



The RHCC Church Mouse

The Reverend Nada Sellers, Pastor
nsellers@rhccucc.org
Georgette L. Huie, Minister for Children and Youth
ghuie@rhccucc.org
Mary DeLibero, Minister of Music
mary@rhccucc.org
860-529-4167 Church

July/August 2020 Newsletter

office@rhccucc.org
www.RockyHillucc.org
Sunday Worship Services (on Zoom) – 10:00 a.m.

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.

“From Where I Sit...”

The many tensions and challenges in life – in our communities, our country, and certainly our world right now - have made me realize how much I need to be intentional about work and rest; writing as well as reading and thinking; being with others as well as spending time alone, within my own thoughts and in prayer...

One of the poets I return to again and again in the midst of things is Richard Blanco, who is presently the first-ever Education Ambassador for the Academy of American Poets, along with serving as a member of the Obama Foundation’s advisory council. There is this sense of reaching for the language and the insight that helps me give expression to what’s going on and what I’m feeling – and also what other people are feeling. See what you think... What are you reading these days? Come share with us as we dig more deeply into being a church who seeks after God’s determination for racial justice and equality. There’s a lot happening and I want you to be a part of it! Below is a poem, in the form a prayer for St. Louis.

- *Pastor Nada*



St. Louis: Prayer Before Dawn By Richard Blanco

Watch the dark sky mute amid the vigil of stars, a black-and-white prayer:

Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Amen.

Hear it above Delmar Boulevard with its black-and-whites stripes that divide the city into black-and-white voices.

A time to rend, and a time to sew.

Listen to the northside: the din of gunfire, the silence of boarded-up windows, the vagabond weeds creeping through the floorboards of abandoned homes still echoing with children who prayed every night:

And if I die before I wake... Amen.

Now listen to its southside: chit-chat about vacation spots, stock tips, and the alabaster blooms of dogwoods in gardens tended to by the help.

The meek shall inherit the earth.

St. Louis: Prayer Before Dawn

By Richard Blanco

Look into their shimmering windows framing cocktail parties filled with platters of gourmet cheese, fresh-cut flowers, and the bouquet of merlot.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Amen.

Don't close your eyes to the sooty plumes of smokestacks rising like sinister incense tarnishing the moon.

Where there is despair, hope.

Compare it to the silver moonlight showering suburban rooftops, backyard decks, green lawns, and the Luna moths' green angel wings.

For it is in giving that we receive. Amen.

Churn with the Mississippi's waters as brown as the skin of the homeless with names, but no home except their shadows in an alley off Market Street.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: there is the kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

Resting with them trying to rest under the arresting reign of fluorescent lights falling twenty stories from locked-up office buildings, empty of executives, but stocked with wealth.

Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

.....See the arch: not the shimmering steel, but the dull as nickel in the dark, a broken circle, a broken promise. Not a gateway, but a gate closed on St. Louis, trapped in all its black-and-white.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Amen.

Glory be waiting for the dawn. Glory be knowing the only dream worth dreaming is the one we dream in every color.

Where there is darkness, light. Amen.

(From *How to Love a Country* Beacon Press, 2019:55-56. 2 stanzas left out for length).



Summer church school is here! Every other Wednesday at 7pm, families are welcome to Zoom in for a half hour of activities related to Bible lessons on “Loving God, Loving Neighbor.” Before each lesson, activity sheets and occasional craft material will be snail-mailed. Contact Georgette if your children would like to participate but haven’t been receiving the snail mail. These class sessions will be geared toward Pre-K to 5th graders. Dates are: June 24, July 8, July 22, August 5, August 19, and September 2.

Stay tuned for possible in-person outdoor family gatherings at the church building. As of this writing, church leaders are thinking through how and if we can safely gather. Information and invitations will be sent when deemed possible.

Occasional online youth gatherings will be scheduled too. We did it! We figured out how to play *Apples to Apples* over Zoom! We will do that again and also possibly find a way to cook for Center Church’s Community Meals program.

And now, a special treat: those of you who Zoomed in during worship on Confirmation Sunday saw the projects which Alyssa Gau, Emily Doten, and Will McKenna created and produced all on their own. They are so enthused about our church and about the United Church of Christ that *they* decided to make these promotional ads to show to their friends and classmates. They especially like the sense of community and inclusivity that our church represents and want to spread that word to others, because they feel that youth their age are stressed out and looking for places to feel welcome and relaxed. What you see here are first drafts done during sheltering. We will be refining them and preparing them for actual use. The flyer was done by Alyssa Gau and the video (<https://youtu.be/hpqJ3-cJau4>) was a collaboration between Emily Doten and Will McKenna.

Enjoy!

Georgette Huie



Rocky Hill Congregational Church

United Church of Christ



“Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.”

Rocky Hill Congregational Church is the perfect place for someone who wants to feel cared for while caring for others. RHCC dedicates time and energy to the less fortunate every day.

“Positive”
“Caring”
“Giving”
“Lively”
“Accepting of all”

“Worshipping at RHCC makes me feel optimistic about the week ahead of me.”

