

The Church Mouse

The Reverend Craig L. Cowing, Pastor

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Georgette L. Huie, Minister of Children and Youth
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860-529-4167 Church

December 2015 Newsletter

RHCC e-mail address – <u>office@rhccucc.org</u>
Website: www.rhccucc.org
Office Hours – 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Friday
Sunday Worship Services – 10:00 a.m.

Childcare Available/Handicap Accessible

ADVENT CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY SEASON WORSHIP & EVENTS

Sun. Nov. 29	10:00am	1 st Sunday of Advent – worship
Wed. Dec. 2	1:00pm	Advent Bible Study
Sat. Dec. 5	8:30am	Men's Christian Fellowship
Sun. Dec. 6	10:00am	2 nd Sunday of Advent – worship and communion
	5:00pm	Advent Family Night
Tues. Dec. 8	1:00pm	"Images of Christmas, East and West 💌
Wed. Dec. 9	1:00pm	Advent Bible Study
Thurs. Dec. 10	7:00pm	Blue Christmas Service
Sun. Dec. 13	10:00am	3 rd Sunday of Advent - Worship
	4:00pm	Lessons and Carols
Tues. Dec. 15	7:00pm	"Images of Christmas, East and West
Sat. Dec. 19	10:30am	Cookie Walk
Sun. Dec.20	10:00am	4 th Sunday of Advent – worship
	11:00am	Snow date for Cookie Walk
	2:00pm	Christmas Caroling
Thurs. Dec. 24	5:00pm	Christmas Eve Intergenerational Service
	11:00pm	Candlelight and Communion Service
Sun. Jan 10	10:00am	Epiphany Pageant



I'm writing while listening to a webinar on the future of Andover Newton Theological School, where I attended seminary in the 1980's. The school is looking at selling the campus outside Boston and relocate to a place that is more financially sustainable. As I listen I realize that I am having to re-hear what I've preached about often during the last three decades: that the church cannot expect to carry out its mission by looking backwards, that we can't be burdened by the past when the past no longer gives us guidance into the future. In other words, we need to distinguish between what we do, which never changes (mission) and how we do it, which is always open to change.

This is a part of my concern over the school because I love the campus where I went to school. I believe that my reluctance to see the campus go is similar to the tie that many people have to a particular church building. I understand how deeply ties to a particular place can form.

Considering Christmas, there's a common thread here. What we find in the Incarnation is the model for God doing something new, and doing it in a new way. In a way that we can't understand God was present in the birth of Jesus. I have to admit that I lean towards Luke's version of the Christmas story, in which everyone is surprised, and the message of Jesus' birth is made to ordinary people such as shepherds and Mary.

This is the surprise of Christmas. The message of the Gospel isn't for just some, but for all. Luke's gospel makes it clear that God favors the marginalized. This thread runs throughout Luke's gospel. People who are outside the pale are those who understand what God is doing. Mary's song in Luke 1, known as the Magnificat, celebrates the toppling of the rich and powerful from their thrones. That's a revolutionary message.

I pray that during our first Advent and Christmas season together we will learn together as we celebrate this ancient tradition.

In Christ,

Craig



A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

December 13, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.



Rocky Hill Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Established 1727
An Open and Affirming Community of Faith



S.P.I.R.I.T. Church School News

Attendance continues to grow in church school: in November, we reached a high of 23 students in class! The children get along and have made their time together fun and inspiring for each other and the adults as well.

Here are the topics for November 15 through December 6:

Pre-K to 1st grade: Hannah and Samuel

Grades 2-5: Who Is Jesus?

• Discover the meaning of the word *Messiah*

• Recognize that Jesus was not the Messiah people expected

• Explore who Jesus is to us

Grades 6-8: Seeking God's Help, Choosing Our Actions, God's Promise, Faith

For December 13 and 20:

Pre-K to 1st grade: Advent and Christmas

Grades 2-5: In the Manger – Luke's Christmas Story

Grades 6-8: Waiting, Courage

December 27: Worship, but NO CHURCH SCHOOL

January 3: EPIPHANY PAGEANT REHEARSAL during Church School

January 10: EPIPHANY PAGEANT

If you are able and willing to help teach, lead an activity, or be a second adult in a classroom, please sign up in Chapin Hall or contact Georgette Huie or Kathy Morgan.

