



THE GOOD NEWS

From the Belfry

FEBRUARY 2025



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

February Worship Schedule

Haddam Campus

February 2

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Cor 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

February 9

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isa 6:1-8, (9-13)
Psalm 138
1 Cor 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

February 16

6th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Cor 15:1-11
Luke 6:17-26

February 23

7th Sunday after Epiphany

Gen 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Cor 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

MARDI GRAS PANCAKE BRUNCH

MARCH 2, 2025

FOLLOWING SUNDAY WORSHIP
HADDAM CAMPUS

THIS IS A CONFIRMATION CLASS
FUNDRAISER!

Our confirmation kids will host a Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras pancake breakfast following our worship service on March 2nd. The Sunday service will be held at the Higganum campus, and the pancake breakfast will be at the Haddam campus.

Please come and support our young people. If you cannot attend, consider giving them a donation anyway!

Thank you

UCCHH Purpose Statement

The following was approved and adopted as the UCCHH Purpose Statement at the Annual Meeting on January 26th:

United as an inclusive congregation, following Christ's message, growing through worship, fellowship, and service, striving towards a just, loving society.





A Message from the Pastor

Hello my friends,

We are now deep into the heart of our Epiphany journey, where we consider the Light that has come into the world and how to bring our gifts into the Body of Christ.

As I write this, I am looking out my window in the peaceful parsonage in Higganum, witnessing the exquisite beauty of snow-laden trees. Our first significant snowstorm has clothed Haddam in a beautiful fresh white garment.

Though you will be reading this sometime later, I am writing on this enormously symbolic day: It is Martin Luther King Day, and it is Presidential Inauguration Day.

Beyond our town, so many things are happening; it is beyond comprehension. Fires in LA are about 50% contained. President Biden is welcoming President Trump into the White House. A divisive cease-fire has been called in the Middle East, and Gazans are returning to their devastated homes. We are on day 1061 of the Russian-Ukraine war.

There is so much conflict in our world. We have so much uncertainty and so many divided perspectives combatting for “truth”. Yet a feeling of peace envelops our community as the sun is shining Divine Light on the fluffy snow. Everything is covered with sparkling white renewal and a feeling of peace.

Many are wondering, how can we stand firmly committed to our faith and the ideals of Epiphany when we see the pain and suffering rampant and raging all around us. Looking at this beauty, I am filled with faith, joy, and hope.

I believe our faith is the only firm stance from which to view the world and its suffering. We can stand firmly on our faith because Jesus came to our world during times of trouble and is available to those who are suffering. Jesus came for the broken and the brokenhearted. Jesus proclaimed healing to a diversity of people and sent his apostles forward to engage a diversity of perspectives. They shared their diversity of gifts, all striving to share in the Body of Christ.

In holding to our faith during our Epiphany journey, moments of beauty, such as this winter storm, remind me to bring Christ’s message of hope into my heart to share with others. In the Epiphany journey, it is the beauty of the star shining brightly in the sky that calls us together. Seeking the star, we are also seeking to figure out how to bring our diverse gifts into this Body, as the wisemen brought their gifts to the Christ child.

The Epiphany journey calls us to travel alongside others who may or may not share our language, culture, or understanding. Christ sent his disciples out in this same way. The Epiphany journey calls us to share our light and our gifts with others. This is why we study the early church during Epiphany and remember the lives of those who first attempted to build up the Body of Christ: to help us learn how to do so today, in 2025!

From the earliest days of the church, what binds us together in this journey is simply that we are seeking this light together. We are following this beautiful and mysteriously promising star together. Its light calls to our childlike innocence and our deepest hopes of what life is “supposed to be.” Its light brings a message of promise to our innate yearnings for peace, justice, love, joy, goodness, and hope, to reign in our world.

The light does not give us all the answers, nor does it solve all our problems. The light shines upon good and evil equally. Hopefully, when we “see the light,” it can help us understand some of our own errors, bringing contrition to our hearts and helping us to grow beyond our past mistakes. For we can newly see our own human frailty and bring ourselves into the light of redemption.

