

**MARCH
2016**



The First Congregational Church in Bloomfield – United Church of Christ

The Wintonbury Spire

Pastor's Page

“THE BEST IS YET TO COME!”

Days before entering Jerusalem and into the salvation drama of Jesus suffering, crucifixion and resurrection he gathered his disciples and told them...

***“In a little while you will no longer see me again...
You will have pain...but your pain will turn into joy.
I will see you again ...and your hearts will rejoice...***

Ask and you will receive ...

So that your joy may be completed”

(John 16:16-24)

THE BEST IS YET TO COME is an expression of hope consistent with the message of Easter. We, as Easter People, strongly believe that in following ***“the way”*** ... ***Jesus way***...we are invited to live our lives creatively, at peace and with joy. ***GOD*** will be our inspiration for us being fully alive and for being a blessing to many!

As your Pastor, I invite all of you as ***Fully Alive*** people, as ***Easter*** people, to celebrate life, to rejoice in life...not to lose hope but to keep searching for new expressions of life even in the midst of difficult times. ***Look for your own rainbow, be inspired by the rainbows of those around you...ask and you will receive...do not give up...keep hope alive...so that your joy may be completed!***

***“For those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength
They shall mount up with wings like eagles”***

Isaiah 40:31

Pastor Ed



PASTOR ED'S *Desk*

“Sparks of challenges and information for you and your loved ones”

“HOLY WEEK”...come participate in our creative worship experiences...invite your family and friends to church!

“EASTER PEOPLE CARE FOR OTHERS” ... Easter people **love GOD, love themselves and care for others!** Let the *Pastor*, our *Parish Care Team* or *Andrea* at the office know of anyone in crisis or in need of support or help. Caring for others in need is also caring for yourself and a beautiful way to build our church community! Talk to our **Parish Care Team** if you feel in your heart the calling and desire to care for others...there are so many ways we can care and help...**join us!**

“BLACK LIVES MATTER”...Yes, Pastor Ed strongly believe that **Black Lives Matter** with the same passion as **Elderly Lives matter...Poor Lives matter, All human lives matter...**I would encourage us not to fall into the trap of words but highlight and promote the importance that ... **ALL LIVES DO MATTER including Black Lives!**

STEWARDSHIP AS A RESPONSE TO GOD’S LOVE... Scripture clearly affirms that we are all blessed in different ways and we respond to GOD’S blessing by giving...by sharing with others of **our time...our energy ...our talents and our financial resources.** I would invite each one of you to begin to explore creative ways of being more

involved in this your congregation. This is my challenge to you... support our community of faith by:

*Exploring new ways of being involved in leadership positions!

*Joining the ministry teams doing great work in our church!

*Examining your financial commitment to the church...try to increase it!

*Actively supporting the Search and Call process for the new pastor!

*Inviting others to come to church and being welcoming to all!

*Being open to God’s Spirit and creativity in our congregation!

YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON MY SUPPORT AND BLESSING...

PLEASE BE IN TOUCH...

Pastor Ed...building community together!

OUR MISSION

Responding to God’s Call, our mission as The First Congregational Church in Bloomfield, United Church of Christ, is to go out into the world proclaiming God’s love for all creation, working for justice, bringing Christ’s peace and growing in love and faith through service to others. We are a safe and sacred community that welcomes all people and supports each individual journey of faith.

News For Kids, Youth & Families



MARCH MADNESS

The Sunday School is giving great thanks to the congregation for their generous support of our Cup Cake Sale for Covenant to Care Birthday Parties. We raised \$105.!!! This wonderful amount is able to support Birthday Parties well into the summer. The children surely enjoyed decorating the cup cakes and we are sure the children will enjoy receiving the Birthday Parties. A big thank you goes to Pat Robair for making the cup cakes. Thank you Lisa Jaffrey for helping the children decorate. Thank you so much.

Silver Lake is now taking camp applications for their summer camp fun. Please see the CE Bulletin Board for the Camp Brochures and register online at silverlakect.org.

The Youth Group also thanks the Congregation for supporting the Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday. We collected \$385.00. We met our Goal of \$1,500.00 over the last 7 years of collecting. Your generous donations go to the Bloomfield Social Services Food Bank. The National Total of money and food donations has reached 6.8 million dollars. Being part of this National effort of feeding 50 million hungry Americans is an awesome way to combat hunger in our nation, as well as providing a need in our local community. Thank you to Leslie Mills and Alex Correa for the delicious Chicken Noodle Soup we had after we counted the donations!

Planning for the 2016 Youth Revival is underway. I am meeting with the planning team and we are getting excited about this year's event. Save the date May 15th @ 3:00pm Please see the flyer for this event in this issue of the Spire.