Middle School Youth Group

On November 1, Marie Antoinette, Wonder Woman, Kevin Durant, a ballerina, St. Patrick, and the Cat in the Hat all visited the Brookdale nursing home to sing pumpkin songs and hand out treats. The Middle School Youth Group first assembled 60 Halloween treat bags, and then did the reverse trick-or-treat, which brought a moment of levity and lightness to the residents at the home. We in turn, were greeted and welcomed warmly. On November 15, the group met at church to bake cookies for the Cookie Walk, and engaged in multiple rounds of Sardines (a hide-and-seek game).

Here is our upcoming schedule:

Sunday, December 6 – 5pm to 7pm – Advent Workshop

Sunday, December 13 – 6pm to 7:30pm – Christmas Party

Sunday, January 3 - NO YOUTH GROUP

High School Youth Group

On November 8, the group took Georgette on a tour of Rocky Hill, which Georgette enjoyed very much. We ended at Praline's for ice cream. On November 22, we held the Baked Potato Fundraiser after worship, and raised \$286! We were also given the used CD's and DVD's from the Church Fair, to see if we could sell any to FYE in Meriden. We made \$357! So far, we have made \$643 toward our July trip to the UCC National Youth Event.

Here is our schedule:

Sunday, December 13 – 11:30am to 1:30pm – Baking cookies for the Cookie Walk Sunday, January 10 – 5pm to 7pm – after Christmas party



Tuesday December 8 at 1 PM and Tuesday December 15 at 7 PM the Rev. Craig Cowing will give a presentation on "Images of Christmas, East and West," in which he will display copies he has painted of Orthodox icons and Renaissance paintings with a Christmas theme. He will talk about the significance of Christmas in the Eastern and Western traditions and how that reflects on images of Christmas.

On Thursday, December 10 at 7 PM we will have a **Blue Christmas service**. The purpose of the service is to acknowledge that the holiday season is difficult for many who suffer from depression or who have experienced loss. December is the darkest month of the year, and the coinciding with a joyous holiday season can be difficult. This will be a meditative service of music, prayer and readings.





Rev. Craig Cowing will lead an Advent Bible Study on three Wednesdays, December 2, 9, and 16 at 1 PM in the Fiorilli Room. Each week we will look at the texts from the Revised Common Lectionary for the upcoming Sunday.



Sunday, December 20 at 2:00pm

Join the Music Committee for an afternoon of singing your favorite Christmas carols. We will be visiting several nursing houses and our church family shut-ins and sharing our gifts. All ages welcome. We will meet at the church and car pool and come back to the church afterward for light refreshments.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS



I would like to thank the congregation for an enjoyable and blessing filled Consecration Sunday. I hope everyone enjoyed the inspiring and energetic message from the Rev. Dr. Dale Acevedo as well as the delicious food arranged by Polly Pagnucco. Anyone who was not able to attend should have received an Estimate of Giving card in the mail. If you did not

receive one, please contact anyone from the Stewardship Committee. Please remember to continue to make your offering based on your 2015 estimate through the end of this year. The new pledge year begins January 1, 2016 and that is when you should follow your new Estimate of Giving. If you would like offering envelopes for 2016, please contact Deb Copes at (860) 257-1099 or via email at deb.copes@gmail.com. If you are willing to receive your financial reports from Deb (and save on postage) please forward your email address to Deb.

Remembering from Luke 19:1-10 the joy that Zacchaeus had upon meeting Jesus, we make our offering because we are happy that we have met God, through Jesus, and we want to know Him and be part of His plan.

