



# THE GOOD NEWS *from the Belfry*



Monthly Newsletter of the  
Higganum Congregational Church  
and the First Congregational Church of Haddam  
United Church of Christ



In the Year of Our Lord 2021



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

Address Service Requested

Church websites:  
[haddamchurch.org](http://haddamchurch.org) and [higganumchurch.org](http://higganumchurch.org)

Dear Haddam and Higganum Friends,

Between a resurgence of Covid cases and the resulting renewed discussion of pandemic precautions, the recent, tragic loss of a youth in our community, other significant health concerns among our members, and anticipation of and uncertainty around September events (Rally Day, the first Joint Golf Tournament, and votes by the congregations about the members' intent as regards joining the two churches), I sense a bit of ANXIETY floating around our community.

(If this does not apply to you, hooray! Tuck the following away for any future need.)

Some regain strength and equanimity reading the many scriptures that remind us of God's Providence and Love. For others, music, contemplation of nature, or physical movement/exercise provide relief.

I would offer Christina Rossetti's poem, "Up-Hill," found at <https://poets.org/poem/hill>.

*Does the road wind up-hill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.*

*But is there for the night a resting-place?  
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.  
May not the darkness hide it from my face?  
You cannot miss that inn.*

*Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?  
Those who have gone before.  
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?  
They will not keep you standing at that door.*

*Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?  
Of labour you shall find the sum.  
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?  
Yea, beds for all who come.*

These are trying times. The griefs and frustrations we feel are real. We are not, however, alone. Christ accompanies us and welcomes our battered spirits to rest in him.

Blessings and Peace,  
Pastor Michelle

## INTERIM PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Michelle holds **in-person office hours at Lewis House from 1-3pm Tuesday afternoons**. Stop by for "Outdoor Hours" weather permitting (anyone) and/or to meet in the Pastor's Study (fully-vaccinated individuals or households, masks required). **No Office Hours August 10th**. Pastor Michelle sometimes works from home, and her day off varies with family needs, so please feel free to reach out to schedule a visit (phone/text at [860-597-4223/mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com](mailto:860-597-4223/mmadsenbibeau@gmail.com)).

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## VIGIL

We join our wider community grieving the loss of Gianna Vincelett. Friends and family have organized a candlelight vigil for **Saturday, August 7th, at 8pm on the Higganum Green**. Gia would have entered HK High School this fall. She was a childhood friend and teammate to youth of our churches. Please keep them and all who treasured this young woman in prayer.



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## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Our current guidelines for public worship may be read on page 6. In addition, given the CDC/CT Health Department recommendation for mask-wearing indoors even by those who are vaccinated, *we ask that any group comprised of multiple households gathering at either of our campuses also resume this precaution unless meeting outdoors*. Please speak with Pastor Michelle if you have any questions.

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## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Keep our Pastoral Search Committee in prayer as they continue receiving and reviewing candidate profiles and interviewing candidates. Pastoral Search Committee members are Mark Soneson (Chair), Candy Casale, Amy Harlow, Sue Henehan, Ralph Livieri, Sabine Nyenhuis, and Lindamae Peck. Read the FCCH/HCC Ministry Opportunity Listing [HERE](#).



## ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Most Church meetings held on Zoom may be accessed during the appointed hours at:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3854472572?pwd=MXk3ODBFc0Vzei83d3hBOXRzVHNwUT09>  
 Telephone: +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)  
 Meeting ID: 385 447 2572 Password: 536662

## AUGUST MEETINGS

Mission/Outreach – Wednesday, August 4th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at FCCH Lewis)  
Joint Diaconate – Monday, August 9th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at HCC Fellowship)  
Physical Reopening Team – (tentative) Thursday, August 12th, 8:30am (Zoom)  
Joint Christian Education – Thursday, August 12th, 7pm by Zoom  
HCC Finance – Mon., August 16th, 7pm (HCC)  
Joint Council – Tuesday, August 24th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at FCCH Lewis)  
 Please contact Committee Chairs for agendas and details of meeting information.

## “READY” SERMON SERIES



This summer, we are getting “Ready” and “Set” for church growth.

Click the links below to view or review materials from the

July "Ready" Sermon Series drawing from Loren Mead's *More Than Numbers: Ways Churches Grow*,

To view a copy of the Growth Grid, click [HERE](#).

