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March 2021 Newsletter

The Church Mouse

office@rhccucc.org

www.RockyHillucc.org

Sunday Worship Services (on Zoom) – 10:00 a.m

A WAY NOT OUR OWN...

Traveling a Lenten Journey - Together at Home

Wednesdays in March, at 6:30pm via
YouTube/facebook/RockyHillucc.org

In partnership...

First Church of Christ (UCC), Suffield
Second Baptist Church (ABC), Suffield
Rocky Hill Congregational Church (UCC)



Image from “A Sanctified Art”

Pastor Nada and the ministers at First Congregational Church, Suffield and Second Baptist Church, Suffield, will offer a half hour evening contemplative service called “A Way Not Our Own”, starting on Ash Wednesday (2-17-21) and running through Lent. These will be pre-recorded and offered via our YouTube channel. We hope this provides restful moments for prayer and reflection during your week.

To watch; visit our website or facebook page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/RHCC>

(We invite you to subscribe to RHCC-youtube so you can follow!)

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Matthew 5:42 NIV

From Where I Sit

If you’ve every been an active part of projects or events at the church, you probably already know this... There are A LOT of things that go unnoticed about how things come together, and one of those things that helps us make a difference, is the Helping Hands Fund of RHCC. Let me share a bit of information about what this fund is and how it works:

- Helping Hands Fund (HHF) provides financial assistance to church members and friends in times of need.
- All disbursements are completely confidentially, with the amount available contingent on the circumstances involved.
- Requests can be made directly to myself as Pastor, or to any member of our Council’s Executive Committee; at present these officers are: Ruth Fitzgerald, Moderator; Deb Copes, Vice Moderator; Hilaire Leavitt, Clerk; and Dave Hall, Treasurer.
- Additional evaluation is provided to find out how we can offer support and from there, allocations are promptly distributed.

Back in the “Before Times,” before the coronavirus arrived and shut us all down from being able to gather freely, our Thanksgiving offering of October, 2020, was designated to provide for HHF. I want to thank everyone who participated in helping to make additional funds available. A truly generous outpouring! I also want to share a bit about some of the ways these funds have helped to make a difference over the past year:

There have been a number of situations in which funds for a temporary stay in a local hotel have been provided when emergency shelter was needed. Direct disbursements to the hotels allowed for easy access to a safe place to sleep – in two cases, family pets where also sheltered. The fund has been a life-line for helping to meet grocery needs at the end of a month when other resources had run out. A one-time disbursement allowed for family gift-giving. In addition, bus passes, grocery gift cards and gas cards are available for staff to share, when the need arises; funds are drawn from HHF to cover these expenses. A Thanksgiving gift of grocery cards was also delivered to Rocky Hill Social Services, as purchased using Helping Hands funds.

As I hope you can now appreciate, there are a variety of situations where our church can make a real difference because we have the Helping Hands Fund. And whenever this happens, the relief and gratitude expressed by those who receive, is a great reminder to me that being a blessing to someone else on behalf of RHCC is a great honor. Thanks again for the part many of you have played in helping to provide a source of financial support to friends and families in need.

Pastor Nada

March 2021 Worship Ministry

Hello Everyone. While we continue to dig out from the snow so far this year, we are busy planning for Lent and Easter services. We will be using content and resources around the “Again & Again” theme:

In Lent, we’re reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, “Again?! How long, O God?” And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: “I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.” Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

One of the elements of this theme is a *Prayer Wall*. We will be inviting everyone to come to God in prayer again and again, weaving your prayers in with those of our larger community at a wall outside our church. Woven together, our prayers will form the shape of an ampersand to represent God’s holy “and.”

Here’s our schedule of services during Lent:

- Fat Tuesday BINGO night: February 16
- Ash Wednesday: February 17
- Palm/Passion Sunday: March 28
- Maundy Thursday: April 1
- Easter Sunday: April 4



We continue to seek volunteers to help with our Call to Offering. Please sign up via our [Breeze Church Management Software](https://rhccucc.breezechms.com/dashboard) (<https://rhccucc.breezechms.com/dashboard>) or contact me directly so I can add you to our distribution list.