Fill up the coin banks for One Great Hour of Sharing. Each little coin in the box makes a difference in this annual collection for emergency funds for disaster relief around the world. The One Great Hour of Sharing collection boxes have been handed out if you did not get one see Ms. Dorine. The filled coined banks can then be returned to church on Sunday March 6th for the One Great Hour of Sharing mission offering.

Sunday School

March 6th Communion Sunday, Children rejoin their families for Communion.

■ Youth Group 4:00 ~ 5:30 TCBY

Sunday March 13th Sunday school for Preschool through Grade 9

Sunday March 20th Palm Sunday Parade meet in Fellowship Hall 9:45am - Sunday School for Preschool through Grade 9

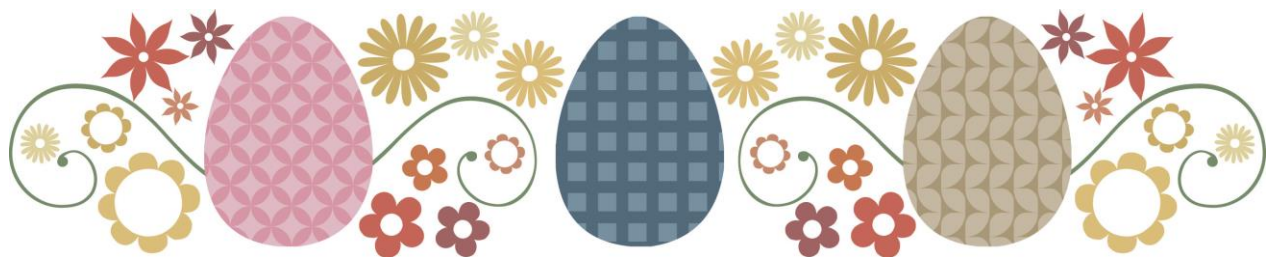
Youth Group 4:00 ~ 5:30 TCBY

Sunday March 27th EASTER SUNDAY Children worship with their families.

Easter Blessings to All

Palm Sunday is March 20th. Our children will be having a Palm Sunday Parade, come with shouts of Hosanna in the Highest...let us praise the Living God with our joy on Palm Sunday. Children will meet in Fellowship Hall @ 9:45 a.m. to line up and receive Palms to hand out to the congregation.

Prayer Vigil will begin after the Maundy Thursday service at 8:00 pm on Thursday March 24th through Good Friday 12:00 Noon. Please sign up on the bulletin board next to the office to pray for 1 hour or even a half an hour with your child, you can pray at home, or go for walk and pray, pray anywhere you are. Take part in the Holy Week Prayer Vigil



WOMENS' FELLOWSHIP NEWS

In December we held a centerpiece craft night. Vicki Casner guided us in making beautiful Christmas centerpieces with greens from her yard. \$170 was collected and donated to the Loaves and Fishes ministry in our church and we all left with beautiful decorations for our dining tables. THANK YOU VICKI! Your time and talents are much appreciated.

SAVE THE DATE:

The Birthday dinner is back! Mark your calendars for Friday, April 22nd at 6:00 PM. Details to follow next month.

SAVE THE DATE!



CTUCC YOUTH REVIVAL

Sunday, May 15 at 3:00 PM

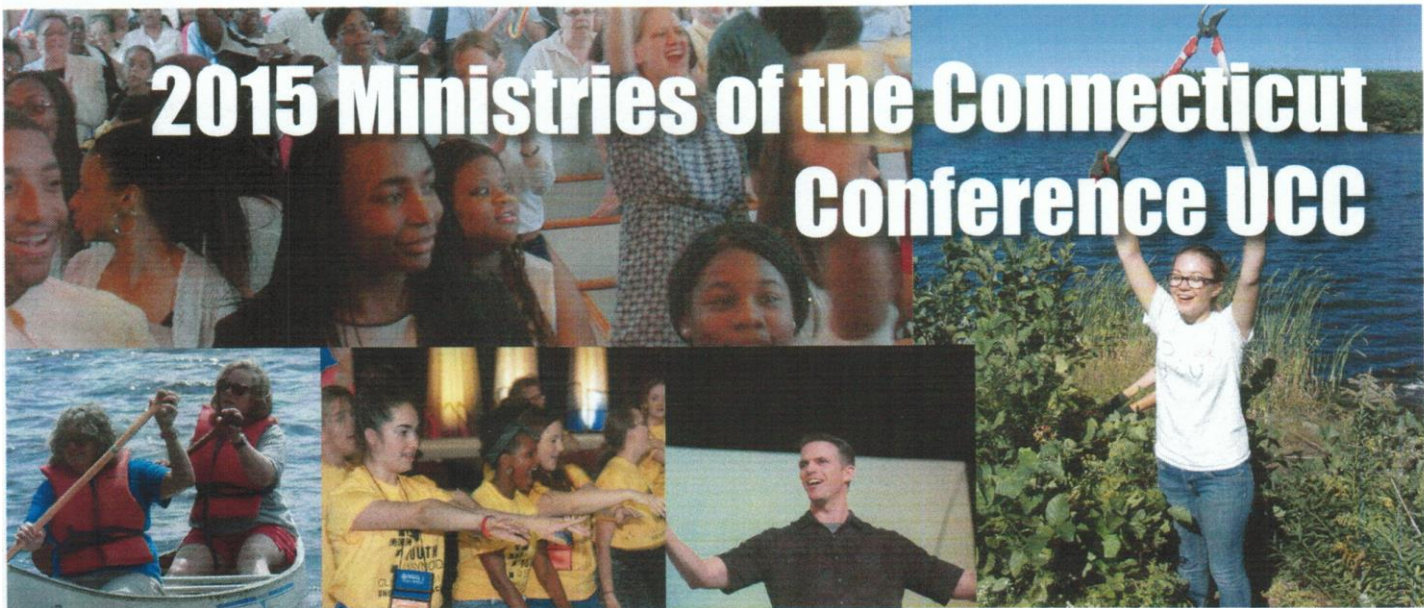
**Liberty Christian Center International 23 Vine
Street Hartford, CT**

