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February 2021 Newsletter

The Church Mouse

office@rhccucc.org

www.RockyHillucc.org

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



Don't miss our **MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION**

featuring BINGO with prizes!

Join us on Tuesday, February 16 at 6:30pm on Zoom

We can't meet in person for our annual intergenerational Pancake Supper, but that doesn't mean we can't celebrate and have some fun ahead of the Lenten season.

Thanks to the folks who have provided the prizes:

- + Judy Graham – half-tray of mac & cheese
- + Violet Collins – hand-decorated dessert
- + Don & Polly Pagnucco – homemade Italian cookies
- + Steph Heneghan – her famous salad
- + Candy Smith and Faith Formation – the grand prize: a pancake-themed basket!!





From the Council: In gratitude for all you DO and all you ARE to our church family

As we continue to “hunker down” and try to ride out this pandemic, I am sometimes amazed at the energy, vitality and action that our church is exhibiting during these trying times. Our guest pastor on January 24, Rev. Jim Antal, noted the following: “A church is not a social group. We gather together to support each other in the courage it takes to live out our Christian calling. We need each other’s support if we are to change systemic injustices.” I would add that we also need each other’s support as a community as we travel on our own inward faith journey and help our children to develop theirs. Rev. Antal also noted that each of our challenges is also an opportunity.

Here’s what I see happening at RHCC as we move forward into the unknown of 2021:

- In 2020, we challenged ourselves to grow and **ACT** in the cause of racial justice. Our Racial Justice Steering Committee has been developing a series of programs and worship moments to deepen our understanding of systemic racism. Also, five members of our congregation are attending intensive racial justice activation training to learn more about what we can do to live out this goal.
- Our Green Team is gearing up with more activity to help us be more aware and take more action to promote the health of our beautiful and bountiful planet.
- Our Faith Formation Ministry actively engages our children and youth and strives to incorporate intergenerational activities—a great example is Shrove Tuesday Bingo Night. Don’t forget to sign up for your bingo cards—great (food-related) prizes!!!
- Congregational Care continues to work hard to stay in touch with everyone—especially those who are unable to attend Zoom worship. We miss you **ALL** and hope it’s not too long until we can meet again in person.
- Outreach and Witness carries the love and care of our congregation to others outside our church family through all manner of activities from diaper drives to backpack drives to food donations and much, MUCH more. Your generous response has been inspiring and is appreciated by so many.
- We have also increased our number of “virtual social gatherings” through topical programs (such as racial justice, homelessness, or the upcoming Shrove Tuesday Bingo Night), but also through simple social events of celebration, such as our December all-church Happy Hour of celebration or the music community’s welcome zoom with our new Music Director, Julie Hagen. Stay tuned for more “events” in 2021.

Through it all, many of you have chosen to increase your support of our church family by: switching to automatic recurring giving, “stepping up” in response to our recent Step Up campaign, and faithfully and enthusiastically buying scrip!! Your generous gifts of time, talent and treasure support and underwrite ALL of our ministries. To echo a “zoom chat” comment Liz Reed-Swale made at the end of worship recently “I am proud to call this my church”. Amen and amen.

Ruth Fitzgerald, Moderator

Racial Justice Activation Training

At the recommendation of the Racial Justice Steering Committee the Council authorized financial support for Racial Justice Activation Training. While this involves a significant cost, our Council and our Racial Justice Steering Committee are serious about our commitment to justice, and willing to do the necessary work. Five of us enrolled in this demanding training.



We had our first session last night (January 21) with two fantastic facilitators. We want to thank the Council for approving monies for us to attend and undertake this racial justice activation team training along with people from other churches and synagogues in the Greater Hartford area. We don't expect the training to be easy nor our experiences comfortable, but that is what makes this training stand out from others.

As a group, we will discuss how to share our progress with the congregation. We look forward to doing that as training evolves.

Deb Copes, Christine Kainamura, Val Triblets, Nada Sellers and Georgette Huie

Donations for Books

Throughout the month of February, the Racial Justice Steering Committee is collecting donations to supply books to the RH community that feature characters of color and storylines of racial justice and racism. More information to follow!



