

MAY 2016 Outlook

Unity Hill United Church of Christ "Where God's Love Grows a Family"



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The Reverend M. Todd Shipley, Pastor

The Reverend Harold C. Smith D.D., Pastor Emeritus

Carole J. Fanslow, Music/Choir Director

Dorothy W. Pickens, Soloist

Louise Evans, R.N., Parish Nurse

Lucille Baver, Moderator

Diane Henderson, Vice-Moderator

Lorie Ann Boveroux, Christian Education Coordinator

Shari Herman, Interim Bookkeeper

Dawn Brezina, Financial Secretary

David Brezina, Church Clerk

Joanne Wickson, Office Administrator

Calap Brown, Sexton

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
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RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:
TURN IN YOUR ARTICLES EARLY!
 REMINDER:
DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES IS

OUTLOOK DEADLINE ~ We welcome contributions to our monthly newsletter and invite you to share information, or even something more creative! The **JUNE 2016 Outlook** will be published at the end of June. All submissions, special announcements, articles or events **provided on, or before, the DEADLINE of Wednesday, MAY 18** will be included.

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



PASTOR TODD'S OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm or by appointment.

A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ~ By: Pastor Todd Shipley

MORE PEOPLE, LOOSER TIES ~ SOCIAL LIFE IN THE MEGACHURCH by David Eagle 4/8/2016

The size of the church attended by a typical Protestant in America has increased over the past few decades. According to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, the number of megachurches (churches with more than 2,000 people in attendance at weekly worship) increased from fewer than 100 in 1970 to nearly 1,800 today. And according to the National Congregations Study, about 15 percent of Protestants in this country attend a megachurch—twice as many as did in 1998.

Megachurches are hardly a new phenomenon. The landscape of Protestantism has been dotted since the mid-19th century with very large churches—like Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, Temple Baptist in Philadelphia, Moody Church in Chicago, Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, and Second Baptist in Houston. All of these large congregations rose to prominence before 1930. The increase in popularity and prominence of megachurches is new, however. The reasons for the rise remain murky, but some guesses can be made.

One guess concerns one of the most important social trends of post-World War II America: the increased participation of women in the paid workforce. According to the Census Bureau, 57 percent of working-aged women participated in some form of paid work in 2013—up from about 35 percent in 1950. Among women who work, far more work full time than in the past. Meanwhile, most men are employed, and if employed they usually work full time. This means that in more and more marriages, both partners are spending more time at work than they did in previous decades.

What does this have to do with churches? A good deal. Churches are volunteer-driven organizations and need a plentiful supply of volunteer labor to function. The bulk of church volunteers come from the ranks of the married. If married people have less discretionary time at their disposal, then churches will feel a corresponding time crunch with volunteers. Think of it this way: a congregation with 100 married couples today has 1,000 hours fewer hours of potential volunteer labor to tap than it did in 1970.

Imagine that you are part of a busy couple, both working as accountants, and you are looking for a church to attend. If you enter a church of a hundred people, it is likely that in a short time you will be asked to put your professional skills to work for the church. But if you were to walk into a church of 2,000, it is likely that the church already pays a bookkeeper to manage its finances, and you would face a lot less pressure to get involved. At the very least, you could more easily pick and choose your level of involvement.

Churches that survive and thrive in today's environment allow for the flexible participation of volunteers. The advantage of size lies in the ability to pay staff to do the things that require sustained commitment—things like bookkeeping, coordinating programs for children and youth, and planning and organizing services. Megachurches create a more hospitable environment for time-stressed people.

Some additional evidence suggests that the success of megachurches has to do with their ability to attract dual-earner couples. It should come as no surprise that dual-income households outearn their single-earner counterparts. If you double the number of hours available for paid employment, on average, household income will rise. Researchers with the National Congregations Study asked a representative sample of pastors to estimate the proportion of their congregation that earns more than \$100,000 per year (pastors tend to be very accurate in making such estimates). In congregations with 100 attenders, about 5 percent of the congregation fits in this category; in congregations with more than 3,000 attenders, 30 percent have high incomes.

One might object that this relationship derives merely from the fact that megachurches disproportionately exist in suburbs dominated by high-income families. But when comparisons are made between congregations across urban and suburban areas, this relationship continues to hold.

Another factor may be that families today have fewer children, which means it takes a larger church to form a critical mass of kids for youth groups and Sunday schools. Larger churches, because they have access to more resources than small churches, can also produce much more polished and professional programs. And success breeds success. As megachurches become more popular, they come to define what success looks like, which leads in turn to more people copying their model.

