



THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



Monthly Newsletter of
Higganum Congregational Church and
The First Congregational Church of Haddam

Open and Affirming
Members of the United Church of Christ



In the Year of Our Lord 2022



Higganum Congregational Church and
First Congregational Church of Haddam
Returned mail to
P.O. Box 215
Haddam, CT 06438

Address Service Requested

Church websites:

HigganumChurch.org and HaddamChurch.org



Psalm 139:17-18

*"How weighty are my thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them –
they are more than the sand;
I come to the end –
I am still with you."*

Greetings my Friends,

May you feel God's presence in your life this day!

As September rolls in and school schedules begin, many of us are called back into a routine of obligations, and the opulence of summer begins to fade in the background. The weight of the world falls back upon us, and often our work unravels more quickly than we can repair.

Our lectionary readings of Luke bring us into some of Jesus' most difficult teachings about discipleship: letting go of family, letting go of possessions, letting go of answering to worldly powers and choosing to become a citizen of God. I, who have centered my life in celebrating God's presence amongst us, feel humbled when I read texts like Luke 14: 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple." or Luke 14:33 "So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all of your possessions."

Most of us simply don't read these passages, and those who do, often quote them in order to manipulate others. And Christianity, like every other human organization, unfortunately has its share of charlatans. A charlatan might uplift these texts to exploit those with troubled families

by encouraging them to hate and abandon their families and give allegiance to the charlatan. Or a charlatan might take advantage of the pure at heart by encouraging them to give everything to the charlatan in the name of God or church. So, we might tune out these passages because that is what we think of when we hear them.

On the other hand, if we tune in, these passages can invoke a sense of impossibility. Our deepest loyalties are to our families and so much of our attention is concerned with our possessions. How can we interpret these words or try to follow Jesus's statements without walking into a kind of madness and chaos, abandoning all our responsibilities?

I don't think that is what Jesus is asking of us now, though it was what he required of his early disciples. In Jesus' time, the rule of familial law was such that walking away from family would be interpreted as hatred. Yet despite this, Jesus encouraged the fisherman to abandon their nets and families when he called them to discipleship and to become "fishers' of men" (see Matthew 4:19). This was real, those early centuries of discipleship required this kind of commitment to God's kingdom above all human concerns, and it led to persecution, martyrdom, suffering, and death. Jesus was making sure that his disciples were given the facts and apprised the pain ahead if they chose to follow into his own martyrdom. It wasn't a picnic. It wasn't about abandoning family. It was about penetrating broken systems to expose that all of reality is God's kingdom, and all human-made systems could follow God's law, a law he reduced to 2 commandments. In Matthew 22:37, he gives us the greatest commandment, "to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind." And in Matthew 22:39, he tells us, "and a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

And where in the first century, the extreme faith of the Christian martyrs fueled the spread of Christianity, I believe today's discipleship and practice of Jesus' teachings strive more to find the "Middle Way" of these commandments. The second commandment has been called "The Golden Rule", "The

Golden Mean" and "The Middle Way". Now more than at any time in my life. I believe this Christian call to "The Middle Way" is the path toward salvation of our broken systems, and I am glad to have this Christian heritage to fall back upon and to guide me through these troubled times.

I think about Jesus telling us in Mark 12:17 to give Rome that which is Rome's and give God that which is God's. I believe Jesus made clear statements and lived his life both according to the rule of God's law, and according to Human laws (both Caesar's and the Temple's) and he encourages us to be obliged to both our human systems and to our spiritual life. This is another kind of "Middle Way" his teachings encourage us to take seriously.