To contribute, visit the church website

www.rockyhillucc.org/donate

Or send a check to:

Rocky Hill Congregational Church,
805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067. Please indicate Christmas offering on check.
Thank you for your continued generosity.

Racial Justice Steering Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm, via Zoom.(unless otherwise noted).

Faith Formation News

Faith Formation Reflection



We humans sometimes need to be bonked on the head in order to become aware of things around us. This past year has been a time of major head-bonking: a global pandemic, George Floyd’s murder, violent insurrection at the Capitol, to name a few. Many of you have responded so very well: reading, learning, conversing, voting, praying, giving, masking, sheltering – doing what you can to help make the world a safer and better place.

It is great timing then, that the Faith Formation Ministry Team has accepted responsibility for adult education at RHCC. There is much to learn, not only from experts, but from each other. Please let us know (through the electronic survey) what you would like to learn, and when, and how. As the Rev. Donna Schaper, pastor of Judson Memorial Church in NYC says, “Never waste a quarantine.”

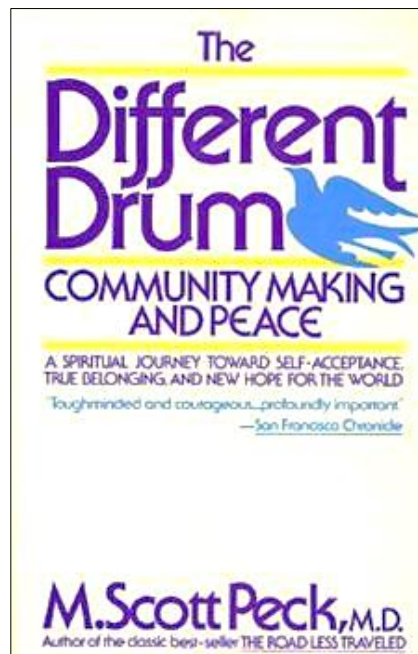
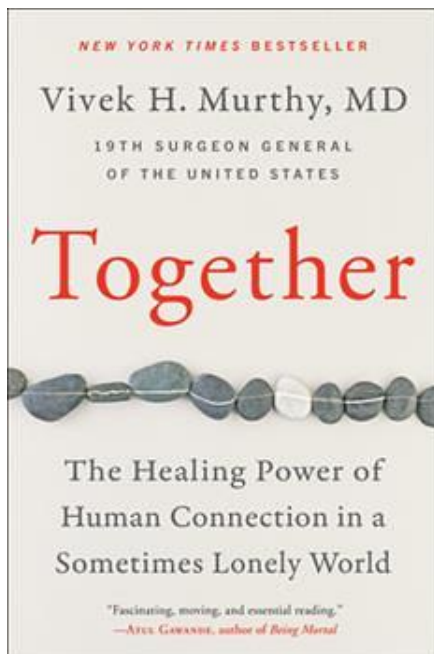
If you have been looking for your next book to read, and have been wondering about the QAnon phenomenon, political division, opioid addiction, and other contemporary crises, I recommend this one by Dr. Vivek Murthy, past and now incoming U.S. Surgeon General - ***Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World***. It is an eye-opening and urgent message about the rise in individual and collective loneliness and the need for genuine, loving relationships.

Why would a medical doctor of such repute be writing about loneliness? Because medical studies are now showing that the impact of loneliness on one’s health is “equal to the risk of smoking fifteen cigarettes a day, and it’s *greater* than the risk associated with obesity, excess alcohol consumption, and lack of exercise.” It isn’t just about not having a date on a Saturday night: loneliness also has a collective dimension – “the hunger for a network or community of people who share your sense of purpose and interests.” And so, we can see how this hunger might drive folks to cling to movements and go to extremes – it is a very real need they are filling. And this is where churches might take pause and reflect: if people are hungry for community, why are they not coming through our doors and staying?

Reflection (cont.)

For that answer, the follow-on recommended book is *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, by M. Scott Peck. Those of you who remember Peck might recall that he was a Christian. So, out of love for his faith and in hope for what the Church could be, he includes a chapter about the Christian Church as he delineates between real community and what he calls “pseudocommunity.” Spoiler alert: on his opening page, Peck writes: “...on the basis of my experience with many Christian churches in this country, I can be fairly confident that each of the churches in your hometown is not likely to be much of a community...” Whoa. Head-bonk. Though really, the Capitol insurrection and growing number of family and friends signing into QAnon ought to be the head-bonk. As we enter Lent, a time for serious reflection, I offer these books for your consideration.

