



# TIDINGS



Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager

November/December 2017

## A LETTER FROM LAURA



*Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are heading home again. Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-over and over announcing your place in the family of things.*

*--Mary Oliver, Wild Geese*

At dusk last evening, I followed the sky arc of six wild geese as they made their noisy, determined flight over our heads to some warmer lands. Finally, the season has turned chilly and the wild geese know it is time for a change of landscape.

Watching geese fly is an inspiring lesson in cooperation, community and shared leadership. Their formation shifts often so that when a lead goose tires, another one takes charge for awhile letting others rest in the energy from an updraft. Likewise, when a bird is ill or too

fatigued to fly, two geese will escort it side by side to safer ground. Thirdly, the honking we hear in the skies isn't the din of grouchy grumblers but sounds of encouragement for those taking their leadership turn in front.

We are called to this model of servant leadership as God's people of faith. Just like the wild community of geese, we need one another to take turns at the helm, lift one another's spirits when the journey feels too long and open our wings of ministry to those who seek to be included from the edges of life.

Being Church in this changing, chaotic time, is a noisy, often messy and star-filled journey of faithful accompaniment. We hope you will let your voice be lifted and heard so that we might keep learning, growing and ministering together. See our upcoming events for the Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas season within these spirited pages.

With a grateful heart,

Laura

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Letter from Laura.....	1&3
Blessing, Fall Back, Birthdays.....	2
Nov Dates, Volunteers needed for a new Committee.....	3
Invitation to Assessment Luncheon....	4.
Fill The Fuel Bank, Giving Tree.....	5
Attention Singers, Directory, Historian, Quilting.....	.6
Plowing Needed, Dec Dates.....	7
Christmas Tea & Craft Night.....	8
Quilt Show, Youth Group, Buckets.....	9
Prayer Chain, Poinsettia Form.....	10
Sanctuary, Fuel Bank, Clothing Bank.	
Monday Morning Guys.....	11
Young At Heart.....	12
Calendars (hard copy only)....	13&14
From the Editor, online Mailing List email.....	inside page
Contact us, Lectionary..	outside page

(cont'd on pg 3)

## How We Can Help



### A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark

by Jan Richardson

Go slow

if you can.

Slower.

More slowly still.

Friendly dark

or fearsome,

this is no place

to break your neck

by rushing,

by running,

by crashing into

what you cannot see.

Then again, it is true:

different darks

have different tasks,

and if you

have arrived here unawares,

if you have come in peril

or in pain,

this might be no place

you should dawdle.

I do not know

what these shadows

ask of you,

what they might hold

that means you good or ill.

It is not for me to reckon

whether you should linger

or you should leave.

But this is what

I can ask for you

That in the darkness

there be a blessing.

That in the shadows

there be a welcome.

That in the night

you be encompassed

by the Love that knows

your name.

from Jan Richardson's

blog, [The Advent Door](#)

Turn clocks back November 5th  
2am



## November

6 Margaret Charney  
Christopher Gerth

16 Chuck Boyce

24 Joshua Hughes

## December

4 Holly Coleman

8 Karl Stofko

21 Emitt Cancryn

28 Kenny Conover  
Diane Osalza



(con'd from pg 1)

**\*\*** In ancient Celtic lore, the wild goose, like the dove, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, the Spirit hovers like a mother hen tending her chicks, and at other moments, the wild goose evokes passion, surprises and the untamed creativity of God's prophetic movement. Where is the Spirit leading in your life today?



### November Dates to Remember!

**Sunday, November 5th following worship**, outside cleaning of the yard and gardens of First Church wear your work clothes to church and bring your brush-cutters, weed-whackers, rakes and shovels

**Sunday, November 5th** "Knowing Our Immigrant Neighbors" training offered by First Church and St. Stephens from 1:30-3:00 pm at St. Stephen's Church in East Haddam. Learn how to accompany folks who are non-citizens as they manage immigration challenges. Workbook included. Facilitator, Chris Von Scoy to offer the training.

