

OUTLOOK ~ Winter Edition DECEMBER 2020 & JANUARY 2021

Unity Hill United Church of Christ

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Facebook: www.Facebook.com/Unity-Hill-UCC



The Rev. Dr. M. Todd Shipley, Pastor

Diane Henderson, Moderator

Dawn Brezina, Church Clerk

Jeffrey Stokely, Music Coordinator

Dorothy W. Pickens, Soloist

Joanne Wickson, Office Administrator

Calap Brown, Sexton



DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021 (WINTER) OUTLOOK DEADLINE

We welcome contributions to our monthly newsletter and invite you to share information, or even something more creative!

Please submit all articles, events or special announcements for the February 2021 Outlook by Wednesday, January 13, if possible, and no later than Tuesday, January 19. Thanks!

Please remember our homebound in your prayers or with a note:

Dorothy Barwick, Lucille Baver, Dolores Colaiacomo,
Katie Schneider and Mitch Wein.



PASTORAL CARE ~ VERY IMPORTANT!

If you, or someone you know, is hospitalized, please call the church office to let us know (203-374-8822). Hospitals do not notify us when a parishioner is hospitalized.

A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ~ The Rev. Dr. Todd Shipley, Pastor

First Coming by Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready, till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady, and prisoners cried out for release.
He did not wait for the perfect time. He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.
He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame he came, and his Light would not go out.
He came to a world which did not mesh, to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh the Maker of the stars was born.
We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain, He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Read the last stanza again out loud.

I don't know about you, but I have been saying the word 'after' a lot. After the 'pandemic'. After 'Election day.' After 'Inauguration day.' After the vaccine after 2020. After, after, after!

If God had delayed his entrance into the human world until after things had 'settled down' then we would still be waiting for the 'First Coming.'

The word 'after' also reminds me of the pep talks we give ourselves during difficult times. After I graduate, after I get a job, after I get married, after the kids go to college, after I retire. Waiting...

BUT ... farmers don't wait until after the corn sprouts to water the crops. Babies don't start being fed until AFTER they are born. Fertile soil and nutritious wombs are cultivated. So, I'm gonna ask you to not wait until after Advent to celebrate the gifts we are promised through Jesus: HOPE! PEACE! JOY! LOVE!

Here is how we stop waiting and cultivate our hearts for Christ:

We are gonna give those gifts away!

Get your pen, make a list, and check it as many times as you need to. Make a list of how you can give hope, peace, joy, or love to the people you know. Notice I wrote 'or.' You may not be able to give all of them to everyone, but you can give one to a few of them. That's how the kingdom of God is built.

ADVENT PEACE,
Pastor Todd

CHURCH UPDATES

CONGREGATIONAL Budget Meeting

CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING ~

Sunday, Dec. 6 after Worship Service in Lynch Hall with safety precautions and socially-distanced seating to vote on 2021 budget. All members please plan to attend.

We have a couple of alternatives for anyone unable to attend the Annual Congregational Budget Meeting. Any questions received before hand about the budget will be forwarded to the committee chairperson.

1. We'd prefer that you put your yes or no vote in a sealed envelope, stop by church and hand it to Joanne between 9:30 - 2:30 on Monday - Friday.
2. If you absolutely can't drive to church, email to unityhillucc@gmail.com or call Joanne at 203-374-8822 before 2:30 pm on Friday, December 4. She will record your vote anonymously and give vote count to our Moderator Diane Henderson.
3. Last resort, mail your yes or no vote in an envelope marked Attention: Budget Meeting. Envelope must arrive by Friday, December 4 to count.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES "Outside" ~ Thursday, December 24

Please join us to celebrate the Birth of Christ!

We have 2 services ~ Family Service at 5:00- 5:20 pm;
Candlelight Service with Holy Communion at 11:00- 11:20 pm.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Office will be closed on Friday, December 25.

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR ~ By: Diane Henderson

Greetings Unity Hill UCC Members and Friends, I'm writing this message after returning home from a very meaningful Church service at Unity Hill UCC. Today was the first Sunday in Advent and the candle of Hope was lit, we listened to a wonderful performance of Haydn's Concerto performed by Frank Willis, a student of Jeff Stokely. Pastor Todd introduced a film we watched about the origin of the hymn "It Is Well with My Soul." It was very moving and heartbreaking, but so inspiring.

As we look forward to the season of Christmas and celebrating the birth of our Savior, this year can be especially difficult for many of us. We miss being with our families including our church family

In this challenging year for so many, let us try to bring joy to someone, text or call a friend, help a stranger in need, share some kindness.

As we look forward to 2021, I leave you with this poem ...

