



THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



Monthly Newsletter of
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:

HigganumChurch.org and HaddamChurch.org



Greetings Fellow Seekers and Friends,

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" *Romans 15:13*.

Hope can be an elusive Angel, who hides whenever we approach. This is especially true when we are isolated or have been struggling with depression. Hope's sister, Joy, can sometimes find even better hiding places than Hope finds. Yet Hope and Joy are also spiritual practices born of faith and the discipline of walking forward relying upon God in all circumstances. Hope and Joy are the spiritual disciplines that we practice during the liturgical season of Easter. Easter comes from the Old English ideas of the direction "East", where the sun rises, bringing hope, warmth, and light. The East is also a symbol for Jesus, who brings light into the world's darkest places and reflects divine light into humanity. The Easter season is a 50-day celebration of the Resurrected Christ transcending death. As we glimpse God's power glorified and illuminated as it is infused with Christ's eternal healing Love, we respond with resounding song, "Hallelujah!"

We have passed through the dark valley of Lent's forty-day season, through contemplations of temptation and torment, we have reflected upon denial, blame, and betrayal. We have passed through and recreated the events of Holy Week, searching our souls for the personal meaning these events hold in our spiritual lives.

This Holy Week, I encountered three trivial occurrences that felt to me like omens and struck me with a profound sense of God's living presence.

The first was during our Maundy Thursday service, when, while reading our confessional prayer, the thunder began to rumble and roll around us with ominous power. My heart grew quiet and felt humbled.

The second was as I opened my car door leaving that same service. The white scallop-shaped bowl in which I had mixed the Chrism oil, a traditional mixture of balsam and olive oils used for healing services on Maundy Thursday, slipped from my fingers. It fell at my feet, in two perfect halves. My heart grew even quieter as I stared at the white halves on the black asphalt. The scalloped shell, in Christianity, has special symbolism. From the earliest times of ancient Christianity, seashells have been symbols of rebirth, spiritual protection, and religious pilgrimage. Two ancient Spanish myths about James of Zebedee feature scallop shells, and they are in countless shrines and markers along the pilgrimages of the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James), leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Scallop shells are used to guide pilgrims along their paths...as I stared at the broken scallop shell bowl, my mind also turned to the image of the torn veil... in the windy night, staring at the broken pieces, I felt, surely, I am in the midst of Holy Week. I remembered Matthew 27:50-52 "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, the rocks split, and the tombs broke open..."

The third was early Easter Morning. After a long night filled with cares and contemplations, I came to Lewis House before the sunrise service, to find that in

the night, one of the two basketball poles had fallen into the parking lot. The pole, heavy and wooden, had rotted at the base. When Judy and I tried to move it out of the way of the parking lot, I could not help but envision us trying to drag Jesus' cross. Later, after the sunrise service, as we gathered in a group to finish moving it, my feeling of having encountered the cross and struggled under its weight as I tried to drag it, deepened. And suddenly I was also filled with an uncanny awareness that this was the third of three unusual moments in my Holy Week. Again, biblical stories reverberated in my being... Peter's 3 denials... The story in John 21 when the resurrected Jesus asks Peter three times, do you love me? and at Peter's affirmation, charges him three times, then feed my sheep...

I experienced a sense of profound inner seriousness, an awe approaching fear and trembling, accompanied by an understanding that, when one is rooted in this depth of being, all material fears and concerns feel minimal, and true joy and holy celebration follow naturally. The paschal mystery in the center of our faith resounded in my heart. I was ready to fully enter Easter. Easter had come to me.

I do not try to interpret such experiences. Instead, I simply appreciate the mystery and marvel at how these stories of old can seem to come to life, making my moments more meaningful in the here and now. Somehow, beyond my understanding, I am uplifted. Somehow, my worries for our troubled world and the burdens I carry was lightened. Somehow the flowers and singing and beautiful organ music became tangibly more important to me than all of the torments and trials of the world that are no less during Easter than during Lent. Somehow, my soul is able to authentically respond, "Hallelujah!" and to declare this good news to you, "Jesus is alive. Jesus has risen." Again I sing, "Hallelujah!"

