



TIDINGS



Reverend Gale Grayson

November/December 2019

All the Best in a Small Package

Harvest season is upon us. It is that time of year that a few of us gaze skyward and recall the strains of that oldie but goodie: *Shine on, shine on, harvest moon, up in the sky...* It is also that time of year that we appreciate the complete transformation of tiny little seeds into fruits, grains, and late season vegetables. All of the potential goodness that was stored up in such small packages now comes to our tables and nourishes us. This year we will offer Thanksgiving praise on November 17th. Come and share some of the favorite hymns of gathering and gratitude.

Soon thereafter, the season of Advent, or coming, awakens a new day and marks a new church year. This year Advent begins on December 1st. We prepare to receive the gift of *Emmanuel*, "God with us." In each of the four Sundays of Advent we light candles symbolic of our deepest spiritual longings: hope, peace, joy, and love. We recall that our vision for deliverance, healing, and salvation is intertwined with the birth of God's anointed one, Jesus. It is in a baby, the smallest of human packages, that all of the God's best intentions for humanity become real and shine into our lives.

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Let us be filled with the Advent candle light such that we, in turn, might bear God's light to others.

Hope is born of the anticipation that God will arrive in our midst. In contrast to the rush, hustle, and bustle of the commercial environment, we wait patiently and expectantly for the one who will make God's good intention towards us tangible, incarnate. We recall that our God promises a future that can be imagined as a "peaceable kingdom," one where the lion lays down with the lamb.

Peace is born through prayer. We faithful lean into the future with humility and penitence. We yearn for and petition God to hasten the coming realm.

Joy is born in worship as we experience the Anointed One in human, fleshly vulnerability, in Spirit-filled power, and in the everlasting glory. We raise our voices and offer our lives as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

(cont'd on page 3)



November

11/3- 11:30am Bible Study-week 3 Topic: Identity, Who is Jesus? Who are his followers?

11/10- 11:30am Bible Study-week 4 Topic: Purpose, What is God's Dream For the World?

11/17- 11:30am Bible Study-week 5 Topic: Destiny, Where Do We Go From Here?

11/17- The Installation of Rev. Gale Grayson. Invitation on page 3.

11/23- Fill The Fuel Bank Saturday, page 4

11/24-12/15- The giving Tree, page 4

11/21 - Christmas Tea Craft Night page 6

December

12/1-12/15- order your Memorial Poinsettias, page 7.

Advent & Christmas Schedule

1- Service of HOPE @ 10am

7- Christmas Tea @ 9am-1pm, pg 6.

8- Service of PEACE @ 10am

15- Service of JOY & Confirmation @ 10am

22- Service of LOVE & Pageant @ 10am

24-Tuesday, 3pm, Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols. **Please note change in time.**

29- Comfy Caroling @ 10am



November

6- Margaret Charney, Chris Gerth

16- Chuck Boyce

18- Gary Bernard

24- Joshua Hughes

December

4- Holly Coleman

8- Karl Stofko

10- Carol Faraci

28- Kenny Conover, Diane McKenna



(cont'd from page 1)

Love is born in community. We gather to hear the story and to be witnesses to signs of Christmas yet alive in the world today. Let us journey together to the manger and affirm that, what seems impossible to us, is yet possible through God. All the best has come to us in the smallest of packages. Jesus is born! Halleluiah! Amen!

Harvest and Christmas blessings,
Pastor Gale



***You are Cordially Invited
to the Installation of Rev. Gale Grayson as Settled Pastor
November 17, 2019 at 3pm
in the sanctuary of First Church of Christ, Congregational in East Haddam
Reception will follow in Parish Hall***

First Church of Christ Congregational of East Haddam is pleased to announce that the Rev. Gale Grayson has been called as the 24th settled minister in the church's 315-year history. It was founded in 1704.

She will be formally installed at First Church by the Middlesex Association of the United Church of Christ on Nov. 17, 2019, at 3 p.m. Members of the public are cordially invited to attend the installation service in the First Church Meetinghouse and the reception immediately following in the Parish Hall.

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 is 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.

Open and Affirming (ONA) is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in this denomination that make a public covenant to welcome and affirm those in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community, providing a worship and ministry environment that is respectful of who they are. This emphasizes the UCC's broad invitation to all persons into their full life and ministry, respecting and honoring every person, their story, their gifts, and their needs.

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.