-Georgette



MARDI GRAS celebration, featuring BINGO with prizes!

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Bingo Rules for Mardi Gras, February 16, 2021

This no-charge event is open to RHCC members and friends, and their families.

Bingo cards and Mardi Gras hats and masks may be picked up during Scrip distribution on Saturday, January 30 and Saturday, February 14. Georgette will do a drive-by drop-off for church school families who can't make those times.

Bingo cards can also be emailed as a .pdf file for printout, or snail-mailed if requested by February 12.

There is no limit to the number of members of a household who may play.

However, each household will be limited to a maximum of one regular prize, i.e., mac-and-cheese, decorated dessert, Italian cookies, or salad.

All players may play for the grand prize, a pancake-themed basket.

One Bingo pack per person. Each pack will contain two cards per game. There will be five games: three regular Bingos, one letter X, and one large picture frame.

Bingo numbers will be called by an online app over Zoom.

The Bingo cards will be numbered, so double checking can be done by Faith Formation.

In between games, attendees will be divided into random breakout rooms with a guided five-minute activity to facilitate greater fellowship.

Love in Action is More than a Valentine

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one another.”
--John 13:34-35

Valentine’s Day is a time when we think about paper hearts and red roses and chocolates, perhaps we even indulge in a Hallmark Channel marathon. And while that’s all great fun, it’s only one kind of love.

At Rocky Hill Congregational Church, we are actively at work, loving one another through our various ministries—some of which are highlighted in this edition of *The Church Mouse*. That work depends on many in our congregation sharing their talents and learning new skills.

Each year, our Nominating Committee prepares a list of at least 31 people to serve as church officers, on core ministry teams and committees. (The list is voted on by our membership in May.) There are also project teams and ad hoc groups. If you are willing to become Jesus’ love in the community, please consider filling one of these roles.

Another way to show love is through giving of our treasure. Our church family is blessed with people who give as they are able and beyond. We give to sustain the life and ministries of this church so that others may feel love. And we give to experience the joy of living a generous life.

In December, your Time Talent and Treasure ministry sent letters asking each of us to consider our giving plans for 2021. We are grateful for all who responded so far to affirm or step-up their commitments. We view as this as evidence of your love in action. At the same time, many of us were able to switch to automated, recurring giving, which enables our ministries to function with a more predictable income.

In addition to our regular sustained giving in support of *all* our ministries, our church holds series of special offerings. Our Virtual Offering Plate, which we started in June of 2020, is one way for us to live generous lives. In January, the Virtual Offering Plate supported Hands on Hartford. During a second hour on January 17, we heard from Pamela about how our gifts of love combined with others to support her transition out of homelessness. We look forward to sharing more of these stories in 2021.

You are the reason we are able to be a loving church in action. Thank you for your continuous generosity, at Valentine’s Day and always.

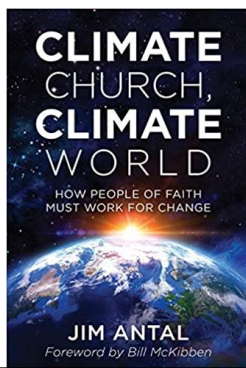


Climate Justice Second Hour – Sunday, February 14 at 11:00 a.m.

Why Should People of Faith Engage the Moral Challenge of Climate Change - and How Should We Do It?

(Hosted by RHCC Green Team)

Rev. Jim Antal will meet with the congregation (live via zoom) for an hour discussion/Q&A on the climate crisis, climate justice and his book, on Sunday, February 14 at 11am. Rev Antal delivered a sermon focusing on climate justice during our January 24 worship service. He has shared copies of his book, *Climate Church, Climate World* with us to assist our church in moving forward in action for climate health. Contact the office if you would like to get a copy of the book, and be sure to join us after worship on February 14th!