My hope and prayer for you during these 50 days is that you can seek and experience your own personal Easter realization of resurrection, Hope and Joy. May the Holy Spirit speak personally to you. Amen.

Hallelujah!
Pastor Hilary McLellan



A NOTE FROM YOUR MODERATORS

Congratulations to all for a most productive Joint Congregational meeting on April 3rd. Several issues were resolved including approval of the New Church Bylaws and the authorization for the Joint Council to move forward with the joining process with the guidance of legal counsel. Through the many motions and amended motions, everyone maintained focus as well as a sense of humor to have reached agreement on these issues.

The second part of the meeting involved a lively discussion on our New Church Name. Everyone was encouraged to share their thoughts on the possible choices and we look forward to the next Joint Congregational meeting following worship on May 1st when we will continue our discussion and hold a final vote.

Also on the agenda for May 1st will be a discussion and approval of actions to be taken for us to start the operations of our new church. A nominating committee will need to be formed to fill church offices and committees and take steps to create the initial budget for our new church.

John Edmondson	Greg Shields
Moderator FCCH	Moderator HCC

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

46 on April 1 Ecumenical Service for Ukraine (rain)
46 on April 3 (chilly)
45 on April 10 Palm Sunday (sunny, cool)
30 on April 14 Maundy Thursday (rain)
47 on April 17 Sunrise Service (clear, cold)
51 on April 17 Easter Worship (clear, cold)
37 on April 24 with Rev. Terry Schmitt (sunny, cool)

REPORTS AND MEETING MINUTES

Draft of recent **JT Council** Minutes [HERE](#) which includes the **JT Diaconate** Report.

Annual Reports for:

Higganum Congregational Church [HERE](#)
First Congregational Church of Haddam [HERE](#)

New Church ByLaws [HERE](#)



SPECIAL JOINT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

May 1st following worship at FCCH

Click [HERE](#) for the **CALL** and **AGENDA** to the Special JT Congregational Meeting.

April 3 Congregational Meeting Minutes may be reviewed [HERE](#).



COVID GUIDELINES

We will continue with "**Mask Optional**" during worship, when speaking from the Chancel or singing, in Sunday School, and any other time on the churches' property. Distance seating during worship is available. Either door may be used to enter/exit the church, and we will continue Fellowship after worship. View our complete **Covid-19 response** [HERE](#).

Southern
New England
Conference
United Church of Christ



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the SNEUCC Middlesex Association will be held on **Monday, May 16, 6pm in Clinton** at the First Church of Christ Congregational.

Each church may be represented by five delegates in addition to the clergy. Visitors are welcome, with voice but no vote. **Please contact Greg Shields if you would like to attend.** In addition to gathering for fellowship and worship, the business of the Association will be conducted. Reports of the officers and committees of the Association will be received and voted to accept. A budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 will be presented for adoption. New officers and members of the working committees will be presented for election.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Drop by or call the church office on Tuesdays from 9am -12 noon* and Thursdays from 1-4pm*.

Please note these exceptions: The Church Office will be open on Wednesday, May 11th from 1-4pm and closed on May 12th, May 24th, May 26th, and May 31st.

**The Church Office voicemail and email are monitored during posted office hours. If you need to speak with Rev Hilary outside of these days/times, please text or call her church cell phone at 860-316-3837.*



MAY MEETINGS

Please contact Committee

Chairs for agendas and additional meeting information.

Special JT Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 1st following worship (FCCH)

“What’s the Word?” Bible Study with

Rev. Hilary Mondays, 10am (Lewis House/Zoom)

HaRRP Meeting Monday, May 2nd

11:30am (Lewis House/Zoom)

IRIS Volunteer training Monday May

2nd, Tuesday, May 3rd, Wednesday May 4th 5:30pm (IRIS Zoom)

Prudential Meeting Monday, May 2nd

5:30pm (Lewis House/Zoom)

HaRRP Clergy Meeting Tuesday, May

3rd 7pm (Lewis House/Zoom)

Prayer Shawl Wednesday, May 4th, 10am

(HCC)

Choir Rehearsal Thursdays 7pm (FCCH)

Joint Diaconate Monday, May 9th, 7pm

(Lewis House / Zoom)

Quilt Group Wednesdays, May 11th and

25th, 6:30pm (FCCH Fellowship Hall)

