



TIDINGS



Reverend Gale Grayson

January/February 2019

A Message From Pastor Gale

Ready, Lights, Action!

“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.
And God saw the light was good...” (Gen 1:3-4a)

Sparks get our attention. Whether it is the flash of a shooting star or the sparkle of holiday fireworks, we are excited and delighted by sudden bursts of light. As curious and creative beings, we are drawn to discovering ways in which we can bring more “twinkle” and “sparkle” into our world. In the church, the we celebrate Epiphany, recalling God’s surprising arrival among us in a way that has changed our perspective *on*

existence. As told in the Gospel of Matthew, magi followed the “twinkle” of a star to locate and honor the Christ child. For this reason, some Christians’ Epiphany observance is called Three Kings’ Day and seasonal gift giving is reserved until this celebration.

One beautiful gift you can give this Epiphany season, and throughout the new year, is to encourage others to use their abilities in new ways. Provide an opportunity which may spark an interest in a creative endeavor. Perhaps the child that enjoys

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Save the Date!

Winter Coffee House
Friday February 15th

The Board of Music and the Arts would like to have a Winter Coffee House, tentatively on February 15th.

Join the fun--If you want to perform, see Margaret. We always have great variety with singers, groups or solo instrumentalists!

It's a nice way to break up the winter!!



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

- 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

Anniversaries

January

- 20- Tony and Codi Boyce

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eating might also enjoy baking for family, or friends, or even for after-worship fellowship time. Perhaps the one who enjoys music might drop in and share that gift with someone who cannot get out and about, or even consider sharing that gift in worship, or during coffee hour. Time together brings “sparkle” into our lives.

Embers aglow draw us to recall the deep emotive connections in our lives. We speak of the embers of desire which drive us to seek out warming and sustaining relationships. We know that unattended embers grow cold and die. The embers require fanning and new fuel to be replenished. A lovely gift you can offer in this new year is to kindle the embers of desire or fan the flames of passion by encouraging someone’s vocational calling. We are all called to fruitful labor which benefits the community. Tell someone how much you appreciate their call to a life of teaching, caring, helping, or administration. Perhaps include a personal thank-you along with the traditional pleasantries.

Star shine and sunlight guide us in our journeys. We meander and wander. Our explorations are not always healthy ones. We need the illumination and elucidation of those who have gone before us and who travel with us, discerning the will of our still-speaking God. You can partner with God in this new year, and for all of eternity, by proclaiming that the redeeming light of Christ has come. It is a light that shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. Your words of comfort and cheer to the downtrodden will shine Christ-light into the shadows. Your deeds of kindness and mercy will send blazing Christ-light into the dark places of unrighteousness and injustice.

Sparkle. Glow. Shine. We are made in the image of God and called according to God’s purposes. Sparkle with the inspiration of the Creator. Glow with the reassurance of the Sustainer. Shine with the life-giving brilliance of the Redeemer. There is light and God has declared it is good.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Gale



Loving Spoonful Snack Bar



The Loving Spoonful Snack Bar opens for its 6th year, Tuesdays starting 1/8/2019 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 Hall or you can contact Patti Lombardo, wjpalombi@yahoo.com or evenings at 860-873-9835.

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

Butter Braid



It is that time of year! We will be selling Butter Braids and Cookie Dough starting February 17, 2019.



We will be selling it until March 17, 2019. With a delivery date of March 30, 2019 at 9:30 am. Just in time for Easter! It takes a lot of help from everyone in order to make this a successful Fun-Raiser.

So please see me in coffee hour and get a free sample and take an order sheet. Tell your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, teachers, and they will sell themselves. The more we sell the higher our profits.

All profits go to help the Church with their rising electric and heat bill. As always, I will have local gift certificates for high sales.

Many thanks in advance for all of your help,
Kathy Boyce

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends:

On November 18th, 2018 The Ecclesiastical society of East Haddam, Connecticut, First Church of Christ, Congregational of East Haddam, Connecticut voted, unanimously, to become an Open and Affirming Church adopting the following covenant.

First Church of Christ, Congregational in East Haddam, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, is created to provide a place for all people to worship God, serve God and humanity, and grow in faith and fellowship. All persons are created in God's image and are loved, valued, and blessed equally by God. This community of faith is an open and affirming congregation who seeks to welcome all persons, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances. All persons are invited to fully share and participate in leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church family

The words of the adopted covenant send a powerful message of love and hope. As we are called by our savior, Jesus Christ to act as His servants in the world and within our church, spreading a message of love, acceptance and reconciliation, we must be a beacon of hope to heal our world.

The United Church of Christ adopted a resolution calling on UCC Congregations to covenant as Open and Affirming. Our Church Council voted, unanimously, to recommend that First Church of Christ, Congregational vote in congregational meeting to covenant as an Open and Affirming Church.

