

THE GOOD NEWS
From the Belfry
NOVEMBER 2026



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

NOVEMBER
Worship Schedule
Higganum Campus

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November 1
Communion
Josh 3:7-17 & Ps 107
Mic 3:5-12 & Ps 43
1 Thess 2:9-13
Matt 23:1-12

November 8
Josh 24:1-3a, 14-25 & Ps 78
Wisdom of Sol 6:12-16
1 Thess 4:13-18
Matt 25:1-13

November 15
Reconnect Sunday
Judges 4:1-7 & Ps 123
Zeph 1:7,12-18 & Ps 90
1 Thess 5:1-11
Matt 25:14-30

November 22
Stewardship Sunday
Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24 & Ps 100
Ps 95:1-7a
Eph 1:15-23
Matt 25:31-46

November 29
First Sunday of Advent
Isa 64:1-9
Ps 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Cor 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37








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Message from the Rev. Kathy

You all made a courageous decision almost four years ago to join your two congregations together to be the United Congregational Church of Haddam and Higganum. Yes, there have been growing pains and challenges. And living these last months without pastoral leadership has necessitated a number of you needing to step up to fill in! I know you are tired! As your bridge, I promise to work with you (and Brian and Amy) to provide meaningful worship as well as pastoral care to those in need, guidance to church leaders and perhaps time to catch your breath as you move forward in this time of transition.

Transitions are not always easy and you have been here before; some might even add that you have been here too often. So, I also see my role as one of an active listener. Open and available to hear your sacred stories, joys and frustrations!

As your moderator Greg Shields has said in all this, "We are much stronger together than separate, and we are bound by our faith and our trust and belief in Christ's message." Christ's message is one of love and care for one another! Know I am here with you as we strive in all we do to be Christ's church at its best, open to the Spirit's guiding touch!

Shalom,
Rev. Kathy



Coffee Klatch with Kathy
Tuesdays, 9 am
Lewis House

Come join in some meaningful conversations on life, faith, and our connections with one another. All are welcome! Contact Rev. Kathy for more information. (revkathyp@comcast.net cell phone 860-919-9030).

You're invited to

Reconnect Sunday

Sunday, November 15th
Immediately following the morning service

Instead of our traditional Homecoming Sunday, we are going to celebrate our relationships with one another! It's also a chance to meet a new friend, Rev. Kathy Peters, our UCCHH Bridge Minister.

Lunch will be catered by Morina Italian Restaurant immediately following our 9:30 am service at the UCCHH Higganum campus.

To help with planning, please RSVP via email to fcchaddam@gmail.com, although walk-ins welcome!



Cookies! Cookies! Cookies!

We need lots and lots of cookies for this year's Cookie Walk!

In addition to our town event, we will once again be supplying 75 plates of cookies to the Higganum Pharmacy on or around December 5th.

Now is a good time to bake and freeze your cookies.

An Update on Our Church's Future
Where We Stand on the "Two-Campus" Dilemma

Concerns have been rising within our membership regarding the slow pace of resolving the ongoing "two-campus dilemma," a topic that has dominated a lot of informal conversations lately.

While it's true that over the summer and early fall the church leadership has been preoccupied with running the church without a minister, finding a bridge minister, preparing the parsonage and arranging its rental, preparing for the golf tournament, and taking some much-earned vacation, rest assured, figuring this out has never been far from leadership's mind.

To help everyone get on the same page, a detailed, comprehensive report is currently being compiled. This report is intended to provide every member with the opportunity to review and carefully contemplate all efforts undertaken to date to address the situation.

What will be in the report?

- The findings from the 2024 congregational survey.
- Professional property assessments from both a realtor and the town manager.
- Evaluation of needed future capital expenses for both campuses.
- Updates on our inquiry to outside NPOs and businesses about potentially partnering to turn a church building into a shared community space.
- Minutes from several "2nd-hour" meetings regarding the properties.

We're planning another "2nd-hour" meeting in the near future so we can sit down, share our progress, and talk through everything together. In addition, Rev. Chris Mereschuk, the SNEUCC Director of Legacy & Church Redevelopment, is available to meet with our congregation.

Remember, with the exception of a few staff members, this church is run by volunteers, people willing to give up hours of their time to help us come to this decision. So, please, be kind and be patient. At the end of the day, we all want what's best for our members and our wider community.



NexTrex® Recycle Challenge Update

Submitted by Kristin Battistoni

Our soft plastic recycling program through TREX is off to a great start this year! We just closed out quarter 3 for the program. We have collection bins at both campuses as well as in the church office. This is a great way to pull plastic out of the general municipal waste.

In quarter one we collected 277 lbs., in quarter 2 we collected 93 lbs. and in quarter 3 255 lbs. were collected. Our total to date is 625 lbs.

