



The Church Mouse

The Reverend Craig L. Cowing, Pastor
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January 2018 Newsletter

RHCC e-mail address – office@rhccucc.org

Website: www.rhccucc.org

Office Hours – 9:00 a.m.–2:00 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 7 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.





Every year has significant anniversaries of historical events. I thought it might be interesting to review a few of the anniversaries that come this year.

Anniversaries are an important way to remember historical events and our part in them. Those who were alive during World War II may remember significant events, and it is startling to realize that many of those events happened over seventy years ago.

When I consider the anniversary of any significant event I like to think about whether the world has changed since that time. This year (August 18) marks the five hundredth anniversary of King Charles V of Spain authorizing the Atlantic slave trade from Africa to the New World. The implications of this almost defy the imagination. The Atlantic slave trade brought an estimated 10.5 million slaves to the Americas, with an additional estimate of 1.5 dying during the crossing. What has happened in the intervening five centuries? Much. We still live with racism in our society. Why is that?

Consider some of these other anniversaries as we begin this year:

- January 30 marks the fiftieth Anniversary of the Tet Offensive in 1968. You may remember that this major offensive changed the course of the Vietnam War.
- This year marks the centennial of the Spanish Influenza outbreak. Albert Gitchell, an Army cook at Fort Riley, Kansas, woke up on March 11, 1918, thinking he had a bad cold. He didn't. Instead, his was the first death in what remains the deadliest pandemic in human history, the Spanish flu. By the time the flu ran its course in 1919, it had killed between 50 and 100 million people.
- This year marks the fiftieth anniversaries of the assassinations of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, April 4 and June 5, 1968. Dr. King was one of the leaders of the Civil Rights movement, and Kennedy was poised to win the nomination of the Democratic Party to become President.
- This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, April 19, 1943, in which Jewish residents of the ghetto in Warsaw staged an uprising to revolt against Nazi rule. Many Polish Jews went to concentration camps during this uprising.
- December 24 is the fiftieth anniversary of Apollo 8 becoming the first spacecraft with astronauts to orbit the moon.
- December 10 marks the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the first edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It was a landmark attempt to contain all knowledge in three volumes.

Take time to think about events of the past, and consider what we can do to move the world along toward a more equitable and just place.

In Christ,
Pastor Craig



ST. SIMEON

The Icon of the Month for January is a copy of a Greek Orthodox icon painted in Crete during the 1500's. It depicts St. Simeon holding the baby Jesus. Simeon is mentioned in Luke 2:25-35 when Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised. Simeon believed that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

Sound Healing Meditation with Tibetan Singing Bowls

Thursday, January 18, 7pm

Conducted by Rev. Craig Cowing, in the Weil Chapel

Singing bowls developed in the region of Tibet a long time ago. These instruments have been found to positively affect the body on many levels. The vibrations soothe the nervous system and invite the release of tight muscles, stress, anxiety, PTSD and depression.

The healing vibrations of the singing bowls can uplift the spirit, relax the body and quiet the mind. Come and see what it can do for you, and bring a friend! Free will food offerings support the Rocky Hill Food Pantry. Please bring a yoga mat or blanket.

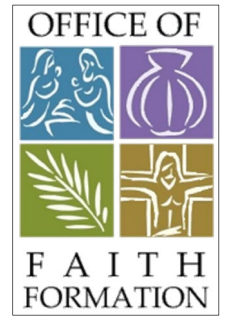


Ordination of Lisa Eleck – Sunday January 28

To all church members and friends: Please save the date for the Ordination of Lisa Eleck. The Committee on Church and Ministry of the Hartford Association has approved Lisa's ordination and it will take place at Rocky Hill Congregational Church on Sunday, January 28, 2018. A formal announcement and invitation will be coming soon.



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



Our annual Advent Event was held on December 3, complete with an abundance of delicious food, fun and beautiful crafts, a Christmas carol-sing, and best of all, folks from ages 2 to 82 helping one another bring in the holiday season.