Hopefully, this light also brings forgiveness into our hearts, for ourselves and others. As we face and forgive the human frailty of ourselves and of others, new possibilities begin to be uncovered. Growth, healing, and salvation are possible.

Simply by seeking this Divine Light together, we are already healing; we are already walking upon a path of redemption and salvation together. This is church.

In all circumstances, whether it is war or conflict with others or inner conflict such as anxiety, depression, addiction, or mental illness, we are still free to seek the star and reach for its Divine Light.

In all circumstances, we can begin our Epiphany journey. Even if we lack faith and have no knowledge of Christ, still we respond to the radiance of Divine Light and take a step toward it. We can begin our Epiphany journey wherever we stand, with the smallest step toward the light.

As we follow the light, sharing with others and giving our gifts into this body, we become church. In striving to bring our gifts into the Body, we are becoming the hands of Christ’s love in the world, here and now. We are becoming the living Word. By inviting Christ to dwell in our hearts to guide us to the light, we begin to become living witnesses to Christ’s redemption and salvation. This brings us closer to the light and inspires us to continue on this journey of faith.

Together, when we dwell in the hope and idealistic optimism of seeking the star, we are on our Epiphany journey. To travel this path is an act of faith that has a profound impact on our experience of the world around us and a profound impact on those we meet along the way. This is a way that God is still speaking, through us, into the pain and suffering of the world.

My prayer for us in this midwinter moment is that we each be ignited by the hope of the star and decide that this is the journey we want to travel. May we continue to walk toward the light, together, loving God and neighbor as we find them on this journey to light. May we each learn to discern how to give our gifts into the Body of Christ as we travel together. Together, may we continue to affirm that, especially in times like these, Divine Light can bring salvation, redemption, and hope into the world. May we celebrate that God continues to give us ways to be on this journey, in our hearts, in all circumstances.

Blessings and Peace to each of us!

Rev. Hilary McLellan

Mission/Outreach News

Submitted by Sue Craffey, Outreach Co-Chair

In February, Mission Outreach wants to spread some love!!!!



Milk & Snack Collection

The Mission/Outreach Committee invites you to bring in shelf-stable milk (usually located in the cereal/coffee aisle of the grocery store) and healthy snacks (granola bars, fruit cups, nuts, peanut butter/cheese crackers) for the HK Backpack Program.

A collection basket is located at each church.



Pennies From Heaven Collection

Love for Lincoln Campaign

Lincoln is at the top of the transplant list in Boston, where he has had to reside since last April. His father is a CT State Police Officer, formerly an HK resource officer, and his mother is an oncology nurse at Middlesex Hospital. The father was born and raised in Haddam with close ties to the community. Help us gather funds to purchase gift cards that the family can use to cover their living expenses.

Lincoln will be turning 5 at the end of the month (write him a birthday card to be sent with our donation)!



SAVE THE DATE

The Nathaniel Field Foundation
Spring into Hope Celebration
 Saturday, April 26th ~ 2- 5 pm
 Falcon Grove, Middletown
 \$25 donation

Mission Outreach continuous collections:

- **Pull tabs** for Ronald McDonald House Charities
- **Printer ink cartridges** – Staples will give the church up to \$30/month for empty cartridges.
- **Pennies from Heaven Collection**

Goodwill Donation Cards

Don't forget to bring a Good Neighbor Donation Card with you when you donate clothes to Goodwill in Middletown. Your donation will then translate into vouchers for St. Vincent dePaul clients.

Donation cards are located in the Higganum social hall, the Haddam vestibule, and the church office.



February Meetings

- Study Group**, Tuesdays, 9:00 am (LH)
- Worship Team**, Tuesdays, 6:00 pm (LH)
- Choir Practice**, Thursdays, 7 pm (Haddam)
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- Property**, February 10th, 5:30 pm (Lewis House)
- Diaconate**, February 10th, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)
- Christian Ed**, February 11th, 6:30 pm (LH)
- Vision Team**, February 12th, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)
- Outreach**, February 17th, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)
- Council**, February 18th, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)



The 3rd Annual Meeting of the United Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum was held on **January 26, 2025**, following the morning worship service.