Jim Antal is a denominational leader, climate activist, author and public theologian. He serves as Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

<https://www.jimantal.com/book>

Green Tips for February

Here are some ideas to help reduce your trash:



- Print on both sides of paper
- Read/subscribe to on-line newspaper
- Switch to paperless bills
- Reduce your junk mail
- Implement tray-less lunches in the cafeteria
- Eat ice cream only in cones!
- Buy items that you can recycle
- Use reusable bags when you shop
- At work, use a reusable coffee mug
- Write your favorite company to rethink how they package their products
- Reduce food waste by eating leftovers and/or prepare only what you will eat
- Avoid products with excess packaging
- Buy in bulk
- Avoid using single-use packages

February 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, January 30, 1:00-1:15pm

Saturday, February 13, 1:00-1:15pm

Saturday, February 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. Because of your steadfast support, we earned slightly more than \$18,000 during calendar year 2020, which is our second highest annual total ever! (The record high was \$19,174 in 2015.)

Dave Hall, Treasurer



RHCC Newsletter

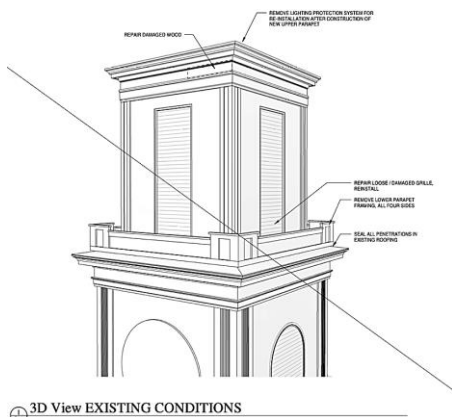
Submission deadline for the March issue of The Church Mouse will be February 19. We want to hear from you! Send your articles and photos to: office@rhccucc.org. The mailing date will be February 24.

Facilities Report

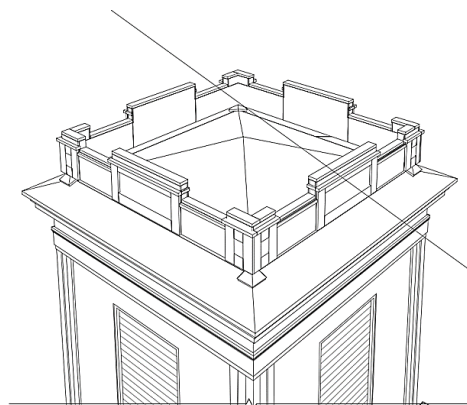
Facilities has been fairly busy over the past month. At the end of December, we decided to put hiring a replacement part-time custodian on hold and instead have retained Renata's Cleaning Service, LLC to clean for us. She is now cleaning 3 days a week and from all reports received so far, is doing a very good job keeping us and the LSP (Little Scholars Program) bubble clean while we endure the covid pandemic restrictions. We will revisit our decision in a few months to make sure that we continue to be happy.



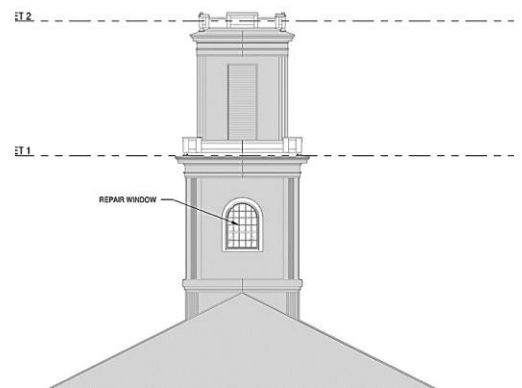
On another note, using a State Historic Office 100% grant, we have nearly completed a project to prepare drawings and specifications to bid for a repair of our steeple. As you may recall we used a previous grant to perform a study of our building to determine what needed work. That study pointed out that the steeple area is deteriorated and is missing the upper parapet which we removed several years ago for safety reasons. The current study shows rot and structure deterioration around the upper levels of the steeple, essentially the area above the clock. The remediation plan is to fix the rot, rebuild a severely compromised window on the side facing the Town Hall and reinstall the upper parapet, this time putting in 4 steeple posts to hold the parapet in place. Our architect estimates the cost for this project to be approximately \$110,000 for which we would likely receive 50% reimbursement from the State Historic Office. Once plans and specs are complete, we will be pursuing such a grant with the State. Stay tuned for details as we have them.