If you're looking for a bright space in your life, RHCC is the group to join. RHCC gives people a sense of belonging and being loved. People of all ages are strongly encouraged to join RHCC's exceptional community.



Congratulations to these young people Alyssa Gau, Emily Doten, and Will McKenna who were confirmed on Pentecost Sunday!

From the RHCC Green Team: JULY-AUGUST TIPS



- Substitute tea towels and bar towels for paper towels. Tea towels dry hands or dishes and folded can be used as a hot mitt. Bar towels are used for most messes. If you can not eliminate paper towels use select-a size for eggs or raw meat juice.
- Bees Wrap is a substitute for plastic wrap. It is made of fabric coated in a moisture of wax, oil, and tree resin and sticks to the tops of bowls and jars. It can be washed and reused up to a year.
- If you're not already a vegetarian, try it part-time. Try eliminating or reducing your meat consumption before 6pm on weekdays. Producing meat is energy intensive and has harmful environmental effects.
- Soaker hoses and drip irrigation are water efficient, using only 50% of what a sprinkler would use. Water early in the day so you can avoid evaporation and winds. Also, the best place to water plants is directly on thirsty roots. Spot watering the soil around your plants with a watering can or hose can also help conserve water.

For more information or to share your green tips, contact Elaine and Gail
via: office@rhccucc.org

Green Team/Faith Formation Nature Photo Gallery on our website

The Green Team at church has come up with a wonderful idea (thanks Heather Collins!). On the church's webpage, there will be a photo gallery featuring snapshots and/or drawings from anyone in the church, including kids! Each month, a different theme from nature will be chosen and everyone is welcome to submit their creations. Steve Smith, technical guru and overall dedicated and hardworking guy, will make it all happen.

Here's how to participate:

1. Submit one or two items (a picture or scanned drawing) via email to (ghuie@rhccucc.org). No more than two per month, please.
2. Include a brief description (what, where, when), photographer's name and age.

Here are themes to begin looking for:

June/July	Flowers, Baby Animals
July/August	Water (creeks, lakes, rain, etc.)
August/Sept	Bugs and insects

Future themes: trees, rainbows, wildlife, birds, our pets, rocks, clouds, more flowers, sunsets and sunrises, moon and stars. So, go take a walk! Bring your camera, phone, or sketchpad! And take time to enjoy nature!

Georgette



Food Pantry Garden Helpers Needed

Rocky Hill Social Services is looking for volunteers to help maintain our town's food pantry garden. The garden is in need of watering and weeding throughout the summer, from June through September. We can volunteer either in family groups who live together or 1-3 individuals at a time, socially distanced with masks. They can accept volunteers weekdays or weekends, anytime. Please contact Heather Collins at: heathercollins2004@gmail.com with timeframes you are available to volunteer, whether it is one time or several times throughout the summer.

Back to School Drive For Covenant to Care

This summer we will once again support our Covenant to Care liaison by providing needed school supplies for children in DCF care. Children removed from their homes are often placed in a new school as part of the placement process. We would like to provide these children with the school supplies they need. With the uncertainty of what school will look like in the fall, we are continuing to work with our DCF liaison to see what the children will need. If distance learning is in place the needs of the children may be different than if they attend school as usual. As we get more information in mid-July we will let you know what is needed. In the meantime, supplies that are usually needed no matter what are backpacks, paper, notebooks, pens, #2 pencils, folders, erasers, pencil boxes, glue sticks, blunt scissors, pencil sharpeners, washable markers, rulers, crayons, and small tissue packets. We will also use Scip gift card donations to shop for any other items needed and give to families to purchase school uniforms. Information about collections will be coming in mid-July. Thank you for your support! Outreach & Witness



Save the Date - Foodshare Walk

This year's Foodshare Walk will take place VIRTUALLY from September 13-19. RHCC will form a team to walk a 1.5 mile course in town to raise awareness and funds to address food insecurity. Our donations will be directed specifically to Hands on Hartford, which serves economically challenged residents in Hartford. We will monitor safety recommendations and either walk as a socially distanced team or complete the course in smaller family groups. Join Us!



RHCC Standing Up for Racial Justice – Black Lives Matter!

In case you missed it – Many RHCC members joined their neighbors in the BLM Peaceful Protest on Wednesday, June 10. 25 people from RHCC - thank you for showing up and letting the world know this is seriously important to all of us. Pastor Nada

[#BlackLivesMatter](#)



More glimpses of social justice in action as the Mayor and Hartford police and police union leaders verbally commit to community demands, including a willingness to fly the Black Lives Matter flag at City Hall! Pastor Nada

[#BlackLivesMatter](#) [#NoJusticeNoPeace](#) [#SNECUCC](#)

RACIAL JUSTICE DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Please Mark Your Calendars!