Remember, plastic must be stretchable, meaning you can easily make a dent with your finger. Most plastic that makes a "crinkle" noise, such as Halloween candy bags, is not eligible.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin at Battistoni.kristin@gmail.com. To view the program details, check out https://nextrex.com/.

November Meetings

Coffee Klatch, Tuesdays, 9 am (LH)
Choir Practice, Thursdays, 7 pm (Haddam)

Property, November 9, 5:30 pm (LH)

Diaconate, November 9, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)

CE, November 10, 6:30 pm (LH/Zoom)

Quilt Show, November 11, 6:30 pm (LH)

Outreach, November 16, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)

Council, November 17, 7 pm (LH/Zoom)



Church Fall Cleanup
Saturday, November 7th
8:30 am

Our fall cleanup will be on November 7th for **BOTH** campuses. We will be starting at the Haddam Campus at 8:30 am. Please come and lend a hand.

Outreach/Mission News

Submitted by Sue Craffey, Outreach Chair

HK CROP Walk 2026

Thank you to all who supported the Haddam-Killingworth Crop Hunger Walk on October 4th. We raised approximately $2370.



3rd Annual Wine & Bourbon Tasting Fundraiser

There were thirty attendees at this year's tasting, helping us to raise $843 for the church. Thank you to Sue Craffey, Kristin Battistoni, and Nancy Soneson for organizing this event. A HUGE thank you to Dave McComas and Gene Grenier for providing the live music!

Harvest House Community Dinner

On October 18th, UCCHH cooked and served dinner at the St. Stephens Episcopal Church's Harvest House Community Dinner. Thank you to Mark Soneson, Howie Field, Linda Hansen, Sue Craffey, Lindsey, Clementine, and Adeline Meyer for helping with this event. We prepared a pork tenderloin dinner for fourteen guests and provided them with a meal to take home as well.

Ronald McDonald House Collection

We collected 12 ½ pounds of pull tabs this year. Now, many say that they only get pennies/pound BUT I feel that every time you save a tab, it's a small blessing/prayer to a family using their housing. Thank you to Kris Tupay for delivering our collection.

Christmas Stockings Stuffer Collection

We have been collecting stocking stuffers for the West Haven VA for the past few months. A wonderful collection of shelf stable snacks, toiletries, and Christmas cards will be delivered by Candy Casale and George Sima this month.

Thank you to all who donated to the annual **UCC Neighbors in Need Collection.** $185 has been collected so far.

Thanksgiving Dinner Boxes

We will be providing Thanksgiving dinners for ten Haddam families through Haddam Social Services. We provide everything but the turkey. The supply slips will be in the sanctuary. All food is due back to the Higganum campus on November 22nd.

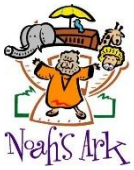
Haddam Historical Society Wreath Fundraiser

Once again this year, UCCHH will participate in the Haddam Historical Society's Christmas fundraiser, this year creating a decorated fresh wreath for them to auction. Thank you to Sue Craffey who has volunteered to create the wreath.

Christian Education News

Submitted by Amy Harlow, CE Director

Hello from CE!



In October, we learned the story of Noah's Ark. We had fun imagining all the items and supplies that would be needed for such a long journey and to begin life in a whole new world! We also had the opportunity to play with Neal Blodgett's beautifully carved Noah's Ark and its animals. The children's favorite carved animals were the alligators, ostriches, and giraffes! Our takeaway was that God keeps promises, and we should follow God's example by keeping the promises we make to one another and to God.



November brings us the story of Jesus Feeds the 5,000, the miracle of the five loaves and two fish. As we explore this story, we will learn that no act of kindness is too small and that God cares for everyone!

An important part of November's lessons will be finding ways to feed and care for others. One opportunity will be decorating and filling an entire Thanksgiving Day box for the Haddam Food Pantry.

