



# THE GOOD NEWS

## *From the Belfry*

JANUARY 2024



*The Newsletter of the United Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum*  
*A member of the United Church of Christ*

### January Worship Schedule *Haddam Campus*

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#### January 7

*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany*

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalms 29

Acts 19:1-7

Mark 1:4-11

#### January 14

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany*

1 Sam 3:1-10, 11-20

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

1 Cor 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

#### January 21

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany*

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalms 62:5-12

1 Cor 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

#### January 28

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany*

*Annual Meeting*

Deut 18:15-20

Psalms 111

1 Cor 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

United Congregational Church of  
Haddam & Higganum

## *1-Year Anniversary*

POTLUCK CELEBRATION

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

10:45 AM

HOSTED BY GLEN STEBBINS  
3 CHRISTIAN HILL ROAD  
HIGGANUM



*Come celebrate the church's  
1-year anniversary!*

Sunday, January 21<sup>st</sup>  
Following morning service

Bring a potluck brunch item to share.

*Thank you to Glen Stebbins for hosting  
our birthday bash!*



## *A Message from the Pastor*

Hello My Friends,

Let us begin our new year together remembering the prophet Isaiah, and the bold promises of Isaiah 43. If you have time, read the whole chapter to begin your New Year.

In this chapter, Isaiah says God is telling us, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

"Do not fear," says Isaiah, quoting God, "for I have redeemed you. I call you by name. You are mine."

As we begin this new year together, remember that God, who knows us inside and out, is seeking our redemption and showing us new ways of life. We need only stretch out to God to have this new beginning.

Sometimes we hold to the past, and this prevents us from recognizing the new life ahead. As Isaiah says, God commands that we must put aside the things of old. "Forget the former things; do not dwell in the past! See, I am doing a new thing."

Isaiah reminds us that God is redeeming us. The Lord says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you."

God is with us, creating a new life beyond what we know and beyond what we can conceive. When our bodies and minds fail us, still our faith can hold fast to this promise of redemption and new life.

May we open our hearts and minds in 2024 to receive God's redemption and discover new ways to live in God's light, sharing our moments with love.

Peace,

*Rev. Hilary*

## CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK



**Thank you to everyone who helped  
with our annual Cookie Walk!**

**The total amount profited was \$3,850.**

**Three cheers to Linda Hansen for  
organizing this fundraiser!**

## January Meetings

**Study Group**, Tuesdays, 9:30 am (LH)  
**Worship Team**, Tuesdays, 10:30 am (LH)  
**Choir Practice**, Thursdays, 7 pm (Haddam)

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**Property**, January 8, 5:30 pm (Lewis House)

**Diaconate**, January 8, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)

**Christian Ed**, January 9, 6:30 pm (LH)

**Outreach**, January 15, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)

**Council**, January 16, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)



Thank you to the **Outreach Committee** for providing coffee hour refreshments for January. See page 10 for the 2024 Hospitality Schedule.



## UCCHH 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>  
 Haddam Campus  
 Following the morning service

See page 9 for the "Call". Note the suggested changes to the church Bylaws highlighted in red. Please review these changes and be prepared for discussion at the annual meeting.

## Officer & Committee Reports

All annual **report submissions** from officers, boards and committees are due on or before **January 14<sup>th</sup>** to the Clerk, Terry Smith. Reports should be a Word or Excel document, NOT a pdf.

### Reports are needed from:

Clerk, Council, Hospitality, Historian, Pastoral Relation, Bylaws, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Diaconate, Membership, Flowers, Memorial, Property Committee, Memorial Garden, Christian Education Committee, Music Committee, Mission/Outreach Committee, Delegates to the Wider Church, Finance Committee, Stewardship, Fund Raising, Investment/Endowment, Minister's Report, Other Reports, Nominations for 2024, and Budget for 2024.

## 2024 Annual Meeting - Nominations

There are several important open committee positions that need to be filled. Please consider serving and let Greg Shields or Terry Smith know of your decision to help our church. If you want information on responsibilities, check with Greg or Terry.