Michael Andonucci 860.670.5940 michael.andonucci@gmail.com



ASH WEDNESDAY

was marked with Rev. Nada offering "Ashes to Go" outside the church.

A prayer service was available on RHCC Utube channel (yes, we have one!) for folks to view from home.

The prayer service will be offered every Wednesday during Lent.

Faith Formation Reflection



Twenty years ago, when I served as the student pastor at a church outside of Chicago, there were a few little girls who loved to run to the pulpit and pretend they were the pastor. The beloved senior pastor of the church was a woman, and the little girls wanted to be like her. They loved church school, were curious about the Bible, and even talked of times they had applied the lessons in public school, such as the times they befriended kids no one else would sit with. I don't know if any of them ever ended up in ordained ministry, but it was great to see that they and their families considered professional ministry as a respectable and viable career choice.

In 2021, being a pastor doesn't seem to be as high on the career choice list, but I still do hear how some kids love church, how they are thinking deeply about God, and how a majority, at least in our church school, have been engaging on their own, the lessons I mail to them weekly. I hope as they grow older, that being a pastor or other type of spiritual leader will be something they and their families consider. I say this not for the sake of keeping the denomination's pension system going, but because leaders in other sectors: government, law, business etc. need good spiritual leaders. As cynical as we might be sometimes about say, our legislators, there are some who really are sincere about their faith. It would be a shame if the spiritual leaders in their midst were not up to snuff.

The first sermon I preached in CT was at historic Center Church in Hartford (when I worked there for a year as the Warburton Resident). Among the membership and attending that day, were two CT federal judges. After the service, both came to me separately and with smiles and energy, said the same thing: that the perspectives they received from my message would have impact on their approach to judicial decisions. Whoa. Someone was actually listening? Federal judges, no less? That experience told me that people do listen and are open to spiritual guidance and may even be yearning for it. It told me that a simple sermon could have unexpected far-reaching impact.

We are blessed to have among us some children who love being part of a church and who love learning about God. Let us not dissuade them or think they are going through a childish phase. Instead, let us consider that God may be preparing them to be spiritual leaders – people who someday might help others do and decide godly things.

Church School and Youth Groups

If March brings in warmer weather, we may try to have an outdoor gathering for the children, especially to meet newcomers Oliver (7 yrs) and Kit (4 yrs) Hagen. With luck, we might even be able to start the youth fundraiser: selling and installing rain barrels! Stay tuned for more info.

Racial Justice Steering Committee
Legislative News for 2021



Beyond exploring our understanding of America’s complex history and our personal feelings about race, it is critical to support the work that brings about changes necessary to create an anti-racist world. Although it is easy to believe Connecticut is dedicated to racial justice as a progressive state, that simply isn’t true. Many of our laws and policies do not reflect a commitment to anti-racist governance and all political parties have participated in supporting those limitations. 2020 was a year of change, opening eyes and hearts to the very damaging and real disparities POC must cope with on a daily basis. 2021 must be the year we begin to act on our new dedication.

You may enjoy spending some time exploring the Connecticut General Assembly website <https://www.cga.ct.gov/default.asp> . You can create an account as a citizen and get alerts on legislation that is important to you here https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabiltracking/pub/CGABillTrack_Register.aspx.

Rocky Hill’s representatives in Hartford are Senator Matt Lesser and Representative Kerry Wood. Both are easily contacted via the CGA website or simply by searching any web browser.