In Christian Love, Barry Wilcock Stewardship Committee Chair

From the Financial Secretary:

Please contact me, Deb Copes, either by phone (860-257-1099) or email (deb.copes@gmail.com) if you need pledging envelopes for our 2016 pledge year. I can leave them for you down in Chapin Hall or another place in the church convenient for you to pick them up. If you are interested in signing up for Vanco/electronic funds transfer for your pledge, I would be happy to help you do that. I do contribute via Vanco for



everything – pledge, Scrip payment, Missions/Diaconate offerings – and it is very convenient. And I'm all about convenience! If you already use Vanco and need assistance changing your current pledge, I would be happy to assist you with that as well.



SCRIP-SURE: December Shopping

November and December are the two busiest months for scrip sales. Some of that is because many of us buy gift cards to give as Christmas gifts. But an even bigger opportunity is to use

scrip to fund some of your own Christmas shopping. If you'll be shopping at Walmart, or Toys R Us, or Macy's, or J.C. Penney, or L.L. Bean, or Amazon, or Home Depot, or Lowes, or Kohl's, or any of the other hundreds of retailers available through our scrip program, then you can buy scrip for those retailers and use it to pay for your Christmas shopping.

Over the past three years, we earned 60% more in the months of November and December than in the other months of the year. Of course, we'll continue to stock the usual cards in inventory. But if prior years are an indication, you'll be ordering a lot of cards that we don't usually stock. Therefore, to support your extra shopping needs, we'll be placing scrip orders on the following dates:

Place your order by	Pick up your cards on
November 29	December 6
December 13	December 20
January 3	January 10

Note that the usual end-of-December order will be delayed until January 3rd.

Here is a partial list of retailers that have been ordered by RHCC members in past Decembers:

American Eagle	Gap	Omaha Steaks
Athleta	Harry & David	Petco
Auto Zone	Homegoods	PetSmart
Banana Republic	Honey Baked Ham	PF Changs
Bath & Body Works	J Crew	Pier 1 Imports
Bed Bath & Beyond	JC Penney	Red Lobster
Best Buy	LL Bean	REI
Cabelas	Macys	Ruby Tuesday
Crate & Barrel	Marshalls	Ruth's Chris Steakhouse
Dicks Sporting Goods	Michaels	Sears
Disney	Motherhood Maternity	Shutterfly
Dress Barn	Olive Garden	TJ Maxx

Order forms and listings of participating retailers are available at the scrip table in Chapin Hall. You can also get an updated listing of all participating retailers at

rhccucc.org/scriplist

Think SCRIP!



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Worship Communion 1st Sunday 10:00 a.m. with childcare







SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
29 1st Sunday of Advent	30	1	2
			1:00pm Bible Study
		7:00pm Board and	5:15pm Pilates w/Caroline
		Committee Mtgs	7:00pm L & C Adult Choir
		7:00pm Hearing Voices	7:30pm Adult Choir
6 2 nd Sunday of Advent	7	8	9
10:00am Worship			9:00am Breakfast Club
11:20am Children's Choir		1:00pm Advent Study	
11:40am Adult Choir			1:00pm Bible Study
4:00pm Siragu Tamil	7:00pm Women's AA	7:00pm Ad Hoc	5:15pm Pilates w/Caroline
5:00pm Advent Family Night	7:30pm Bell Choir	Governance	7:00pm L & C Adult Choir
Middle & High School Youth		7:00pm Hearing Voices	7:30pm Adult Choir
13 3 rd Sunday of Advent	14	15	16
Poinsettia Deadline	Cookie Baking	Cookie Baking	Cookie Baking
10:00am Worship		Newsletter Deadline	
11:20am Children's Choir	7:00pm Little Scholars	10:30am Retired Clergy	1:00pm Bible Study
11:40am Adult Choir	Preschool		
11:30am High School Youth	7:00pm Women's AA	7:00pm Advent Study	5:15pm Pilates w/Caroline
3:00pm Lessons & Carols Warm-up	7:30pm Bell Choir	7:00pm Hearing Voices	7:30pm Adult Choir
4:00pm Lessons & Carols Concert			
20 4 th Sunday of Advent	21	22	23
10:00am Worship	7:00pm Women's AA		
11:00am Cookie Walk Snow Date	7:30pm Bell Choir		5:15pm Pilates w/Caroline
2:00pm Christmas Caroling		6:00pm Community	7:30pm Adult Choir
4:00pm Siragu Tamil		Meeting	7.30pm Addit Chon
6:00pm Middle School Youth		7:00pm Hearing Voices	
27	28	29	30
10:00am Worship	Newsletter Mailing		
No Church School	7:00pm Women's AA		5:15pm Pilates w/Caroline
4:00pm Siragu Tamil	7:30pm Bell Choir	7:00pm Hearing Voices	7:30pm Adult Choir

