



The Church Mouse

The Reverend Craig L. Cowing, Pastor
ccowing@rhccucc.org

Georgette L. Huie, Minister of Children and Youth
ghuie@rhccucc.org

Mary DeLibero, Minister of Music
mary@rhccucc.org
860-529-4167 Church

January 2016 Newsletter

RHCC e-mail address – office@rhccucc.org

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

Epiphany Pageant **Sunday, January 10th at 10 AM**

Please join us during worship when the young people present an Epiphany Pageant: a retelling and reenactment of the Christmas story. As witnessed to by the children, the gift of baby Jesus, also known as ‘God with us’, was not for a few people at a specific time in history, but for all the world and for all time. Come, to be reminded of God’s love for you and for all creation.





A number of years ago I went exploring behind one of the churches that my first wife and I were serving in Maine. At the edge of the church's property was a cellar hole, the last remainder of a small house. Cellar holes appear all over northern New England, remnants of a time when the population was much greater than it is now.

At one end of the cellar hole was a fairly large pile of bricks, the last remains of the chimney. Out of curiosity I poked through the bricks, hoping to find a treasure of some sort. I indeed found a treasure, although not one that had any monetary value. I brought home several handmade bricks which helped to date the house to the early 1800's, before uniform commercially made bricks were available. I cleaned the bricks off to get a look at the features, and found that one had a distinct fingerprint in it, just the size of a finger tip. I can imagine that the person who made the brick two centuries ago used a wooden trowel to shape the brick and set it in the sun to dry prior to stacking a load of bricks in a kiln to fire them. You can still see the scrape marks where he drew the trowel across the top of the brick to shape it. It isn't difficult to imagine him testing a few bricks to see if they were dry yet.

Perhaps this sounds overly romanticized, and I suppose it is, but it is well within the realm of possibility. Bricks were handmade at that time, and bear the marks of their creation.

We too bear the marks of our creation, and each of us reflects the experiences we have had that have shaped us. Emotional and physical scars tell a story. No two of us are alike, yet we have so much in common. We are each a creation of our Creator. And every single person is a creation of their Creator. We may not even understand that in the same way, and that's fine.

It's important to remember that as creatures we are not perfect. Individual creations have flaws. My brick has fine cracks in it where the clay may have dried too quickly, yet it still functioned as a brick. We are all unique because of our flaws. Accepting that is the first step in personal growth. Let's make this a year in which we learn that accepting flaws and individuality become stepping stones that lead us to grow as disciples of Jesus.

In Christ

Craig



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

As part of their study on *Who Is Jesus?*, the 2nd-5th grade students viewed clips from a video entitled *The Face: Jesus in Art*. They then toured Pastor Craig's office to view his paintings of ancient and modern Christian icons. During the tour, a few of the children were inspired to share their views about Jesus, God, humanity, and the whole creation. They are quite the theologians! They have been keenly receptive of their lessons, and are not shy about expanding on them. One of their favorite images is of Jesus as the vine (and we as the branches).

On December 6, we held the Advent Event, a wonderful intergenerational gathering of RHCC folks who helped bring in Advent with an amazing pot luck supper (wow!), fun crafts, and joyful Christmas caroling.

Here is our upcoming schedule:

January 3: Epiphany Pageant costume fitting and read-through during Church School

Saturday, January 9: Epiphany Pageant rehearsal: 9:30am to 11am

January 10: EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Topics for January 17 to February 7:

Pre-K to 1st grade: Love Is... (1 Corinthians 13)

Grades 2-5: Acceptance (1 Corinthians 12, Acts 10)

- We are all created in the image of God
- We believe God's love is for all people
- God's love is also for us – we need to accept ourselves
- When we recognize our diverse and unique gifts, we can work together to serve God and others
- It is important not to prejudge people
- We can work to accept others
- We can be sensitive to our own behaviors or language that may show prejudice
- We can learn about and show appreciation for other cultures, countries, and peoples

Grades 6-8: Being Called, How to Treat Others, Having a Healing Faith, Sharing

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

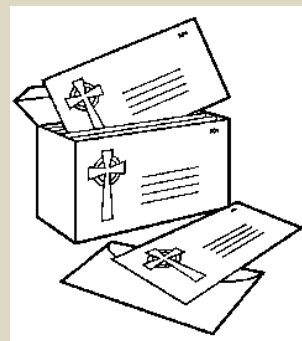
On December 20, we gathered for a Christmas party, complete with good food, fun games, and an exciting gift exchange. Looking forward to January, there will be NO youth group on January 3. We will meet again on January 17 to bake a large casserole for the community feeding program at Center Church in Hartford.