**Sunday, November 19th**, The Valley Shore annual Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service will be held on Sunday, November 19th, at 4 p.m. at the Deep River Congregational Church. This is the time every year when members of the faith communities of the Valley-Shore area gather together as one to give thanks to God for the good gifts of life. A combined choir will offer special music along with the great Thanksgiving hymns sung by the congregation. Members of the area clergy group will share in leading the service. A special offering will be taken to benefit the Shoreline Soup Kitchens.

**Wednesday, November 15th**

Faith, Food and Family 6:00-7:30

Join us!

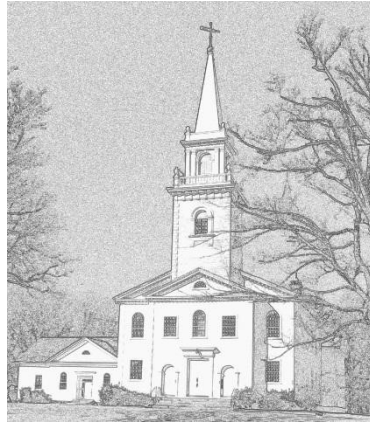
### Volunteers Needed for New Committee To Explore An Inclusive First Church.

*At First Church, we continually seek to strengthen unconditional love and acceptance for each other. The Church Council voted at its October meeting to create a new committee to explore making First Church formally a welcoming and inclusive congregation. First Church has a history of welcoming visitors and new members, regardless of sex, color, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and prior faith practices. Rev. Laura makes this welcome public each week to in her message to the congregation. But other churches have taken the formal step of becoming an "open and affirming." Should First Church decide to do the same, it would tell the world what we already practice in our hearts. The Council voted unanimously to create this new committee after listening to a presentation by members of the North Madison Congregational Church and the path it followed to becoming open and affirming to all people -- regardless of age, race, sex, color, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or previous religious affiliation -- in short, to love all their neighbors as themselves. If you would like to serve on this new committee, please contact any member of the Church Council listed in our worship bulletin.*

Thank you!



**Join us for a**



## **Luncheon of Thanksgiving & Assessment Presentation**

**Sunday, November 19, 2017**

**Time: 11:30 – 1:30**

**In fellowship hall following worship**

Celebrate the blessing of First Church and our historical Meetinghouse. Give thanks for our many ancestors that preserved and maintain this gift over the past 300 years. Learn the findings from the assessment performed by Noyes Vogt Architects. Tom Gribbin will present through photographs recommendations for stabilization, preservation, restoration and code compliance. He has prioritized the recommendations, providing a guide that we can use to develop a long-term plan to insure this gift gets passed on for many generations to come.





## Help Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank!

Many of us are doing our winter preparation, getting our homes ready for the cold winds, snow and ice, keeping Old Man Winter out and keeping it warm and cozy inside. But despite these efforts, some of our neighbors may come up short with the finances to heat their home.

East Haddam Emergency Fuel Bank is a non-profit organization that can benefit these 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)

Funding for the Fuel Bank comes from tax-deductible financial donations from area churches, community organizations and individuals just like you. And your help is needed now to ensure that the funds are available when assistance is needed.

Saturday November 18<sup>th</sup> volunteers are needed from 9:00 am to Noon at the following locations: East Haddam Transfer Station, Grist Mill Market, Two Wrasslin Cats and Shagbark Lumber & Farm Supplies and at our church. The youth group will continue efforts to fill the bank from 12:30-2:30pm in front of First Church.

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.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO COVER FIVE THE LOCATIONS** – Please sign up in fellowship hall or contact Patti Lombardo [wjpalombi@yahoo.com](mailto:wjpalombi@yahoo.com) Sign up for the full shift 9am-noon –or- ½ of a shift.

## Outreach Christmas Giving Tree

First Church has shown the true meaning of giving by purchasing Christmas gifts for a list of children that the Dept. of Children & Families, Middletown CT provides us each year. We rely on the donations from members and friends to full the list each year. And every year we complete the request (and then some), so area children experience the joy of opening a gift on Christmas morning.

We plan to have the Giving Tree up just prior to Thanksgiving so you can select gift tags and fill specific request or donations of Wal-Mart, Target and Toys R Us gift cards (\$25 to \$50) or cash donations (please note: Outreach Giving Tree) are always helpful. Start your Christmas shopping early and help us to full the gift list quickly.