The 2021 Legislative session began on January 6th and there are several proposals regarding racial justice that may be discussed or voted on before the session closes on June 9th. GHIAA (Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance) has provided a toolkit to understand the legislation with supporting stories and resources you can see here <http://cljct.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-GHIAA-Legislative-Toolkit-FINAL-1.pdf>

Racial Justice Steering Committee
Legislative News for 2021

The GHIAA goals for this session are the following:

- Declaring racism a public health crisis
<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/TOB/S/PDF/2021SB-00055-R00-SB.PDF>
- Repealing welfare liens <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/rpt/pdf/2020-R-0051.pdf>
- The Clean Slate Act <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/TOB/S/PDF/2020SB-00403-R00-SB.PDF>

In addition, keep an eye out for proposed changes or repeal of the Police Accountability Act signed by Governor Lamont in 2020. Rocky Hill Town Council voted 7 to 2 on July 31, 2020 (<https://rockyhilltownct.documents-on-demand.com/>) to send a resolution to Governor Lamont to conduct more studies before signing the bill into law. Rocky Hill made a clear statement **against** acting on this important legislation, counter to the effort of improving racial justice in Connecticut.

You can view the meeting and discussion via the town YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/RockyHillConnecticut/videos> under **Special Meeting July 31,2020**.

To speak out against this decision and urge our town to support this act, contact Mayor Lisa Marotta and members of Town Council.

If we wish to move toward a more just society it is important to view legislation through the lens of racial justice and the viewpoints of POC in Connecticut. Eliminating unjust laws and policies while supporting new laws that encourage fairness and opportunity are beneficial to all of us.

Valerie Triblets
Racial Justice Steering Committee



Outreach and Witness
Easter and Lenten Offerings Going Global

One Great Hour of Sharing UCC Lenten Offering March 14

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is one of four special missions offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee and development ministries of the UCC within wider church ministries.

“Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind,
for the Compassion One guides them, takes them to the best springs.”

- Isaiah 4 9-10

Let us always be the compassionate ones to help those who hunger, thirst and need shelter.

Church World Services Easter Offering

Nearly one-fifth of the UCC’s OGHS offering is shared through Church World Service to support refugee and disaster programs worldwide. Our congregation will further our support of OGHS by collecting monetary donations throughout the month of March to support our toiletry kit collection for Church World Service. **Date to be determined in April or May to meet together outside to help assemble the kits.**



Tens of thousands of hygiene kits are shipped around the world each year. They bring comfort and hope to those who receive them. They are shipped throughout the U.S. and worldwide to provide relief and comfort for those affected by famine, natural disasters and epidemics as well as to welcome refugees and asylum seekers. Once we pack and deliver the kits, they will be ready for shipment when and where the need is the greatest.

If you wish to contribute, there are many options - visit the church website donation page at <https://www.rockyhillucc.org/donate-methods> and donate using your bank account, your credit card or Paypal. And, of course, you can always send a check to the church office at 805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

Please indicate that your donation is for either:

- One Great Hour of Sharing UCC Lenten offering
- Church World Services Easter Offering to support toiletry kit assembly



And once again, thank you for your continued generosity which inspires and warms us, particularly during these challenging times. Being part of a church family made up of people who are living generous lives brings us joy!

High school seniors and college students; it's time to apply for scholarships!

Graduating high school seniors and returning college undergraduates who are seeking a RHCC scholarship for the 2021-22 academic year are invited to complete and return an application prior to April 15. Scholarship awards will be announced in June.

Applications are available in the office, or at: www.rockyhillucc.org/scholarship-program.

Submit completed applications to: scholarships@rhccucc.org, or to the Church office.

Scholarship Committee: Hilaire Leavitt, Randy Pulling, Gail Hall and Steve Ware.



Frank Roswell Fuller Scholarship - This scholarship requires that you be a member of the UCC/Congregational Church. Applications are available in the church office. The deadline for submitting your application and other documents is May 15.