High School Youth Group

On December 13, we met for lunch and baked cookies for the Cookie Walk. We are thankful to all in the church who continue to support our upcoming trip to the UCC National Youth Event in July. On January 10, we will gather for a post-Christmas party, and on January 31 (not the 24th), we will cook and serve the community dinner at Center Church in Hartford.

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.



LESSONS & CAROLS

Recordings are now posted on the church web site:

[http://rhccucc.org/new_design/build.php? choir/Lessons and Carols 2015/index.html](http://rhccucc.org/new_design/build.php?choir/Lessons%20and%20Carols%202015/index.html)

There is also a link on that page to a photo gallery on Facebook.

Thanks to Steve Smith for taking most of the photos

LOOK UP

DEACONS

You may have noticed something different about the outside of the church in recent weeks. From the Silas Deane Highway, one can clearly make out the historic tower of our church, the stark white front of the building standing out against the town center and looming above all the other structures in the area. But something is different. Something new is going on.

Recently, the Diaconate has been discussing ways that our church could reach out into the surrounding community. Ways we could welcome people in, people who may not know what goes on inside our old historic building. Museums, state houses, and other historic places often use colorful banners and signage to catch the eye, usually with slogans or wording describing something happening inside. Area churches throughout the Northeast have long adopted this practice. When we investigated, we found that the UCC had already developed a set of banners, which churches have been using on their buildings. The Deacons, along with Pastor Craig, decided to go ahead and order the banners. We went to Council with our plan, then spoke with Trustees, and got the go-ahead.

We measured twice, looked at the building from all angles, and chose areas most visible to passersby. We then ordered 4 banners to adorn our church. The messaging follows our greater church's language, as well as the Open and Affirming stance our church has made.

We were happy to see the banners fit so well and went up so neatly, careful to hang them in such a way as to keep the wooden clapboard from being damaged. It was a successful endeavor and had the effect we were going for. People have been noticing. Something new is going on. The outside of our church matches what's happening on the inside. Will this new attention translate to curious new visitors, or new members? Time will tell. But the true intent of the banners is to let the surrounding community know that this is a place of welcome. And to get people to stop, if only for a moment, and look up to see that this house of worship they had maybe passed hundreds of times, is different than what they had thought.

On behalf of the Diaconate, we thank all who made this project possible, and for all the help we received along the way.

Michael H. Bower
Senior Deacon

LESSONS & CAROLS

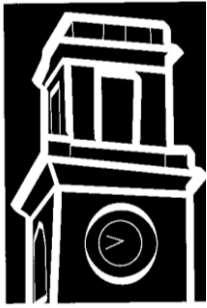
The Music Committee would like to thank all who helped make this year's Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols such a beautiful and successful event. From the many talented (and intergenerational) ringers, singers, readers, instrumentalists, soloists and dancers who were part of the program, to the generous help of Inreach, ushers, sound system techies, riser construction crew—you name it....all is gratefully appreciated. Special thanks to Mary for her excellent leadership and program selection and to Craig for his support. Last but by no means least, many, many thanks to those who came to hear and participate in this wonderful seasonal service.

The Music Committee is working hard to increase our visibility and activity beyond our own church family, by inviting and welcoming others from the greater Rocky Hill community and beyond. This year we "deputized" all of you to help and you did a great job! We had almost 200 in attendance and the sanctuary was packed. Not only that, but because of your offering generosity, we are able to donate \$750 worth of grocery store gift cards to the Rocky Hill Food Pantry for our neighbors in need.

Thanks again for supporting these efforts.
Your Music Committee







WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Worship

Communion 1st Sunday

10:00 a.m. with childcare



CHILD
care
Provided

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
3 Communion Sunday 10:00am Worship 4:00pm Siragu Tamil	4 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	5 6:00pm Kickboxing w/Caroline 6:00pm Community Event 7:00pm Board and Committee Mtgs 7:00pm Hearing Voices	6 6:00pm Pilates w/Caroline 7:30pm Adult Choir
10 10:00am Worship Epiphany Pageant 4:00pm Siragu Tamil ..5:00pm High School Youth	11 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	12 6:00pm Kickboxing w/Caroline 7:00pm Council Meeting 7:00pm Hearing Voices	13 9:00am Breakfast Club at Bob's Café 6:00pm Pilates w/Caroline 7:30pm Adult Choir
17 10:00am Worship 11:00am Second Hour 4:00pm Siragu Tamil 6:00pm Middle School Youth	18 Office Closed 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	19 11:00am Retired Clergy 6:00pm Kickboxing w/Caroline 7:00pm Hearing Voices	20 6:00pm Pilates w/Caroline 7:30pm Adult Choir
24 10:00am Worship 11:30am Second Hour 4:00pm Siragu Tamil	25 Newsletter Mailing 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	26 6:00pm Little Scholars Preschool Fund Raiser 6:00pm Community Event 7:00pm Hearing Voices	27 6:00pm Pilates w/Caroline 7:30pm Adult Choir
31 10:00am Worship 12:00pm Dinner Preparation/Set up & 5:30pm Comfort Food Dinner Snow Date 2:30pm High School Youth 4:00pm Siragu Tamil			