Deacons - 3 open positions  
 Delegates to the Wider Church - 1 opening  
 Nominations Committee - 2 openings  
 Hospitality Committee - 1 opening  
 Auditor - 1 opening

Terry Smith, Clerk

## Outreach/Mission News

Submitted by Sue Craffey, Outreach Co-Chair



GIVING TREE

A HUGE THANK YOU to all who picked a tag from the Giving Tree for the youth at the Alfred J. Solnit Center and the family from the Youth and Family Services' Holiday Giving Program.

Besides the many purchased gifts, we supplied gift cards to Walmart for each child to pick out a coat, shoes or clothing of their choice. An additional \$100 gift card to Stop & Shop was also given to the children's parent(s). The cost of the gift cards was offset by generous donations. Youth & Family stated that 104 children were in their Holiday Giving Program and thanked us for being instrumental in making Christmas wishes come true!

Using the profits from the 2022 Yuletide Quilt Show and SERRV, the church distributed \$2400 in year-end charitable donations of \$200 each to the following organizations:

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation  
Middlesex Hospital Chaplaincy  
The Nathaniel Field Memorial Foundation  
Back Bay Mission  
Men's Residence at Middletown YMCA  
Silver Lake Conference Center  
New Horizon's (Battered Women's shelter)  
St. Vincent dePaul  
Mission at the Eastward  
Simply Smiles  
Middlesex Habitat for Humanity  
Soldiers' Angels (provides aid, comfort, and resources to the military, veterans and their families)

The church received thank you notes from:

- Haddam Social Service for the very generous donation of \$3222.50 towards the Haddam Fuel Bank from The Bread Ministry
- The UCC for our donation of \$100 towards disaster relief in Hawaii
- Haddam Social Services for the 10 Thanksgiving dinner boxes

### Updated Diaper Bank Info

We actually donated \$1,203 to the diaper bank this year. In addition to the \$675 we collected in person, we also collected \$528 on-line for a total of \$1,203. Wonderful work everyone.

A note from the Diaper Bank of Connecticut:

*"We're so grateful for all of your support this year!"*

*In 2023, we distributed:*

- 6,489,385 infant & toddler diapers
- 406,755 period supplies
- 151,206 adult incontinence products
- 6,403 youth incontinence supplies

*With your support and our network of over 160 partners, we helped more families than ever before. Thank you for continuing to champion our mission and improving the lives of families here in Connecticut.*

*We couldn't do it without you!"*



**Caring Connection:** Now that the cookies have moved out of the freezer, it is time to replenish with a few savory meals for those in need. Please list ingredients and date. Share some of your delicious holiday meals.



### UCC Christmas Fund

The UCC Christmas Fund collection was held on December 17<sup>th</sup>, collecting \$214. The 7 pm Christmas Eve service also collected for the Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund supports active and retired UCC clergy and their families.



### & Holiday Bazaar

Thank you to everyone who donated to and helped with the Quilt Show this year!

We profitted \$4,450!



## Christian Education

Submitted by Amy Harlow, CE Director

Greetings from CE!

December has been a busy month. CE met on 12/04/2023 with the Property Committee and the Haddam Co-Op Nursery School (HCNS). Our meeting covered the terms of HCNS's lease and use of our shared space. HCNS has strict compliance rules in order to maintain the insurance for the school and they had a few concerns. All of their concerns were addressed and resolutions are being worked on! As the details are worked out, the church and its members will be informed of any changes to the use of our shared space.

CE discussed the shape that Coffee Hour Contemplations (CHC) would take going forward. Please feel free to make suggestions on topics that you would like to hear about. So far, the wool felted Advent Calendars were the crowd favorite! At Dawn Alger's home a kitty may also have enjoyed the project. Lizzy you naughty girl! Please join us after service for CHC!