Some observers have thought that megachurches, given their capacity to create extensive programs, have an unusual power to shape people's beliefs. In 1990, a writer in the *San Antonio News Express* argued that the megachurch "provides a total environment under a single sacred canopy" and worried that congregations of this size would become a "sealed bubble."

But the evidence above suggests that the popularity of megachurches is more likely related to their *inability* to provide a "total environment." Families are pulled in multiple directions by the demands of work, childcare, housework, and leisure, and they want a place that won't make too many more demands. If anything, megachurches represent the loosening of religious bonds.

Nearly 120 years ago, the German sociologist Georg Simmel argued that organizations that exercise total control over individuals are necessarily small in size. Only in organizations in which everybody has direct contact with everyone else can behavior and belief be restricted. Small, tight-knit organizations have many tools to enforce commitment. As organizations get larger and the internal networks of relationships become more diffuse, it gets harder and harder to demand conformity. In large organizations, people with minority opinions are likely to find sympathizers, whereas in small organizations, dissenters often fail to reach a critical mass.

If Simmel is right that large organizations have a harder time exercising control over individuals, then it makes sense that members of small churches attend church more frequently than members of megachurches. Large churches are more anonymous places—your comings and goings aren't noticed from week to week, and you may not face the same encouragement (or pressure) to attend.

It's probably equally true that if you are the sort of person who doesn't have the time or the interest to attend church every week, you might gravitate to a larger church. My research has found exactly this dynamic. Large-church attenders are significantly less likely to attend weekly than are their small-church counterparts. This pattern holds across denominations, which gives credence to the argument that size, independent of other factors, promotes lower levels of involvement. The fact that a larger share of Protestants attends big churches may say something about the loosening bonds of religion.

Ironically, while the rise of megachurches may signal the loosening hold of organized religion, it may create a larger role for some churches in public life. Consider that in 2008, Saddleback Church in Southern California hosted a presidential forum between candidates Barack Obama and John McCain. Because of its size, a 20,000-member church like Saddleback can host a presidential debate; it carries a lot more cultural influence than, say, a coalition of 100 congregations of 200 members each.

And since, as pointed out earlier, larger churches contain a higher proportion of people with high incomes, they are even more likely to attract the attention of politicians. In this fashion, megachurches can both reflect the loosening of religious ties and prompt the rise of some churches' social and political influence.



Please remember our homebound in your prayers or with a note:
Barbara Bailey, Hazel Berger, Dolores Colaiacomo, Elsie Rapposch,
John Ray, Katie Schneider, Mitch Wein and Nellie Wirth.

CHURCH UPDATES

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHRISTIAN ED CO-ORDINATOR!

Lorie Hansen Boveroux, her husband Benjamin and their four children have resided in Trumbull for eight years. Lorie is the former Director of Christian Formation for St. Paul's Church, Fairfield and taught in the public schools in New York. Lorie holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and a MS in Architecture and Urban Planning from Pratt Institute. She holds Permanent Certification in Visual and graphic communication in the State of New York. She has received training in Godly Play and believes in teaching directly to children's specific learning styles.

Lorie volunteers her time in the childrens' schools, serves as community service coordinator for Cub Scout Pack 167, is an alternate to the Trumbull Zoning Board of Appeals and is a Vestry Member and Chair of Christian Formation at St. Paul's Church in Fairfield, where her family attends church. She also attends Haverhill Congregational Church in Haverhill NH in the summer with her family. All four of her children are active in church

ministry, from choir, to acolytes, to youth group and youth leadership. Her eldest child, Elisabeth (17) will be pursuing her call to ministry in college.



WELCOME TO OUR INTERIM BOOK-KEEPER! Shari Herman

We at Unity Hill are proud to be a new client of Shari Herman, a freelance bookkeeper. In only a few weeks we have already had a wonderful experience together. We look forward to our business relationship with her as the structure of our financial management continues to evolve!

DIVORCE SUPPORT GROUP ~ Wednesday, May 4 at 7:00 pm at Unity Hill UCC

CELEBRATE PENTECOST SUNDAY WITH US! Sunday, May 15 at 10:30 am



GEORGE'S HILL



George's Hill will be on Thursday, May 12 from 11:30am - 1:00 pm
A social engagement group for persons with memory problems or early dementia and their caregivers, where they can meet with other people with similar problems, for lunch and a fun program. To register, please call the church office at 203-374-8822 or sign up on our web site.
Our motto is: **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

CHURCH COUNCIL ~ By: Moderator, Lucille Baver

Church Council Meeting will be on **Monday, May 9** at 7:00 pm.