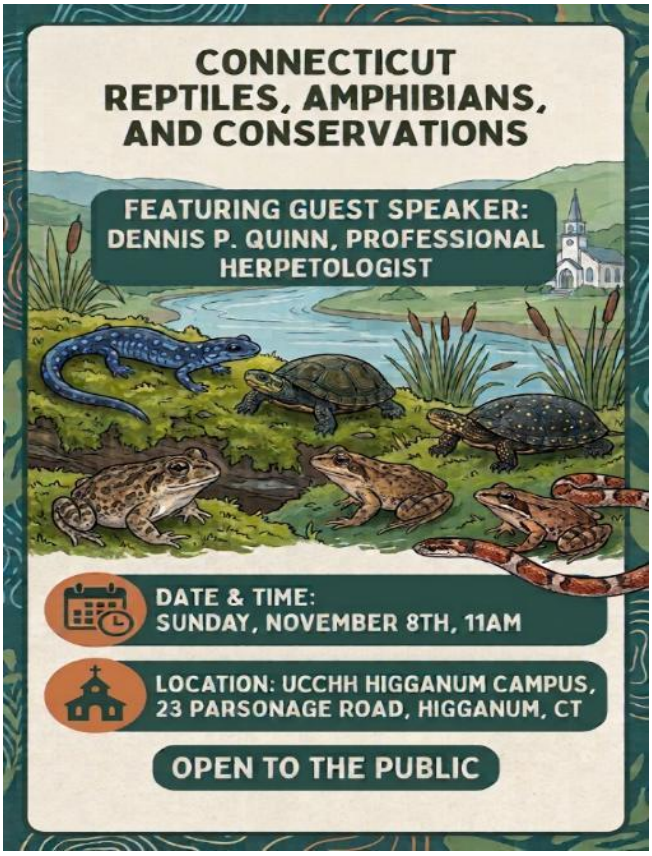


On November 29th, the children and I will continue our quest to feed others by making goodie bags for the warming shelters in Middletown. This outreach effort is organized by St. Vincent de Paul's soup kitchen and Middletown churches to help provide a warm place for members of our local homeless community to stay overnight. This is a wonderful opportunity for our children to put their faith into action by showing kindness and caring for others in our community, just as Jesus demonstrated in this wonderful Bible story.

CE will gladly accept gift cards or cash donations to help cover the cost of supplies for making sandwiches. More announcements and details will be coming soon!

Thank you for your continued support of Christian Education and for helping us nurture faith, kindness, and compassion in our children.

Amy Harlow, Christian Education Director



The Green Church team has invited guest speaker Dennis P. Quinn to give a talk on Connecticut amphibians, reptiles, and conservation with a focus on the Connecticut River Valley. Mr. Quinn is a professional herpetologist and owner of Quinn Ecological, LLC, a Connecticut-based ecological consultancy founded in 2007 specializing in amphibian and reptile research, conservation, and habitat assessment.

As the consulting herpetologist for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), Mr. Quinn coordinates state and regional amphibian and reptile research and conservation projects. He has extensive experience with endangered and threatened species.

Mr. Quinn has nearly 20 years of professional field experience, regulatory expertise, and scientific authority to ecological consulting throughout Connecticut and the Northeast. He has published various peer-reviewed articles in *Northeastern Naturalist*, *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, and *PLOS ONE*. And is co-author of *Conservation of Amphibian and Reptiles in Connecticut*.

Quilt Show Exhibitors Needed!

The Quilt Show Committee is looking for quilts to display at the Yuletide Quilt Show. It takes over 100 quilts to fill the sanctuary and we need your help!

To show a quilt, pick up a **registration form** from the church or download from www.haddamchurch.org/events/quilt-show.

We are also in need of **donations for our basket raffle**. You can donate a whole basket or just a few items that can be combined with other donations.

Thank you in advance!







Christmas Items

Do you have Christmas decorations that you no longer want? The Quilt Show will take them and turn them into cash to help fund our Outreach programs! See Nancy Soneson to donate.

Music News

Submitted by Dr. Brian Frazier, Music Director



Behind the Music: Finding Our Balance in Worship

One of the joys—and occasional challenges—of choosing music for worship is finding the right balance between the familiar and the new. Our three hymnals, *The 1956 Pilgrim Hymnal*, *The Hymns of Truth and Light*, and *The New Century Hymnal*, offer us a rich variety of hymns, from traditional favorites that have accompanied generations of worshippers to newer selections that express our faith in fresh and meaningful ways. As I plan music for each Sunday, I try to consider not only what we know and love, but also what might speak to us in a new way. The seasons of the church year play an important role in these decisions, too. Advent and Christmas call for music of anticipation and celebration; Lent invites reflection and contemplation; Easter brings us back to the joy of resurrection; and the seasons in between offer opportunities to explore other aspects of our faith. My hope is that our music will honor the traditions that have sustained us while continuing to help us discover something new.

Of course, introducing a new hymn is not quite as simple as putting it on the schedule and expecting everyone to sing along! Even a beautiful melody can feel unfamiliar at first, particularly when we are trying to read the words, follow the music, and keep up with the congregation around us. That is why you may sometimes hear the choir sing a new selection as an introit—the musical offering at the beginning of worship—several times before it appears as a congregational hymn. This gives us an opportunity to become familiar with the melody and text before we are asked to sing it ourselves. And once a new hymn makes its way into our worship, we may sing it more than once over a period of weeks or months. Repetition helps a melody become familiar, allowing us to spend less time figuring out the notes and more time reflecting on the words. There is no magic number of times a hymn must be sung before everyone knows it, and congregations learn at different rates. My goal is to give new music a fair opportunity to become part of our shared musical vocabulary without allowing it to become tiresome. Sometimes a hymn that initially seems unfamiliar eventually becomes a favorite; other times, a piece is best appreciated when it returns at the appropriate season.