Hope by Ms. Moem

Hope is the place where you want to go, Hope is the person who you want to know, Hope is the feeling that carries you through, And Hope is the future for me and for you. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year! Diane

MISSIONS COMMITTEE ~ By: Brenda Finizio, Chair

***"But they are also filled with abundant joy,
which has overflowed in rich generosity." ~ 2 Corinthians 8:2-4***

Treat of the Week Challenge ~ Thank you for participating in the Treat of Week Challenge. We don't have the final number for donations, but know it is close to our goal. As a result, mission initiatives can be supported.

Support for our Members ~ We provided Stop and Shop gift cards to families to provide food for Thanksgiving. Special thanks to Pastor Todd for delivering.

UCC Our Church's Wider Mission ~ Neighbor in Needs funds of over \$475 were sent to UCC Our Church's Wider Mission. The special mission offering of the United Church of Christ supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities. Thank you for all your support.

Next collection will be the Christmas Fund which we collect during Christmas Eve services. For all the sacrifices that clergy and lay church workers have made in our congregations, over 100 years ago the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ created the **Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund**, to help support them in retirement and during times of emergent need.



Haitian Helping Hands ~ As Christmas approaches, Haitian Helping Hands will have a celebration for the children of Haiti. The celebration will consist of food, school supplies, bibles and the story of the gospel of Jesus, starting from birth. All supplies will

be bought in Haiti to support the local economy. HHH will be running a campaign until Dec 20th to raise \$800. They have already reached \$200. See me if interested in donating to this special cause.

Church World Service Blanket of Hope Program ~ In lieu of sending Christmas Cards, please consider donating \$10 for the CWS Blanket program. In the midst of crisis, faith guides a loving response. That's how the CWS Blanket program started, and that's why your gifts mean so much this year. Through the generosity of your support and our partners, vulnerable neighbors can keep warm with fresh linens and clean sleeping quarters.



Merry Christmas! Brenda Finizio, Missions Chair; Carole Fanslow & Marsha Piper!!

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ~ By: Carole J. Fanslow, President

No December or January **Executive Board Meeting or Monthly Luncheon Meeting**. Sorry to report that our annual **Christmas Tea** set for December 3 will be postponed to a later date, possibly a spring tea in May, if the pandemic is over.

FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY HILL ~ By: Dorothy Pickens, President

COMMUNITY SUPPERS ~ On October 28, thanks to our volunteers, Dave Panula, Patrick Marro, Marsha Piper and Carole Fanslow, who served mac & cheese, beans and salad outside to 50 clients. 3 trays cost \$89.00. Also, thanks to Dot Pickens, Patrick Marro and Carole Fanslow for preparing the meal on Sunday, October 25. Our next turn at **Golden Hill Community Suppers** is on Wednesday, December 23; cooking at 2:00 pm and serving at 5:00 pm at Golden Hill UMC. We will prepare the meal at church on Sunday, December 20. Additional help is always appreciated. Next year, our first turn will be on Wednesday, February 24.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND HAPPENINGS

SILVER LAKE CONFERENCE CENTER

Join us for In-Person Christmas at the Lake on Saturday, December 5 & Saturday, December 12 ~ 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. \$50/\$40 tiered pricing per person. Bring your family to camp for a day of fellowship by the fireside, games, crafts, hot cocoa, chili, and some Adventure games. *Masks and physical distancing required.* Space is limited, so register now! Visit www.silverlakeect.org/christmas for additional details & registration. Silver Lake Conference Center / 860.364.5526 / slcc@sneucc.org

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

DELEGATES MEETING ~ Tuesday January 19, 2021 - 6:30 – 8 pm on zoom.

ANGEL GIFT GUIDE

We invite you to celebrate an “Angel in Your Life” by donating to The Council of Churches in their honor to help support the work of the Council of Churches will be acknowledged by a personalized card from us notifying them of your special recognition.

Through our FEED Center, Janus Center for Youth in Crisis, and Bridge Building programs your gift in honor of an “Angel in Your Life” will help us

impact the lives of people who need our help more than ever! Our clients are among the hardest hit by this pandemic -- those who were already economically vulnerable, those who depend on our food pantries, those living in halfway houses, youth already struggling with poverty and violence. You can donate here www.ccgb.org/angelappeal, or you can fill out and mail this form if you'd prefer to pay by check. Thank you for honoring and thanking your “Angels” by paying it forward and helping others! pick up a flyer on the table in Fellowship Hall, see the flyers in the bulletin coming in a few weeks, or call the office to have one mailed to you. Contact Council of Churches for more info at (203) 334-1121 or info@ccgb.org

DONATION FORM

TO ACKNOWLEDGE
“AN ANGEL
IN YOUR LIFE”

FOR ONLINE DONATIONS,
VISIT CCGB.ORG/ANGEL



OR, FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS FORM, WITH YOUR CHECK, TO:
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT
1718 CAPITOL AVE
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

I AM MAKING A DONATION IN HONOR OF “AN ANGEL IN MY LIFE”

Enclosed is my gift in the amount of \$ _____

Your gift will help support current urgent needs throughout the greater Bridgeport area, or if you wish to support a specific program of the Council please indicate it here:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Please provide the name(s) of your Recipient(s) and what you'd like to have included on the acknowledgment card.