Your Help Is Needed For Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank Saturday!



Saturday November 23rd from 9:00am to Noon members of First Church will hold a town wide collection to **Fill the East Haddam Fuel Bank**. Please find time in your busy schedule to support our efforts **and sign up to help cover one of the locations. Volunteers are need at East Haddam Transfer Station, Two Wrasslin' Cats and Shagbark Lumber & Farm Supplies.**

We're also hoping to have a group collecting in front of our church with a firepit going and serving hot chocolate & coffee. This would be a visible sign of the need to provide fuel for heating to our neighbors.

Please sign up in fellowship hall or contact Patti Lombardo
wjpalombi@yahoo.com.

Sign up as a team, family or we'll pair you up.

During this season of Thanksgiving, please give the gift of your time to ensure funds are available when assistance is needed by friends and neighbors.

Outreach Christmas Giving Tree

First Church has shown the true meaning of giving by purchasing Christmas gifts for children that are in the care of the Dept. of Children & Families, Middletown CT. We rely on the donations from members and friends to full the gift requests 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. **The Giving Tree will be up by Sunday, 11/24/19 for you to select gift tags.** Please sign them out by number on the sheet provided near the tree. **All gifts must be returned unwrapped by Sunday, 12/15/19.**

Gift cards are always part of the gift requests for the older children and can be used to purchase gifts for tags that might remain on the tree. **If you'd like to start your shopping early, Target, Walmart, Marshalls, CVS and Walgreen gift cards are always needed.** They can be put into the collection plate noted giving tree or given to a member of Outreach.

We thank you for generous support.

The Board of Christian Outreach



CHOIR FOR THE HOLIDAYS

We are rehearsing Sundays after church on **Oct 27th, Nov 3rd and Nov 10th** in preparation for **Thanksgiving Sunday on Nov. 17th**. Rehearsals for **Christmas Eve** will be on **Sundays in Dec--the 8th, 15th & 22nd**.

Christmas Eve service on the 24th is at 3 pm. Lynn Rossi will be the organist this year.



Quilt Show Report

Columbus Day weekend, Oct 12th & 13th was our 24th Annual Quilt & Needle Arts Show.

There are a lot of people to thank for making it very successful;

Betty Haines is at the top of the list for making the lovely raffle quilt that takes many hours to put together. She is already thinking about next year's quilt!

We thank all the exhibitors who loan us their works of art--without them, there would not be a show.

A big thank you to everyone who helped sell raffle thickets--we sold 2,856!

The winner of the quilt is Hillary Thompkins of Middletown. She bought her ticket at the show on Saturday.

All the bakers and cooks deserve thanks for providing such delicious food and the ***kitchen staff*** for serving our patrons.

Thanks goes to the white glove ladies, the boutique workers, the greeters as people arrive at the admissions table and all those who helped with set-up on Friday and clean up on Sunday.

Last, but not least, ***we appreciate the time that Susi Ryan and Christle Rawlins-Jackson spend here to be our sleepovers, providing security.***

Now, the information you all are waiting for--***our proceeds from all Quilt related sales is (drum roll please) \$7,302.84!!***

Good work and be sure to look for planning about next year, The 25th Show!!





The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair

Saturday, December 7, 2019

The Christmas Tea and Children's Fair will be held Saturday December 8th 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 The Elves' 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!

Santa will arrive at 10am. If weather permits, he will arrive on his red-nose motorcycle.

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 21st at 6:30 pm

If you are interested in helping see Kathy Sewell or sign up in the Fellowship Hall.



Please join us to assemble our Candy Mugs, Popcorn Snowmen, and Candy Sleighs. Bring your glue guns, scissors and tape.



Christmas Eve Memorial Poinsettias



6 1/2" pots \$12.50 per plant

____ Pink

____ Red

____ White

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 15, 2019

COMING IN JANUARY 2020!

Loving Spoonful will open on Tuesday, January 7, 2020. Once again we look forward to seeing friends and neighbors for some warm soup, a hearty snack and fellowship time. The snack bar opens on Tuesdays during the winter months of January, February and March, in coordination with the opening of the East Haddam Food Bank and the East Haddam Clothing Bank.