VOICE MAIL INSTRUCTIONS – If you call the church and the Voice Mail answers, you do not have to listen to the entire message. Anytime during the message you can have the call transferred directly to the person you are trying to reach by simply keying in the following numbers:

Craig L. Cowing, Pastor	203	Mary DeLibero, Minister of Music	207
Georgette Huie, Minister of Children/Youth	202		
Mitsey Baker, Office Manager	201	RHCCNS (Nursery School)	208





THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4	5
7:30pm Men's AA		8:30am Men's Bible Study 12:00pm Baby Shower 2:00pm Woodwind Rehearsal
10	11	9:00am Lessons & Carols Rehearsal
7:00pm Blue Christmas 7:30pm Men's AA		
17	18	19
Cookie Baking	Cookie Baking	8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am Cookie Walk
7:30pm Men's AA		
24	25 Office Closed	26
5:00pm & 11:00pm Christmas Eve Services	Merry * Chrixtma	
31		
New Year's Eve 7:30pm Men's AA		

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of winter weather on a Sunday morning, our first priority is to ensure the safety of church members. **At any time, if the Town issues a parking ban, we must be closed**. If snow and ice are a real danger, worship is cancelled for the day. Notice will be posted on **Channel 3 WFSB-TV**. The voice mail greeting on the main church phone number will be updated with the cancellation. An email and phone tree will alert church leaders. Cancellations will also be posted on the church website: www.rhccucc.org.

On weekdays, if schools are closed in Rocky Hill, the church office will also be closed.

Global and Local Mission News

Thank you to all who donated to our Thanksgiving drive for Covenant to Care. It was a great success and the kids that our social worker supports are so grateful to everyone in the congregation for showing them love, care and grace during this holiday season.

The last month of the year also brings us one of the most joyous. Jesus Christ is born. And so the Missions Board is joyously bringing the March of the Toys back. No need to choose a name off the tree. Just bring an unwrapped toy to church between November 29th and December 13th. The toys collected will be brought to the Hartford Seminary where they will be distributed to Hartford area families in need. Many social workers in the area 'shop' at the Hartford Seminary for the families they support so don't worry that the Covenant to Care children will be deprived of toys in any way, shape or form. There will be a basket in the sanctuary for toy collections. Toys can also be left in the Missions Office, at the Missions Board in Chapin Hall or speak with Kari McCaw 860-803-4852 kariblaise@hotmail.com. If you will be attending church on December 13th, please bring your toy for the 'March of the Toys'.

Global Prayers for this month - Prayers for Lebanon

Brought to us by Ariel Royer, Global Mission Intern with the Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

Creator God, who knows our fears and trepidations, guide us with your presence as we seek to be companions to our brothers and sisters in Lebanon. Be with the Middle East as it suffers from the birth pains of political turmoil and social struggle. Give the people of Lebanon faith that better days lie ahead, and inspire them to unity in the face of injustice and oppression. Let us pray that soon the day will come when nations will reach out to each other rather than rise up against each other.

The Board for Missions is Kari McCaw - chair, Wendy Ware - secretary, Bob Inderbitzen, Marge Murk, Cindy Hunt, Lisa Eleck



Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools

It is our hope to participate in this excellent educational program. It will be part of our Adventures in the City summer program. This is a very intense curriculum with emphasis on leading. It requires a great deal of dedication and training of staff. I applaud Executive Director Cori Mackey for pursuing this excellent program for children and youth in North Hartford.

Housing:

54 -56 Deerfield Avenue is finally finished! The house will be for sale. I hope this concludes CAC's housing endeavors.