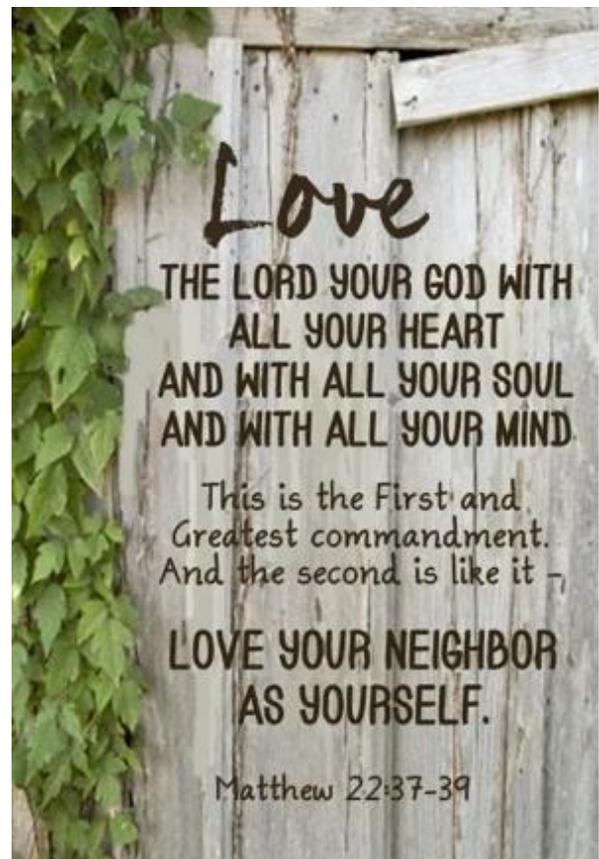
It is not irreconcilable to do one's duty and to love God and use one's influence to sway toward the Good. But we can do a better job. We can be better stewards. We can make a greater effort to co-create with God to make our human systems more reflective of what we know God advocates and what Jesus' ministry and mission was about: peace, justice, compassion, care, liberation, and healing.

I think that Jesus' sacrifice of his own life, and his harsh words in Luke as he warned his disciples of the cost of discipleship ahead and the martyrdom they would experience, all helped pave the way of understanding for us now. And we are here, still paving this way, the middle way. I hope we have come a long way in the centuries of Christianity. I hope we are beyond the need of martyrs. I hope we have learned that we need not have scapegoats to reconcile us with God, we just need to make choices that are grounded in God's law, that support and protect the diversity and wonder of the world God has created and which we inhabit. We need not sacrifice our lives to bring about the Kingdom, but we can live our lives most fully and meaningfully, simply by choosing God as the center of our lives, and the foundation of all other relationships, and making each daily

decision reflect this determination. I think that is today's challenge of discipleship.

My prayer for you today is that you consider your own discipleship and your path to the Golden Mean or Middle Way. What does it mean to you? How do you express it in your life? What is your next step along your path? May God Bless you and lead you forward.

Blessings and Regards,
Rev. Hilary McLellan





A NOTE FROM YOUR MODERATORS

Thanks to the persistence of Terry Smith, we have reestablished contact with the attorney and have signed agreements to proceed with resolving the legal issues involved in our joining process. Stay tuned for further developments.

Led by the efforts of Pastor Hilary, conversations have been initiated to determine how FCCH/HCC can contribute to helping the Haddam Co-op Nursery survive. Several Co-Op parents are taking the lead in exploring how to reopen and will get back to us soon. We hope they will be able to open in September and then be able to explore reconfiguration options. The Co-Op is an important outreach service to our community, and we will do what we can to insure its continuation. Thanks to Pastor Hilary, Sue Craffy, Ginny Evensen, Amy Harlow, Lori Chadwick, Steve Bull for attending the informational session.

Once again, we ask that you check in with Lindamae Peck and John Anderson as they continue their efforts to fill positions on the new slate of officers and committee posts. Again, please give thought for how you can contribute to the success of our new church.

John Edmondson Greg Shields
Moderator FCCH Moderator HCC

REPORTS AND MEETING MINUTES

August JT Council Meeting Minutes [HERE](#)
August Mission Outreach Report for JT Council [HERE](#)

Annual Reports

Higganum Congregational Church [HERE](#)
First Congregational Church of Haddam [HERE](#)

New Church ByLaws

Revised May 1st [HERE](#)

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

August 7th (warm, clear)
11 at 8am Gazebo
16 at 9:30am
August 14th (sunny, 70's)
10 + 1 child at 8am Gazebo
32 at 9:30am
41 on August 21st (cloudy, warm)
40 on August 28th (cloudy, warm)
Neal Blodgett's 101st Birthday



COVID GUIDELINES

We will continue with "**Mask Optional**" during worship, when speaking from the Chancel or singing, in Sunday School, and any other time on the churches' property. Distance seating during worship is available. Either door may be used to enter/exit the church, and **Fellowship will be held outside after worship**. View our complete Covid-19 response [HERE](#).