We thank you for generous support.

Outreach Committee



## ATTENTION SINGERS

Adults and teens who like to sing--There will be rehearsals for Thanksgiving Sunday (Nov 19th) on Sunday after church on Nov 5th and Nov 12th. The rehearsals to prepare for Christmas Eve will be in December--dates to be announced.

Thanks, Marg



### Family Directory Updates

Margaret Charney's phone # is 860- 537-3323

Helmut & Rose Dijer live in East Hampton 06424

Joan & Don Osalza no longer have a landline. Their phone numbers are; Don- 860-949-5058 and Joan- 860-334-7785

If you notice any incorrect addresses, phone numbers or email addresses contact Kathy Sewell.

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### 2016 Historian's Report

The 2016 Historian's Report has been published in limited quantity. See Karl Stofko, church historian, to arrange for a copy.

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### Quilting on Tuesdays

Quilting will continue on Tuesday mornings from 9-noon.

We meet downstairs in the multi-purpose room.

**Contact Margaret Charney for more information.**







### We Need Your Help!

The Board of Trustees is seeking bids from members of the congregation or area contractors for **snowplowing and sidewalk shoveling services** at First Church this winter. We are very grateful to Jeff Carlson for providing snowplowing

services at family rates to First Church for several years. Unfortunately for us, Jeff is no longer available. With winter soon upon us, we need to hire a dependable and affordable contractor to plow our driveways and parking areas and to clear the sidewalks and steps in front of and back of the church. The contractor will coordinate with Trustees to make sure the building is open to those who use it on a weekly basis, as well as for Sunday service.

**If you are interested, or know of someone who may be interested in bidding for this work, please contact Patti Lombardo, Larry Fraser or another member of the board.**

Thank you!

Submitted by Susan Kinsman on behalf of the Board of Trustees



### December Dates to Remember

#### Star-filled Light: Prayer Mornings in Advent

10:00-11:00 am

Wednesdays December 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>



**December 17th God's Garden Annual Christmas Pageant.** See Val Seaver for details.

#### December 20<sup>th</sup> Advent Labyrinth Walk– In Fellowship Hall

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.*

—Psalm 25.4

Drop in at any point on this afternoon or evening to enter into the silence and experience walking the labyrinth. Open from 4-8 pm.

#### December 20<sup>th</sup> Blue Christmas Service

6:30-7:30 pm

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:5*

Christmas can be a time of growing darkness and sadness for many who remember those they have loved and lost. Join us as we take time to gather in community and care with those who carry heavy burdens in this holy and hard season.

#### Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 10am Worship Service

#### Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm

Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Guest organist, Thomas Smith



**Save the Date!!**  
**The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair**  
**Dec. 2, 2017**



**The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair will be held Saturday December 2nd from 9am-1pm. We need your help!**

We need you to **bake cookies** and **sign up to work the day of the event** as well as **set up** and **clean up!**

**We will have a pennywise room where kids through age 12 can purchase gifts for their family for 25 cents per item. Then they can visit our gift wrapping room where our elves will wrap their presents for free!**

There will be a **White Reindeer Table** and a **Teacup Auction, Photos with Santa** and **Cookie Decorating**. **Cookies by the Pound** will be offered and **free cookies, coffee, tea and hot chocolate** will be served.

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

**Look for the sign up sheets in the Fellowship Hall.**  
**See Patti Lombardo or Kathy Sewell for more information**

## **Christmas Tea Craft Night**

**Thursday, November 9, 2017, 6:30pm**

**Please join us to assemble our Candy Mugs, Popcorn Snowmen, and Candy Sleighs.**

**Sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.**

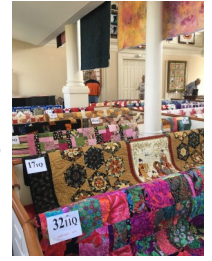




## Quilt Show Report



We are pleased to announce that the 22nd Annual Quilt & Needle Arts Show was very successful! The Columbus Day weekend show went smoothly and was well attended by quilters and those who appreciate the artistry and talent on display. It is a successful event because of everyone's help.



