budget
- The transaction of any other business

Patty Blodgett, Clerk (FCCH)  
Terry Smith, Clerk (HCC)

**PHYSICAL REOPENING TEAM**

Our **Covid-19** response can be viewed [HERE](#). If your church group plans public events in the coming weeks/months, please contact a member of the Team for consultation and specific guidance. Members include the Moderators, Minister, and Diaconate representatives.

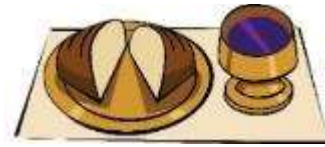


Welcome Diane Hines! Diane recently began working as the new **Sexton** at FCCH! Thank you Diane for helping us shine!



Tuesdays 1pm-4pm  
Thursdays 9am-12noon

**9:30am Sunday Worship at FHCC during January**



**January 2nd**

Worship with Holy Communion  
Second Sunday after Christmas  
New Member Service & Reception

**January 9th**

The Baptism of Christ  
First Sunday after Epiphany  
Blessing of the Reverse Advent Bags

**January 16th**

Second Sunday after Epiphany

**January 23rd**

Third Sunday after Epiphany  
Annual Church Meetings

**January 23rd**

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

**COMMUNION AT HOME**



Would you like to receive communion at home? If so, please contact the Church office at 860-345-2742 or [fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com) and your request will be shared with Rev. Hilary.

**SERVICE STREAMING**



Access to the service by livestream on YouTube is provided. Visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SxL2fMB-DZu4BxaM6hWNg> on Sundays at 9:35am or anytime to view archived streams.

## CHURCH HOSPITALITY



The Joint Mission / Outreach Committee will host fellowship in **January** at FCCH. The FCCH Prudential/Finance and HCC Finance/Trustees will host fellowship in **February** at HCC. The Joint Diaconate will host fellowship in **March** at FCCH. **Thank you volunteers!**

*Per our Covid safety procedures: Food and drink should be pre-portioned, self-serve for individual pick up (food items wrapped or plated, not self-serve, and beverages prepackaged or poured by a host wearing mask and gloves). As weather permits, doors and windows may be open.*



We welcomed Pastor Hilary as our new settled minister. As we get to know each other better and the current church practices and styles, there may be small changes in our services. A few that have already taken place is to start the Sunday service promptly at 9:30 am with 'private' joys and concerns and then begin 'live-streaming' when complete. Another one is that we are encouraging the use of 'prayer cards'. These can be filled out at the beginning of service and will be picked up by the Deacons during first hymn. This will provide a written record of prayer requests which can be included in church programs. One last change is during the last hymn, the Pastor will follow the Deacon with the lighted candle holder to the back of the Sanctuary where she will then give the benediction.

We will also be making available and encourage the wearing of name tags. This will help the minister and all of us to better learn the names of our fellow worshipers.

Since the number of Deacons will be decreasing in 2022, we will be soliciting and encouraging others to participate in the reading of scripture during the service. If you would like to volunteer to assist in the church service 'readings', please notify Terry Smith.



Due to various commitments, classes and obligations that are scheduled in several different work areas and involvements in the new year, I have asked for and been granted a four month leave from the organist / choir director position at both churches (January through April 2022). The choir and churches will have better continuity with a steady substitute musician during these times. I will miss seeing and working with so many of you on a weekly basis, it has been a joy to know you all (5 plus years at Higganum, 21 years at Haddam). I wish each of you a healthy, blessed new year.