CHURCH OFFICE

Drop by or contact the church office on Tuesdays from 9am -12 noon* and Thursdays from 1-4pm*.

fcchaddam@gmail.com
860-345-2742

The Church Office voicemail and email are monitored during posted office hours. If you need to speak with **Rev Hilary outside of these days/times, please text or call her church cell phone at 860-316-3837.*

Please note, the church office will be open on Thursday, September 1st from 1-4pm and Friday, September 2nd from 9am-12noon.



SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

Please contact Committee Chairs for additional meeting information.

Adult Spiritual Formation with Rev. Hilary Mondays, 10am (Lewis House / Zoom)

Bread Ministry Mixing Tuesdays 9am (FCCH)

Choir Rehearsal Thursdays 7pm (FCCH)
Please confirm the start date with Choir Director

Bread Ministry Baking Fridays 9am (FCCH)

Artisan Bread Sale Fridays 3-6pm (Higginum Farmer's Market at Haddam Elementary School)



Crop Walk Planning Tuesday, September 6th, 9am (Lewis House / Zoom)

Prayer Shawl Wednesday, September 7th, 10am (HCC)

Prudential Monday, September 12th, 5:30pm (Lewis House / Zoom)

JT Diaconate Monday, September 12th, 7pm (Lewis House / Zoom)

Make A Quilt Group Wednesday, September 14th, 6:30pm (FCCH Fellowship Hall)

HCC Finance Monday, September 19th, 7pm(HCC)

JT Church Council Tuesday, September 20th, 7pm (Lewis House / Zoom)

CE: 3W's Wacky Wonderful Wednesday! September 21st 6-8pm (HCC)

Belfry Articles Due Tuesday, September 20th to fchaddam@gmail.com

Quilt Show Working Group Wednesday, September 28th, 6:30pm (Lewis House)

ZOOM LOGIN

Please use the Zoom login below for access to FCCH HCC meetings, adult education, and fellowship programs.

ID: 391 987 2707 / Password: 90523

Phone call-in number: +1 646 558 8656



"For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God. God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken." - Psalm 62.5-6

As a new program year dawns full of sermon series, Bible studies, justice initiatives, and an avalanche of committee meetings, I invite you to seek out spaces of silence. Listen beyond the clutter and clamor of the to-dos, must-dos, and didn't-dos to the voice of God calling your name. What is God trying to tell you?

Beloved, may God speak to your heart a word of hope in the midst of fear and a word of assurance in the midst of great transition.

Blessings,
Rev. Isaac Lawson (he/him)

MINISTRY MATTERS

September 7th 6:30pm - Learn about new and exciting developments and offerings at the Center for Transformational Leadership, in the area of Digital Ministry, and the Conference. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

FINDING HOPE in our everyday lives
September 10th 8:45am-4pm - Join in a retreat at the Edward's House in Framingham, MA. "Escape" for a day with other **Christian women** and learn ways to navigate in this crazy world. Click [HERE](#) for more information or to register.



Sundays 9:30am
Higganum Congregational
 with Rev Hilary McLellan

September 4th

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost



September 11th

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost



September 18th

We will not gather for worship due to the Mission Golf Outing & Community Dinner.

September 25th

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Our adult spiritual formation class is viewing and discussing videos related to peace and justice. "What's the Word" Bible Study explores how the scripture intersects our spiritual lives. **Join Pastor Hilary on Mondays at 10am in the Lewis House or on Zoom.**



INTERCESSORY PRAYER LIST

Click [HERE](#) for the current Intercessory Prayer List.

