



TIDINGS



Reverend Gale Grayson

January/February 2020

Heartcare

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. NRSV

The success of the multi-media fantasy Frozen (and sequel) bears witness to the time-honored theme that hearts can only be healed by an “act of true love.”

The story captures the heartaches and heartbreaks of our human condition. Two sisters, who are loving playmates, romp through their childhood paradise until an unfortunate mishap occurs. The elder child, not understanding the extent of her creative and destructive powers, causes unintentional harm to her sibling. The girls are then separated by their well-intentioned parents in an effort to protect the younger child. Thus, painfully isolated, the sisters also become increasingly alienated. Tragedy strikes again as the parents are lost at sea and the girls, now orphaned, suffer increased isolation and alienation. Misunderstanding between the girls and their caretakers abound as the girls come of age. Potential suitors oft prove to be opportunists and treacherous false lovers.

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Then the sisters experience a heartwarming turn around. Trustworthy allies are found in unlikely and strange people, like trolls and a simple woodsman. The sisters' deep relationship is found to be worth the risk of being “frozen,” as the youngest puts herself in harm's way to spare her sister. As it turns out, “frozen” does not need to be a permanent condition. It is discovered that an act of love can “thaw” the heart and set it beating again with renewed vigor. After the “thaw” the sisters re-forge the strong bonds that had been torn apart through life's trials and tribulations. They return to their kingdom where the elder sister's powers become guided to lend order and incredible beauty to life.

(cont'd on page 3)



JANUARY

Every year about this time, just when the last of the Christmas decorations have been put away and the days are slowly getting a bit longer, we turn our thoughts to all the commitments it takes to keep our church moving forward on a firm financial footing. We call it **stewardship**, and we ask you to look into your hearts and **put your commitment to our church in the form of a pledge**. It's only in doing so that the hard-working folks who must make our budget and plan our future can feel your presence standing alongside them. Each year your generosity and willingness to step up to this challenge warm our hearts. **Your Board of Christian Membership Resources will be in touch in late January to start the season of stewardship. In the meantime, thank you in advance for working together with us on this critical process.**

FEBRUARY

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday,
February 26, 2020.

JANUARY

- 1- Betsy Barney
- 7- Wayne Lombardo, Michael Sewell
- 9- Allison Ballek
- 14- Nicholas Kinsman
- 18- Brittney Lombardo
- 19- Scott Feulner
- 20- Sharon Fritz
- 23- Codi Boyce
- 26- Brenda Collis

FEBRUARY

- 5- Arlene Sjoblom
- 8- Susan Kinsman
- 9- Justine Cancryn
- 10- Kathy Lisowicz
- 11- Kathy Sewell, Kathy Guidi
- 18- Anita Ballek
- 20- Nadine Lisowicz
- 21- Karan Conover
- 23- David Nelson, Julia Freeman



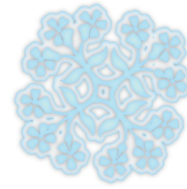
January

- 20- Tony & Codi Boyce

(cont'd from page 1)

Such a fantastic tale does relate to real life. Hearts frozen over by isolation, alienation, betrayal, and tragedy do have hope for new life. The pathway to freedom is through love. Experience the thaw!

Blessings for the New Year,
Pastor Gale



First Church Calls the Rev. Gale Grayson as Settled Pastor

The Rev. Gale E. Grayson was installed as the 24th settled pastor of First Church of Christ Congregational of East Haddam on Nov. 17, 2019.

Rev. Grayson has served First Church for the past year as the designated minister and was recommended for a permanent position by the Church Council. The congregation approved her appointment by acclamation at the congregation's annual meeting on Sept. 22. The appointment was effective immediately.

The congregation also voted to accept Rev. Grayson, and her husband, Terry Grayson, into membership.

"It is clear that Rev. Grayson has many gifts to share with First Church and our community. Through her guidance, we have grown, and will continue to grow to a more fulfilling ministry," said Moderator Alan Ponanski.

Rev. Grayson said, "It is a pleasure to continue in mutual ministry with folks who are actively engaged in faith formation and growth. We continue to seek God's will and to follow in the ways of compassion that are central to the good news that Jesus proclaimed."

Last year, Rev. Grayson guided First Church to declare its status as an "Open and Affirming" church, formalizing a long-practiced open-door policy of welcome.

Rev. Grayson holds a master's degree in divinity from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's of science degree in business.