Congregational Care Ministry

Although the pandemic continues, we at RHCC are beginning to feel optimistic about getting together. As members are getting vaccinated, we will be able to consider being together in our church building. While Nada and the Worship Ministry are discussing the future of Sunday services, the congregational care ministry just wants to get us together in small groups for a time of reflection and fellowship. The RHCC Reopen Task Force is evaluating the guidelines around such gatherings, likely, we will all still feel safer wearing a mask. Wendy, Don, Kim and I will be contacting members to create a list of who is, or soon will be, two weeks after a 2nd vaccine and considered “safe”/immune. So let's all hope for calmer weather, an early Spring and some time together! Do I hear an AMEN

-Stephanie Heneghan

SUPER SATURDAY REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

March 13th & March 20th

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: March 4, 2021

Virtual Super Saturday is back! Our special guest is the [Rabbi Elan Babchuck](#), the Founding Director of GLEAN Network, an incubator and network for faith leaders who seek to reimagine the role of religion in an ever-changing world yearning for meaning, belonging, and justice.

And It Came to Pass, Luke 2:15 ~ Living Into the Fulfillment of God's Promises

[Super Saturday - Southern New England Conference of the UCC \(sneucc.org\)](http://sneucc.org)

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION ~ PRIZE PATROL!

10-year-old Anna Gau won the Grand Prize during the Mardi Gras celebration (or what Liz Reed-Swale is calling Phat Tuesday). The Bingo Grand Prize was a pancake-themed basket donated by Candy Smith and Faith Formation, and beautifully assembled by Candy Smith. The basket contained:

- ❖ *Stonewall Kitchen Apple cinnamon pancake mix*
- ❖ *Stonewall Kitchen buttermilk pancake mix*
- ❖ *Stonewall Kitchen blueberry syrup*
- ❖ *CT maple syrup*
- ❖ *Pancake socks*
- ❖ *Pancake journal*

Sue Chatfield won the salad made by Stephanie Heneghan

Cheryl Hummel won the mac & cheese made by Judy Graham

Nancy Rolfe won the Italian cookies made by Don & Polly Pagnucco

There was a three-way tie in this game, so Denise Carberry won a \$10 Dunkin' Donuts gift card and Sue Speers won a \$10 Starbucks gift card

Suzanne Thompson won the decorated dessert made by Violet Collins

And a great time was had by all!



From the RHCC Green Team: GREEN TIPS

- Dry two or more loads of laundry in a row to take advantage of extra heat in the dryer.
- Skip the tub and take a shower. It takes 35 - 50 gallons of water to fill a bathtub versus 25 gallons used during a Q 10-minute shower. Skip a shower and take a sponge bath instead, occasionally.
- Put lamps in the corners of rooms so that light reflects off two walls. This way, you won't have to use as many light sources.
- Switching your outdoor porch light to an LED bulb, especially one with a motion sensor will help save energy and cut down on costs.



Earth Day Festival – Save the Date – Information coming soon. 4-24-21

Silent Auction.....maybe!!

Sending out Feelers

We are considering holding a virtual silent auction this summer. We recognize that it is not feasible to solicit local businesses that are stressed more than ever now with the COVID impact, but we do have significant Talent and Treasure within our own church members and their friends and contacts. The thought of a project to work on might be exciting for some at this point. Please consider the following list of potential items that you might have or could create to donate:

Baskets
Hand-made items
Knitted/crocheted
Paintings
Wreaths
Furniture
Jewelry
Vacations/timeshares

Services:
Home cleanup
Babysitting
Dog walking
Shopping

*Or anything else- this list
is by no means complete.*

Indications of interest and items can be sent to either Deb Copes or Sue Chatfield. Please respond by early March, so we can make a determination on how to proceed.

Thank you in advance for your interest!! Deb and Sue



Calling all Bakers!

Hands on Hartford's community meals program serves dinner every Monday night to about 80 people. While we can't do an in-person volunteer effort now, we can provide a tasty desert of cookies or brownies for a dinner. Please consider supporting this Outreach and Witness initiative on **March 15th**. We are looking for several volunteers to provide ziplock bags of handmade cookies or brownies (2 to 3 items depending on size). Eight volunteers at 10 each or 6 at 15 or 4 at 20! Please contact Sue Chatfield at 860-595-6639 to volunteer. I can pick up all goodies at the church at 4:00pm on Monday the 15th. Baking supplies can be reimbursed by O&W. *Happy Baking!*

March Scrip Schedule

Since the start of the pandemic-driven shutdown of the church building, I've been delivering scrip every two weeks for drive-by pickup behind the church. If you have email access, you will continue to receive regular updates in advance of each delivery date. (Let me know if you are not receiving these.) If you do not have access to email, then you should call me at 860-561-0182 when you need scrip so that I can prepackage your order and confirm the next delivery date. All pickup orders must be communicated to me in advance of the delivery date. Payments can be made online, or by check when you pick up your order.