Note from the church office: The need for prayer is sometimes personal and difficult to clarify. We would like to keep our prayer list as current and active as possible. Since often we don't receive good news of recovery, we will now be removing names monthly. Please feel free to contact the office to restore any prayer concerns that are removed prematurely in this process. There is no time limit on prayer concerns.

COMMUNION AT HOME

If you would like to receive communion at home, please contact the church office at fcchaddam@gmail.com or call 860-345-2742 and your request will be shared.

CHURCH HOSPITALITY

Fellowship and refreshments will be enjoyed **outdoors** after worship.

SERVICE STREAMING

Visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel for access to services on Sundays at 9:35am or any other time to view archives. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SxL2fMB-DZu4BxaM6hWNg>

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

A sign-up sheet is available in church to donate flowers for the altar. You will have the option to include a dedication which will be printed in the bulletin.

LAY READERS

Would like to be a reader during Sunday service? All ages are welcome! No experience necessary and we can give you a few pointers! Contact the church office if you are interested.



Children's Kindness Camp was a success as you can see from the following photos.

Special thanks to Dena who put in such hard work creating a wonderful curriculum! I know the kids enjoyed it!!!! I would also like to thank Barbara who was there every day to help Dena and to bring her grandson Gunner. Thanks to Lori Chadwick for all her help decorating and in the classroom!

Throughout the week we had many in-class helpers. I'd to thank Linda Hansen, Ginny Murphy, Dawn and Emily Alger, and Sadie Harlow for being there for CKC!

Everyone did an amazing job! Thank you so much!

Next up will be the **3W'S- Wacky, Wonderful Wednesday's!** Fellowship in the form of movies or games (TBD) 6-8pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at HCC fellowship hall. Pizza and popcorn available for purchase. *Parents are welcome to drop off their children or stay and enjoy the night.* **September 21st** is our first 3W's so mark your calendar!

Thank you for all your support.

Peace and Blessings,
Amy Harlow CE Director



CKC kids made bookmarks for the Brainerd Library and then walked to the Library to deliver them.





Circle Time



Be the "I" in KIND



On Sunday, Clementine, Brayden, Gunner, and Dena reading the story of the Lion and the Mouse during worship.



CKC kids made this beautiful quilt with Dena's assistance.



Miss Amy presents flowers as a thank you to CKC helpers



**RON BOOTH
MISSION GOLF OUTING**

*A glorious day of grand golf, good food,
& great memories!*

Our largest church fund raising event will be held **September 18th**. Once again HCC and FCCH are joining forces to serve the community together better and with more generosity.

The Ron Booth Mission Golf Outing returns to the Lyman Golf Club, the Player Course, in Middlefield. The **Community Dinner** will be hosted again by Danny and Sue Gascoyne beginning at 3pm with dinner served at 5pm. **All are welcome!**

Click [HERE](#) for more details. You will find information about the Golf Outing, Community Dinner, Sponsorship Opportunities, and Raffle Donations. Click [HERE](#) for a printable Registration Form.

This is a fun time, but it does take a lot of **VOLUNTEERS** to make it a success. Join us! Please consider how you might help - prepare dinner, venue set-up/take down, writing thank you notes, helping at the golf course and at the dinner venue.

Can you help to provide food for the dinner? If so, click [HERE](#) to indicate what you will bring. If you would like to bring something else, please contact Linda Hansen at 860-345-8746 or lhansen625@yahoo.com.

So whether you golf, volunteer, provide a sponsorship, a raffle prize, or join us for dinner, you will find the experience one of the highlights of 2022. At the same time, you will help us to celebrate Ron's vision of an event focused on what matters most, **Faith, Family, Friends, Fun, & Food!**



CROP WALK

The Haddam/Killingworth CROP WALK will be held at Chatfield Hollow State Park on **October 2, 2022** at noon if you would like to walk in person. You could also do a virtual walk at home. **Sponsor envelopes** will be available in early September in church, in the church office, or from Candy Casale.

The need for food assistance is greater than ever this year. A percentage of the funds raised at our walk will be received by the Haddam Food Pantry, the Killingworth Helping Hands and the Backpack program.