Rev. Grayson, center, was joined in the service by clergy and staff of the United Church of Christ, from left:



The Rev. George Blair, pastor of the Mohegan Congregational Church, The Rev. Dr. Jan Gregory Charpentier, representative of the Middlesex Association and pastor of First Congregational Church of Westbrook, Rev. Grayson, The Rev. James Silver, chaplain of the Middlesex Association and Charles Kuchenbrod, executive associate conference minister, Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank Saturday!



Saturday November 23rd from 9:00am to Noon members of First Church held a town wide collection to **Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank**. We covered four locations - East Haddam Transfer Station, Two Wrasslin' Cats, Shagbark Lumber & Farm Supplies and First Church and in *just three hours, collected **\$1300.***

East Haddam Emergency Fuel Bank is a non-profit organization that can benefit East Haddam families in times of need. Assistance is awarded via referral through: Youth and Family Services (Toni McCabe 860-873-3296), or Energy Assistance (Brad Parker – East Haddam Senior Center 860-873-5034). First Church is the sponsoring charity for this fund and Dr. Karl P. Stofko, has acted as treasurer and manager of this fund since its inception.

Donations are welcome through the year and can be put in the offering plate or mail a check made payable to East Haddam Emergency Fuel Bank, c/o First Church, PO Box 445, East Haddam, CT 06423-0445

Thank you to all our volunteers that braved the cold and helped to fill the fuel bank.

First Church Board of Christian Outreach

Outreach Christmas Giving Tree

Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, **we delivered 46 Christmas gifts** for children under the care of Middletown's Dept. of Children & Families. This is a message we received from MDCF –

We are so grateful every year for all the fantastic gifts you send for our kids. Your act of kindness is very much appreciated.!

Judy and all the social workers at Middletown DCF!!!

For over 20 years, we have supported this mission and shown the true meaning of giving by making sure these children had gifts to open on Christmas morning.

We thank you for generous support.

The Board of Christian Outreach





The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair

The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair was held Saturday December 7th from 9am-1pm. Thank you for your help! Thank you if you baked cookies, signed up to work the day of the event or set up and cleaned up!

The Elves' Pennywise Room, where kids through age 12 could purchase gifts for their family for 25 cents per item, was very popular! Then they visited our gift wrapping room where our elves wrapped their presents for free!

Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived at 10am. Many photos were taken! Special thanks go to Ted and Shirley Lawrence and Lou Faraci!

As of this writing, almost \$1,200 has been raised. Many items are still out and for Sale. Everything will be put away the 1st week in January. The final count of money raised will be reported in the March/April 2020 Tidings.

All proceeds will benefit The East Haddam Fuel Bank and The East Haddam Food Bank.

The Board of Christian Outreach

Tuesday Quilters

We continue to meet on Tuesday mornings to make items for the Quilt show boutique while we set up for Loving Spoonful,
We sew from 9:30am—noon.

Contact Margaret Charney at 860-537-3323



Loving Spoonful begins it's 7th Year

The Loving Spoonful Snack Bar is a blessing for those being served and for those who serve. This mission came together out of the tragedy of frozen pipes at First Church which brought awareness to the needs in our community for assistance to get through the winter cold. In just about two weeks it went from an idea of how we might help, to serving our first bowl of soup on January 21, 2014.

The Loving Spoonful Snack Bar opens for its 7th year, Tuesdays starting 1/7/2020 from 12 noon – 5:00 pm. This time overlaps the hours for the EH Food Bank and EH Clothing Bank. Volunteers are needed for the morning shift 11:00-2:00 and the afternoon shift, 2:00-5:00. Soup chefs, bakers, donations of beverages and monetary donations to purchase grinders are needed each week. Sign-up sheets will be available in the fellowship or you can contact Patti Lombardo, wjpalombi@yahoo.com or evenings at 860-873-9835.

Thank you for your help and support. Together we are a blessing to our neighbors and friends, offering warm soup, a light snack and fellowship.



The Knitting Ministry has reached a Milestone!

The knitting Ministry is proud to announce that we have hit a milestone. We have knitted and given away more than 2003 shawls! Thank you to all of you who have knitted and all of those of you who have donated to the prayer shawl ministry! There are many ways to contribute to this amazing ministry!

The most important part of the knitting ministry is, how many lives we have touched . These shawls are indeed a little hug from God!

During January or February we will be hosting a pot luck luncheon immediately after worship service.

Come celebrate with us! More information to follow!

Myra Brandt, for the knitting ministry



NEW LOOK, SAME GREAT TASTE

The Butter Braid® brand is all about family. Through our pastries, we celebrate togetherness and support future generations of hungry dream-chasers.