It never ceases to amaze me how church pot-lucks, more often than not, result in a balance of foods, and this year was no exception: from appetizers to soup to salad to main courses to desserts – there was something for everyone, and we were well-fed.

The crafts brought young and old together, as children worked side-by-side with adults to create each one's own ornament or candle holder. Creating crafts together is not a silent activity: the conversations and interactions are priceless and so valuable for our mutual nurturance and joy. A portrait of me drawn by 3-year-old Keira now hangs outside my office. The punk rocker ornament, complete with a Mohawk hairstyle, created by 5th grader Alex is truly one for the ages (wish I had taken a picture!). Through it all, the younger children saw how older children and adults were creating Christmas cards and candle holders to be given to shut-ins. When Liz Reed-Swale brought out her guitar and led us in carol singing, it seemed so natural and right that our voices would express in this way our praise and joy for the reason for our gathering.

In just two hours, our young ones could see that church is not just about formal worship and church school. Church is also about gathering to enjoy shared food, talents, and time, to affirm that each person belongs, and to honor the One who makes our fellowship possible: God made known through Jesus Christ.

It was two hours well spent. "Thanks to the members of the Board for Faith Formation (Steph Heneghan, Nancy Rolfe, Kathy Morgan, Kristy Solie, Sandy Gau, Sherry Silkowski, and Jen Cordes) for the contributions of their time, talents, food, and children!"

Church School

On January 7, the church school classes will present the Epiphany Pageant during worship. The dress rehearsal will take place on Saturday, January 6 from 10am to 11:30am.

From January 14 to February 4, the pre-K to 5th grade classes will be studying a unit called "Jesus Is Baptized". They will learn that:

- Jesus was baptized as a sign of belonging
- We participate in the same sacrament
- The shell and dove are symbols of baptism
- John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus
- God's presence is with us always.

Grades 6-8 will focus on the following topics: Being Called, How to Treat Others, Forgiveness, Protection.

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

Youth Groups

The High School Youth Group had a Christmas Party on December 17. We had dinner and conversation, planned for upcoming 2018 meetings and the summer Mission Trip, helped move Pageant costumes and props from the attic, assembled and played a Giant Ker-Plunk game, and enjoyed a small gift exchange.



In January, the High School Youth Group will stay warm with a Movie Night at church on January 7, and will try an unfamiliar cuisine at a restaurant on January 21.

The Middle School Youth Group will have a belated Christmas party on January 14, and tentatively, will make dinner on January 28 for Center Church's Community Meals program.

Georgette Huie

YOUTH GROUP Super Sub Fundraiser

Super Bowl Sunday is coming and that means we'll have Our Super Sub Fundraiser. The Youth will be selling Sub Sandwiches after worship on Sunday, February 4th. Save the date!



Diaper Drive – Sunday, January 7

The Diaper Bank distributes free diapers to poor families, food pantries, soup kitchens, day care centers and shelters throughout Connecticut. We'll collect diapers during the Epiphany Pageant on Sunday, January 7. All sizes are needed.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Friends, we would like to take a moment to remind you all that there are three members of the Church Council that serve as representatives "At Large". This means that we do not represent a specific Board, Committee, or project but rather the Congregation as a whole. This role puts us in a unique position as the new Constitution is being discussed and implemented. We can assist by hearing your comments and question, in order to build a greater understanding of the activities. Obviously, specific Boards and Committees would also be a source of information, but one of our goals would be to enhance the communication process.

At this time your "At Large" representatives to the Council are:

Bill Collins, Don Pagnucco, Steve Ware



Governance Update

In mid-November, the Governance Committee released a preliminary draft of a proposed Constitution, embodying many of the organizational concepts that we've been discussing over the past several years. Thanks to those of you who took time to read through the draft and provide comments. Your feedback definitely led to some revisions in several sections, helped us to clarify concepts that were not well defined, and generally improved the entire document.

On December 18th, we released our final version of the proposed Constitution. This Dec 18th release date was important, ***because we plan to vote to adopt this proposal at the Budget and Elections Meeting on March 18***, and we are required to publish Constitutional revisions three months in advance of any vote.