HCC Finance Monday, April 16th, 7pm

(HCC)

Joint Council Tuesday, May 17th 7pm

(Lewis House/Zoom)

FCCH HCC Tag Sale Saturday, May 21st

9am-2pm (HCC)

Physical Reopening Team Tuesday,

May 24th, 9am (Lewis House / Zoom)

Golf Committee Tuesday, May 24th, 7pm

(Lewis House/Zoom)

HaRRP Community Meeting Wednesday,

May 25th 6pm (Brainerd Memorial Library/Zoom)

Sunday School

Friday May 6th, 13th, 20th (Zoom)

Sunday, May 8th, 15th, 22nd (FCCH)



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

Meeting ID: 391 987 2707

Meeting Password: 90523

Phone call-in number: +1 646 558 8656



The **JT Diaconate** Report is included in the draft of the April **JT Council** Minutes which can be viewed [HERE](#)



“WHAT’S THE WORD?”

"What's the Word?" will resume at **10 am on Monday May 2. Join with Pastor Hilary** and others to discuss how our lectionary readings are speaking to us and how we are responding. We will also begin discussing what to choose for our next study session since we have finished our First Light curriculum.



INTERCESSORY PRAYER LIST

Click [HERE](#) for the Intercessory Prayer List. Please contact the church office if there are prayer requests that you would like to add or remove.



Sundays 9:30am

with Rev Hilary McLellan

**The First Congregational Church
of Haddam**

May 1st



Holy Communion

Third Sunday of Easter

Special JT Congregational Meeting
following worship

May 8th

Fourth Sunday of Easter

In person Sunday School

May 15th

Fifth Sunday of Easter

In person Sunday School I

May 22nd

Sixth Sunday of Easter

In person Sunday School

May 29th

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Memorial Day Service at HCC

COMMUNION AT HOME



If you would like to receive communion at home, please contact the Church office at 860-345-2742 or fcchaddam@gmail.com and your request will be shared.

SERVICE STREAMING



Visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel for access to services on Sundays at 9:35am or any other time to view archives.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SxL2fMB-DZu4BxaM6hWNg>

LAY READERS

Would like to be a reader during Sunday service? All ages are welcome! No experience necessary and we can give you a few pointers! Contact the church office if you are interested.

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR



A sign-up sheet is available in church to donate flowers for the altar. You will have the option to include a dedication which will be printed in the bulletin.



CHURCH HOSPITALITY

Fellowship and refreshments will be enjoyed after worship! Prayer Shawl and Bread Ministry will host during May.

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.

CHOIR REHEARSAL

Join us for practice on Thursday evenings at 7pm at FCCH. Newcomers are welcome and asked to contact the church office before attending so your music can be prepared.



Hello from CE!

We have been very busy working on CKC.

What is CKC? Children's Kindness

Camp! If you haven't heard, we will be hosting a Bible camp and childcare week this summer. The camp will be 8/15/22 - 8/19/22 with a special Children's Sunday on the 8/21/22. We are so excited about this new chapter! If you think you would like to help in any way, please email me.

Thank you for your continued support!

Peace and blessings

Amy

amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join Miss Amy for Sunday School in-person and on Zoom. **The 2022** schedule for both can be found [HERE](#).



Donate to [The Diaper Bank of Connecticut!](#) to Honor Mother's and Father's Day.

This time of year, we start to think about useful and meaningful gifts for Mother's and Father's Days. Flowers, chocolate or a new hammer are nice, but we are excited to give you a **GREAT** idea. The Mission- Outreach committee is hosting a diaper drive to

benefit The Diaper Bank of Connecticut! **The Diaper Bank covers the entire state working through more than 50 partner agencies.**

They supply over **75,000 diapers each week** (which only meets 20% of the need) In addition to diapers, they **also supply incontinence and sanitary products** to those in need.

Diaper supply affects **the health of children:** they are more likely to suffer from diaper rash, urinary tract infections and other medical problems if they do not have clean diapers

Children cannot go to day care without disposable diapers. **The lack of diapers forces parents and caregivers to miss school and work,** making it harder to break the cycle of poverty. Every dollar invested in diaper assistance yields an 11-times increase in the personal income of recipients.