Eric Lundin, Organist / Choir Director

## GUEST PIANIST AND CHOIR DIRECTOR



Rebecca Degnan is excited to fill in as pianist and music director for the first few months of 2022. In addition to being a School Counselor at Haddam-Killingworth Middle School, Rebecca is the Founder, President and Music Director for Blue Fire Stage Company, a nonprofit theatre company in Higganum. Rebecca is also the Founder and Director of Shoreline Singers, a local community choir program, which is currently on hiatus due to Covid. She teaches private voice lessons at her home studio and virtually. Rebecca has a BMus in Music Composition and Music Production and Technology from the Hartt School of Music and a MS in School Counseling from CCSU, and is a Licensed Professional Counselor as well. She is currently forming a private therapy practice, Prism Counseling and Support LLC, to support LGBTQ+ youth and their families. She and her dog, Solo, are a registered therapy dog team with Pet Partners. She lives in Haddam with her husband, Mark, son, Tarin and daughter, Ryleigh. Rebecca is looking forward to working with a choir again, and learning new things through her first experience as a church music director, including teaching herself to play the organ!

## CHOIR PRACTICE

Do you love to sing? Veteran and new choir members are invited to join Rebecca, Guest Pianist and Choir Director, for practice on **Thursday evenings at 7pm at the First Congregational Church of Haddam. Newcomers** are welcome and asked to contact Rebecca before attending to discuss Covid19 precautions and so your music can be prepared.



## LET'S KEEP MAKING

# Joyful noise!

Psalm 98:4

"Make a Joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth"



### Stew Gillmore makes joyful music!

Stew graciously shared this photo of his days as the pianist & Music Director for the Nutmeg Foxtrot Jazz Orchestra - Dancin' to the 20's: Sweet and Hot!

## FIRST LIGHT WEEKDAY STUDY

First Light Reading Group paused during Advent and will resume with a discussion on what to focus on next. Newcomers are welcome. Please join us **Monday, January 3rd at 10am** in person at the FCCH Lewis House or on Zoom.

## INTERCESSORY PRAYER



Intercessory prayer is beseeching God on another's behalf. Intercessory prayer for other's healing was central to Jesus' ministry and is foundational in our Christian Faith. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we are reminded to, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." But how can we rejoice, give thanks, and pray ceaselessly when occupied by other concerns of the day? To learn more from Rev. Hilary including examples of Intercessory Prayer and for **this week's prayer requests**, click [HERE](#).

### Brigitte Battistoni and Alex Battistoni make joyful music!



Alex plays in the jazz band and Brigitte plays the French horn!

They both performed during the Winter concert at HK High School. We are so proud and fortunate to have such talented young people in our congregations!

### Liz & John Anderson make joyful music!

Liz and John have been involved in some form of music all of their lives. They met in University Chorus at Ohio State. Handel's *Messiah* was one of the



works they performed at least twice while they were at OSU. On those occasions, they performed the entire 3.5-hour work. Since that time they have sung various portions of the *Messiah* numerous times. Now, 60 years later, Liz and John joined Cappella Cantorum to perform the Christmas portion plus Hallelujah chorus on December 5th. **Listen to their joyful music [HERE](#).**



**Share with the church office how you make joyful music, or uplift your friends, to be included in this Joyful Noise series!**



Hello from Christian Education!

Happy New year! I wanted to thank our recent Confirmands Emily Alger, Brigitte and Alex Battistoni and two of their classmates Luke and McKenna for their excellent food service skills at the Yuletide Quilt Show. Lunch wouldn't have been the same without their help! They were gracious hosts and hostesses.



I wanted to announce that I will be switching my ZOOM Sunday school from Thursdays to Fridays at 6pm. See the new 2022 schedules below for ZOOM and in person opportunities for Sunday school. I will also have welcome bags for new and returning students who wish to remain in service.

**Zoom Sunday School** will be held on Friday nights at 6pm on January 7, 21, 28, February 11, 25, March 4, 18, 25, April 1, 8, May 6, 13, 20, and June 10. Join on Zoom with Meeting ID: 391 987 2707 and Meeting PW: 90523.

**In person Sunday School** will be held during worship on January 23, 30, February 13, 27, March 13, March 20, March 27, April 10, and May 8, 15, 22.

**Important dates:**

January 9 Epiphany

April 17 Easter Egg Hunt

June 12 Children's Sunday - end of year party!