This new Constitution, if adopted, will be effective at the start of the next fiscal year – May 1, 2018. While this is technically a “final” draft, we expect that more changes will be necessary over the first year as we begin to operate under the new format.

In the next several months, we'll be formulating transition plans with the existing Boards and Committees, and we hope to host a second hour program to promote greater understanding.

Meanwhile, since we know the Constitution itself can be rather dry and legalistic, we've also published a set of “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) to try to articulate how the changes may impact us in more conversational language. Hard copies of both documents – the Constitution and the FAQ – can be picked up at the church, or you may request digital copies (in pdf format) by emailing Dave Hall at treasurer@rhccucc.org.

Governance Committee: Deb Copes, Craig Cowing, Ruth Fitzgerald, Dave Hall, Marsha Hoffman

Celebration X event April 6 - 8, 2018, Portland, Maine.

sponsored by the New England Women of UCC

The New England Women's Celebration takes place every 4 years at various locations in New England. The purpose of the Celebrations is to reach women in the pews and to involve them in learning and sharing their faith beyond the local church and Conference setting. It is organized by women from United Church of Christ (UCC) congregations across New England, however women from all denominations and religious traditions are welcome to attend. For more information and to register, visit: <http://www.uccwomenscelebration.org/>



Welcome New Members!

These new members were welcomed by Pastor Craig Cowing (left) and the congregation on November 19, 2017:

(left to right)

Wendy Cowan, Jennifer and Jesse Smith, Frank and Sue Chatfield.

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of winter weather on a Sunday morning, our first priority is to ensure the safety of church members. If worship is canceled, a notice will be posted either Saturday evening or early Sunday morning on the following media outlets:

1. Channel 3 WFSB-TV
2. Our facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/rhccucc>
3. Our website – rhccucc.org

Additionally, an email will alert church leaders of the cancellation.

You should also note that if the town of Rocky Hill has a parking ban due to snow, then worship is automatically cancelled as well. As always, call the church office and leave a message with your phone number for any pastoral concerns, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.



FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

Thank you to all who helped make our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols such a success. Singers, ringers, readers, soloists, instrumentalists, food preparers, servers and more.....we are blessed with so many talented and dedicated members in our church family. Special thanks to Mary for her leadership and hard work. Most of all, a HUGE thank you to all of you who attended and brought friends and family. Thanks to you we were able to donate \$800 in grocery gift cards to the Rocky Hill Food Pantry.

Well done!

Your Music Committee



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HEAT

The heating season has started; this is a reminder to let Theresa know if you are planning a meeting or activity at church. We use the church calendar in the Office to schedule heat. When rooms are not being used, we lower the temperature to the low 60s to save energy and costs. If you have questions about heating, contact Dave Sageman.

GRANTS

Recently we learned about grants from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation which help fund maintenance, repair and restoration projects. They also provide grants for feasibility studies, and they have a comprehensive listing of preservation professionals and services in Connecticut. Their grants are 1:1 matching grants. After meeting with their representative, we have decided to apply for a grant to perform a capital needs assessment. The assessment by preservation professionals would provide us with a list of projects we will need to undertake in the next few years to keep our church in good condition.

SUNDAY OPEN/CLOSE

A small group of volunteers have taken care of opening and closing the church, as well as any setup needed for Sunday services. First, we want to thank the volunteers for their help this past year. And second, we are asking for additional volunteers to help with this effort. If you would like to know more about what is involved or are willing to help with either opening or closing the church, please contact Dave Sageman at dsageman@snet.net or 860-985-5988.



RECYCLE AND HELP OTHERS

Donate your old eye glasses to the Lion's Club to help others.
A collection box is in the church office hallway.



Looking for something you left behind?
Check the Lost & Found Boxes in
Chapin Hall and near the back entrance.



Do you love knitting or do you want to learn? The prayer shawl ministry knits prayer shawls that are given to church members and friends in times of grief or illness. We also donate prayer shawls to local hospitals. No knitting experience required, just ask and we'll teach you. Contact Denise Carberry with questions.