Committee Reports to Council are due in church office by **Monday, May 2.**

DIACONATE ~ By: Louise Evans, Chair

The next meeting for the Diaconate Committee is Tuesday, May 3 at 1:30 p.m.

We revised the list of Deacons.

UHUC will celebrate its 28th year Anniversary on June 5th. We will soon begin planning for the 30th Anniversary in 2018.

We have many things to discuss and do. We're considering having another service outdoors. The one we had last year when we lost power was enjoyed by all. We plan to create plans for the year, to suggest bible studies, spiritual gymnasia and book studies, to mention only a few. We discussed polishing the communion silver. We will continue to plan the duties of the current Deacons. We will discuss the need for a "Flower Committee" to coordinate holiday plants, planning and planting the entry planters, memorial altar flowers, etc.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE ~ By: Sharon Brezina, Chair

Hello All,

We, and some community organizations, count on the church building to be clean, safe, and functioning well. That happens thanks to the work of many people: our office personnel, our pastor, our custodian, and our dedicated Building and Grounds committee.

I wanted to take a minute to highlight some of the work that was done recently:

- * Outdoor locks have been changed so one key fits all (still waiting on two doors to be done). Fire Marshall was very excited that we did this.
- * Replaced all the emergency lighting in the hall and other areas (failed on the walk through with the Fire Marshall).
- * Discarded furniture that is no longer needed

Future plans:

- * Spring clean-up day plans for Sunday, May 15 - 9am-1pm
- * Spring pot-luck and Bingo date
- * Beautifying handicapped entrance/Repainting parking spaces

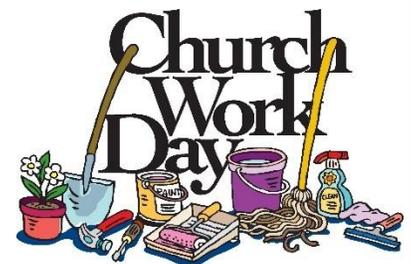
Our new B&G committee is on the move - never a dull moment - still working on lights, ceiling tiles and general cleaning.

We are looking for help with several maintenance and clean-up projects on **CHURCH CLEAN-UP DAY** on Saturday, May 15th from 9 am—1 pm.

Volunteers — both skilled and unskilled — are welcome, so please consider volunteering some of your time to help with some much needed work around the church and grounds - even if it's only for an hour. So that we have some idea of how many people will be participating and what jobs can be scheduled, please sign up ahead of time on the Buildings and Grounds bulletin board at church - or call the office. However, last minute volunteers are also most welcome! There is always lots of yard work that needs to get done so, if possible, please bring gardening tools for working on the grounds. Work gloves are also recommended for all volunteers.

Keep it Green! The B&G Committee would like to request the congregation's help in keeping interior and exterior doors closed and locked and lights turned off when leaving the building. Closing doors helps with heating and safeguards against potential fires, while turning off all lights helps reduce our electricity usage. It falls on all of us to help keep our church safe and efficient. Thank you!

Happy Spring! Sharon, Trevor and Steve



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ~ By: Lorie Boveroux, Christian Education Coordinator

I am so pleased to be a part of Unity Hill! Thank you for greeting me warmly. It has been a pleasure getting to know all of you - children, youth and adults, and thank you for ongoing patience as I learn all of your names.



It is hard to believe that, at the time I'm writing this, I have shared three Sundays with the children and youth of Unity Hill. I am pleased to say that I love every minute of it. Just a week ago, I brought my two younger children - Matthew (10) and William (8) with me and they could not stop talking about how wonderful the people were and how they cannot wait to come back.

Right now, I am in the beginning phases of reviewing curriculum and talking to the youth about direction and purpose of programming for them. The next few weeks - and months - we will be working on adding on to the strong foundation of what is already in place and getting the message out that something indeed is happening and is wonderful at Unity Hill.

I am asking everyone to think about their role in Christian Education and how you can support this ministry. Would you be interested in teaching a class or two? Would you like to share a life skill with the youth of the congregation ... building something or cooking something? Would you be willing to pray for the children and youth and their families on a regular basis?