To all members and friends of RHCC:

As we announced on Sunday, we have scheduled three discussions or listening sessions on Zoom to kick off our Racial Justice initiative. Please try to attend at least one of these if at all possible as we would like to have wide participation in this effort. These sessions will be no more than an hour long and will be held at the following dates/times:

1. Tuesday, June 30 at 7 p.m. (recorded and on our member's portal)
2. Wednesday, July 1 at 11 a.m. (recorded)
3. **Thursday, July 9 at 7 p.m.**

The Zoom link for all three of these sessions is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82771362956?pwd=dnFJUml6bTdMSVMvZU83S3paNUZPUT09>

We hope to see you soon and to hear your views and ideas on this important initiative. We are so gratified at the enthusiastic response to our Racial Justice Resolution and to our request to form a Steering Committee.

Ruth Fitzgerald, Moderator
Rev, Nada Sellers, Pastor

JOIN US SUNDAYS AT 10:00 AM FOR WORSHIP – VIRTUALLY!

Rev. Nada leads the service from her home worship space via Zoom, with Mary DeLibero, Dave Hall and Liz Reed-Swale offering music including some recordings of our RHCC Choir, and Georgette offering the children's message.



Instructions and the LINK to join in from your computer, tablet, or cellphone are posted each week in Nada's "Staying Connected" email bulletin sent out every Friday or Saturday.



Virtual Offering – help support the good works of Covenant to Care for Children

For the month of July, Outreach & Witness has chosen Covenant to Care for Children to receive our virtual offering plate. Covenant to Care provides a safety net for abused, neglected or impoverished children in Connecticut. They provide essential support in moments that are critical for a child's ability to thrive and a family's ability to stay together, such as providing critical goods (e.g., books, crib linens, diapers), partnering with a social worker to match a need with someone who can fulfill that need, partnering with food pantries to deliver food.

Covenant to Care partners with state agencies as well as faith organizations to meet these needs. RHCC has partnered with Covenant to Care's Adopt a Social Worker program for many years. We support them throughout the year, including our annual backpack drive that benefits families that have difficulty providing school supplies for their children. We are coordinating with the social worker this year to provide traditional school supplies as well as laptops and other things that may be needed for home study. With so many people out of work due to the pandemic, the need for our contributions is great. We hope that you will place your offering in our plate this month.

We have multiple options for giving available: PayPal Giving, Vanco and, of course, people can send a check into the office. Please refer to our website (link below) for more information on how to give.

<https://www.rockyhillucc.org/contributions>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

*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.*





Since the start of the pandemic-driven shutdown of the church building, I've generally been delivering scrip every two weeks for drive-by pickup behind the church.

I'll plan to continue that 2-week delivery cycle during the summer. The tentative schedule is posted below, although it is possible (maybe even likely) that some dates may need to shift to accommodate summer travel (as the Hall travel schedule is still in flux for July and August).

If you have email access, you'll continue to receive regular updates in advance of each delivery date. If you do not receive 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 summer scrip delivery dates:

- Saturday, July 11, 1pm
- Saturday, July 25, 1pm
- Saturday, August 8, 1pm
- Saturday, August 22, 1pm

Some retailers also offer e-cards that can be ordered and delivered at any time via email. Many of you are already taking advantage of these. Unfortunately, e-cards are generally not available for grocery cards.

Thanks to all of you who have continued to faithfully buy scrip during the past three months. Because of your steadfast support, we are continuing to earn in excess of \$1000 each month to support the mission and ministries of RHCC.

Dave Hall, Treasurer

Send your **prayer requests** to: office@rhccucc.org
Missed **worship** on Sunday on Zoom? Visit our website to view the recorded service!
www.RockyHillucc.org



JULY & AUGUST CALENDAR
UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS



All meetings below are also listed on our website: www.RockyHillucc.org

Racial Justice Discussion (zoom)

Thursday, July 9 at 7 p.m.

Recordings of the first two sessions are available on the member’s portal, on our website.
 Contact the office for assistance.

Worship (zoom)

Every Sunday at 10:00am, first Sunday of the month we celebrate communion.

Church School Class (zoom)

Every other Wednesday at 7pm, dates are: July 8, July 22, August 5, August 19, and September 2.
 These class sessions will be geared toward Pre-K to 5th graders.

Council and Core Ministry Team Meetings (zoom)

Council - Tuesday, July 14 and August 11

Facilities – Tuesday, July 7 and Wednesday, August 5

Worship – Wednesday, July 8 and Tuesday, August 4

Outreach & Witness – Monday, July 13 and Monday, August 10

Music Search Committee – Thursdays at 7pm (using Liz-Reed Swale personal zoom acct)

Racial Justice Steering Committee – dates to come

Safe Re-open Steering Committee – working via email, meeting dates to come

Staff Meeting – Tuesday, August 18 (tentative)

Scrip Pick-up (church parking lot)

Saturday, July 11, 1pm

Saturday, July 25, 1pm

Saturday, August 8, 1pm

Saturday, August 22, 1pm

Outreach Activities

Help with food pantry garden

Backpack Drive

Foodshare Walk virtually,

September 13-19.