The Loving Spoonful Snack Bar will be open Tuesdays starting 1/7/2020 from 12 noon – 5:00 pm. We're located in the lower level next to the Clothing Bank and serve both eat-in or take out. **Volunteers are needed for the morning shift, 10:30-2:30, and the afternoon shift, 2:30-5:30.** We also need soup chefs, bakers, donations of beverages and monetary donations to purchase grinders each week. Sign-up sheets will be posted in fellowship hall. *If you can help in any way for our opening day, Tues. 1/7/2020, please contact Patti Lombardo so we can insure that we have everything we need to serve our guests.*

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry

First Church Cemetery News



The 23rd Annual Venture Smith Day Celebration went very well in the cemetery on a beautiful sunny, warm day. The attendance was approximately 120, of which 22 were descendants of Venture Smith. The main speakers were Maisa Tisdale of Bridgeport, Rep. Bobby Gibson III of Bloomfield, Beth Moore of Stonington and Karl Stofko. Their talks were well received. Elizabeth J Normen sold copies of her new book "Venture Smith's Colonial Connecticut". The local historical society sold copies of Venture's 1798 narrative. The life-size wooden statue of Venture Smith, carved by Weymouth Eustis of Chester and Frank Todaro of Butte, Montana, was unveiled in the sanctuary of the church. All were pleased with the result, especially the descendants. After the celebration, the statue was moved to the Venture Smith Exhibit in the East Haddam Historical Society Museum on Town St. It will remain there on permanent display.

Two dead trees, south of the new cemetery section, were blown down into the driveway during a storm in the middle of September. Our grounds keeper, Anthony Valentino, did the cleanup.

At the end of September, someone ran into the north end of the east wall of the old cemetery with a vehicle and knocked down about 2 feet of the wall. The person responsible did not leave a note or inform anyone of us by phone. Mr. Valentino will repair the wall in early November.

LOIS (RHODES) BAKER-ZADROSKE, age 82, passed away on October 7, 2019 at the Fox Hill Center in Vernon. She was a long time member of the Cemetery Association and former member of First Church. As a member of First Church, she served for many years on the Board of Trustees. Lois was the Secretary of the Cemetery Association from 1970 to 1974. She served as Treasurer from 1974 to 2014. She was on The Board of Directors of the Cemetery Association from 2015 until her death. She was buried with her second husband, Ed Zadroske, in St Bridget's Cemetery in Moodus. She will be profoundly missed!

Respectfully submitted,
Karl P. Stofko, president and treasurer

Tuesday Quilters

We continue to meet on Tuesday mornings to make items for the Christmas Tea & Quilt show boutique.
We sew from 9:30am—noon.

Contact Margaret Charney at 860-537-3323



Restoration Committee Report

The Restoration Committee will resume its planning work with a meeting later this month. The date and time will be announced by email to the contact list.

The meeting will focus on planning fundraisers to provide matching funds needed to complete our various projects. All suggestions are welcome.

Our thanks to Bob Cumming and Dr. Karl Stofko for volunteering their time and talent to present “Ghost Stories Shared & Preserved” on Oct. 26 in the Meeting House. A free will donation benefitted the restoration fund. An organ concert is being planned in December.

Our architect, Thomas Gribbin, has completed the bid specifications and documents needed for the Parish Hall roof replacement and repair to the Meeting House roof. At his recommendation, we also commissioned environmental testing of exterior and interior paint, plaster and insulation in anticipation of our restoration work. We are awaiting the results of that report. An approved planning grant by the state Department of Economic and Community Development’s State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”) is expected to pay 50 percent of the design and testing expenses.

Work on the roof replacement project has been delayed by the temporary suspension of the SHPO Historic Restoration Fund Grant program, which provides matching funds for approved restoration work at the completion of the project. To qualify for reimbursement, the grant must be approved before the work begins. While we have the money to proceed, the grant will help to replenish our available funds for the next restoration project. It is expected the program will reopen before the end of the year.

First Church was one of 32 finalists among 240 applicants, but was NOT one of the 10 churches chosen for grant funding this year by the National Fund for Sacred Spaces. The good news is the Lily Endowment, Inc. will continue funding for the grant program for four more years and we will have another opportunity to apply. Chad Martin, director of the program, will provide additional information on how to improve our chances to qualify in the next or subsequent years.

“We also want to reiterate the religious and social value your congregation brings to its community. As with each of this year’s applicants, your congregation and its ministry is vital to your community,” he wrote.