Thanks to the exhibitors, the bakers and soup makers, the white glove ladies and Monday Morning Guys, our sleep over girls and cleaning angels, Kitchen workers and raffle quilt maker. The list is endless-it takes a whole congregation to put on a quilt show and we are so grateful! The raffle quilt was won by Sherry Ringuette of Colchester.

After all expenses were deducted, the net proceeds of this year's show is \$6,400.00.

**GOOD JOB!**

## Youth Group



Our Middle and High School youth will be assisting with Fill the Fuel Bank on Saturday November 18th from 12:30pm-2:30pm in our church parking lot.

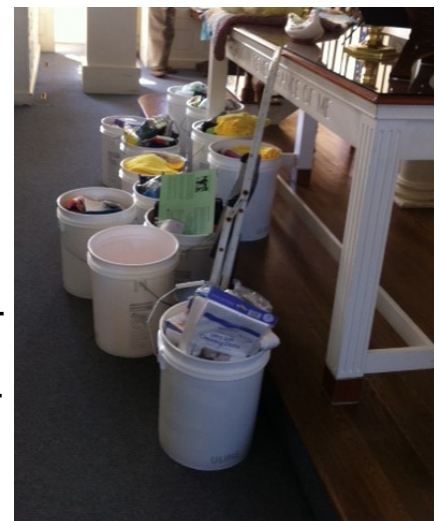
On December 10th The Youth Group will be cooking and serving at Harvest House from 4pm-6pm. Please bring a box of brownies to bake. If there are any questions, please see Darcy Allen.

Pictured above is our Youth Group doing yard work and planting bulbs for our neighbor and dear friend Peggy Carlson.

## Blessing of the Buckets

Thirty buckets with lids were donated to First Church for the Outreach project to fill and deliver CWS Emergency Cleanup Buckets. Ten filled buckets were delivered to Center Congregational Church in Meriden. They were to deliver them to Texas and Florida. Three more are filled and ready to go when needed. Thank you to all who donated cleaning supplies/filled a bucket. This is an ongoing project. To get a list and find how to donate, see Patti Lombardo.

*Thank You*



*We Believe In The Power Of Prayer*



### Prayers, Joys and Concerns

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.

### For more information

please contact Barbara Bernard at [barbara-bernard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:barbara-bernard@sbcglobal.net) or call 860-705-8842.

### God is still listening to our prayers for:

Bill, Eddie, a mother who died. Those having surgery, our neighbors in Puerto Rico and Northern California. Those in recovery, and teachers everywhere.



### Christmas Eve Memorial Poinsettias



6 1/2" pots \$12.50 per plant

\_\_\_Red

\_\_\_White

\_\_\_Pink

Name .....Phone #.....

Address.....

(Please circle one) In memory/honor/celebration of.....

.....

.....

\_\_\_I will pick up my plant(s) on Christmas Eve, following Service.

\_\_\_Please deliver my plant(s) to a shut in.

Make checks out to First Church and write poinsettias on memo line.

Final order date is December 10, 2017

## From the Sanctuary Committee



It's time to order your Memorial Poinsettias!

They will be in church on Christmas Eve and you can take them home or deliver to a shut-in. Fill out the form on page 10. Put in the collection plate or mail to the church.

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

## The East Haddam Fuel Bank

Winter is coming!!

Sat November 18, 2017 is Fill The Fuel Bank Day. People will be stationed around town to collect donations for the East Haddam Fuel Bank.

The next 5th Sunday for Fuel is December 31, 2017. Look for the pink envelopes in the bulletins.



## 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 are ,the 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoons from 2:30 –5:30pm. 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.