Plan to enjoy a walk in the October sunshine and help feed our needy neighbors

SAVE YOUR POP TOPS



Simply take off the tops from beverage cans and bring them to church. We will get them the Ronald McDonald House in New Haven and they will recycle them for cash. **Let's see if we can**

collect 5 pounds of pop tops by the end of September. The Ronald McDonald House envisions a world where all children have access to medical care and their families are supported and actively involved in their children's care.

HARVEST HOME DINNER ON SUNDAY EVENINGS will begin this fall at St Stephen Church in East Haddam. A training meeting was held on Sunday, August 21st and a representative attended for us. We have been assigned to do the dinner on **October 9th**.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet at 10am at HCC on the **first Wednesday of every month**. Newcomers are welcome to join us! For more information on this ministry, please contact Carol Ricker or Edie Williams.



Welcome to *Blakely Nicole Cugini* born 7/29/22 shown with Mom Logan (Craffey) Cugini and Opie. **Thank you to the Prayer Shawl Ministry of her beautiful blanket.**



ARTISAN BREAD MINISTRY

The Artisan Bread Ministry sells their delicious bread at the **Higganum Farmers' Market, held at Haddam Elementary School on Friday's from 3 pm - 6 pm.**

Our Artisan Bread Ministry has been a success due to our many volunteers. It is fun to be at the market and meet new neighbors and see what the farmers and crafters have for sale. If you are interested in selling bread, please sign up [HERE](#). (Don't worry, you won't have to sell all by yourself!)

All the proceeds from the bread sale will be given to Social Services in early October. This will help families in Haddam stay warm in the winter.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE SCHOOL BAGS

THANK YOU to everyone who sewed the school bags this winter and to those who donated school supplies. 32 bags have been filled and were blessed during worship on August 28th. They will be delivered to CWS Depot in Meriden. A cash donation will be covering the cost for shipping of each bag. There are some left over items that will be delivered to Youth and Family Service to be used locally. THANK YOU ALL for your support.



QUILTING MAKING GROUP

Watch the bulletin and weekly email for days/times. Our next Quilt Group and will meet in **FCCH Fellowship Hall on Wednesday September 14th from 6:30-8pm.**

Do you have a quilt project that needs finishing? Would you like to spend some time working on your project with others who like to sew? Advice is available to help you plan your projects. If you are interested, please leave your name in the office or speak with Dena or Ginny Evensen.



MEMORIAL GARDEN STONE

A memorial stone is a great addition to the HCC Memorial Garden as well as a place for friends and family to visit. With the family’s approval, we would like to add a stone for Deb Livingston. Deb died of breast cancer at the young age of 42 in 2017, leaving a young son, AJ and husband Dan as well as many friends and family to mourn. She was very active at The First Church of Haddam in the choir and was first to assist with any fundraisers. She would be just “tickled pink” to be included in the Memorial Garden. The cost is \$250 and we are collecting donations which can be sent to FCCH (memo line Livingston stone) or to Sue Craffey. Any questions or concerns: contact Sue Craffey or Sabine Nyenhuis

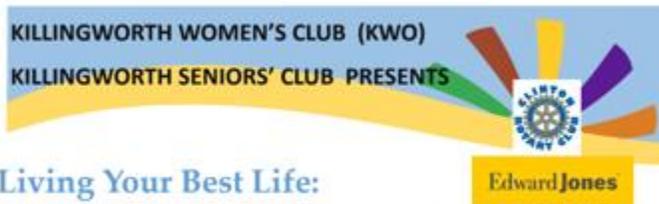


HADDAM AREA REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT (HaRRP)

It’s time to finalize the details for our project! It is exciting and essential that we double-check all the details needed to submit our “Green Light” form and wait for a family to be assigned to us. If you need help accessing training materials reach out to Lori to find time to work together. The “Green Light” form is being completed item by item. Areas identified that need additional attention include: Welcome Committee, Appointment tracking system, Family Financial training plan, Education, ESOL and Cultural Orientation plans. These areas were on the back burner while Fund Raising, Project Budgeting, House preparation, Healthcare planning were the focus of our efforts. All these teams performed their tasks efficiently and professionally. It is hoped that we will be ready to “Green Light” the project by early September. It’s not too late to become involved. See Jack or Lori to get more details.