Click on the links below to view the meeting minutes and the 2024 Annual Reports.

- [UCCHH Annual Reports 2024](#)
- [UCCHH 3rd Annual Meeting Minutes](#)



Music News

Submitted by Brian Frazier, Music Director

Celebrating the Gift of Music in Our Worship

As we enter the month of February, we are reminded of the importance of music in our lives and in our worship. Music has the unique ability to connect our hearts with God, to express our joy, sorrow, gratitude, and praise. In our church, music is not just an art form but a vital part of our ministry and spiritual life.

The Role of Music in Worship

Throughout the Bible, music is portrayed as a powerful tool for worship and praise. From King David, who played the harp to soothe King Saul, to the choirs of angels announcing the birth of Jesus, music has been integral to the faith journey. Psalm 95:1-2 invites us: "Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song."

In our church, music brings people together—whether it's through hymns sung by the congregation, a choral anthem, or a solo. Every note played, every word sung, has the potential to elevate our spirits and draw us closer to God.

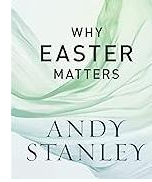
The Power of Music to Lift the Spirit

Music has the power to comfort us in difficult times and to celebrate with us in moments of joy. This February, we invite you to take some time to reflect on how music impacts your faith. Whether it's listening to your favorite hymn or instrumental piece, singing along in worship, or just appreciating the melodies that fill our sanctuary, remember that music is a gift from God to help us grow in faith and fellowship.

Let us all be reminded of the words of Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."

May the music of February lift your spirits and draw you closer to God's presence.

Brian



Why Easter Matters

Adult Bible Study

Tuesdays, 9 am, Lewis House

Have you ever been at odds with God? Have you resisted, defied, or tried to bargain your way out of what you thought God wanted? You aren't alone.

Scripture documents similar stories. In this Easter Study, Andy Stanley looks at some of the people whose lives intersected with Jesus in the weeks leading to his crucifixion. Each of them had an agenda that put them at odds with God and Jesus. As you'll see, there's a little bit of them in all of us.

Pastor Hilary and the Tuesday Adult Bible Study group invite you to join them for *Why Easter Matters*, a Bible study from Andy Stanley. The group meets on Tuesday mornings at 9:00 am in the Lewis House.

2025 Church Goals

At the January Church Council meeting, the council approved the following as the UCCHH 2025 Church Goals:

- a. Develop and propose a resolution of the two-campus dilemma.
- b. Create a UCCHH tri-fold brochure.
- c. Apply for Green Church designation.
- d. Improve church marketing (communications, signage, etc.)



[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.

Stewardship & 2025 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 2025 year.

2025 UCCHH Budget: \$ 268,858
No. of pledging units to date: 42
Total amount pledged to date: \$ 105,037

If you have not pledged yet, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

[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!*

CHURCH HOSPITALITY



The **Property Committee** will be hosting coffee hour/fellowship in February. The **Diaconate** will host in March.

A big thank you to the Mission/Outreach Committee for hosting in January.

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.

January Worship Attendance

January 5 36
 January 12 28
 January 19 30
 January 24 35

Inclement Weather?

Check WFSB Channel 3 or wfsb.com to see if the Sunday Service is still on.

Look for UNITED CHURCH OF HADDAM & HIGGANUM.



Card Angels

Thurs., February 27th
5 – 7:30 pm ~ Lewis House

Come make homemade cards for people in cancer treatment centers and nursing homes. For more information, please get in touch with Jesse at cardangelsct@gmail.com



Caring Connection:

Don't hesitate to contact one of the following Caring Connection members if you or a member you know could use a helping hand (or a meal or two).

Caring Connection contacts:

Sue Craffey 860-338-0216
 Sue Henehan 860-212-4807
 Dave McComas. . 860-978-0462
 Rev. Hilary 860-316-3837



The Middlesex Association,
Southern New England Conference UCC
invites you to prayerfully witness

Grace Winakor's Ordination

Saturday, February 8, 2025 • 10:30 am
First Congregational Church of Portland
554 Main St, Portland CT 06480

CLERGY WILL PROCESS IN RED STOLES
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW





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 and click on *Online Giving* on the menu bar.

OR



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



Church Documents

Click on the links below to view various church documents.

- January Council Minutes – [January 21, 2025 \(Draft\)](#)
- December Council Minutes – [December 17, 2024 \(Approved\)](#)
- [UCCHH Annual Report for 2024](#)
- [UCCHH 3rd Annual Meeting Minutes](#)
- [UCCHH ByLaws](#)
- [UCCHH Church Policies](#)

Sunday Services 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 on the icon to get started!



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Super Saturday 2025

March 8th
9 am – 4 pm
Shrewsbury, MA

Church Contact Information

Rev. Hilary McLellan
revhilarymclellan@outlook.com
(860) 316-3837
Office hours: Tues. 9 am – noon
& Thurs. 5 pm – 9 pm
Days off: Friday & Saturday

Amy Harlow, CE Director
Brian Frazier, Music Director
Nancy Soneson, Office Administrator

fcchaddam@gmail.com
(860) 345-2742

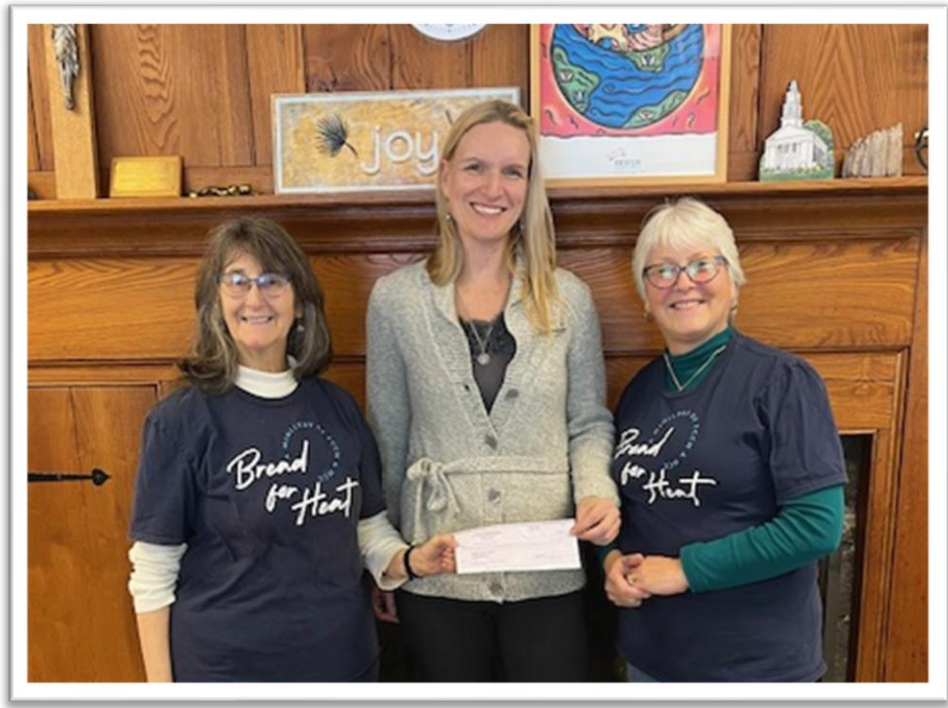
Church office hours: Tues. & Thurs., 9 am–1 pm
Office address: 905 Saybrook Rd, PO Box 215
Haddam, CT 06438

Zoom Login Information

ID: 391 987 2707
Password: 90523

BE THE CHURCH
*Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Forgive often. **Reject racism.** Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.*

Photo Album



Linda and Sue presented the 2024 Bread for Heat check to Becky Rice, Director of Senior & Social Services for Haddam and Higganum.

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Town clergy enjoying fellowship after the Ecumenical Service of Prayer for Christian Unity held at St. Peter Church on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.