Several families have mentioned that they would like to have their children confirmed. One family expressed a desire to have their children's fellow Scout Pack join the class. Rev. Hilary and I have begun to discuss what Confirmation could look like. There are many options open and could include combining with other area churches for parts of the learning process. I purchased the SNEUCC suggested curriculum, "Head to the Heart". Debbie Kirk, the SNEUCC Faith Formation leader, has assured me that she is available for consultation during this process. We would like to start this Confirmation class at the end of January. If you would be available to be a mentor, please email me at [amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com).

It was decided that the CE Committee will regularly meet on the second Tuesday of every month. Please feel free to join us on Zoom or at the Lewis House on those nights at 6:30 pm! All are welcome!!!

Thank you for all your support!  
Peace and blessings,  
Amy Harlow

## Music Ministry



Music Director, Joel Spinetti, and Organist, Kevin Dodd, will be taking a much-deserved vacation from January 1<sup>st</sup> to February 28<sup>th</sup>. During their time off, we will be having a substitute Music Director and Organist.

The choir will also be taking a little break for the holidays. Thursday night practice will resume on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Stewardship & 2024 Pledge Drive Update



Thank you to all the friends and members of the United Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum who have submitted their pledges for the 2024 year.

**No. of pledging units to-date: 36**

**Total amount pledged to-date: \$90,514**

If you have not pledged yet, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible so work can begin on the 2024 budget.

[Download A Pledge Card Here](#)

Pledge cards may be mailed to the church office or placed in the offering plate during Sunday worship.

*Thank you for your generosity!*

## Financial Secretary Report

Submitted by Judy Hodgson

Although there is still time left in 2023 for pledge money to come in, and 2024 pledges to be submitted, you will receive the Newsletter prior to the 2024 Annual meeting, so I thought I would give you some preliminary numbers.

2023 number of pledges: 44

2023 amount pledged: \$105,059.71

2023 pledge money received YTD: \$102,275.17

Money received beyond pledge amount: \$1,771.00  
(yes, some people have paid extra)

2022 pledge balances cleared: \$5,100.00

Unpledged money received: \$14,658.65 (persons  
named but non-pledged)

Loose cash in plate: \$1,383.47

Total related to pledges: \$125,188.29

Special UCC Offerings:

One Great Hour of Sharing: \$720.00

Neighbors in Need: \$302.00

Strengthen the Church: \$329.00

UCC Christmas Fund: TBD

The Treasurer will be reporting Fundraising such as:

Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast: \$805.00

Concerts >\$1000

Tag Sale: \$2,816.00

Cookie Walk \$3,850

And there are all those Mission Outreach projects such as the Sunrise Service, Bread for Heat, Diaper Bank, Heifer International Bees, Coffee House Music Nights, and the Quilt Show.

All showing that we are a generous, supporting group of people.

Then there are income producing activities such as the Haddam Cooperative Nursery School rental, Trinity House rental, the Historical Society rental of space in the Higganum church basement to help cover expenses.

And now to start next year:

2024 number of pledges to-date: 36

2024 pledge total to-date: \$90,514.17

## HaRRP Update

We have successfully completed the first HaRRP! The Haddam Area Refugee Resettlement Project to assist the Azam Khan family has officially been completed with the move of the family to New Haven on December 1, 2023.

The journey began in late 2021 when a group of us had a dream to resettle a refugee family in Haddam. The infrastructure was developed including a large team of volunteers, securing the Lewis House to provide shelter, making an empty space a place to call home, preparing teams of drivers, assistants with healthcare, assistance with finances, education and language helpers.

In November 2022 we welcomed Azam and his family, wife Bibi Jana, daughters Muska and Afsana, and sons Jahanzib and Raihan. And as we began to work with them, they became family. The children were enrolled in school, participated in Little League and quickly improved their English. Azam found a job, began work on obtaining his driver's license and supporting the family finances.

Hours and hours of volunteer time was offered to help them assimilate to life in a new country. We celebrated the one-year anniversary in the United States in August with an Ice Cream Social and in November they prepared a traditional Afghan meal for the community to "thank" us for the assistance they had received. As the year came towards an end, the family indicated that they wanted to return to New Haven where they had close family members. Azam secured an apartment and on December 1<sup>st</sup> HaRRP volunteers packed up the family's belongings and moved them to New Haven. Azam's family members helped unload and set up the new apartment. In early December the children began attending new schools in New Haven. Our role in helping this family is complete. We helped prepare them for the next chapter in the story of the Azam Khan family in America.