Organizing:

Core, Muse and AJ spent three days in court as part of the legal aid lawsuit against the city. This involves residents who are displaced because of a fire, disaster, or other reasons. The city must give aid to these residents.

Faith based organizing is ongoing. The training of urban ministers continues.

Smoke Detectors:

Once again a huge thank you to the American Red Cross and the Hartford Fire Department and volunteers for installing over 500 detectors in North Hartford.

Winter Coats:

Once again Best Cleaners will be donating much needed coats to needy residents in the upper Albany Avenue district. Also through their generosity I've included Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford. A special thanks to Carmen Coleman, District Manager for Best Cleaners.

Lastly, I am strongly considering stepping down as a delegate and Board member on May 1, 2016. I will have put in 20 years of service to a great non-profit, the Christian Activities Council. If you are interested and willing to devote your time and a lot of energy, please see me at coffee hour or contact me at 860-257-8177.

Prayerfully, Rich Pawlich-Pagliccio Delegate

Report of the RHCC Delegates, Lisa Eleck and Jackie Little, to the

Connecticut Conference UCC 148th Annual Meeting October 23 & 24, 2015

Leadership, community, interdependence, and impact are themes weaving through this Annual Meeting. On Friday, the UCC's new general minister and president, Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, spoke at the Authorized Minister's Luncheon (which Lisa Eleck attended as a Member in Discernment) and at the evening session. He would like to see the UCC working together with interfaith communities, offering extravagant welcome. Also, what would make the church relevant for people ages 40 years and younger?

We welcomed our Korean guests and signed a five-year extension of our Agreement with the Korean Partnership.

Saturday morning's session included opening worship with music from different countries presented by the CT-UCC Conference Choir (which Jackie Little participated in). Our Korean partner participated in the worship service. The Rev. Kent Siladi presented his keynote address emphasizing building leadership. He also encouraged us to celebrate all things, not just the amazing. Servants are leaders. A new "Leadership Studio" at the CT UCC headquarters in Hartford is available to all UCC churches: a meeting space equipped to connect via video conferencing, live streaming, recording and editing audio and video - building leaders. Take a look at the video highlight released just four days after the Annual Meeting at www.ctucc.org. Rev. Siladi presented the background of a new resolution adopted by each of the CT, MA and RI UCC Boards of Directors, in which we would use the 2015-2016 program year as a season of discernment for a future of shared ministry to consider God's call for us to federate or merge. Our Conferences are already sharing interdependent activities, such as "Super Saturday." In striving to align ourselves to what God wants, who should we partner with in order to make an impact?

The delegates participated in focus groups to discuss leadership—how do our churches build and identify leaders? At lunchtime, the CT-UCC Choir presented more international music and testimonies on racial justice.

In the afternoon session Pat and Jerry Blakey from Cornwall, and Allison Rivera from North Madison were awarded the "Living Waters" award. The "Living Waters" award recognizes outstanding Christian ministry done outside the church setting. In the business meeting following, the Board of Directors Report and the 2016 Budget for the CT Conference were passed. The Consolidated Fund, now called the Total Return Fund, and the new Eden Fund were explained. The Eden Fund is a new investment option for congregations concerned about environmental impact. The next annual meeting will be June 10 & 11, 2016. There will be no budget to vote on in June; it was pointed out that there is no requirement to approve the budget by the Conference.

The only resolution to be voted on was presented by Rocky Hill Congregational Church, UCC, and was adopted. It was <u>A Resolution of Implementation for the Right of All Adult</u>

Adoptees to Access Their Original Birth Certificates and True and Accurate Information about Their Origins. Bob Inderbitzen presented the resolution, and Brian Donahue, Lisa Eleck, Karen Caffrey, Jackie Little, and Rev. Craig Cowing spoke to the resolution. Our resolution team also includes Ruth Fitzgerald, Elaine Somes, and Marge Murk, with advice and guidance from Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszcza and Rev. Meghan Young before they left RHCC. The next step is contacting other Conferences and taking the resolution to General Synod in 2017, and keeping the education and awareness of it moving. Brian received many "thank you's" from around the country that evening - word travelled fast!