July 11th: [Combined Stretch Session/Sermon "Marked"](#); Link to Tani Roger's blog "[Growing Beyond Numbers](#)"

July 18th: [Stretch Session \(Numeric and Maturational Growth\)](#); Sermon "[Bearing Fruit](#)"

July 25th: [Stretch Session \(Organic and Incarnational Growth\)](#); Sermon "[Body Building](#)"

## AUGUST 2021 9:30am SUNDAY WORSHIP

### August 1st at HCC

*Worship with Holy Communion*



Proverbs 24:28-29, Matthew 7:1-5, 12  
 “Going for Gold”

## “Set”



### August 8th at HCC

“Set” Series: “Teaming Up”  
 | Peter 10:1-10

### August 15th at HCC

“Set” Series: *Worship*

### August 22nd at FCCH

“Set” Series: *Education*

### August 29th at FCCH

“Set” Series: *Mission*

## 8:00am GAZEBO SERVICES

We are offering brief outdoor worship services at the Higganum Gazebo at 8am on summer Sundays through September 19th. Our upcoming August schedule is below.



August 8th Worship with Holy Communion  
 August 15th Morning Worship  
 August 22nd Worship with Holy Communion  
 August 29th Morning Worship

No masks will be required for fully vaccinated individuals at these services, but unvaccinated individuals are asked to mask.

Please bring your own chair. Leashed dogs are welcome!



July 12, 2021

Feedback on the combined in-person and livestream services indicates that the quality of the livestream continues to improve, although there are still problems with the music reproduction.



The gazebo services began July 11 and will continue throughout the summer.

There will be Congregational Meetings July 18 to vote on whether to accept the hiring of Lynn Pandiani as the new Administrative Assistant, per the MOU between the churches.

Congregational Meetings will be held in September to consider joining FCCH and HCC as one church. The membership lists for both churches are being updated so that every member will receive notification of this meeting.

Deacons are reminded to call their sheep to update them on the changes regarding masks in the in-person services, the proposed hiring of the Administrative Assistant and the joining meeting to be held in September.

The Annual Organ Concert is being planned for October 17 or 24.

The water at HCC may need to be tested, and the sidewalk is being repaired soon.

A "pick-up" choir will provide an anthem for summer services.

Vacation Bible School will be held at Higganum Methodist Church beginning July 19. Our Christian Education Committee is joining and supporting this effort.

Dr. James Ross, Minister for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at SNEUCC will be invited to visit our churches in October to assist with program recommendations.

The next Joint Diaconate meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2021.

-Submitted by Liz Anderson



## SERVICE STREAMING

Access to the service by livestream at YouTube is provided. Visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SxL2fMB-DZu4BxaM6hWNg> to view archived streams anytime or Sundays at 9:35am for the service on a slight delay.

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## SUMMER HOSPITALITY

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| August 1  | HCC Trustees and Board of Finance (at HCC)        |
| August 8  | HCC Outreach (at HCC)                             |
| August 15 | Combined Music (at HCC)                           |
| August 22 | FCCH Christian Education and Prudential (at FCCH) |
| August 29 | FCCH Christian Service and Stewardship (at FCCH)  |



The Flowers on the altar on Sunday, August 1st, were given by Sue Craffey in celebration of Logan and Dan's wedding on August 8th.

*Congratulations and blessings on the couple!*



On Sunday, August 1st, we prayed for our short-term mission team traveling to Maine to work with Mission at the Eastward (MATE) the week of August 15th: **Lori and Alan Chadwick, Sue Henehan and Greg Shields, and Gwen and Bruce Dubee.**

During the service, gifts were received towards a special offering in support of the team. Along with contributions from the Mission/Outreach Committee, **the amount for MATE will be at least \$850!** Thank you to all!

These funds will help provide materials for building projects. MATE's Housing Ministry every year helps 70-80 clients in need stay in their homes by doing home repairs they otherwise could not afford.

Please pray for the six traveling team members as well as Ginny and Jack Murphy (who had planned to participate until Jack had to have shoulder surgery 😞).

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### FCCH LANDSCAPING

Many thanks to **Alex Battistoni** for keeping the grass mowed at FCCH!

If you are available to help with an upcoming weeding party, please contact Steve Bull.



## Are You Able?

### OFFICE REOPENING

With the arrival of Lynn Pandiani (pictured below receiving the HCC key from Interim Pastor Michelle!) as our new Administrative Assistant, the Church Office in the Lewis House at First Congregational Church of Haddam has reopened! The regular hours are:

**Tuesdays, 1pm-4pm**  
**Thursdays, 9am to Noon**



*Until further notice, please plan to wear a mask when visiting the Church Office regardless of your vaccination status. Thank you!*



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### GIVING INFORMATION

FCCH has an online contribution option accessible [HERE](#). Mailing addresses are:

Higganum Congregational Church  
23 Parsonage Road, Higganum, CT 06441

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

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Our gatherings for public worship may include unvaccinated individuals as well as those at increased probability for Covid-19 complications due to age or health conditions. Those attending our gatherings do so at their own risk. We encourage all youth and adults 12+ attending worship to be fully vaccinated.