There are openings for volunteer slots for both in person and online Zoom Sunday School on Fridays. Please contact me at if you have questions or can volunteer! Thank you for your support!

Peace and blessings,  
Amy Harlow CE Director  
amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet at 10am at HCC on the **first Wednesday of every month**. Newcomers are welcome to join us! For more information on this ministry, please contact Carol Ricker or Edie Williams.



**HKYFS SANTA'S HELPER LIST**

We were asked to provide gifts for children from HKYFS (Haddam Killingworth Youth & Family Services). **A HUGE THANK YOU to all for your generosity!** Christmas was brighter for three kids!

## JOY



**JOY is always sparked at our Friday Night Card Group!** This group has been meeting to play cards and enjoy each other's fellowship for several years. They started meeting every other Friday night at 7pm in the church then migrate to houses when the weather gets colder. During Covid, they met on Zoom during and resumed in person after everyone was vaccinated. Lately they have played Setback, hand and foot, train dominoes and Five Kings but are open to other games - usually two different games each night. Join in a \$2 fifty - fifty raffle per person to play then make a small (\$5 or less) donation at the end of the night. They have donated that money for various things including: camper-ships for Silver Lake, lights for the town center, new white tables for HCC, and a sizable donation to Amanda Lyons who was paralyzed by gunfire.

**We welcome new players.** See the Murphys, Matregranos, Chadwicks, Munsters, Carol Ricker, or Judy Hodgson for more information. At some point we may try to return to the church for more space and easier access.

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### H/K BACKPACK PROGRAM

Thank you to everyone who has donated. We will continue to collect shelf-stable milk. In addition, this program offers hygiene supplies for the children, and the manager asked if we would collect **deodorant for teens- girls and boys**. If you get coupons that you cannot use for deodorant, we also can send those in.

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## REVERSE ADVENT BAGS

Reverse Advent Bags gave us an opportunity to remember the meaning of advent by giving to someone else. Bags were picked up after worship and returned filled with items like the ones below. **These bags will be blessed during worship at FCCH on Sunday, January 9th.** Reverse Advent Bags will be donated to Schwarz Residence at Middlesex YMCA, Albert J. Solnit Children's Center in Middletown, St Vincent DePaul/Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown.



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### OPEN YOUR CLOSET, NOT YOUR WALLET



This project, sponsored by St Vincent de Paul in Middletown, has asked for our help. Open your closet and clean out clothes you no longer wear and bring the clothing to Goodwill Store with a **yellow donation card** that we have at the church. St. Vincent de Paul receives clothing vouchers from Goodwill that they can give to people who are in need of clothes. This program is completing its first year, and it has been a resounding success. The donations have provided \$5,500 worth of vouchers that have been distributed in the community. These vouchers allow people the dignity of shopping for their own clothing. Thank you all for helping with this project.

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## CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK

The 14th Annual Christmas Cookie Walk at HCC was held on Saturday, December 11th from 9am - 12noon. **Thank you** to all of the volunteers who helped with set up/clean up, baking, putting plates together, and filling orders!



## 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  
PO Box 215, Haddam, CT 06438



*Happy Birthday!*

- |    |                 |                       |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 2  | Clare Hoover    | Carol Ricker          |
| 4  | Lori Chadwick   |                       |
| 10 | Kristen Gras    | Cherylann Hunt        |
| 11 | Suzanne Murphy  |                       |
| 13 | Walter Bragoni  |                       |
| 18 | Audrey Chadwick |                       |
| 19 | Hannah Williams |                       |
| 22 | Patty Blodgett  |                       |
| 25 | Rogene Gillmor  |                       |
| 28 | Cody Johanson   | Carter Michael Hansen |
| 30 | Sadie Harlow    |                       |

*Happy Anniversary!*

- 28 Washington and Karen Malave

Please contact us at [fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com) if there are omissions from or corrections to our birthday and anniversary lists. Thank you.