We are grateful for the opportunity to help this family and the support we received. The experiences we shared with them have given us new insights into the reality of new immigrants.

*Lori Chadwick*

# INTERCESSORY PRAYERS



[Click for Prayer List](#)

## Note from the church office:

We would like to keep our prayer list as current as possible and will be reviewing entries on a monthly basis. Please contact the office to restore any prayer concerns that may have been prematurely removed.

## Help Decorate our Sanctuary!



A floral arrangement sign-up chart is located in the Haddam Campus Fellowship Hall. Please sign up to provide flowers for our chancel.

They can be in celebration of a special event or in memory of a loved one – any reason will do!

## Inclement Weather?

Make sure you check WFSB Channel 3 or wfsb.com to see if the Sunday Service is still on.

## December Worship Attendance

|                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| December 3         | 50            |
| December 10        | 40            |
| December 17        | 40            |
| December 24 (9:30) | 50            |
| December 24 (7 pm) | 80            |
| December 31        | not available |

## OPEN SEW & QUILT WITH DENA LIEDKE



January 6  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Haddam Campus

RSVP Dena  
sewdena22@gmail.com

Come join us on the first Saturday of the month for a time to do what we like to do--SEW! Participants bring their machines, supplies, project, materials, lunch and snack. Don't sew? Bring whatever handicraft you like!

All levels of expertise welcome!

## Church Documents



Click on the links below to view various church documents.

November Council Minutes – [December 19, 2023 \(Draft\)](#)  
October Council Minutes – [November 14, 2023 \(Approved\)](#)  
[UCCHH Annual Report for 2023](#)  
[UCCHH Annual Meeting Minutes](#)  
[UCCHH ByLaws](#)



Online Meeting

## Zoom Login Information

ID: 391 987 2707  
Password: 90523

Phone call-in number: +1 646 558 8656

## Sunday Services Stream Live on YouTube!

We live-stream each Sunday service - just tune in at 9:40 a.m. and watch live or watch previous recordings. Click below to get started!







Our Ministry and Mission are maintained by your generosity. Thank you for supporting UCCHH with your gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Financial contributions may be made at in-person worship services or mailed to the following address

**United Congregational Church  
of Haddam and Higganum**  
Attn: Collector  
P.O. Box 215  
Haddam, CT 0643

Make checks payable to: **UCCHH**

Automatic payments for your pledge can be set up for most banking institutions; contact your bank for more information.

#### Online Giving

Visit [www.haddamchurch.org](http://www.haddamchurch.org) and click on *Online Giving* on the menu bar.



OR  
The QR Code will bring you directly to our secure Online Giving page.



#### Church Contact Information

Rev. Hilary McLellan  
[revhilarymclellan@outlook.com](mailto:revhilarymclellan@outlook.com)  
(860) 316-3837

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 9 am – noon  
or by appointment

Amy Harlow, CE Director  
[amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com](mailto:amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com)

Joel Spinetti, Choir Director  
Kevin Dodd, Organist  
Nancy Soneson, Office Administrator

(860) 345-2742  
[fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com) / [www.haddamchurch.org](http://www.haddamchurch.org)  
Church office hours: Tues. & Thurs., 9 am – 1 pm  
Office address: 905 Saybrook Rd, PO Box 215  
Haddam, CT

**SILVER LAKE**  
Camp & Retreat Center



**LEARN  
MORE**



**2024 Registration Now Open**

#### Words From the Conference Minister



I cannot tell you how the light comes, but it does. That it will. That it works its way into the deepest dark that enfolds you, though it may seem long ages in coming or arrive in a shape you did not foresee.

And so may we this day turn ourselves toward it. May we lift our faces to let it find us. May we bend our bodies to follow the arc it takes. May we open and open more and open still to the blessed light that comes.