Revival Preacher
Rev. Da Vita "Day" McCallister
ACM for Leadership and Vitality

The Youth Revival is a Racial Justice Ministry Event



For more information contact Debby Kirk, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
debbyk@ctuucc.org 860.761.7103 www.ctuucc.org



2015 Ministries of the Connecticut Conference UCC

Leadership

Leaders engender trust.

Leaders have fun.



Leading & Learning Together

- Over 450 joined with MA & RI leaders to learn at Super Saturday in March
- 384 inspired by UCC President John Dorhauer Annual Meeting in October
- CT, MA, & RI Boards of Directors vote a "Season of Discernment" considering future ministry together.
- Hundreds of Giv2 youth worked over a thousand service hours
- 54 pastors placed as leaders in installed or bridge positions
- 119 total attendance at "Saints" retirees gatherings
- Clergy workshops draw over 300 total participants

Ministries at Silver Lake Conference Center

- 927 young people learned leadership through 37 conferences
- 95 deans, 175 counselors, and 7 chaplains led, nurtured, and inspired
- 46 dedicated summer staff sang, cleaned, ran, protected, and mentored the conferees
- 11 took a mission trip working with Simply Smiles
- Clergy Camp returned to raise leaders' spirits
- 3,233 people attended 117 weekend programs, including 8 created by Silver Lake
- 63 churches and 3 associations in four conferences gave \$58,376.90 to support conferees
- The second Fancy Camp Gala raised \$10,700 for Silver Lake programs and \$3,193 for scholarships



Racial Justice Ministry

- CT Women of the UCC raised \$11,000 for Racial Justice Ministries
- 40 now certified as Racial Justice Ministry Facilitators
- First Lay and Clergy Training offered in November
- 11 local trainings completed
- Expanded Joseph Clemmons Job Training Program

Leaders love God and love people.

Leaders experiment and learn from mistakes.

Leadership with Partners

- Delegations visited partners at CEDECOL in Colombia and the Kyung-Ki Presbytery in South Korea
- CTUCC/Kyung-Ki Partnership renewed for another five years
- 59 staff & delegates, including 12 youth & young adults, participated in General Synod in June
- 44 from 11 congregations attended Youth at Synod, joining RI/MA/CT delegation of over 80

Leaders are self-aware.

Leaders embrace the unknown.



Environmental Justice

- Second Environmental Justice for All Retreat for Youth of Color
- Over 500 conferees experienced Earth Avengers sessions at Silver Lake
- Composting at Silver Lake diverted 2.5 tons of food waste from landfill
- Launch of Eden Fund for non-carbon fuel investments
- 10% of CTUCC churches have received a Green Church Award
- Partnered with Inter-Religious Eco-Justice Network

Leaders are passionate for what they believe in.

Staff Arrivals

- Michelle Hughes, Associate Conference Minister for Transitions
- Alan Munshower, Assistant Director of Silver Lake Conference Center
- Lynn Boettger, Chef/Food Manager at Silver Lake Conference Center
- Andrew Wicks, Bridge Executive Director of Silver Lake Conference Center