An Open and Affirming Church is a great idea, but more importantly, it is a great idea whose time has come.

The Apostle Paul said that, as Christians, we are many members with different gifts, but we are one body in Christ (Rom. 12:4) and Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mk. 12:31) without being judgmental (Mt. 7:1-2) nor disparaging of others (Lk. 18:9-14).

The Bible affirms and celebrates human expressions of love and partnership, calling us to live out fully that gift of God in responsible, faithful, committed relationships that recognize and respect the image of God in all people. By covenanting as an Open and Affirming Church, we have affirmed the most basic of all human rights-- the right to belong to Christ's church – of all people:

Young and old;

Able and disabled;

Healthy and infirm;

Regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

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We recognize the value of all people – unique individuals -- and open our doors wide to share our common communion as children of God.

We are all indeed created by God, reconciled by Christ and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

No matter who you are, whom you love or what you wonder about, you are welcome here.

Blessings,

Alan

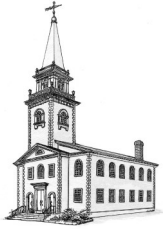
Alan N. Ponanski, Esq.
Moderator



VAL SEAVER TO INTERN AT MARLBOROUGH CHURCH

For several years now we have been blessed by the gentle leadership of our own First Church seminarian, Val Seaver. She has overseen our Christian Ed program, organized Vacation Bible School, preached heartfelt sermons, filled in wherever needed, and even made memorable appearances as chief angel in our Christmas pageant. All this while, Val has been on an important journey toward her Masters in Divinity from the Chicago Theological Seminary, and we have cheered her every step of the way. An important part of Val's journey must be an internship with a church which is not her own. Val has been called to intern with the Marlborough Congregational Church. While we knew this day would come and while we will miss her bright smile and kind presence, we are immensely proud of her. We remain devoted cheerleaders while she takes this step forward, and we send our love with her wherever this journey takes her. She will always have a home with us, and in the meantime, we want the Marlborough Church to know that we are sending our very best.





A Letter from The Board of Trustees

For Support of the Raise the Roof Campaign

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

The Board of Trustees is asking for your help to build the Raise the Roof fund, which will be the foundation of our restoration projects at First Church – starting with replacement of the Parish Hall roof in the spring.

A generous bequest by Robert Drouin and a state grant from the Connecticut Historic Preservation Office, allowed us to commission and complete a comprehensive assessment of our church buildings and operating systems earlier this year.

With that plan in place, we can begin to address our most pressing projects and seek state and other grant assistance to help us with the substantial costs. State grants operate on a reimbursement basis, meaning we need to pay for and complete the work to historic preservation standards, before any payment can be made.

We estimate that \$50,000 is needed before we can put the roof replacement project to bid. Generous memorial gifts and fundraising have started us down the path. Your contributions are needed to help reach that goal.

Please consider a contribution. We will be reaching out to the community as part of a larger capital campaign to help restore our iconic Meeting House. But we need to start first with our own congregation to raise all we can.

The trustees will keep the congregation informed about the progress of fundraising and restoration projects. We welcome your suggestions and your assistance as we begin this critical and necessary work.

Thank you,

The Board of Trustees

Seph Adams, Roy Butler, Carol Faraci, Larry Fraser, Susan Kinsman, Patti Lombardo and Mike Sewell



IT'S STEWARDSHIP TIME!

The Christmas decorations are down and packed away. The last Christmas cookie has vanished from the tin. That awful sweater has gone to the back of the closet for another year. Now we're ready to turn our faces toward the future and what it takes to keep a church like ours moving forward into a better world. We call it stewardship, and it's a time of reminding one another about what it is that has kept this church a force for good in our community for over two hundred years. People just like us, stretching back in time, have come together to pledge to support to a future that we will build together. Over the next few weeks, we will be celebrating stewardship and inviting you to pledge once again to make that future real.

If you google the word "steward," you might see that at one time, stewards were the workers on trains and ships that cared for passengers, making sure they were comfortable, fed, and safely on their journey. We are the stewards of our church future. Thanks for all you do to help us go safely on our journey.

Tuesday Quilters

We continue to meet on Tuesday mornings to make items for the next Fair season and Quilt show boutique. During the winter we multitask by setting up for Loving Spoonful, so come with your project supplies and have some warm soup too!

We sew from 9:30am and between setting up and guests until about noon.

Contact Margaret Charney at 860-537-3323



Outreach Christmas Giving Tree

Once again, thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, **we delivered 44 Christmas gifts for children** under the care of Middletown's Dept. of Children & Families. We have shown the true meaning of giving by making sure these children had gifts to open on Christmas morning.

We thank you for generous support.

