



CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, NEWINGTON, CT

Belfry Echoes

WINTER 2023



**WE ARE AN OPEN AND
AFFIRMING CONGREGATION**

Worship Service |
Every Sunday at 10:00 am

Communion Service |
1st Sunday each month

Rev. Melanie Enfield, *Senior Pastor*
menfield@newingtonucc.org

Rev. Dr. Kenneth C. Brookes, *Pastor Emeritus*
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 **Like us on Facebook**

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Advent Message FROM THE PASTOR



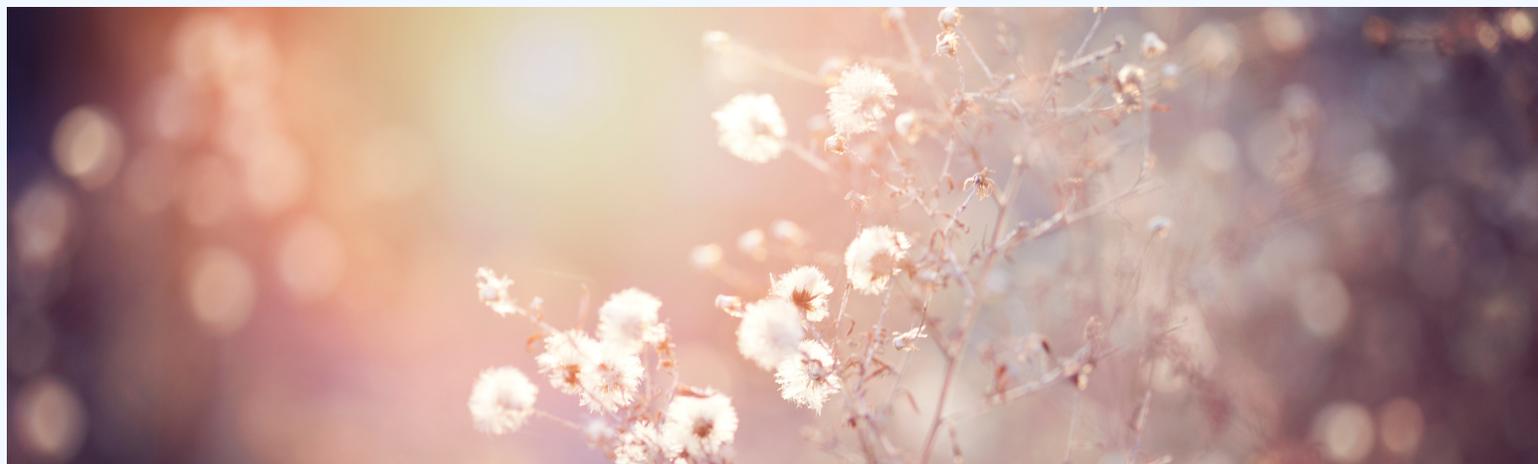
Dear friends in Christ,

We are entering the Advent/Christmas season when we deck the halls and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The world right now makes us all uncertain. Many of us are weighed down by the war in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine. Issues such as the opioid crisis, gun violence, mental health, and the politics of our country also make us anxious. So, during this Advent season we will consider, how does a weary world rejoice? I pray that we will find comfort sitting with Mary, Zechariah, and the shepherds as they bring greetings of “Do not fear” to the world. I pray that as we worship, we may find community – together. I pray that as we serve those around us, we may find hope – together. I pray that as we give to one another and those less fortunate, we will find joy – together! I pray that as we light candles, we will find peace – together. May our community of faith give Glory to God.

May the blessing of our Great God be with you,

Rev. Melanie Enfield

PASTOR





How does a weary world rejoice?

We root ourselves in ritual

When the world wears us thin, we gather in God's presence. All it takes is just one voice of joy to be a force for good.

ADVENT PREACHING SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 3RD

"Longing to be Restored"

Luke 1:1-23

Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 24TH

A Dramatic Presentation: The Story of the Nativity as told by the Shepherd's Wife

Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 10TH

"Dreaming Impossible Dreams"

Luke 1:21-45

Rev. Sara Salomons - Wilson

DECEMBER 24TH | 5PM

Christmas Eve Family Service

More details on page 6

DECEMBER 17TH

"Allowing Ourselves to be Amazed"

Luke 1:57-66

Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 24TH | 10PM

"We Make Room"

Rev. Melanie Enfield

DECEMBER 14TH | 7PM

A Service of Peace in a Weary World

A quiet service of scripture and song. People will be invited to light a candle of peace in the midst of despair in our world.