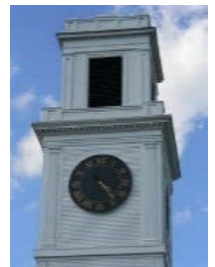
RHCC Newsletter

Submission deadline for the February issue of The Church Mouse will be Monday, January 16. We want to hear from you! Send your articles and photos to: office@rhccucc.org. The mailing date will be Monday, January 30.



HONOR YOUR LOVED ONES
DEDICATE ALTAR FLOWERS OR LIGHT THE TOWER

Dedicating altar flowers or the church tower in memory of a loved one is a nice way to mark a special date or memory. Sign up on the flower calendar or the tower schedule, both in Chapin Hall, during coffee hour after worship. Another way to sign up is to contact the church office via:email office@rhccucc.org or call: 860-529-4167.



Shrove
Tuesday



Mark your calendar!

SHROVE TUESDAY FEB 13
ASH WEDNESDAY FEB 14
PALM SUNDAY MARCH 25
EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 1

*For with
God nothing
shall be
impossible.*

-Luke 1:37



Do you have a favorite hymn that you would like to sing in church? If so, the Board of Deacons will be asking you to name your favorite hymn so we can include it in one of our Sunday services. We will be including in the bulletin and future newsletters a form that you can fill out to let us know what your favorite hymn is. Just drop the form off in the collection plate. Or, if you forget to leave it on Sunday morning, you can call the church office (860-529-4176) or email the office (office@rhccucc.org) with your selection. There will also be collections boxes outside of the office and in the Narthex where you can drop off your form. We do want to match the hymn you choose as your favorite with the appropriate liturgical season, so do not be disappointed if you do not see your hymn listed in the Sunday bulletin right away.



From the Financial Secretary:

It's hard to believe that 2017 is over and we are celebrating a new year, not to mention preparing to file our taxes. Before the end of January, you should receive from me one statement that combines your pledge accounting with a statement to be used when you are preparing your income tax returns.

Here are a few reminders:

- For anyone who pledged during 2017, you will also see any additional contributions that you made to the church as one line item on your year-end pledge accounting statement.
- For anyone who did not pledge during 2017 but has requested a tax statement, you will see all of your contributions listed in one letter.
- If you did not pledge and did not request a tax statement, you will not automatically receive a year-end statement from me. You must request a tax statement from me to receive one.
- Memorial donations are acknowledged and sent separately by our minister. I do not record or include them on what I send to you.
- The mailing that shows you the charitable contribution portion of your Scrip purchases will not change.

Also, our pledge cards this year did not include a place to indicate whether you want pledge envelopes. If you do, please let me know. I can also walk you through how to set up electronic funds transfer via Vanco. If you have any questions about any of this information, please feel free to reach out to me at 860-729-6541 or deb.copes@gmail.com.

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Audit Committee recently conducted a general assessment of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church's (RHCC) current insurance coverage. This particular expense is especially important for two reasons:

1. The necessity of having adequate loss/liability protection, and
2. The fact that insurance is a significant annual church expense (\$15,000-\$16,000 for RHCC-UCC)

Maintaining proper insurance for the church falls under the responsibility of the RHCC Board of Trustees. The Trustees have chosen The Insurance Board to provide the insurance needs of RHCC. The Insurance Board is a non-profit corporation established by the participating Conferences of the United Church of Christ. This in turn provides two major benefits to RHCC.

1. An 'economy of scale' – more than 4,000 churches are covered by The Insurance Board.
2. An expert understanding of the needs and coverages of a UCC church.

An online review of the reputation of The Insurance Board and an interview with the Anderson-Krause Insurance Agency (RHCC's agent), confirmed that The Insurance Board provides insurance from insurers with at least an 'A' rating (very good reputation).

While the Insurance Board does not necessarily provide the cheapest possible insurance premiums, it does provide a high degree of assurance that RHCC assets and missions are appropriately protected at a reasonable cost.

In addition, by obtaining our insurance through The Insurance Board, we are in part fulfilling our covenantal relationship with the United Church of Christ.