JANUARY

2016

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Office Closed	2 8:30am Men's Christian Fellowship
7 9:30am Little Hands in Harmony 7:30pm Men's AA	8	9 9:30am Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal
14 9:30am Little Hands in Harmony 7:30pm Men's AA	15 Newsletter Deadline	16 8:30am Men's Christian Fellowship
21 9:30am Little Hands in Harmony 7:30pm Men's AA	22	23
28 9:30am Little Hands in Harmony 7:30pm Men's AA	29 3:00pm Setup for Comfort Food Dinner	30 1:00pm Set up for Dinner 5:30pm Comfort Food Dinner

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SECOND HOUR 11:00 am

Sunday January 17

**WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE CHURCH
TO BE VISIBLE IN THE COMMUNITY**

Come explore what it means to be an open and affirming community of faith in the community and our visibility in the community.

Sunday January 24

SACRED CONVERSATION ON RACE

01 Gladys Kitchens
Samantha Dion
02 Amy Dion
03 Fred Nashold
Marc Fritzer
04 Jack Malespini
05 Babs Wheeler
06 Joan-Marie Schaefer
08 Brian Silkowski
09 Debra Peterson
Melody Hall
10 Natalie Tine
Nicolis Alessi
11 Gregory Pickett
12 David Dean
13 Robert Speers
Louis DiRenzo
15 Mark Sheehan
Doris Schreier
16 Martin Sudell, Jr.
Kathryn Eichner
17 Kenneth Rousseau



**Happy birthday
January**

18 Grace Cole
Daphne Donahue
19 Anne King
20 Lois Stevens
Nancy Flynn
21 William Cordes
Matt Fulda
Quincy McNeil
22 Charlotte Bacon
23 Nancy Newton
24 Doris Hick
Joe Tokarski
Candy Smith
25 Sylvia Steucek
John Engel II
26 Spencer Rupaka
27 Judy Graham
Emma Vann
28 Laura Pandolfo
29 Toryn Pulling
30 Jason Montana
31 Laurel Cole



John and Midge Sword
were married on
January 19, 1947

Percy and Nancy Hall
were married on
January 27, 1951

Bay Tran and Thomas Buong
Were married on
January 7, 1971

LITTLE SCHOLARS PRESCHOOL at the Rocky Hill Congregational Church PRIORITY REGISTRATION



The priority period for church members to register their children for Little Scholars Preschool at the Rocky Hill Congregational Church for the 2016-2017 school year is upon us. Church members will be offered priority registration from January 11 to January 24. Informational brochures are available in the Church Office, as well as registration forms.



The Pre-K 3 Program will be held Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9AM – Noon. The Pre-K 4 Program will run 5 days/week, also from 9 AM – Noon. If you have questions or would like a brochure or registration form mailed to you, please contact Gaetana Ferreira at 860-372-4932.

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of winter weather on a Sunday morning, our first priority is to ensure the safety of church members. Some winters the snow and ice are a real danger, and so worship is cancelled for the day. If such a storm happens, please know that a system is in place to make as many of our members and friends aware as possible. If and when worship is canceled, notice will be posted on **Channel 3 WFSB-TV**, and the voice mail greeting on the church phone will be updated with the cancellation if you choose to phone the main number. Additionally, an email and phone tree will alert church leaders to the same information. It takes a real storm to disrupt our worship, but if that happens, we want to be ready. 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

I wake up Christmas morning and I hear my little twin sisters screaming in excitement. I am surprised they didn't wake me up but probably wanted to give me the present of rest. I have been working 20 hours a week at my part time job trying to help my mother out. I have also been trying to pull my grades up now that I am living in a stable environment and able to get to school every day. I hopefully can get a scholarship to community college next year. I'm so happy that we are in an apartment after 4 years of living in shelters and foster homes. My Mom found a job and with an agency's help found this apartment. It's only 2 bedrooms but we all have our own beds. I really missed the twins when I was placed in a group home but I would never tell them that. I hear more screaming and then here they are; screaming, laughing and pulling me into our living room. I still can't believe that we even have a living room.

When I get in the living room, I am shocked to see wrapping paper everywhere and new toys for the girls spread on the floor. There are 2 brand new Barbie dolls. Brand new. The girls have only had used dolls before. They also each have a stuffed animal and princess dress-up sets. I looked at Mom in awe but I was a little worried about how we would pay the rent next month. I pulled Mom into the kitchen alcove and whispered "How did you get the money for the toys?"