Here is the tentative schedule of upcoming scrip delivery dates:

- ❖ **Saturday, February 27, 1:00-1:15pm**
- ❖ **Saturday, March 13, 1:00-1:15pm**
- ❖ **Saturday, March 27, 1:00-1:15pm**



Many retailers also offer e-cards that can be ordered and delivered at any time via email. (An e-card is simply a gift card that can be emailed to you, which you can then print on paper if needed.) Many of you are already taking advantage of these. Unfortunately, e-cards are generally not available for groceries.

Thanks to all of you who have continued to faithfully buy scrip during the pandemic. We're off to a good start in 2021, with almost \$2700 earned in the first two months of the calendar year – which is very similar to the amount earned during the same two months in 2020 (pre-pandemic). Almost 30 families bought scrip at least once during January & February.

Dave Hall, Treasurer

Spring into Action

It has been a long winter with dark days and piles of snow. Add to that a year-long quarantine during a global pandemic and it is no wonder that medical experts are reporting an increase in clinical depression.



But in one of life's great ironies, research has proven that one of the best ways to care for yourself is to *care for others*. According to an article in Psychology Today, "the really good news is that by turning our attention toward helping others, we make everyone feel better—ourselves included. We find not only relief from our depression and anxiety, but also improvements in our relationships."

At Rocky Hill Congregational Church, we are actively helping others through our various ministries—some of which are highlighted in this edition of *The Church Mouse*. If you are looking for ways to care for yourself, why not consider joining one of the many groups that supports others in our church family and our community? With the start of spring, we'll need people to help with tending the church gardens. Outreach and Witness is assembling toiletry kits for Church World Service. The Prayer Shawl Team is knitting and crocheting for people in need of a warm hug.

The Nominating Committee is actively filling roles in ministry teams and committees. Where do your interests lie? We can always use more help on our Worship, Faith Formation, Facilities, Congregational Care, Time Talent and Treasure, Outreach and Witness and Music core Ministries. Or consider something as simple as making a phone call to someone you've not seen in a while. If you can think it, someone could benefit from it. Every bit helps. Please contact Doretta Andonucci doretta.andonucci@gmail.com or Theresa in the church office tcleary@rhccucc.org.

Why not "spring into action" and be part of the church in action.

-Your Time, Talent & Treasure Ministry Team



When Do We Get Back to Normal: A few notes from our Re-Opening Task Force

With some of us starting to get our vaccinations, many may be wondering about how soon we may be “back to normal”. The short answer is “not quite yet” but clearly, **NOW** is the time to start thinking and planning for our next steps.

Here are a few thoughts:

- 1) Your RHCC Re-opening Task Force has been meeting and working toward our eventual return to **in-person worship** that would be safe for attendees, following current Covid preventive protocols. Our guidelines already allow for some smaller group meetings in the church as long as COVID protocols are observed and Theresa is informed about who attended.
- 2) One of the complexities of looking ahead is that our “new normal” may not look like our “old normal”. We have worshiped and met successfully by Zoom which has enabled us to use new technologies and approaches at times which some have come to really appreciate. But the drawback—and it’s a huge drawback—is that we have missed being together in person and we have missed seeing those of us who are either not able to Zoom or not interested in the Zoom experience.
- 3) But our church of the future needs to be able to accommodate some flexibility in Worship that allows people to engage in worship from afar on occasion even when we are able to be back in the Sanctuary. Nada and our Worship Ministry has been thinking ahead about this and is working to develop some options that we can try out. Will we stream out live service? Will we Zoom our live service? Will we develop some type of hybrid way to worship together in a slightly different way. We have already invested in a high tech video camera to allow us to record our services for those unable to attend. We will, of course, need people to operate the camera and other equipment. So.....it’s complicated!
- 4) No matter what our “new normal” looks like, or what we learn from some of our trial and error experiences, we do all look forward to the possibility of seeing those we have not seen in a long time and sharing fellowship in-person with our church family.