Excerpt from [“How The Light Comes”](#) by Jan Richardson

*Beloved, during this often-busy season, I pray that you take a moment – or moments – to just allow yourself to be surrounded by the light of Christ.*

Wishing you a Merry Christmas,  
Isaac





## Annual Meeting Call

The 2nd Annual Meeting of the United Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum (UCCHH) will be held on January 28, 2024, following worship service in Haddam. The agenda is:

- **The hearing and approval of Officer, Board and Committee 2023 reports**
- **The election of Officers and Committees for 2024**
- **The adoption of the proposed 2024 budget**
- **The transaction of any other business:**
  1. Bylaw Changes (**changes are in 'red'**)
    - **Proposed changes to the UCCHH Bylaws:**
      - Article 2 – Covenant\* and Statement of Faith **& Diversity**
        - We therefore covenant to welcome people of all gender identities and sexual orientations, races and ethnicities, **ages**, mental and physical abilities, marital and socioeconomic status into the full life of ministry and leadership of this faith community.
      - Article 11 – The Church Council
        - Section 1 C
          - Establishment of Other Committees: The Church Council may appoint individuals or small groups to function for as long as deemed necessary by the Church Council, to carry out responsibilities assigned to the Church Council as well as ministry services and administration. The Church Council shall provide guidance and support to such committees, individuals, teams, or groups, who shall report regularly to the Church Council. The roles and responsibilities for such committees will be included in the Church Policy document. The Church Council may request that the Nominating Committee assist in the recruitment of members for specific committees, such as an Open and Affirming committee **or a Personnel committee.**
        - Section 2
          - Terms of Office are specified in the Church Policy document. A Council member must also be **an active** member of the Church. No person may serve on the Council in more than one capacity at a given time.
      - Article 12 – Committees
        - Section 4 – Property Committee
          - F. Property or Physical Asset Disposal/Reuse
            - Decisions regarding the disposal or physical reuse of church property or physical assets will be made by the congregation. A 3/4 vote of church members at a congregational meeting is required to dispose of or repurpose any major church physical asset (over \$10,000 asset value) and this can't occur for three years after the formation of the church; **this three year time restriction does not apply to the Trinity House.**
        - Section 5 - Deacons Committee (Diaconate)
          - D. Establishment of Committees
            - Such sub-committees may include but not be limited to a Membership committee, Flowers committee and Memorials committee, **Caring committee** and others. Specific duties are defined in Church policy documents.
- Other Business
 

Terry Smith, Clerk

## 2024 Monthly Church Schedule and Hospitality Schedule

(All members are encouraged to participate)

| <u>Month</u> | <u>Campus</u> | <u>Organization(s) Responsible for Hospitality</u> |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| January      | Haddam        | Mission/Outreach Committee                         |
| February     | Higganum      | Property Committee                                 |
| March        | Haddam        | Diaconate                                          |
| April        | Higganum      | Christian Education Committee                      |
| May          | Haddam        | Finance Committee                                  |
| June         | Higganum      | Music Committee                                    |
| July         | Haddam        | Mission/Outreach Committee                         |
| August       |               |                                                    |
| August 4     | Haddam        | Christian Education Committee                      |
| August 11    | Haddam        | Delegates & At Large Council Members               |
| August 18    | Higganum      | Bread Ministry                                     |
| August 25    | Higganum      | Property Committee                                 |
| September    | Higganum      |                                                    |
| September 1  |               | Officers                                           |
| September 8  |               | Officers                                           |
| September 15 |               | No Service – Golf Outing                           |
| September 22 |               | Memorial Garden Committee                          |
| September 29 |               | Bread Ministry                                     |
| October      | Haddam        | Music Committee                                    |
| November     | Higganum      | Diaconate                                          |
| December     | Haddam        | Finance Committee                                  |

## January Photo Album



**2023 Cookie  
Walk**



**CE Advent  
Felting**







## 2024 Yuletide Quilt Show



**Voted Visitor's Favorite**