Years ago, we began baking pastries in our kitchen to bring in extra money for our family. What started as a side job grew and grew, from farmers markets to retail stores, from mixing bowls to industrial-sized mixers, from home kitchens to renovated buildings.

What started as love for family and love of baking grew to become the Butter Braid brand.

And after years of selling our pastries in stores around town, a suggestion to offer Butter Braid pastries for a fundraiser inspired us to look at ways we could share the good.

Today, Butter Braid pastries are available exclusively through fundraisers, so with each purchase, you're getting a tasty treat and supporting a loved one.

Braided by hand, each Butter Braid pastry is a symbol of the dedication we have to our family, our love of gathering around the table and our hope that others will reach their goals.

The flavors of our Butter Braid pastries are rich and delicious; don't worry, we'd never change them! But we did change the packaging of our product to better highlight those great flavors. We've chosen a horizontal design concept that prominently displays the main ingredient of each pastry. This new style also allows us to feature more color in our packaging which makes it easier for our customers to find them in the freezer!

Our marketing materials have also undergone a redesign. The new, fresh imagery gives our materials a more modern feel that will better connect to consumers of all ages.

"Share the Good" is the tagline for the new and improved *Butter Braid* brand, and we are in love with it. The word "good" is referring to several different things: the good taste of our products, the good feeling you get when you share our products with people you love, and the good you're doing for your community by buying and selling *Butter Braid* pastries. There's just so much good to go around!

Butter Braid® Pastries are light and flaky, containing mouthwatering fillings like cinnamon, blueberry cream cheese and various fruit flavors. Unlike a dense bread, Butter Braid® Pastries are hand-braided with a sweet dough base containing over 25 layers of light, airy dough and 100% real butter. This gives the one-and-only Butter Braid® pastry its unique and incredible flavor! Thaw, Rise & Bake. Icing packet included. Great for breakfast, dessert or any special occasion. Very profitable AND exclusive to fundraising!

The Joyful Traditions Cake Rolls are made from scratch and are great for the Holidays and special occasions. The Cake Rolls are frozen so you can use them when it's convenient for you. Just thaw the Cake Rolls and they are ready to serve!

This year we are going to add the Cake Rolls. The flavors are Pumpkin, Chocolate Creme, Red Velvet or Strawberry Cheesecake!

We will start our fundraiser on February 16, 2020 and end on March 16, 2020. Pick up date will be on March 28, 2020 at 9:30 AM.

If you have any questions please see Kathy Boyce or call (860)873-1830. Don't forget to see Kathy during coffee hour to try some of these delicious treats! As always, I rely on all of you to take an order sheet home with you and just share with your friends, families and neighbors that you are selling Butter Braid and it will sell itself. Butter Braid has been around for years and the goodness and quality of them will sell themselves. Thank you for your continued support for this fundraiser. All money raised goes toward helping First Church to pay their fuel and electric bill.

Restoration Committee Report

The past year has been one of preparation and planning, and more than a few prayers, at First Church as we embark on repair and restoration of our building. We are facing a multi-year process, undertaking work projects as money becomes available through grants, fundraising and donations. An estimated \$1 million in projects have been identified by our architect, Thomas Gribbin, of Noyes Vogt Architects of Chester.

With assistance from a planning grant from the State Department of Economic and Community Development's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), we were able to have environmental testing completed and the design documents prepared for our parish hall roof replacement project and repair to our Meetinghouse roof. SHPO has recently reopened the Historic Restoration Grant program and we are submitting an application for funding. If successful, we hope to go out to bid later this winter and begin work in the spring.

Another positive development is an invitation by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation to submit a grant application for repair or restoration and repainting of the windows and louvered panels in our steeple. This is a very competitive grant, but we hope we can make the case for funding. If successful, that work would also begin in the spring or early summer.

One disappointment: while First Church was among 33 finalists for the National Fund for Sacred Places grant program, we were not among the 12 houses of worship chosen for funding this year. We hope to reapply for next year.

Meanwhile, we continue to raise money and seek contributions to assist this important work from church members and friends and the community. The SHPO roof replacement grant would be a reimbursement, assuming the project meets national standards for historic preservation projects. That means we have to spend the money up front and complete the project and pass state inspection and review prior to receiving any funds. The Connecticut Trust grant would be paid to us up front, but we need to match those funds on a 1:1 basis. That means if we apply for \$15,000 for the steeple work, we need to also commit \$15,000 to that work. This year fundraising for restoration will be an important priority and we hope to attract help and support from the community.