3D View EXISTING CONDITIONS



3D View - UPPER PARAPET





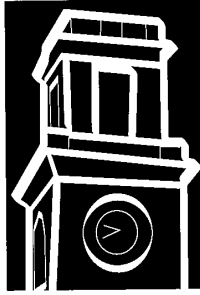
1	Alice Bradstreet	14	Brian Speers
2	Doreen Grandell	16	John Speers
2	Cyndy Hunt	17	Grant Hoffman
3	Teagan Reed-Swale	19	Leona Griswold
4	Bill Timrud	20	Midge Harvey
4	Jarod Taylor	22	Brendan Flynn
4	William Timrud	23	Scott Bengston
5	Kimberly Sweezy	23	Skyler Smith
6	Cole Triplets	23	Brett Timrud
7	Cheryl Hummel	24	Jan LaCava
7	Heather Wolfe-Taylor	24	<i>Ben Rolfe</i>
8	Susan White	24	<i>Will Rolfe</i>
8	Robert Mullins	25	Hannah DeGiovanni
8	Chris Gengenbach	27	Dot Wenzel
11	Val Triplets	27	Roxanne Molina
12	Alyssa Gau	27	<i>Keira Silkowski</i>
12	Caryn Doten	27	<i>Gabriella Silkowski</i>
13	Bev Schmidt	29	Joseph Sheehan
13	Tyler Morgan		
14	Kurt Sheathelm		



Harry and Bev Schmidt were married on February 15, 1958

Brian and Sherry Silkowski were married on February 18, 2008

Mark and Kim Biglow were married on February 22, 1986




WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Worship

Communion 1st Sunday

10:00 a.m. (via Zoom)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	1 All meetings held on Zoom unless otherwise noted.	2 7:30pm RJSC Mtg	3 7pm Church School
7 COMMUNION 10am Worship 11am Comma Group 5pm Middle Church School	8 Church office closed	9 Church office closed	10 7pm Church School 7:30pm Council
14 10am Worship 11am Climate Church Book Discussion w/Jim Antal	15	16 Mardi Gras Bingo Night! 6:30pm (zoom)	17 ASH WEDNESDAY 7pm Church School
21 LENT 10am Worship 11am Racial Justice Talk 5pm Middle Church School	22 <i>President's Day</i> <i>Little Scholars closed</i> 	23 <i>Little Scholars closed</i>	24 7pm Church School
28 LENT 10am Worship 11am Comma Group			

Church school continues most every Wednesday by Zoom at 7pm.

Middle school church school is held by zoom every other Sunday at 5pm (Feb 7, 21, Mar 7, 21).





2021

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4	5	6
11 <i>Preschool Closed</i> 5:30pm Worship Ministry	12 <i>Preschool Closed</i>	13 1pm Scrip Pickup 1pm Bingo Card pickup at the church
18	19 Newsletter deadline	20
25	26	27 1pm Scrip Pickup at the church



LENTEN WORSHIP IN MARCH

March 7, 14, 21

Palm Sunday March 28

Easter Sunday April 3



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

Non-Profit Organization
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Hartford, CT 06101

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME VALUE MAIL

Permit #7

Mailed January 28, 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.*



RHCC RACIAL JUSTICE RESOLUTION

June 17, 2020

At Rocky Hill Congregational Church, we condemn racism in all its blatant and insidious forms. In light of recent events in our country, and in order to address hurtful and destructive behaviors and attitudes within our own body, we resolve now to embark on a journey to examine the sin of racism in ourselves, in our church and community, and across our country.

We commit to equipping ourselves to fight racism by:

- Acknowledging white privilege
- Confronting white fragility
- Learning how to be true allies.

We pledge not only to learn, but to work to change the laws, methods and attitudes that have been used, and are still being used, to suppress the freedoms, opportunities and health of our siblings of color.

To be the church we want to be, we must turn our love for all God's people into actions that will create meaningful change. We invite others in our community and surrounding communities to join with us in working to end the scourge of racism.