"I didn't" Mom whispered back. "Allison brought them last night. Apparently church groups in the area donate toys and money to help children in need. All DCF workers get to 'shop' the donated toys for their kids and that is what she picked out for the twins."

I was shocked. I couldn't believe there were such nice people in the world, to buy us presents and not even know us. I already had a beautiful Christmas outfit to wear that was donated by a church group. It looked brand new. And now the twins had toys. How amazing. I had tears in my eyes when I noticed Mom was holding out a card for me. She said "This is for you, from Allison."

I opened the card and inside was a \$25 Kohl's gift card. "For me?" I was 16 and had never bought one thing for or by myself. I was so excited that I couldn't wait to go shopping as soon as possible.

The next day on my way to go shopping for a new shirt at Kohl's, I passed the Congregational church in the middle of town and saw a banner that said "All are welcome here". I thought about my Christmas day, the joy I felt, the gratitude I had and made up my mind to attend church one of these Sundays and see what it is was all

about. The church looked so nice and stately that I never would have thought to visit but there were colorful banner outside and the welcome words, and I thought that it might be a place for me.

-This is a fictional story but I know for sure that so many families have been blessed and continue to be blessed by the joyful generosity of the members and friends of Rocky Hill Congregational Church, UCC. On behalf of the entire Missions board; **Thank you, thank you, thank you.**

Kari McCaw

DIAPER DRIVE DURING THE EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Sunday, JANUARY 10

10:00AM



We are collecting diapers to be donated to The Diaper Bank who distributes free diapers to poor families, food pantries, soup kitchens, day care centers and shelters throughout CT. In poor and low-income families, a baby can spend a day or longer in one diaper, leading to potential health and abuse risks. The greatest need for diapers is size 5 & 6.

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

WORSHIP RECORDINGS AVAILABLE.

Audio recordings, written sermons 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 or printed sermon.

HISTORIAN NOTES - NOVEMBER 2014



The third pastor of the Stepney Parish, now known as Rocky Hill Congregational Church, UCC was Rev. John Lewis who became pastor January 30, 1781. Rev. Lewis was from Southington and a tutor at Yale College. The house at 79 Elm St, now known as the Dr. Calvin Chapin house was built for Rev. Lewis. When Dr. Chapin succeeded Rev. Lewis, he purchased the house. The house was purchased in 2 transactions. In 1795, Dr. Chapin purchased 2/3 interest from the guardian of the children, who were minors for 333 pounds, 10 shillings. In 1799 he bought the remaining 1/3 to the widow Lewis. Library service in Rocky Hill was voted on in the Chapin House in December of 1794.





For upcoming events, watch in February for the first **Harmonic Healing with Tibetan singing bowls**. This will be a monthly opportunity for meditation while listening to the sounds of antique Tibetan singing bowls. Also, during Lent Craig will do another presentation on Christian themes in art, this time on **Lent and Holy Week in Art, East and West**. There may be other opportunities for study and reflection during Lent.

Stay tuned!

WELCOME OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER

The Personnel Committee and Church Council are pleased to welcome Theresa Eldredge Cleary as our church's new Office Manager. Theresa will begin in January. She lives in Portland, and has most recently worked as the parish administrator at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in South Glastonbury. She has a significant background in church office administration and communications. Theresa is committed to being a warm and welcoming presence to all who have contact with our church.

As many of you are already aware, Office Manager Mitsey Baker will leave the church staff by the end of December. Mitsey joined our staff in April 2013—but had helped "cover" the church office responsibilities on a temporary basis many times before. Mitsey agreed to remain on staff much longer than she had intended. We are all grateful to Mitsey for her excellent and dedicated support of the ministry and mission of our congregation throughout many seasons of transition and change.

Bob Inderbitzen, Chair, Personnel Committee

Personnel Committee Representatives: Holli Bacon, Music Committee; Rev. Craig Cowing, Pastor; Gail Hall, Diaconate; Bob Inderbitzen, Missions; Marge Murk, Acting Moderator; Dave Sageman, Trustees; Kristy Solie-Fuller, Faith Formation

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Hartford, CT 06101

Permit #7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME VALUE MAIL

Mailed December 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.

All Are
Invited
to InReach's

COMFORT FOOD DINNER
Saturday, January 30, 2016

Chapin Hall - **5:30 PM**

Tossed Salad & Rolls

Hot Vegetables

Meat Loaf, Mashed Potato & Gravy

Ham, Macaroni & Cheese

Variety of Desserts

Coffee, Tea, Soda

Entertainment – Sea Tea Improv

\$10.00 – Adults; \$5.00 – 4 to 12 years;

Free – Children under 4 years old

Family cap \$35.00

Please reserve tickets: Jeannie Alessi 860/839-1321

Tickets for sale beginning January 3rd during Coffee Hour

Snow date: January 31, 2016