Recipient Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Occasion for the gift: _____

Special remarks to include on the acknowledgement card: _____

Thank You!

TRUMBULL INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Our **Monthly Meeting** in December and January has been cancelled.

46th ANNUAL CROP HUNGER VIRTUAL WALK

Many thanks to our volunteers from Unity Hill UCC: Pastor Todd Shipley, Marsha Piper, Patty Bowman, Dot Pickens, Phyllis Bachinski, Mabel Buttress and Carole Fanslow. They collected \$1,730 for CROP and Church World Service.

CONNECTICUT WOMEN OF THE UCC

Brenda Finizio was honored recently by Connecticut Women of UCC as a recognized woman for her loyal and supportive service to Unity Hill United Church of Christ.

HEALTH CORNER ~ Holiday Season Stress & Depression [By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

You may feel stressed, sad or anxious because your holiday plans may look different during the COVID-19 pandemic. But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression ~ When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

- 1. Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- 2. Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups, social media sites or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship.
If you're feeling stress during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call or a video chat.
Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.
- 3. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as

sharing pictures, emails or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.

4. **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
5. **Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Try these alternatives: Donate to a charity in someone's name; Give homemade gifts; Start a family gift exchange.
6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Try these suggestions:
 - Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks and avoid excessive tobacco, alcohol and drug use.
 - Eat healthy meals and Get plenty of sleep.
 - Try deep-breathing exercises, meditation or yoga and include regular physical activity in your daily routine.
 - Be aware of how the information culture can produce undue stress and adjust the time you spend reading news and social media as you see fit.
9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Some options may include: Taking a walk at night and stargazing; Listening to soothing music; Reading a book.

December 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30am Worship Service Congregational Budget Meeting after service	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	21	22	23 Golden Hill UMC Community Suppers	24 Christmas Eve Services 5pm & 11pm	Christmas	26
27 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	28	29	30	31		

<i>Birthdays in December ~ HAPPY BIRTHDAY!</i>		
2 Sandra Osten	10 Lucille Baver	18 David Brezina (son)
5 Kim Gorlo Hayward	10 Al Paolozzi (Dad)	26 Wally Yeager
9 Brenda Finizio	17 Andrew Pickens	



January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <u>New Year's Day</u>	2
3 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	18 <u>M L King Jr Day</u> - Office is closed	19	20	21	22	23
24 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 10:30am Worship Service & Sunday school						

Birthdays in January ~ HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

1 Ruth DeNomme	13 David Vars	23 Brooklyn Rondon
4 Shane Paolozzi	14 Shari Henderson	25 Louise Evans
5 Dolores Colaiacomo	14 Mabel Buttress	27 Aria Garcia
6 Trevor Bowman	18 Daniel Finizio	30 Alicia Pickens
9 Vicky Buttress	18 Jonathan Sanchez	



CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE "BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE"

If you would like to make a Memorial Contribution to the "Book of Remembrance" in addition to, or in place of, a Christmas poinsettia, please complete this form and return it, with your check, made payable to "Unity Hill UCC" with a notation for: "Book of Remembrance" **to the office no later than Monday, December 21st** so we can prepare the list of memorials for the Christmas Eve bulletin. Be sure to write your loved ones' name exactly how you want it inscribed in the Book of Remembrance! Thank you!

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

Book of Remembrance - Donation: \$ _____

In Loving Memory Of _____

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS 2020

Choice of White or Red potted poinsettias at **\$16.50** each.

Payment and order **MUST** be submitted to Office by **Thursday, December 10, 2020.**

QUANTITY	PLANT	COST EACH	TOTAL
	Red Poinsettia	\$16.50	\$
	White Poinsettia	\$16.50	\$
TOTAL		Cash () Check ()	\$



IMPORTANT: Please do not include any other payments or pledges in the same check. You can either submit form to church office with your check or Mail it.

Please Print.

From _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Celebration of _____

Check off one option: If you **do not** check off, your plant(s) will be donated.

() I will pick up my plant(s) () I wish to donate my plant(s) to shut-in.

() I will help deliver the plants.

Please do not take your plant until after you check with Diane Henderson or Linda Polito.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Check # _____

A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!



*May the peace and hope of
Christ's birth
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

***“No matter who you are
or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here!”***

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