I am regularly in the classroom on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00-2:00 and on Sunday before and after the service. Please feel free to stop in and ask any questions you might have. I will be adding later hours as we begin to develop the youth programs.



MISSIONS COMMITTEE ~ By: Brenda Finizio, Chair

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) We sent a check for \$706 this month from "One Great Hour of Sharing" collections. One of the organizations that "One Great Hour of Sharing" supports is DSPR (Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees) in Beirut, Lebanon, an organization that helps keep families, who have been forced out of Palestine, safe.

Next OCWM collection is in June for "**Strengthen the Church.**" This special mission offering supports youth ministries, developing their spiritual gifts and leadership skills for the church of the future. Funds also support full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

Haiti Mission Trip The planning for the Haiti trip and fundraisers to support the expense continue to go well, thanks to the congregation. We have 11 committed volunteers and possibly one or two more joining us this summer. On our trip, we plan to work on rebuilding and restoring the Church of the Apostles and helping to expand the Cornerstone School. We are still focusing on finishing the floor in the sanctuary, painting, providing electrical work, as well as replacing the failed water pump for distribution of water in the building. We also want to visit a hospital, spend time with the students, and provide much needed supplies.

Thanks for all the support from Unity Hill Members and Missions Committee Members. Your generous gifts and time are greatly appreciated.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY HILL ~ By: Dot Pickens, President 2015

~ We will be cooking at 2:00 pm and serving dinner at 5:00 pm at Golden Hill United Methodist Church Community Suppers Program on Wednesday, April 27. We are preparing the food Sunday, April 24 after church. As always, additional help is needed and greatly appreciated. Our next turn at Golden Hill will be on Wednesday, June 22.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ~ By: Carole Fanslow, President

~ We have only two more meetings this year. Our luncheon out will be on Tuesday, May 17 following the Executive Board's meeting at 10:00 am for the 2016-2017 Program Planning. We always welcome suggestions for future programs for the Women's Fellowship. We have a 12:30 reservation at The Lazy Dog Tavern, 2505 Main Street, Stratford. Dutch Treat. We can carpool from church. Menu can be found at <http://lazydogtavern.com/menus.php#page-title>.

~ Our fundraiser is on Thursday, May 19 at 1:00 pm featuring a Festival of Tables along with entertainment by the Festive Ringers Handbell Choir. Cost is only \$5.00 which includes special tea sandwiches and desserts. If anyone is willing to help out for this event, please let Carole Fanslow know. We will gratefully take donations of finger sandwiches or desserts. Bring a friend, relative, neighbor with you!

~ Many thanks to those that responded to our annual Church World Service Kits appeal. Unfortunately, this year the response was very poor, and the need is great. On April 3, only 10 health kits, 8 school kits and 1 baby kit were dedicated; Plus, we received donations for 3 additional kits. This is an all-church appeal, not just the Women's Fellowship. We hope we can do better next year.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND HAPPENINGS

WORSHIP SERVICE AT MIDDLEBROOK FARMS

Thursday, May 5 at 2:00 pm led by Deacons Carole Fanslow and Waltraud Yeager.

TRUMBULL INTERFAITH COUNCIL

The **MONTHLY MEETING** will be on Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30 pm at Trumbull Congregational Church, 3115 Reservoir Avenue, Trumbull.

42nd ANNUAL C.R.O.P. HUNGER WALK

The CROP Hunger Walk is on Sunday, May 22 - kick-off at 1:00 pm at our new location - Seaside Park (use Park Avenue entrance) and remember to bring non-perishable food for the pantries in Bridgeport. Our CROP coordinators for walkers and supporters are Marsha Piper and Dot Pickens. In 2015, we raised more than \$34,000 with 25% of monies raised remaining in Bridgeport. Let's go CROP!

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER BRIDGEPORT

ANNUAL MEETING on Thursday, May 12 - 6pm Trumbull Congregational Church, 3115 Reservoir Ave.

FAIRFIELD EAST ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL MEETING on Wednesday, May 25 beginning at 6:00 pm at Newtown Congregational Church.

149th ANNUAL MEETING OF CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE UCC

ANNUAL MEETING on June 10 and 11 to be held at the University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford; Keynote speaker is the Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder.

HEALTH REMINDERS: Friendship and Depression ~ From: Louise Evans, RN

If you are depressed, you may not enjoy activities you once found pleasurable, including socializing and making friends. Even if you do want to spend time with old friends and meet new people, you may worry that your persistent sadness, pessimism, and other depression symptoms might make it difficult for people to want to develop a friendship with you. Many people who have depression feel isolated and helpless. But reaching out to others, expanding your network of social support, and enjoying the diversion of a good friendship can be just what you need when you are depressed.