SNAP and WIC programs were not designed to be used to purchase any of these products.

Because The Diaper Bank buys truckloads of diapers at a very reduced cost, **monetary donations** are the best way to help. **\$25 will supply a month's supply of diapers for 1 child, \$100 for 4 children.**

You can donate in three ways:

1 **Online:** Donate directly to **our special page** on the diaper bank website. <https://thediaperbankofconnecticut.salsalabs.org/hhchurch22/index.html>

2 **Checks:** Send a check to Ginny Evenson at FCCH indicating that it is for the diaper drive. **Make checks payable to FCCH.**

3 **Cash** donation in church. Indicate that it is for the diaper drive. (Checks to FCCH)

This is a great way to honor or remember you parents, your children who have their own children, or anyone who cares about the health and welfare of others. We have a **goal of \$750.** A goal we are certain we can surpass.

If you would like a **recognition certificate,** they are available to print after you donate on the web site or you can pick one up at church.



HADDAM AREA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT (HaRRP)

As a leader of a community group, we would like to introduce you to HaRRP and ask for your support. **Haddam Area Refugee Resettlement Project (HaRRP)** is a community collaboration sponsored by the Congregational Churches of Haddam and Higganum. This team is working with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Service) from New Haven to settle a refugee family in Haddam.

The family will arrive during the coming months with virtually no material possessions and in need of community support. As great as the family's initial needs are, their potential to enrich our community is even greater.

We invite your members to join in a **Community Informational Meeting on May 25, 2022 at 6:00 pm**. It will be held at Brainerd Memorial Library in Haddam and on Zoom (Meeting ID 894 3051 9040 – no passcode needed). A speaker from IRIS will be there with more information and HaRRP will present an update on the project.

The most immediate need is financial support. Donations may be made in two ways:

1. Checks can be made out to HaRRP. They can be mailed to Higganum Congregational Church, 23 Parsonage Rd, Higganum, CT 06441.
2. Online by going to [FCCH Payment Processing – First Congregational Church of Haddam](#) Use the dropdown arrow under “give now” to select Refugee Resettlement Project.

For more information, please contact Co-leaders, Jack Murphy at jackcmurf@gmail.com or Lori Chadwick at Lori.chadwick@snet.net .



Thank you for your support.

We hope to see you and some members of your group on May 25th.

Make A Difference in The World by Helping A Family In Need.

IRIS TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you could not attend the training sessions in March you can attend the **3-part training series** on May 2, 3, & 4 via Zoom. The sessions run 5:30-7:30 pm each evening. Register here: [May 2-4 Co-sponsorship Training](#). Please let Liz Anderson know when you complete the process. Those who cannot attend all three evenings can make up whichever session(s) they miss by viewing the recorded version.

INTEREST SURVEY FOR VOLUNTEERS

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available for our **HaRRP Refugee Resettlement Project**. You will find details in this online survey [HERE](#) of each committee and you may respond if you are interested, might be interested, or not interested. You may print the survey [HERE](#) and copies are also available in the church office. Share this survey with friends and neighbors who may want to join us in this effort.

ATTEND A MEETING VIA ZOOM

You may use the usual **church Zoom log in** for HaRRP Refugee Resettlement Project meetings by clicking on this link [HERE](#) at the scheduled meeting time or by using:

Meeting ID: 391 987 2707

Password: 90523

or by calling +1 646 558 8656.



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.



HCC & FCCH TAG SALE

Our Tag Sale will be held on Saturday, May 21st from 9 am to 2 pm during the Town-wide Tag Sale. We will be serving our **Famous Hot Dog Lunch!** from 10:30am-2pm!

We need **donations!** Items can be dropped off ahead of time and stored in the HCC garage or basement. Or drop off on Friday, May 20th between 3pm - dark. Please, no TV's, old electronics, VHS tapes, and clothing.

Volunteers are needed to help set up tents and tables on Thursday, put out donations on Friday, to work the day of the sale, and to clean up afterwards. A volunteer sign-up sheet will be available at church during Sunday coffee hour.



THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

Located behind the Higganum Church is a quiet place surrounded by trees and plants where one can sit and reflect upon the names etched in stones lining the pathway.