The General Synod presentation highlighted "be the church - fight for the powerless." Next, the Silver Lake Conference Center presentation included a song by Xavier: "Hug each other, love each other; all we have is one another. We are disciples, mighty disciples. God made us shine like light bulbs."

Next year's Conference moderator will be William Peltz.

Singers from the Norma Pfriem Choir of the United Congregational Church of Bridgeport and the Senior Choir of Salisbury Congregational Church offered anthems in the closing worship service. Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support was the recipient of the special offering. Rev. Jennifer Whipple, Conference preacher, asks in her sermon, "Who, me? Who else?" She says listen and talk often with God, our foundation of leadership. Delegating is partnering and empowering others to lead. And for more impact, also ask "Who else can join me in this?"

HISTORIAN NOTES - NOVEMBER 2015

In last month's newsletter, I left a cliffhanger. In December of 1896, Reverend Mr. Chunn had charges of heresy brought upon him by the members of the church. A special council and session was held and Rev. Chunn was given opportunity to defend himself. Why the charges of heresy? Politics. At the time, most Congregationalists, Protestants and other



Christians were Republicans, pushing the party to support the abolitionist's movement and prohibition. At that time, the Republican party also believed in a large federal government that would help grow the economy. Chunn was a steadfast Democrat who believed in state and local power. Democrats believed that the government was there to protect people and allow them freedom to choose their own path. Many believed that this political system was in direct opposition to Christianity, where all people should be united in their search for morality and salvation, Chunn believed that the path to salvation was an individual journey best traveled alone. Church members did not appreciate his solo act and while not found guilty of heresy, the court of public opinion ruled against Chunn and he resigned in Kari McCaw

Happy December Birthday



- 1 John Hoffman
- 2 Anita Watson Joe Kunzelman
- 3 Jennifer Courtemanche
- 4 John Hummel
- 6 Marty Rowe
- 7 Robert Mullins
- 9 Kendres Lally
- 13 Thelma Somes

- 14 Dave Hall
- 15 Linda Grillo
- 17 Jacob Engel
- 19 Midge Sword
- 20 Nicholas Jokl
- 21 Holly Peterson
- 24 Nancy Edwards
- 26 Janet Kunzelman
- 30 Krista Pender



Rudy and Barbara Burgess were married on December 29, 1956

WORSHIP RECORDINGS AVAILABLE.

Audio recordings and bulletins for many of our Sunday worship services are available on the church website, **rhccucc.org** (see WORSHIP: BULLETINS), or you may contact the office to request an audio CD.

Remember to Honor your Loved Ones With Christmas Poinsettias



They will adorn the sanctuary for worship on Sunday, December 20th
The cost is \$14.00 per plant.
Ordering deadline is Sunday, December 13th

Please fill out the information below and mail to Kim Burghoff (see address below)

Given by:
Daytime Telephone number:
2
Please select:
[] I will pick-up my plant <u>after worship</u> on Sunday, December 20th

Make your checks payable to:

Use my plant to decorate the church through Christmas.

Rocky Hill Congregational Church with "Poinsettia" in memo line and mail to:

Kim Burghoff

204 Gray Fox Lane, Rocky Hill CT 06067.

You may call Kim with questions at 860 563-3287.

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill CT 06067 Telephone # 860 529-4167

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Permit #7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED TIME VALUE MAIL

Mailed November 30, 2015



Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we.

The United Church of Christ:

No matter who you are,

Or where you are on life's journey...

You're welcome here.

ADVENT FAMILY NIGHT Sunday, December 6, 5 PM - 7 PM

Join us for a pot-luck dinner, and crafts as
we prepare for this season of Advent
to wait in anticipation for the birth of Jesus Christ.
Bring a salad, a main dish, or a dessert (a true pot luck!)

This is an intergenerational event for the entire church family and friends.

If you have questions, contact Georgette Huie ghuie@rhccucc.org 860-529-4167 or Kathy Morgan kathym317@gmail.com 860-257-7454