All worshippers are asked to familiarize themselves with and abide by the following guidelines (**updated August 8, 2021**):

- Please do not attend in-person worship/events if you or a household member have symptoms of Covid-19 or if you have a known exposure (regardless of vaccination status).
- **All persons** are asked to wear a mask covering mouth and nose **while indoors, except during Communion.**
- Fully vaccinated persons may go without a mask **outdoors.**
- Hand sanitizer will be available. Please avoid passing objects (e.g. hymnals, bulletins) from person to person.
- Offerings may be placed in the plates as you arrive or as you depart after the service.
- Enter the Sanctuary as traffic flow signs direct unless using the ramp (FCCH) or elevator (HCC), and leave promptly following worship through the door nearest you (please do not congregate in HCC Fellowship Hall).
- The rear right quadrant of the Sanctuary and the balcony will continue to be reserved for distanced seating.
- Our worship will include congregational singing throughout.

- There is no Nursery/in-person Sunday School at this time.
- A summer schedule for hosting outdoor fellowship with refreshments (pre-portioned, self-serve snack and cold beverage) will be coordinated with the church committees and published in the *Belfry*. Please contact the designated committee in advance to contribute items so they can plan for serving.

Sanctuary windows and doors will be open and fans used for ventilation (moving air out of the building, not for comfort). If very high temperatures or humidity are expected, services may be moved outdoors; notice of this will be made in the weekly email.

Restrooms are available for use; they are located on both levels at FCCH and near the Sacristy and in the education wing at HCC. Our church buildings are cleaned weekly when in use, with restrooms and high-touch surfaces sanitized.

**Please read the weekly email and check for additional updates prior to Sunday services, as our safety protocols may be updated more frequently in upcoming weeks given changing local conditions.**



# THANKS

TO THOSE ON THE FRONTLINE OF COVID-19



## RON BOOTH MISSION GOLF OUTING September 19, 2021



The first joint (HCC and FCCH) Golf Tournament is scheduled for Sunday, September 19th. Golf 9 or 18 holes at Lyman Orchards, with the shotgun start at 9:30am. Dinner will be hosted at Sue and Danny Gascoyne's at 130 Dublin Hill Road, Higganum, a beautiful venue.

Dinner is included for golfers. The cost for dinner only is \$35, with children (2-12) \$5. Dinner includes steak/chicken, salad, baked potato, appetizers, dessert, and an open bar.

Early bird pricing runs through August 15th, and it would be helpful for us to have a dinner count by the end of the month.

Click [HERE](#) to sign up as a golfer, diner, or sponsor. Click [HERE](#) or call the church for a printable registration form.

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### PLANNING FOR SPECIAL MEETINGS



The Joint Church Council met in July and began discussion of preparation/communication in advance of the scheduled September 26th votes by FCCH and HCC on the question "Should

*the Higganum Congregational Church and the First Congregational Church of Haddam combine to form a new church?"* Further planning will take place at this month's August 24th Council Meeting (7pm, all are welcome!).

A basic timeline was set at the July meeting. Around **September 1st**, a packet including background information and a paper ballot will be sent to members. Ballots from those who will not be present in person on the 26th will **need to be received back by Friday, September 24th**. In addition, Pastor Michelle hopes to schedule discussion opportunities on the three September Wednesdays prior to the vote (for HCC members at HCC and by Zoom on 8/8, for FCCH members at FCCH and by Zoom on 8/15, and all together on 8/22).



Our Prayer Shawl Ministry met August 4th at HCC. Newcomers are welcome to join us next month on Wednesday, September 1st at 10am. For materials or more information on this ministry, please contact either Carol Ricker or Edie Williams.



## MISSION/OUTREACH NEWS

AUGUST 2021



### “ACM Called for South Central Region” by Tiffany Vail, SNEUCC Conference Staff

A familiar face in the Hartford area has accepted a call to serve as the Area Conference Minister for the South Central Region: the Rev. Isaac Lawson will step into that role beginning Oct. 4.



Rev. Lawson joins the Conference staff having previously served in a dual call as Associate Pastor at Immanuel Congregational Church and Communications Associate at the Center for Leadership and Justice (CLJ), both in Hartford, CT. [read more at <https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/acm-called-for-south-central-region-15315576>]

The South Central region includes the churches and clergy in the Central Connecticut, Farmington Valley, Hartford, Hartford East, Middlesex, New London and Tolland Associations. The Rev. Rhonda Myers has been serving there as Bridge ACM since the Rev. Tamara Moreland moved to local church ministry in the spring.

Lawson currently serves on the Hartford Association’s Committee on Ministry. He has a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, NYC, and a Master of Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School.

Prior to moving to Hartford, Lawson served as a minister of pastoral care at a local UCC congregation in Washington, DC, while simultaneously providing logistical and operational support for the South Asia Trade and Competitiveness Global Practice of the World Bank. Lawson hopes to bring lessons learned from years of being bi-vocational to his work with the Conference.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who helped to fill the **CWS school bags**. These bags, lovingly sewn by folks in our congregations and filled with school supplies donated by all of you, will be sent where they are needed in our country and in the world to help children in need. **(The last day to bring in items is Sunday, August 8th; we will dedicate the filled bags in worship on August 15th.)**

**SAVE THE DATE:** The Haddam/Killingworth **CROP WALK** is being planned for **October 4, 2021**. This walk benefits people in our towns and people around the world who are hungry.



The Joint Mission/Outreach team met on August 4th to plan mission projects for the Fall and Winter. The next meeting will be **Wednesday, September 29th, at 7pm**. If you have an idea for a project for our congregations, please share it with Carol Matragrano, Ginny Evensen, or Rev. Michelle.

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### “NECESSARIES” COLLECTION



This August we once again will ask for your help providing underwear for local school children in coordination with Haddam Social Services. **Choose a tag (available on August 15th), shop, and return your item(s) by Sunday, August 29th.**

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### BREAD MINISTRY

The weekly Bread Ministry will run through August 20th, and then will resume September 17th. You can sign up to help at the link at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e44a5aa28a5fc1-selling4>







Hello from CE! I want to thank everyone for your overwhelming support for the VBS dinner at the Methodist Church. Our dinner service was a huge success and very well received.

Without Linda Hansen's superb food service skills I would have been lost! Thank you, Linda, for all you did.

Sadie Harlow and Dawn and Emily Alger helped serve dinner and then helped as Camp Guides. I was proud of our girls; they jumped right in and participated fully, even dancing. Both of them deserve a round of applause!



Behind the scenes Lori Chadwick peeled MANY many clementines! The kids loved them! Thank you so much, hope your fingers will un-crimp soon!

I really enjoyed myself and felt very welcomed. I look forward to a restful few weeks as I restore my batteries in preparation for the new Faith Formation year. Thank you for your continued support.

Peace and blessings, Amy Harlow CE Director

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The Joint Christian Education Committee will meet **by Zoom on Thursday, August 12th, at 7pm**, to confirm and make plans for our fall start up.

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**Save the Date!**

**Sunday,  
September 12th,  
is Rally Day!**

Plan now to join in worship and fellowship at FCCH as we launch a new year of learning and fun for children, youth, and adults.



**FALL MIDWEEK STUDY**

“Living the Questions” (LTQ) curriculum is intended to inspire thoughtful and faithful discussion. Our midweek group is identifying topics for fall study from LTQ. If you are interested in participating in our daytime (or perhaps an evening or recorded/virtual class?), please check out the offerings at this link: <https://livingthequestions.com/product-category/digital-curriculum/>, and let Interim Pastor Michelle know which interest you.

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## WELCOME!

Congratulations to Alison and Brian on the arrival of **Jacob John Iozza** on July 29th. Jacob weighed in at 5 lbs. 15 ozs. and measured 20 1/4 inches. Mother and baby are doing well, and grandparents Lolly and Pop (Lise and Brian Thayer) are the excited grandparents!



- 2 Charlotte Morin
- 7 Elizabeth Anderson
- 8 Pam Crum, Marissa Sarmuk
- 9 Jack Moore
- 12 Alli Sanford, Donna Turnage
- 15 Mary Alice Matulevich
- 16 Austin Paradis
- 19 Oliver Brassard, Ryan Walker
- 21 Logan Craffey
- 25 Jacob Saglio
- 30 **Neal Blodgett (100!)**, Tyler Gras
- 31 Edie Williams



- August 3 Bryan and Kristen Gras
- August 11 David and Jamie Beckman
- August 24 Dick and Carol Matregrano
- August 29 Peter and Mary Aduskevich
- August 29 Terry and Carol Smith

Please let the Office know at [fcchaddam@gmail.com](mailto:fcchaddam@gmail.com) if there are omissions from or corrections to our birthday and anniversary lists.



Congratulations to Mark Soneson on his recent retirement from the Berlin Police Department after 36 years of service!

## A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear FCCH/HCC,

Thank you for the generous donation to the Haddam Food Bank. Your support helps feed many in our community.

God Bless!

-Haddam Social Services



## MEMBER'S CORNER



Do you have a special message to share with your Church family? If so, send it in for the Members' Corner!