Sunday, May 29th our 9:30 am worship service will move from Haddam to Higganum to emphasize the theme of Memorial Day.

Hopefully the weather will allow pleasant outdoor fellowship afterward, with an opportunity to stroll our Memorial Garden, remember friends and family no longer present, offer special prayers, and dedicate any new stones.

You can purchase a stone in memory of a friend or relative by contacting Dick Matregrano or the church office.



JOIN IN QUILTING

Do you have a quilt project that needs finishing? Would you like to spend some time working on your project with others who like to sew? Our Quilt Group and will meet in **FCCH Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, May 11th and May 25th at 6:30pm**. This space is great for laying out fabric with lots of outlets to plug in sewing machines. Advice is available to help you plan your projects. If you are interested, please leave your name in the office or speak with Dena or Ginny Evensen.

WINTER MISSION PROJECTS

School bags for Church World Service and stockings for Solnit Center should be nearing completion. Please try to complete your project soon and return it to the church. It can be left in the office or on the platform of either church on a Sunday morning. We will complete the school bag project in July when school supplies are on sale. Solnit Center will be using the stockings at Christmas time. Thank you all for working on these projects. If you have fabric you have not used, please return it to the church.



GUITAR CONCERT AT HCC

Mark your calendars for this free concert on **Father's Day, June 19th**. HCC will host one night of the Candlewood Farm Arts Foundation Concert Series. Jason Vieaux will play classical guitar at HCC, and you can preview his music [HERE](#). You will find the June Concert Schedule for Candlewood Farms Arts Association [HERE](#).



THOUGHTS & INSPIRATIONS

Rev Hilary was visiting with Neal Blodgett, Sr in April and he lamented about not being able to attend worship lately. Neal would like to encourage another way of sharing and adding to each other's thoughts. Neal has passages, quotations, and articles that we will add to the Belfry. **He is eager to see what others might want to share!** Send your thoughts and inspirations to fcchaddam@gmail.com.

HAPPY 79TH BIRTHDAY NORM MANNING!





**EASTER SUNDAY 6:30AM
HADDAM MEADOWS**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HADDAM
&
HIGGANUM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

TAG SALE

May 21, 2022
9 am - 2 pm

At Higganum Cong. Church
23 Parsonage Road
Higganum, CT

Donations can be dropped
off on Friday, May 20th
3pm - dark

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HADDAM
HIGGANUM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ARTISAN BREAD MINISTRY

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE HADDAM FUEL BANK

2022 HIGGANUM FARMERS' MARKET

June 3 - Aug 19
Sept 9 - Sept 30

FRIDAYS
3:00 - 6:00 PM

LOCATED AT
Haddam
Elementary School
272 Saybrook Road
Higganum, CT



HIGGANUM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HADDAM

RON BOOTH MISSION GOLF OUTING

Sept. 18, 2022
9:30 Shotgun Start
Lyman Orchards
Golf Club




GIVING INFORMATION

Our **Ministry** and **Mission** are **maintained** by your **generosity**. Thank you for how you support FCCH and HCC with your gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure. Financial contributions may be made at in-person worship services or mailed to the addresses below anytime.

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

Higganum Congregational Church
23 Parsonage Road
Higganum, CT 06441

Online gifts to FCCH may be made [HERE](#). It also should be possible to set up direct payments from your own bank to either FCCH or HCC; contact your bank for more information.



- 2 Michael Brookes, Sue Gascoyne
- 4 Charles Negrelli
- 5 Bari Edmondson
- 6 Kevin Hunt
- 7 Nancy Tucker
- 10 Steve Bull, John Edmondson, Jack Murphy
- 13 Ken Wendt
- 15 Karli Aresco
- 16 John & Michelle Madsen-Bibeau
- 17 Rebecca Salerno
- 18 Chris Carlin
- 21 Amber Gemmel, LisaMarie Harry
- 21 Troy Johanson, Sabine Nyenhuis
- 23 George Sima
- 24 Michael Battistoni, Karen Malave
- 26 Kristin Battistoni
- 27 Charlotte Stetson
- 28 Jen Saglio
- 29 Piper Cameron
- 30 Sandy Nightingale