A restoration committee planning meeting is scheduled for January 19th after service to discuss our proposed bid and work schedule and plan for several community fundraisers to be undertaken this year as part of our capital campaign.



Hope to see you there.

Submitted by Susan Kinsman



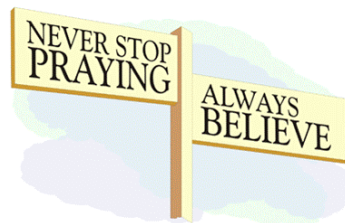
A Winter Coffee House is being planned. The date is not confirmed, but we are leaning toward A Leap Day Concert on the 29th of February.

Please consider taking part! It's a nice break in the cold winter.

If you play an instrument, sing, or want to recite poetry, please contact Margaret Charney.

This is a fun fellowship event!

Stay Tuned!!



The Prayer Chain is one of the Ministries of First Church. If you would like to pray with this group, there is a sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

Please note that Myra Brandt is the new Prayer Chain Coordinator.

Please pray for; Matthew; Margaret's niece, Molly; John's daughter, Lisa; Helmut; Steve.

For more information

please contact Myra Brandt at myrabrandt3@gmail.com or call 860-873-1303.

God is still listening to our prayers



Prayer

*How to do nothing
and still think you're helping*



From The Sanctuary Committee

Do you have a beautiful house plant that you would like to share during worship? Maybe you would like to have cut flowers on the table for a birthday or anniversary. Please see Kathy Sewell or Holly Coleman.

Note; we will be worshipping in the Parish Hall for most Sundays during January, February and March.

The East Haddam Fuel Bank

The next Fifth Sunday for Fuel is March 29th. Look for the pink envelopes.

For more information about the East Haddam Fuel bank, contact Karl Stofko, manager and treasurer.



The East Haddam Clothing Bank

The East Haddam Clothing Bank is located on the lower level of the church. You may enter through the back entrance.

The hours for January-March are 2:30pm -5:30pm every Tuesday of the month.

You may drop off your clean, gently used clothing during these hours. As there isn't any storage space available, they ask that you bring seasonal clothing only.

Note: The East Haddam Clothing Bank is run by the town. We just give it a home. Any questions or concerns about the clothing bank should be directed to the town office.



The Monday Morning Guys

The Monday Morning Guys are a group of gentlemen who love this church and lovingly maintain it. Their numbers are getting smaller and they need some new blood!

Are you retired?

Do you work 2nd or 3rd shift?

Do you have a couple of hours on Monday mornings?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, call one of the gentlemen named below;

Larry Fraser, Don Messmer, Roy Butler,





WOW! It is a new month, new year and new decade!

I hope that 2020 will bring you health, wealth and happiness!

New Year's Resolution suggestion: join us for worship on Sundays at 10am. We would love to see you!

You can contact me at
schleppsister35@gmail.com.

The deadline for the March/April 2020 Tidings is February 15, 2020.

Blessings,

Kathy Sewell

Our email has changed!

Please note that the general church email address has changed

to

contact@firstchurcheh.org

Join Our Online Mailing List

If you would like to receive The Tidings on line, please email me at contact@firstchurcheh.org, Attention Kathy for Tidings in the subject line. I will add or subtract you from the Tidings email list.

Our mailing list is never shared or sold. We may, however, occasionally pass along an offer from affiliated organizations that we think you may be interested in.

Read the Tidings on our Website!

Tidings is available to read on our website and our events calendar is, also, posted. firstchurcheh.org.



First Church of Christ, Congregational
 499 Town St
 PO Box 445
 East Haddam, CT 06423



TIDINGS
 JANUARY/FEBRUARY
 2020

Lectionary Series		Contact us
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	Minister
5- Matt 2:1-12	2- Mic 6:1-4, 6-8	Rev. Gale Grayson
12- Psalm 29	9- Psalm 84	860-837-4606
Matt 3:13-17	Matt 5:13-20	revgalegrayson@gmail.com
19- Psalm 40:1-11	16- Deut 30:15-20	Church Office Phone Number
John 1:29-42	Lev 19:1-2,	860-873-9084 (Leave message)
26- 1 Cor 1:10-18	9-18	Chair of Deacons
Matt 4:12-23	Matt 5:21-37,	Barbara Bernard
	38-48	barbarabernard@sbcglobal.net
	23- Ex 24:12-18	Tidings Editor
	Matt 17:1-9	Kathy Sewell
		schleppsister35@gmail.com
		Church Email address (Best way to contact us)
		contact@firstchurcheh.org
		Church Website
		firstchurcheh.org
		Like us on facebook
		facebook.com/fccceh