SUMMER WORSHIP at the Higganum Gazebo





Living Your Best Life:
Recognizing Aging in Yourself & Others, or
Where Did My Eyebrows Go?

LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE:

The Killingworth Women's Organization and the Killingworth Senior Club announce an **informational health awareness program geared toward senior citizens and caregivers**. The event will take place on Wednesday, **September 14, 2022**, at the St. Lawrence Church social hall, 7 Hemlock Drive, Killingworth.

Register no later than September 5, 2022 at KillingworthSeniors@gmail.com, or call 860-452-4420 and leave a message with your name and phone number. **The program is free, but reservations are required as attendance is limited to 60.** Check-in begins at 10:00 am with presentations starting at 10:30 am ending at 1:00 pm. A light lunch will be served.

Presenters include Keith Lyke, pharmacist, Molly Standley, Family & Patient Advocate, Micaela Finnegan, LMSW with Shoreline Estuary, and Mary Fretz, EMT, Killingworth Ambulance Association.

The team will address health issues as one ages, medication changes and OTC supplements, being a caregiver, elder depression/mental health, need for socialization, senior nutritional needs, exercise, and Medicare coverage. Learn how to best communicate concerns with your doctor.



SNEUCC INSTALLATION

The Middlesex Association announces that the Congregational Church of East Hampton has called a new pastor, the Reverend Amie McCarthy. All Middlesex Association congregations are invited to bless and celebrate this new partnership. Rev. McCarthy will be installed on **Sunday, September 11, 2022 at 2pm**. The Reverend Isaac Lawson, our Associate Conference Minister, will be preaching. For additional details click [HERE](#)



UCC SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Join us **online** for the UCC Summit, **The Space Between: The Evolving Church in a Post-Pandemic World on September 19-21**. The program includes engaging presentations and an invitation to bring your best thinking to reimagine a vibrant church of today and tomorrow. More information and the registration link can be found [HERE](#).

The Partners in Building Event will be held **online September 29-30**, pastors and church leaders are invited to attend and engage in various informative presentations and workshops about how to repurpose, finance, and manage church-owned property. Workshops include: **More Than You Can Ask or Imagine**: Visioning and Fundraising Campaigns; **Construction, Cost and a Conductor**: Partners In Vision and the Importance of a Project Manager; and **Virtual is Not Going Anywhere**: The Future of Hybrid. More information and the registration link can be found [HERE](#).



SAVE THE DATE

The FCCH HCC **Christmas Holiday Quilt Show** will be on **December 3rd**. Show quilts you have made or were made by family members. Raffle tickets for a hand-made Christmas quilt and a handmade Afghan for sale in late September. More information will be available next month.

NEEDS FOR THE SHOW-We make favors for our guests. This year we will be making Christmas Crackers. **We need lots of empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls.** There will be a box on the table at coffee hour for your "generous" deposit.



- 05 June Lamoureux
- 07 Washington Malave
- 10 Ron Alger
- 15 Olivia Harry
- 24 Jordan Tupay
- 26 Brian Thayer



- 04 Alan and Linda Hansen
- 07 Ken and Catherine Wendt



GIVING INFORMATION

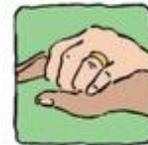
Our Ministry and Mission are maintained by your generosity. Thank you for how you support FCCH and HCC with your gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure. Financial contributions may be made at in-person worship services or mailed to the addresses below anytime.

First Congregational Church of Haddam
P.O. Box 215
Haddam, CT 06438

Higganum Congregational Church
23 Parsonage Road
Higganum, CT 06441

Online gifts to FCCH may be made [HERE](#). It also should be possible to set up direct payments from your own bank to either FCCH or HCC; contact your bank for more information.

HAPPY LABOR DAY



Always
give
yourselves
fully to
the work
of the
Lord ...

1 Corinthians 15:58