## 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?

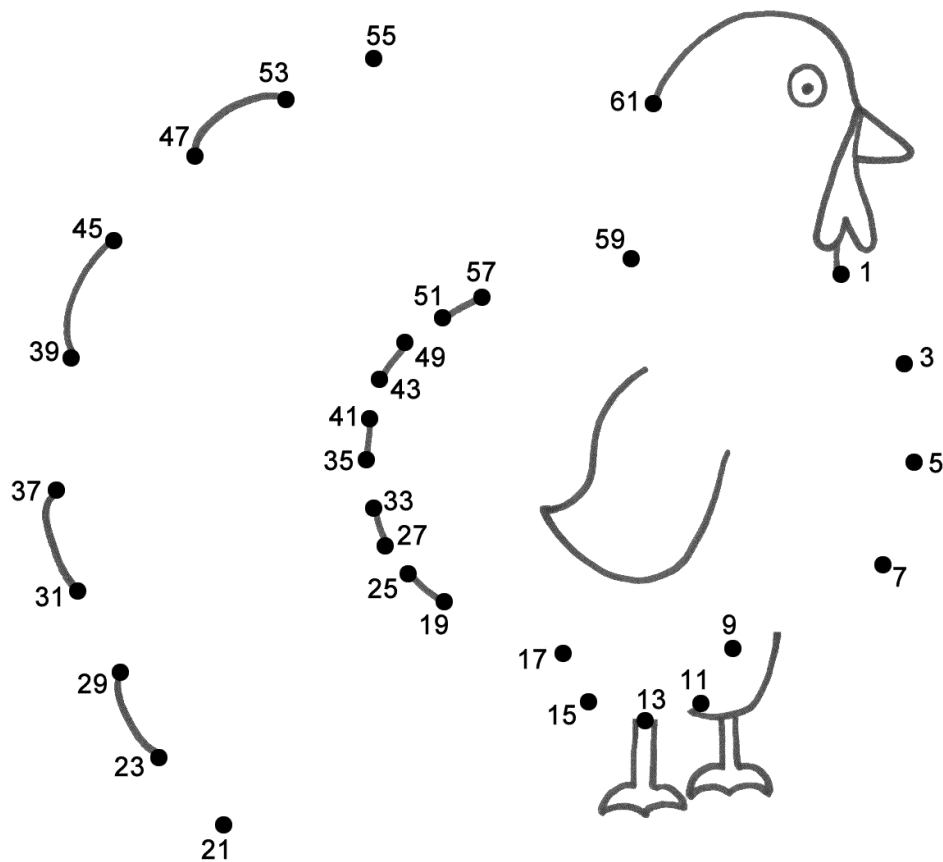
Do you work 2nd or 3rd shift?

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 Osalza, Don Messmer, Roy Butler, Joe Dawson







We will be printing and mailing fewer copies of the Tidings in 2017.

We will continue to email the Tidings and post on our website.

You can contact me at  
schleppsister35@gmail.com.

**The deadline for the January/February 2018 Tidings is December 15th.**

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

Blessings, Kathy Sewell

## **Join Our Online Mailing List**

If you would like to receive The Tidings on line, please email me at [contact@firstchurcheh.org](mailto: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, [firstchurcheh.org](http://firstchurcheh.org).



## **Our email has changed!**

Please note that the general church email address has changed from  
[firstchurcheh@juno.com](mailto:firstchurcheh@juno.com)  
to  
[contact@firstchurcheh.org](mailto:contact@firstchurcheh.org)



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

TIDINGS  
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER  
2017



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### Lectionary Series

November	December
<b>5-</b> Josh 3:7-17 Matt 23:1-12	<b>3</b> - Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 1 Cor 1:3-9
<b>12-</b> Ps 78:1-7 Matt 25:1-13	<b>10-</b> Isa 40:1-11 Mk 1:1-8
<b>19-</b> Judg 4:1-7 Matt 25:14-30	<b>17-</b> Ps 126 or Luke 1:47-55 Jn 1:6-8, 1928
<b>26-</b> Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24, Ps 100 Matt 25:31-46	<b>24-</b> Ps 89:1-4, 19-26 Luke 1:26-38 <b>31-</b> Ps 148 Luke 2:22-40

### Contact us

#### Church Office Phone Number

860-873-9084

#### Our Pastor

Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager at  
lfitz\_nager@comcast.net

#### Tidings Editor

Kathy Sewell at  
schleppsister35@gmail.com

#### Church Email address

contact@firstchurcheh.org

#### Church Website

firstchurcheh.org

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