Stay tuned for more news in the coming weeks as we work in collaboration with Pastor Nada and the Core Ministries of Worship, Music, and Congregational Care. And if you have ideas about how to go about things, please share your ideas with us at: office@rhccucc.org

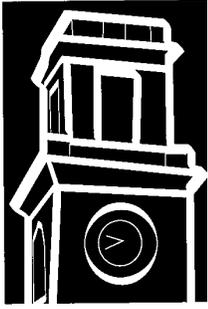


1	Bill Hoffman	17	Kathryn Morgan
1	Todd McGowan	20	Susan VanNess
2	Rebecca Milles	20	Charlotte Reed-Swale
2	Grace Donahue	20	Elaine Somes
3	Pat Gordon	21	Ryan Bengston
4	John Van Doran	22	Gladys Carpenter
5	Tim Bishop	23	Marilyn Van Doran
6	Bay Tran	24	Bea Donahue
8	Kevin Sudell	24	Sarah Mosure
9	Jason Hall	26	Todd Pender
11	Cheryl Robbins	27	Richard Sweezy, Jr
12	Todd Doten	28	Nicole Graham
12	Suzanne Speers	29	Kim Burghoff
13	Jackie Little	30	Jayson Veley
14	David Bell	31	Mark Walworth
		31	Pat Hughes-Walworth

WELCOME GUESTS!

Welcome! If you have been joining us at our online worship services, or keep in touch on facebook – we’d love to say hello and get to know you better. If you’d like to learn more about our church community; please email us at: nsellers@rhccucc.org and leave your contact information, so Pastor Nada or a church leader can get in touch with you. We are an Open and Affirming Christian community, actively expressing Jesus’ inclusive embrace of all people.





WORSHIP SCHEDULE
 Sunday Morning Worship
 Communion 1st Sunday
 10:00 a.m. (via Zoom)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	1	2	3 A Way Not Our Own Prayer Service on UTube 6:30pm
7 Communion Sunday 10am Worship Church school 	8	9	10 A Way Not Our Own Rev Nada preaching Prayer Service on UTube 6:30pm
14 10am Worship Daylight Savings Time begins	15 Baked goods for Hands On Hartford Dinner for those in need.	16  <i>St. Patrick's Day</i>	17 St. Patrick's Day A Way Not Our Own Prayer Service on UTube 6:30pm
21 10am Worship	22	23	24 A Way Not Our Own Prayer Service on UTube 6:30pm
28 PALM SUNDAY 10am Worship 	29  HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE	30	31 A Way Not Our Own Prayer Service on UTube 6:30pm

March

2021

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4	5 World Day of Prayer	6
11	12	13 UCC Super Saturday! Online 1pm – Scrip Pick Up <i>Turn clocks ahead</i>
18	19  <i>Welcome Spring March 20!</i>	20 UCC Super Saturday! Online
25	26	27 1pm – Scrip Pick Up
APRIL 1 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:00pm zoom	APRIL 2 GOOD FRIDAY 7:00pm zoom	APRIL 3



March 13
Turn clocks ahead 1 hour
at midnight



Easter Worship Services ~ Sunday, April 4
Sunrise service at Rose Hil Cemetary
10:00am service on zoom

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill CT 06067
Telephone # 860 529-4167

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Hartford, CT 06101

Permit #7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME VALUE MAIL

Mailed February 26, 2021



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.



**PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP
IN-PERSON, OUTDOOR SERVICE
SUNDAY, MARCH 28 AT 10:00 A.M.**
Weather permitting ~ details to follow