The Importance of Friendship in Depression Recovery

Depending on where you are in the course of your depression treatment, it's often difficult to motivate yourself to be social. But think about how much fun it can be to spend time with other people and participate in social activities.

Try these suggestions for reconnecting with loved ones and making new friends:

- **Rebuild existing friendships.** Connecting with those who have already helped you through good times and bad is a great place to start when trying to be more social. Call up a friend whose company you usually enjoy and go see a movie, get a cup of coffee, attend a sporting event, or do an activity you are both interested in.
- **Get involved in the community.** Religious and community organizations tend to be a welcoming way to meet new people, engage in activities, and develop a supportive social network. Find out about options in your area. Volunteering in your community can help both with making friends and feeling more purposeful in your life.
- **Join a support group.** It is important to have friends who understand what you are going through and who you can lean on for support and talk to about your struggles with depression. A support group of other people managing depression can be a great option for making friends since everyone in the group knows just what you are experiencing.
- **Take a new class.** Pick a subject you would like to learn more about and see if a local college, university, or community center offers a class on it. In addition to learning something new, you are likely to meet other people who share your interest.
- **Be a good listener.** As you meet new friends, remember that it is just as important to listen as it is to talk. Engaging someone else about their views and the interests you have in common can help distract you from the troubles you are experiencing. Remember that the strongest friendships are based on mutual exchanges.
- **Be someone your friends can count on.** While you may be in great need of support when managing depression, it is important that support goes both ways in a friendship. Make an effort to be there when friends reach out to you. When your depression makes it difficult to be social, try to explain to your friends what you are going through and that you are working to get better.

Remember that healing from depression can be a long process, marked with ups and downs. So give yourself time. Do your best to socialize with others and make new friends, but don't beat yourself up if you don't always feel like being around other people. With time and treatment, know that you will begin to feel better and take pleasure in social activities you once enjoyed.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH. For more info about talking to your doctor about depression see <https://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/screening-tests/talk-with-your-doctor-about-depression>

For more info about getting your teen screened for depression go to <https://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/screening-tests/talk-with-your-doctor-about-depression>

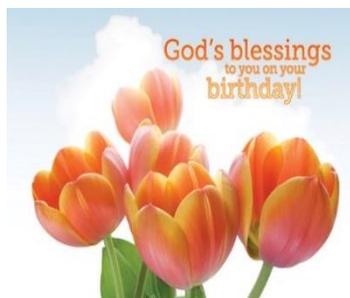


HAPPY ANNIVERSARY IN MAY!

May 17, 1952 Waltraud & Edward (Wally & Ed) Yeager

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Committee Reports to Council Due in Office	3 1:30pm Diaconate Meeting	4 7:00pm Divorce Support Group 7:30pm TIC Meeting	5 2pm Middlebrook Farms Worship Service 3-9pm PCCT	6 8am-12pm PCCT	7
8 	9 7:00pm Church Council Meeting	10	11 11:30-2:30 Kennedy Center	12 11:30-1:00 George's Hill 3-9pm PCCT	13 8am-12pm PCCT	14
15 9:00am-1:00pm Unity Hill's Church Clean-up Day 	16	17 10am Women's Fellowship 2016-2017 Program Planning 12:30pm Women's Fellowship Luncheon Out- at the Lazy Dog Tavern 7-8:30pm Overeaters' Anonymous Intergroup Meeting	18 DEADLINE FOR JUNE OUTLOOK	19 1:00pm Women's Fellowship "Festival of Tables" Fundraiser Tea 3-9pm PCCT	20 8am-12pm PCCT	21
22 12pm Unity in Loss Group 1:00pm CROP Hunger Walk	23	24	25	26 3-9pm PCCT	27 8am-12pm PCCT	28
29	30 	31				



HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN MAY!		
2 Patricia Bowman	12 Emily Brezina	26 Paulette Shipley
4 Justin Beaudry	12 Madeline Gaetano	28 Christine Beaudry
6 Donald Gorlo	12 Norman Aanensen	29 Benjamin Boveroux
11 Bob Krakovich	25 Dorothy Barwick	31 Pat Spencer



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

***Unity Hill United Church of Christ
The Rev. M. Todd Shipley, Pastor
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