WINTER CALENDAR

Night of Lights... Dec. 1st, 6pm

Cookie Walk... Dec. 2nd, 8am

Christmas Party... Dec. 3rd, 11am

SALT Dinner & Conversation... Dec. 3rd, 5:00pm

FUSE Group Meeting... Dec 3rd, 6pm

Women's Ministry Group... Dec. 5th, 10:30am

Common Meeting... Dec. 5th, 7pm

Christmas by Candlelight Concert... Dec. 10th, 4pm

Christmas Concert Reception... Dec 10th, 5pm

Council Meeting... Dec. 12th, 7pm

A Service of Peace in a Weary World... Dec. 14th, 7pm

FUSE & SALT Caroling Party... Dec. 17th, 5:30pm

Christmas Eve Services... Dec. 24th, 5pm & 10pm

Christmas Day... December 25th

New Year's Day... January 1st, 2024

Family First Friday... January 5th, 6pm

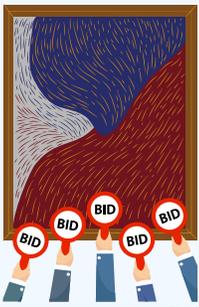
Common Meeting... January 9th, 7pm

Council Meeting... January 16th, 7pm

SALT Dinner at Center Church... January 21st, 1:45pm

Family First Friday... February 2nd, 6pm





Family Promise

of Central Connecticut

ART AUCTION

Please join us on December 3rd, 2023 for a Family Promise Art Auction. The event will take place at Trinity on Main in New Britain. The doors open at 2:00 for registration and the auction starts at 3:00.

Tickets are \$10 and include wine and hors d'oeuvres.

All of the pieces of artwork are original and have been donated by artists throughout the tri-state area. The proceeds from this event will continue to fund the work of housing stability in Central Connecticut.

Please see Cheryl Liedke for tickets or email her at cherylliedke@gmail.com



GOT LUNCH NEWINGTON

Got Lunch Newington has been selected by the Store Leadership Team at Stop & Shop to benefit from the Bloomin' 4 Good Program. The Got Lunch program will receive \$1 from every specially marked \$10.99 Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet sold during the month of December 2023 at: 44 Fenn Road, Newington CT



Want to learn
eco-friendly swaps?

look for them in our
weekly newsletter!

Do you know about our church's effort to help small farmers around the world? For the past several years, the Green Team has sold coffee, chocolate, and other items during Coffee Hour. Our purpose for working with Equal Exchange is to support initiatives that support our desire to be good stewards to the Earth.

Equal Exchange works with over 40 small farmer organizations around the world in countries such as Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia and Ethiopia. Equal Exchange works to give these farmers a fair price, help them build their own businesses and restore and preserve our planet. They promote safe and sustainable farming methods and working conditions, and promote the prohibition of the use of the more dangerous pesticides and herbicides.

We appreciate the support of many in the congregation over the years. Look for announcements in the church emails and the Bulletin of when we will be selling next!

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you! **Envelope Enclosed**



Night of Lights

Again, this year our church will have a significant role in the Newington Night of Lights.

Main Street is closed for the event – right in front of our church.

This is a great community outreach activity – and it's a lot of fun!

Where: Here at church.

When: Friday, December 1st, (two one-hour shifts: 6PM to 7PM and 7PM to 8PM).

What: Volunteer opportunities during each shift are for:

Serving Cocoa

Distributing Candy Canes

Live Nativity (Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Magi)

Sanctuary Greeter

Who: You!

How do I sign up: Put your name on the signup sheet in the Narthex.

Be a part of this great community event!



Christmas PARTY

DECEMBER 3RD
11 AM

Come downstairs following worship (or just sneak in at 11:00 am) for a party! Join us with some entertaining crafts and as we decorate (and eat) Christmas cookies. Rumor has it, Santa is also dropping by to read a story to all the kids. This will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with the Church family.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Gather55

NOURISH · CONNECT · GIVE

CHRISTMAS LUNCH



Anyone who is available is welcome to come and celebrate the Christmas season sharing lunch together on Tuesday Dec. 5th at 11:30 am. at Gather 55. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office. For those that need rides, we will meet at Church at 11:15 am. Gather55 has a "pay-what-you-can" philosophy, and it combines great food with an inclusive vibe. It is a Hands On Hartford initiative to serve neighbors, engage volunteers and connect communities in the Hartford area. They will offer separate checks. Gather 55 is located at 55 Bartholomew Ave, Hartford, CT 06106. Hope you can join us!