Another decision I make each week is whether to accompany our hymns and other service music on the organ or the piano. Both instruments have an important place in worship, but each brings a different character to the music. The organ has a wonderful ability to fill the sanctuary with sound, support congregational singing, and lend a sense of majesty or timelessness to traditional hymns and festive occasions. The piano, by contrast, can offer warmth, intimacy, rhythmic energy, and flexibility, making it especially effective for certain contemporary songs, reflective moments, and music that benefits from a lighter or more conversational accompaniment. These are not absolute rules: an organ can bring life to a newer hymn, and a piano can beautifully support a traditional one. The choice depends on the character of the music, the mood of the service, the season of the church year, and what I believe will best support our singing and prayer. Ultimately, all these decisions—what we sing, when we sing it, how often we return to it, and which instrument accompanies us—serve the same purpose. Music is not simply something added to worship; it is one of the ways we worship together. My hope is that, through a thoughtful balance of tradition and discovery, familiarity and growth, organ and piano, our music will continue to enrich our life together and help us encounter the many ways faith can be expressed through song.

Brian



Stewardship

Kristin Battistoni, Dawn Alger, Amy Harlow



It Takes All of Us
Our Faith. Our Church. Our Future.

Our church is more than a building—it's a community where faith grows, friendships are formed, children learn about God's love, and we come together to support and care for one another.

As we begin our stewardship campaign, *"It Takes All of Us,"* we are reminded that each of us has something meaningful to offer. Through our gifts of time, talent, and treasure, we strengthen our shared ministry, support the programs that bring us together, and help ensure a vibrant future for generations to come.

As you prayerfully consider your pledge for the coming year, think about what our church means to you and the legacy we want to leave for those who follow. Every gift, helping hand, and act of kindness makes a difference.

Thank you for all the ways you give, serve, and care. Together, we can continue building a church rooted in faith, strengthened by love, and committed to our future—because truly, **it takes all of us!**

Stewardship Sunday
November 22, 2026

You will receive your pledge card in the mail. Please fill it out and return it on November 22nd or mail to the church office, UCCHH, Attn: Collector, PO. Box 215, Haddam, CT 06438.





Welcome, Bennett Bailey!



Thank you to the **Diaconate** for providing coffee hour refreshments for November.



The **Finance Committee** will host in December.



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.



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.





Zoom Login Information

ID: 391 987 2707
Password: 90523

September Worship Attendance

October 4 23
October 11 14
October 18 33
October 25 53



Caring Connection

In this time of pastoral transition, the Caring Connection members are here for you. Please reach out to one of them if you, or someone you know, needs a visit, assistance, or to let them know of any health concerns.

Caring Connection contacts:
Sue Craffey 860-338-0216
Sue Henehan 860-212-4807
Dave McComas. . 860-978-0462

Church Documents



Click on the links below to view various church documents.

Council Minutes – Not available at time of printing
UCCHH August 9, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes
UCCHH 4th Annual Report
UCCHH 4th Annual Meeting Minutes
UCCHH ByLaws
UCCHH Church Policies

Follow us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/haddamchurch/



Sunday Services Stream Live on YouTube!

We live-stream each Sunday service - just tune in at 9:40 a.m. to watch live or watch previous recordings.

Click HERE to get started!

UCCHH Purpose Statement

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

Church Contact Information

Rev. Kathy Peters, Bridge Minister
revkathyp@comcast.net
(860) 919-9030
Office hours: Tues. 9 am – noon

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
www.haddamchurch.org

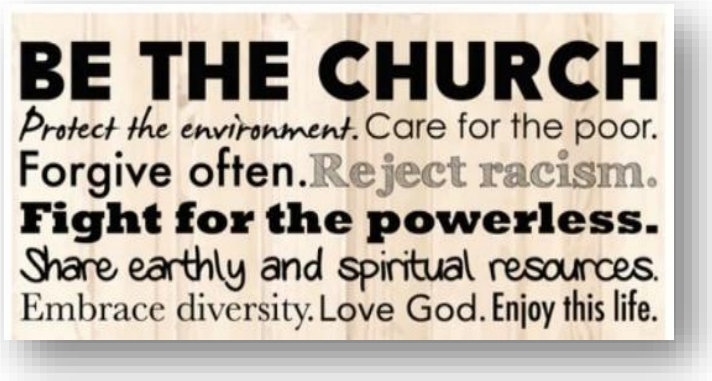


Photo Album













The Sunday school learns about Noah's Ark.