-RHCC Audit Committee

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



The Church Directory has been updated and copies will be available in Chapin Hall after worship or in the church office during office hours.

Monday through Thursday: 9am – 2pm, and Friday: 9am – Noon.

01 Gladys Kitchens
Samantha Dion

02 Amy Dion

03 Fred Nashold

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

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

23 Nancy Newton

24 Candy Smith

25 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

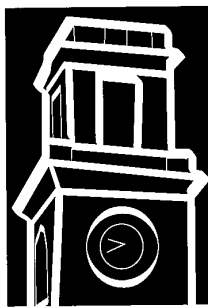
were married on

January 19, 1947

Bay Tran and Thomas Buong

Were married on

January 7, 1971



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Worship

Communion 1st Sunday

10:00 a.m. with childcare



**CHILD
care**
Provided

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	1 Office closed HAPPY NEW YEAR! 7:00pm Women's AA	2 NEWSLETTER MAILING 7:00pm Boards and Committee Mtgs 7:00pm Hearing Voices	3
7 10:00am Worship Epiphany Pageant HS Youth Group	8 7:00pm Women's AA	9 7:00pm Council Meeting 7:00pm Hearing Voices	10 9:00am Breakfast Club at Bob's Coffee Shop 7:30pm Choir
14 10:00am Worship Church School MS Youth Group 5pm Confirmation Class	15 newsletter deadline 7:00pm Bonsai Group 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	16 7:00pm Hearing Voices	17 7:30pm Choir
21 10:00am Worship Church School HS Youth Group	22 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	23 7pm Cedar Hollow 7:00pm Hearing Voices	24 7:30pm Choir
28 10:00am Worship Church School MS Youth Group 5pm Confirmation Class	29 Office closed 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	30 February Newsletter Mailing 7pm Hearing Voices	31 7:30pm Choir

Epiphany Pageant Jan. 7



Thanks to our nifty volunteers who gather once a month (sometimes twice!) to fold, seal and prep the newsletter for mailing. Your support is much appreciated!

JANUARY

2018

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 9:30am Music Together 7:30pm Men's AA	5 6pm Tamil School	6 11am Bob Hansen Memorial Service Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal
11 9:30am Music Together 7:30pm Men's AA	12 6pm Tamil School	13
18 9:30am Music Together 7pm Tibetan Bowls 7pm Events Committee 7:30pm Men's AA	19 6pm Tamil School	20
25 9:30am Music Together 7:30pm Men's AA	26 Setup for Comfort Food Dinner 6pm Tamil School	27 1:00pm Set up for Dinner 5:30pm Comfort Food Dinner

*In
Loving
Memory
of*

Youth Group
Super Sub
fundraiser
February 4
Superbowl
Sunday!



COMFORT FOOD DINNER - Saturday, January 27, 5:30 pm

Then get set to be drawn into the soul and spirit of the delta blues by the acoustic bluesmen of THE COFFEE GRINDERS! They pepper their show with some delta blues history and trivia, too!

Cost is \$10.00 – Adults; \$5.00 – 4 to 12 years; Free – Children under 4 years old; Family cap \$35.00. Please call to reserve tickets with Jeannie Alessi 860/839-1321. Tickets will be on sale during January Coffee Hours. Snow date: January 28, 2018.



ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
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Telephone # 860 529-4167

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Mailed January 2, 2018



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 27,
2018, in Chapin Hall at
5:30 PM.**



Menu: Tossed Salad &
Rolls, Hot Vegetables, Meat
Loaf, Mashed Potato &
Gravy, Ham, Macaroni &
Cheese, a variety of Desserts,
and Coffee, Tea, Soda.

Then get set to be drawn into the soul and spirit of the delta blues by the acoustic blues-men of THE COFFEE GRINDERS! They pepper their show with some delta blues history and trivia, too!

Cost is \$10.00 – Adults; \$5.00 – 4 to 12 years; Free – Children under 4 years old; Family cap \$35.00. Please call to reserve tickets with Jeannie Alessi 860/839-1321. Tickets will be on sale during January Coffee Hours. Snow date: January 28, 2018.