2023
Cookie Walk
DRIVE-THRU



We are calling all bakers to bake some cookies for the Cookie Walk on December 2nd! If you plan to bake cookies for the event, we ask that you plan to bring them to the church by 8pm on Thursday, November 30th. We hope you will join us! Please sign up in the Narthex.



Saturday, December 2nd, 9am It's that time of year again! The Cookie Walk is a drive-thru event with pre-boxed (3 sizes) homemade cookies available for purchase. We sell out every year so we need lots of homemade cookies to support this church fundraiser! This is a very popular community event and we appreciate your help in making it a success!

MARKET SQUARE THRIFT SHOP



Our Church sponsored Market Square Thrift Shop is in need of kids' clothes, size 5-12. If you can help with winter clothing donations, we are open Wednesday - Saturday, 11AM - 3PM to drop off your items. Thank you for your help!



calling all angels, shepherds and kings!

On Sunday, December 24th at 5pm we will present the "Nativity Story in Tableau" during our **Christmas Eve Family Worship service**. Children and their parents are invited to come to the church just prior to the service to choose their costumes (we'll have helpers here to assist you!) and then the children will sit with their families for the start of the service. Everyone will have a chance to take part in this special retelling of the Nativity Story! More information will be sent via email to our Church School Families soon!



*Christmas
by
Candlelight*

December 10 at 4:00
Church of Christ, Congregational
1075 Main Street, Newington

FREE CONCERT

Music news

Sunday, December 10 at 4:00, our choirs perform with orchestra, directed by Peter Niedmann. A beautiful assortment of carols for Handbells, Youth Choir, and Adult Choir. Music of Handel, Rutter, Forrester, and more. Sing-along favorites for audience. Sanctuary is lit by candlelight. A perfect way to get in the holiday spirit! Bring family and friends. FREE CONCERT



An Update on St. Vincent's Center for Children with Disabilities in Haiti

An Organization which we have supported for over 25 years

In Haiti, the Ministry of Education mandates the school calendar: openings, holidays, exam days, closings. Last year, the "full" academic year began not in September, due to violence, but in January, so everyone was shortchanged. This year, classes started on September 11th. The usual pattern is that the first week or so is slow...not all students return right away. Our full complement of students is 227; and, last year, we averaged 190 students and all faculty daily. That's a remarkable statement given the hurdles both had to overcome to get safely to campus.

On Friday, September 8th, there was a teachers' meeting to discuss the opening of school. For those of you who regularly follow the news in Haiti, you know that the violence in Carrefour Feuille has been especially grim. Among the thousands who have fled are 16 SVC faculty and three employees. Most people fled without taking anything, and their homes were first looted and then torched. At Friday's meeting, 14 of these victims attended the faculty meeting, which gives an idea of how deeply committed these teachers are to their students and their work.

Once on campus, the usual routine is for the school nurse to check each student's health. If a physician is required, the student is taken either to our downtown Medical Clinic or to a nearby hospital. The biggest issue, however, which often finds students in the morning with headaches or even writhing in pain, is lack of food. Parents have been unable to provide breakfast. So, the school nurse administers the most-frequently used medicine: food. Students then deemed well head straight to class, where they become immediately engaged in their lessons.

The length of our academic day depends on traffic pattern and today, those patterns often depend on locations of gang activity. Bus drivers refuse to drive if there is violence near pick-up spots. When this action became pronounced last year, parents banded together and rented taptaps (the local taxi) to convey their children to class. That is how deeply they value their children's education and what they risk to ensure it.





Pledge envelopes for 2024 will be available for pickup on November 27th in the hallway near the South entrance by Dunkin Donuts)



Christmas Memorial Fund

Each Christmas we have memorial poinsettias in the Sanctuary during our Christmas Services. It is a chance to memorialize loved ones during the Christmas season. After the Christmas Service, the plants are delivered to members in our congregation who are bereaved, ill, or are no longer able to attend services. Funds that are collected in excess of the money needed to purchase the plants will be donated to various missions of the church. If you wish to make a contribution, please make your check payable to Church of Christ, Congregational, put "Christmas Memorial Fund" on the memo line, and return it along with this completed form to the Church Office by **Sunday, December 10th.**

PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONTRIBUTION OF: (check one) ...



\$15.00 Additional Donations \$

... TO THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FUND

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY

CONTRIBUTION FROM:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF: (one name per line unless it's a couple)

PLEASE give us your name and phone in case we have any questions.

NAME:

PHONE: