Dear Friends,

As Eric’s playing of the graduation march for our Prelude yesterday signaled, in the immortal words of Elle Woods, “We did it!” After a VERY long interim, it is at last time for us to say farewell as our paths diverge.

It has been a joy and a privilege to share in this interim journey with you, and I am excited that you will be going forward with Rev. Hilary McLellan, whose successful candidating weekend on October 30th-31st is pictured on the following pages.

As we part, I want to express my gratitude:
- to FCCH and HCC’s members and friends for participating faithfully in the sometimes challenging work of this interim time;
- to the staff of FCCH and HCC for their creativity, dedication, and friendship;
- to your volunteer leaders for all their service and support, especially Moderators Kristin, Greg, and John, as well as those serving (often in multiple capacities!) on Boards, Committees, and Teams;
- and in particular to the seven members of your Joint Pastoral Search Committee whose work over these past two years resulted in the selection and call of Rev. McLellan- well done!

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, 4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”

-Philippians 1:3-6

Blessings, Pastor Michelle

Thank you so much for the wonderful send-off on Sunday, November 7th. I appreciate your generous gifts and kind words!

-Pastor Michelle

Interim Pastor Michelle with Linda Hansen, who made the Prayer Shawl presented to Michelle on her departure.

**SURVEY and EXIT INTERVIEW**

Thank you to those who filled out an Interim Ministry Survey and to Sue Craffey for compiling the information to share with the Pastoral Relations members (current and incoming) and Pastor Michelle.

Thank you also to those who gathered (in person and via Zoom) on Monday, November 1st, for Pastor Michelle’s Exit Interview. This meeting was attended by Rev. Isaac Lawson, our new Area Conference Minister, who will be an ongoing resource; Rev. Lawson is our guest preacher on November 14th.
A NOTE FROM YOUR MODERATORS

October 20, 2021

As the work of our Search Committee draws to a close, we all should take a moment to personally thank the members of the committee for their tireless efforts over the past twenty-four plus months. Amy, Sue, Lindamae, Sabina, Ralph, Candy and Mark have kept the congregations informed and have remained on task in spite of the many obstacles that the times have presented to them. We are indeed thankful for their diligence and determination in seeking out a candidate whom they are confident will lead us in the challenging days ahead. We will have an opportunity to meet and greet the candidate on October 30th and she will lead us in worship on the 31st. A special congregational meeting will be held immediately following the service to vote on calling the candidate as our next settled pastor.

The success of the search also means that the service of Pastor Michelle is drawing to a close. We as a congregation were very fortunate indeed to have had her leadership, her spirit, her pastoral care, and her boundless energy to lead us through the challenges of the past two and a half years. More than one parishioner has observed that she will be a hard act to follow! Pastor Michelle has set a high standard which serves to inspire us all in service to the church. Her final Sunday service will be November 7th with a reception to follow. Stay tuned for further details.

Greg Shields John Edmondson
Moderator HCC Moderator FCCH

EDITOR’S NOTE:
The letter above was sent to the Belfry in advance of the Candidating Weekend, but our publication was delayed. Click HERE to read the draft minutes of the Special Business Meeting from October 31st calling the Reverend Hilary McLellan as the new settled Minister!

Rev. Hilary McLellan

Rev. Hilary McLellan has served congregations large and small, and enjoys creating worship moments with others. She has spent most of her career managing Spiritual Care Services and mentoring ministers through their chaplaincy training in Clinical Pastoral Education.

She is a native New Orleanian who served as UCC Disaster Response Coordinator for the South Central Conference (Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas). Her undergraduate work at Yale was in Economics and Political Science, where she focused on third world community development projects. She then spent several years working on various research and writing projects through Harvard’s Graduate Psychology Department before obtaining her Master of Divinity at Boston University and her ordination in the UCC.

She has a small permaculture farm in Nova Scotia nearby her cousin’s larger dairy farm, where she and her kids have enjoyed many long hours soaking up the beauty of rural life.

Her teenage children, Oliver and Athena, now attend boarding schools in the DC area. They are looking forward family kayaking on the Connecticut River when the weather warms up again.

1986 Economics and Political Science, Yale University
1999 M. Div., Boston School of Theology
2000 Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church of Guilford, Connecticut
2001 Pastor, Little Farms United Congregational Church, River Ridge, Louisiana
7 years in Hospital Chaplaincy
Metairie, Louisiana
Beverly, Massachusetts
Seattle, Washington
Calgary, Alberta
2020 Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church of Bristol, Rhode Island
Saturday, October 30th Meet and Greet

Sunday, October 31st Candidating Service
NOVEMBER MEETINGS
Interim Pastor Exit Interview – Mon. Nov. 1st 7pm (hosted access at HCC)
Joint Diaconate – Monday, Nov. 8th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at FHCC)
HCC Finance – Mon., Nov. 15th, 7pm (HCC)
Physical Reopening Team – Tues. Nov. 16th 8:30am (Zoom)
Joint Council – Tuesday, Nov. 16th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at HCC)
Quilt Show Planning – Wed. Nov. 17th 6:30pm (FCCH)
Mission/Outreach – Tuesday, Dec. 7th, 7pm by Zoom (hosted access at FCCH)

Please contact Committee Chairs for agendas and details of meeting information.

STAYING CONNECTED

Beginning November 1st, our churches have switched to a new Zoom Sign On for regular use. Please use the meeting ID and Password below for online access to meetings, adult education, and fellowship programs available online.

New Meeting ID: 391 987 2707
New Password: 90523

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

First Congregational Church of Haddam is looking for a new Sexton (must be age 18 or above) or Cleaning service. The hours are flexible, and the position is immediately available. Please click HERE for the list of duties and how to apply, and forward this information to anyone you think might be interested.

It was a delight once again to see the children from the Haddam Cooperative Nursery School enjoying a Halloween parade at FCCH!

The Nursery School classes are held Mondays through Fridays from 9am to 1pm. Please drive carefully if you visit! Information on the Nursery School is available at https://haddamco-op.org/.
9:30am SUNDAY WORSHIP at FCCH during November

**November 7th**
Worship with Holy Communion
Pastor Michelle’s Farewell Celebration

**November 14th**
Worship with guest preacher
Rev. Isaac Lawson
Sunday School: Thanksgiving Box Decorating

**November 21st**
Rev. McLellan’s First Sunday
Thanksgiving Worship
Pledge Dedication Sunday
Packing the Thanksgiving Boxes

**November 28th**
First Sunday of Advent
Sunday School: Advent Calendar Project

---

**2021 SUNDAY CHURCH HOSPITALITY SCHEDULE**

The Joint Council has established the Hospitality Schedule for the remainder of 2021:

**November:** Joint Diaconate

**December:** Joint Music with help from Prayer Shawl Ministry

*Thank you to all our volunteers.* Per our Covid safety procedures: Food and drink should be portioned for individual pick up (food items wrapped or plated, not self-serve, and beverages prepackaged or poured by a host wearing mask and gloves). Fellowship time should be set up OUTSIDE unless it is raining or extremely cold.

---

**SERVICE STREAMING**

Access to the service by livestream at YouTube is provided. Visit and subscribe to our YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7SxL2fM B-DZu4BxaM6hWNg to view archived streams anytime or Sundays at 9:35am for the service on a slight delay.

---

**PHYSICAL REOPENING TEAM**

The next meeting of the Physical Reopening Team is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16th at 8:30am.

The group will discuss planning for worship and fellowship as the weather grows colder, and safety plans for the scheduled Quilt Show.

If your church group plans public events in the coming weeks/months, please contact a member of the Team for consultation and specific guidance. Members include the Moderators, Minister, and Diaconate representatives.

---

**CHOIR PRACTICE**

Do you love to sing? Veteran and new choir members are invited to join Music Director Eric Lundin for practice Thursday evenings at 7pm at FCCH.

The Choir will NOT practice on Thursday November 25th.

Newcomers are asked to contact Eric before attending to discuss Covid19 precautions and so your music can be prepared.
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The joint stewardship committee is excited to launch the 2022 season of generosity through introduction of our theme: “Be The Church, Together”.

The program this year includes a month of stewardship moment activities featuring a symbolic tribute to the beautiful and strong combination of our churches. We will honor members of each congregation, through our stewardship moments we are calling ‘lifting up’. Members of the committee will honor members of the ‘opposite’ congregation that have impacted us through who they are and what they have done to bring our two churches together.

As much as we know there are many reasons to rejoice for all we have come through together in the past five years or so, we as a committee, are issuing a call to action for every single member to “Be The Church, Together”. For every individual, this will have a different meaning and hopefully inspiration to act. The combination of generously given time, talent and treasure will continue to bring our two congregations “Together”.

A special shout out to Miss Amy for her superior crafting and construction skills for our symbolic project: a handmade loom that will weave together the colors of our two sanctuaries (also reflected in the graphic shown). Make sure you ask Amy about the loom structure, as it too has a special origin story.

A bit of information about the timeline for the stewardship program:

- To save on postage, we will hand deliver pledge packets at our service on November 7, and will make sure everyone gets the info by November 14.
- Our congregations will consecrate the pledged gifts of time, talent and treasure at the Thanksgiving service on November 21.

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORIES

Thank you to all those who updated their contact information on the draft directory copies available after church services in October. This allowed the office to produce updated directories for inclusion in the Stewardship packets.

We still have a ways to go- we already have heard back about errors in how some entries were generated from the software, and are working on it!- but we are grateful to have an updated directory for the first time in two years!
The Bread for Heat Ministry has completed its activity for the season. Throughout the summer, our artisan breads were mixed and baked on Friday mornings and sold at the Higganum Farmers’ Market on Friday afternoons. It was a very successful year and many compliments were received for the bread. A check for $2500 will be delivered to the Haddam Social Services office to be used for the fuel bank. THANK YOU to everyone who helped bake, sell, or bought the bread. Your participation in this project will help people stay warm in the winter.

OPEN YOUR CLOSET, NOT YOUR WALLET

This project sponsored by St Vincent de Paul in Middletown has asked for our help. Many of you have responded to this request. This project involves the Goodwill Donation Center and YOU. Open your closet and clean out clothes you no longer wear and bring the clothing to Goodwill Store with a donation card that we have at the church.

St. Vincent de Paul receives clothing vouchers that they can give to people who are in need of clothes.

This program is completing its first year, and it has been a resounding success. The donations have provided $5,500 worth of vouchers that have been distributed in the community. These vouchers allow people the dignity of shopping for their own clothing.

Thank you all for helping with this project. The donation cards are still available at each church.

Thanksgiving Dinner Collection

In November, we will be preparing 14 Thanksgiving dinner boxes that will go to Haddam families.

Look for the poster in the vestibule that will display the list of items to be gathered. Fourteen of each item will be needed. Items should be brought to church on Sunday, November 21, 2021. We will package the dinners in decorated boxes and deliver them to the Social Services office following worship.

Please help us help other families in town for this feasting holiday.
The Quilt Show Committee invites you to exhibit your quilts and quilted items at our 10th Annual Yuletide Quilt Show. If you or someone you know has any homemade quilts or quilted items, we would love to have them in the show! An Exhibitor’s Application can be picked up at the church office or downloaded from the church’s website HERE.

Applications need to be returned by November 24th. Drop off is on Friday, December 3rd from 2 pm – 7 pm and pick up is between 4 pm and 5 pm on December 4th.

Quilt Raffle – Raffle tickets are now available. They can be purchased during coffee hour, by contacting the church office, or from Carol Matregrano. Tickets are $2 each. If you take a book or two to sell, that would be wonderful!

Basket Raffle – We hope to have about 20 themed baskets to raffle off during the show. If you would like to donate to the basket raffle, please contact Denise Bouchard or Meredith James.

Crafty Tag Sale Table – Do you have any unwanted craft supplies? We would love to sell them at the Quilt Show! Any and all craft/sewing items are accepted and appreciated!

Thank you for your support!

Racial Justice Education Program

The October weeknight Program with Rev. James Ross, Il, Minister for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Southern New England Conference UCC was postponed so it can be planned with input from the incoming settled pastor. Please watch for updates.

H/K Backpack Program

Thank you to everyone who donated shelf-stable milk for this program. We will continue to collect shelf-stable milk in November. In addition, this program offers hygiene supplies for the children, and the manager asked if we would collect deodorant for teens- girls and boys. If you get coupons that you cannot use for deodorant, we also can send those in.
2021 CROP WALK UPDATE

With your help we again raised over $6,000!

Donations will benefit:

CWS
HK Backpack Program
Helping Hands of Killingworth
Haddam Food Bank

THANK YOU!
Hello from Christian Education!

This semester, Fruit of the Spirit, has been **fruitful**! We have covered Love and Joy, next will be Peace. What wonderful gifts!

Trunk or Treat was a great success! Over 160 children walked past our fruit of the spirit tree. WOW! Special thanks to Lori Chadwick who helped to cut out the fruits and with the Trunk or Treat try out. Thanks to Dawn and Emily Alger who helped with set-up and distribution of the goodies. Thank you to Brayden for lending his creative eye for the placement of the leaves and fruit, everybody loved it! So many of you helped with this project, yay team!

November will bring many exciting new things and some old favorite traditions! Fourteen decorated Turkey Boxes will go out to local families of four. Stay tuned for opportunities to donate goods and share your artistic talents!

Children can join us Sundays in person or Thursdays online as we learn about the Fruit of the Spirit! Click below to view the schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk or Treat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk or Treat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are openings for volunteer slots for both in person and online Zoom Sunday School on Thursdays. Please contact me at amyharlow.ucc@gmail.com if you have questions or can volunteer! As always thank you so much for your continued support!

Peace and blessings,
Amy Harlow, CE Director

---

NEW CHURCH MEMBER

On Sunday, October 24th, we welcomed Dianne Hines as a new member of HCC and FCCH. Dianne has been singing in the Joint Choir since she came to live with Jan and Don Berry a few years ago, and she enjoys baking and gardening. Linda Hansen, who worked with Dianne in the schools for many years, is her sponsor. Welcome, Dianne!
Late last year congress extended and expanded the universal charitable tax deduction that became law as part of the CARES Act. This deduction now allows individual taxpayers to deduct up to $300 and couples filing jointly and married to deduct up to $600 in charitable contributions made in 2021. For many people, this restores the deduction for charitable contributions they benefitted from prior to the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA).

To qualify, charitable donations must be: 1) in cash, not property (a “cash” donation includes money contributed by cash, check, credit card, electronic funds transfer, or payroll deduction), and 2) given to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization, such as a religious organization like your local church, the SNEUCC, and/or the national setting of the UCC.

Importantly, this universal deduction is used to calculate one's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), so taxpayers don’t have to itemize their deduction on Schedule A to claim it. Instead, taxpayers can simply enter their qualifying amount on line 10b on page 1 of their Form 1040, then deduct it from their gross income.

There is no requirement that taxpayers provide any documentation for their contributions with their tax returns. However, the IRS does require that taxpayers keep a written record of the cash contributions. For cash donations under $250, donors can use a bank record or other documentation that substantiates the payment. For cash donations above $250, the donor must have a document or timely receipt from the charity, for example, the church.

Because of the TCJA, it is estimated that approximately 90% of Americans now choose to take the standard deduction instead of itemizing, and thereby are unable to deduct their charitable contributions. While tax deductibility is generally not the primary reason why people make charitable contributions and/or how much they give, it can be a consideration.

Item #3 in the Taxpayer Bill of Rights states, “Taxpayers have the right to pay only the amount of tax legally due...” With this extension and expansion of the universal charitable deduction, individuals filing a tax return for 2021 have a right to claim up to $300 ($600 for a couple filing married and joint) in charitable contributions they make, including those made to the church, and thus reduce their taxable income.

I urge our churches to inform their members and friends of this tax change so that they can avail themselves of it when they file their 2021 tax return. Although there is legislation pending to both expand and extend this universal charitable deduction, its future is unclear. Hence, this may be the last year it is available.
This fall our **weekday study** will explore the **historical Jesus** and the challenge of his proclamation of the **Kingdom of God** in the context of the Roman Empire. We will use Living the Question’s “First Light” curriculum which features **scholars John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg** and **footage from biblical lands**. To see a sample of the video component, visit [https://youtu.be/Wp9fPTepD44](https://youtu.be/Wp9fPTepD44).

Join us at **Lewis House (masks required)** or **by Zoom** **Mondays at 10am** beginning on September 13th. (Tentative session schedule is below.)

Print out the **Readings** and **Discussion Questions** or request them in print form from the church office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 13th</th>
<th>The Matrix of Jesus</th>
<th>November 1st</th>
<th>Jesus as Lord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 20th</td>
<td>The Advent of the Messiah</td>
<td>November 8th</td>
<td>Substitutionary Atonement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27th</td>
<td>God’s Great Cleanup</td>
<td>November 15th</td>
<td>Demonstrations in Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4th</td>
<td>Collaborative Eschaton</td>
<td>November 22nd</td>
<td>The Crowd &amp; the Crucifixion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10th</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>November 29th</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18th</td>
<td>The Lake as the World</td>
<td>December 6th</td>
<td>Resurrection as Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25th</td>
<td>Parables as Lures</td>
<td>December 13th</td>
<td>America as the New Rome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“RUTH AFTER HOURS” EVENING/ONLINE STUDY**

Tune in **by Zoom** for 30 minute discussions Wednesday evenings OR sign up with the church office for access to **recorded sessions** of our study of the book of **Ruth** using Living the Question’s “Uppity Women of the Bible” curriculum. See below for handout links and our schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 2 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 3 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 4 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 5 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 6 Worksheet LINK</th>
<th>Session 7 Worksheet LINK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7pm Wednesday, October 6th</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, October 13th</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, October 20/27th</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, November 3rd</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, November 10th</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, November 17th</td>
<td>7pm Wednesday, December 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bittersweet</td>
<td>In Case of Emergency</td>
<td>The Go’el?</td>
<td>A King’s Ancestry</td>
<td>Understanding Ruth</td>
<td>An Uppity Woman?</td>
<td>Grace and Hospitality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HADDAM
905 SAYBROOK ROAD, HADDAM

Yuletide Quilt Show

December 4, 2021
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Admission to Quilts: $7
Free Admission to Cafe and Raffles

QUILTS FOR SALE ~ QUILT RAFFLE
HOMEMADE LUNCH ~ RAFFLE BASKETS
SILENT AUCTION
PRAYER SHawl MINISTRY
Our Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet at 10am at HCC on Wednesday, November 3rd. Newcomers are welcome to join us! For more information on this ministry, please contact Carol Ricker or Edie Williams.

THANK YOU
Many thanks to Alan Chadwick for his work adding stone and grading the upper parking lot and putting in the storm windows at HCC in preparation for the winter!

Thank you to all who helped put up and take down canopies and decorations for recent special events at HCC and FCCH.

See pictures of the Fall Clean Up at FCCH below- thank you to the Boy Scouts for their help!

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

Birthday List:
1 Paul Blodgett
4 Mary Aduskevich
5 Kellen Crum
6 Stewart Gillmor
7 Dan Wendt
8 John Anderson
10 Joan Bragoni
17 Jan Berry
18 Suzanne Ellsworth
19 Stella & Caroline Moore
23 Michelle Wendt
29 Joe Tupay
30 Morgan Crum

November Anniversaries:
22 Paul and Peg Lewis
24 Alan and Lori Chadwick

Please contact us at fcchaddam@gmail.com if there are omissions from or corrections to our birthday and anniversary lists.