Board of Christian Outreach



Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank Saturday!

Saturday November 17th from 9:00am to Noon members of First Church braved the cold winds and held a town wide collection to **Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank**. We covered five locations - East Haddam Transfer Station, Grist Mill Market, Two Wrasslin Cats, Shagbark Lumber & Farm Supplies and First Church and in *just three hours, collected **\$1080.19***.

The East Haddam Emergency Fuel Bank was established in 1977 by the East Haddam Public Health Nursing Board and the East Haddam Council of Churches, neither of which exist today. First Church (First Ecclesiastical Society of East Haddam, Connecticut) volunteered to act as the sponsoring charity for this fund and continues in that capacity. Dr. Karl P. Stofko, former treasurer of First Church and clerk of the Board of Public Health Nursing Board of the Town of East Haddam in 1977, has acted as treasurer and manager of this fund since its inception.



Thank you to all our volunteers.

Board of Christian Outreach

Board of Music and The Arts

Christmas Eve service was again made special with the choir singing, Bob Cumming doing a beautiful solo of 'O Holy Night' and Thomas Smith at the organ! Looking ahead--anyone who plays an instrument and would like to provide the music for a Sunday service, please contact Margaret Charney.



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.

Beginning this month, names will be removed every 2 months or so. If you want someone to stay on the Prayer Chain, you need to notify Barbara monthly.

For more information

please contact Barbara Bernard at barbarabernard@sbcglobal.net or call 860-705-8842.

God is still listening to our prayers for:

Karan, Justine as Emitt has passed away December 29th, Lisa, Scott.



Prayer

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



Report on The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair

The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair was held
Saturday December 8th from 9am-1pm.



Thank you to all who participated in every way!

We would like to thank the following businesses for their donations to our Tea Cup Auction; Moodus Ice Cream Parlor, EMP Apparel & Accessories, Village Pizza, Pizza DaVinci, Town Tavern, Gelston House, Shagbark, 7-eleven, Deep Roots, Swing Bridge Wine & Spirits, Higher Grounds, Two Wrasslin' Cats, Ballek's Garden Center, Moodus Barber Shop, Dutch Oil.

Total collected as of 12/31/2018, and we are still collecting, \$1,636.70 . Compare to last year's total of \$1,674.98.

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



The Board of Christian Outreach



News from the Knitting ministry.

Dear knitters, The knitting ministry is a booming success! That creates a little problem!

We are in need of prayer shawls! So if you knit, want to learn how or know someone who likes to knit, we meet the **third Wednesday of each month at 7 PM** in the room directly behind the sanctuary. We would love to see you there! Come for good conversation ,prayer, knitting and fellowship!

If you are unable to attend meetings but are willing to knit, please contact Myra Brandt for more information and yarn at myrabrandt3@gmail.com.



From The Sanctuary Committee

We will be in the Fellowship Hall for January, February and March. We



would love to have flowers or even house plants to perk up the winter chill.

Let Kathy or Holly know if you would like your name in the bulletin.

If you have questions about the Sanctuary Committee, see Holly Coleman or Kathy Sewell.

The East Haddam Fuel Bank

See page for a report on the Fill The Fuel Bank Saturday.

The next Fifth Sunday for Fuel is March 31st. Look for the pink envelopes.

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



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, Joe Dawson





If you would like to see what is happening you can go to our website to view the calendar and it is posted just outside the Fellowship Hall.

You can contact me at
schleppsister35@gmail.com.

**The deadline for the March/April 2019
Tidings is February 15, 2019.**

This is a good advertising tool for any
events coming up!

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 organiza-
tions 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



TIDINGS
 JANUARY/FEBRUARY
 2019



Lectionary Series		Contact us
<p>January</p> <p>6 - Ps 72:10-14 Matt 2:1-12</p> <p>13-1 Cor 12:1-11 John 2:1-11</p> <p>20-Gen 1:1-5 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22</p> <p>27-1 Cor 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21</p>	<p>February</p> <p>3-Micah 6:1-4, 6-8 Luke 6:17-26</p> <p>10-Ps 138 Luke 5:1-11</p> <p>17-Ps 71:1-6 Luke 4:21-30</p> <p>24-Micah 5:38-48 Luke 6:27-38</p>	<p>Minister Rev. Gale Grayson 860-837-4606 revgalegrayson@gmail.com</p> <p>Church Office Phone Number 860-873-9084 (Leave message)</p> <p>Chair of Deacons Lydia Sherman lydgeosherm@aol.com</p> <p>Tidings Editor Kathy Sewell schleppsister35@gmail.com</p> <p>Church Email address (Best way to contact us) contact@firstchurcheh.org</p> <p>Church Website firstchurcheh.org</p> <p>Like us on facebook facebook.com/fccceh</p>