Meanwhile, we are pursuing another grant with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The trust makes matching grant awards up to \$15,000 for church maintenance and repairs. We had a site visit in October by Trust staff and hope to qualify for funding to repair the most critical elements on the church steeple in the spring.

Submitted by Susan E. Kinsman



The Board of Trustees is thankful for the many gifts, donations and in-kind contributions made by our congregation's members and friends to benefit First Church.

We want to give special thanks to Holly Coleman and Anita Hayn who are retiring Dec. 1 from our volunteer church cleaning crew. For years, Holly and Anita have donated their time and often the cleaning supplies used to keep our church sparkling, particularly the bathrooms and kitchen, which get heavy use from our many church activities.

Their hard work has saved us the expense of a commercial cleaning service in the annual operating budget. It has been an invaluable contribution for which the Trustees, on behalf of the congregation, are very grateful.

Before they step down, Holly and Anita will be compiling a list of tasks and the products they use to help us prepare for the transition. The current budget does not include funds to hire outside help, so we will need to develop a cleaning rotation, much like we do with hospitality. If you can spare a few hours a month to help, please contact the Trustees.

If you have visited the kitchen recently, you will notice big changes – particularly a gently used oven and range donated by Patti Lombardo. Thanks to Larry Fraser and the Monday Morning Guys, it was installed where our old range used to be. The old range, which still works, replaced the unused double-decker, which was disposed without cost to the church. Anita spent hours cleaning up after the guests when the “high-rise hotel” left the building. Sachet bags of Irish Spring soap, peppermint oil and discreet traps are keeping those unwanted guests from finding new quarters.

A big thanks to Patti, Larry, Anita and all those involved in this project, which was completed before the quilt show. The kitchen appliances kept pots of chili and soup ready for that event.

A reminder to keep your pledges up to date. One easy way to keep from falling behind is to pay your tithe or pledge electronically using your bank's bill pay service. Many members, including Alan and I, use this option to pay our pledge monthly. If we miss a week of service, we are still on track and don't have to “catch up” at the end of the month or year. And we write fewer checks. If you need more information about this option, our Treasurer Roy Butler, Financial Secretary Christina Adams, or a member of Trustees can help.

Donations are welcome toward the purchase of a new church computer. Our current computer has reached the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. We estimate it will cost approximately \$800 for new hardware, updated software and technical services to configure the system and transfer files. This needs to be an off-budget purchase. If you would like to help, write “church computer” on the message line of your check. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted by Susan E. Kinsman, chairman, Board of Trustees



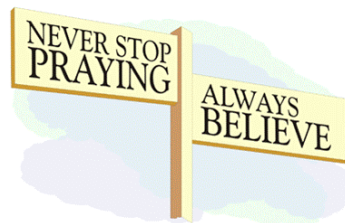
News from the Knitting ministry.

Dear knitters, The knitting ministry is a booming success! We are close to making 2,000 shawls! Please help us get there as 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!

We have the yarn and needles.

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.



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.

Prayers for The Ibbotson Family for the loss of their son/grandson.

For more information

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

God is still listening to our prayers



Prayer

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

From The Sanctuary Committee



It's that time of year again!

Order your Memorial Poinsettias before December 15th. The price is \$12.50 per plant. The colors are pink, white and red.

We get the plants from Ballek's. They are always lush and beautiful!

The form is on page 11.

The East Haddam Fuel Bank

The next Fifth Sunday for Fuel is December 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 April-December are 2:30pm-5:30pm the 1st & 3rd 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





You can contact me at
schleppsister35@gmail.com.

**The deadline for the January/February
2020 Tidings is December 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 06423

TIDINGS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

2019



Lectionary Series		Contact us
November 3– 2 Thess 1:1-4, 11-12 Luke 19:1-10 10– 2 Thess 2:1-5, 19-17 Luke 20:27-38 17– Col 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43 24– Col 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43	December 1– Hope Isa 2:1-5 Ps 122 8– Peace Isa 11:1-10 Ps 72:1-7, 18-19 15– Joy Isa 35:1-10 Matt 11:2-11 22– Love Isa 7:10-16 Matt 1:18-25 29– Ps 148 Matt 2:13-23	Minister Rev. Gale Grayson 860-837-4606 revgalegrayson@gmail.com Church Office Phone Number 860-873-9084 (Leave message) Chair of Deacons Barbara Bernard barbarabernard@sbcglobal.net Tidings Editor 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