Staff Departures

- Bob Slagel
- Tim Hughes



Telling the Story

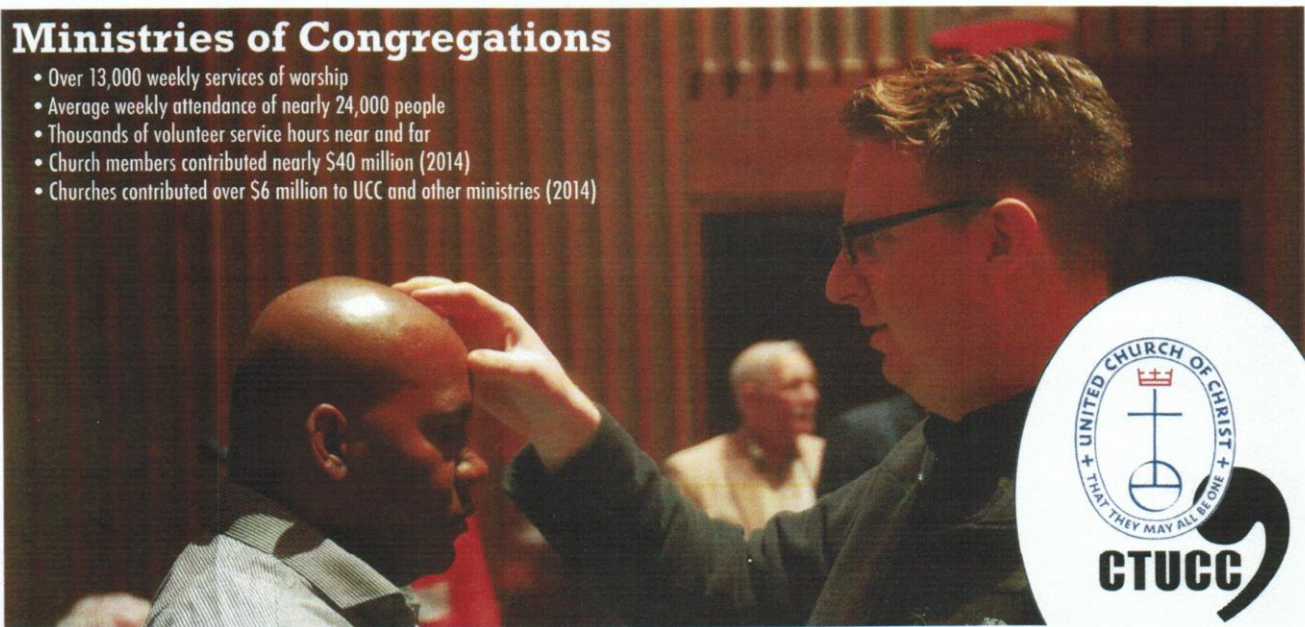
- Vantage Point included six-episode series on interdependent ministries
- 36 Connecticut writers contributed 52 Spirited Wednesday reflections
- CTUCC published 200 stories to a redesigned CTUCC.org
- @CTUCC on Twitter has over 1,000 followers
- CTUCC ConferenceCast turned 5 and has over 200 weekly downloads

Leaders develop competencies to read and adapt to the culture in which we live and find ways to authentically speak the Gospel truth.



Ministries of Congregations

- Over 13,000 weekly services of worship
- Average weekly attendance of nearly 24,000 people
- Thousands of volunteer service hours near and far
- Church members contributed nearly \$40 million (2014)
- Churches contributed over \$6 million to UCC and other ministries (2014)



The Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ • ctucc.org • 125 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105 • 860.233.5564



Parish Care – Volunteer Signup

Please fill out a volunteer form and submit to the church office as soon as possible. If you have any thoughts you'd like to share or need more information, please contact Pastor Ayala or one of the Parish Care Ministry Team members listed below:

Karen Blanchard (chair) – 860-424-7868
Ursula Dang – 860-242-7547
Anne Weaver – 860-966-0786

Marnie Clark – 434-409-0386
Connie Robinson – 860-521-5129
Trudy Barnard – 860-627-7417

I would like to volunteer and be part of the Parish Care Visiting/Calls Ministry

Name:

Address:

Tel.

_____ Email _____

I would like to volunteer and be part of the Parish Care Rides to Church Ministry

Name:

Address:

Tel.

_____ Email _____

I would like to volunteer and be part of the Parish Care Visiting/Calls Ministry

Name:

Address:

Tel.

_____ Email _____

If you have other suggestions on how we can take care of our church, please add to our form below.



One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing offering in 2016 is March 6

Go The Extra Mile

One Great Hour of Sharing® is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions. The suggested offering date for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering in 2016 is March 6, but gifts may be shared at any time.

Read the most recent copy of the OGHS Annual Mission Report.

Make your gift through your local United Church of Christ congregation. Gifts go through your Conference for record keeping, and then arrive at the United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Financial Services 6th Floor, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

Please give generously! Thank you.

All gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing are tax deductible and 100% of designated gifts go to the designated area of response. Non-designated funds also are highly encouraged. They allow One Great Hour of Sharing to address hidden and forgotten emergencies around the world.



**Featuring Keynote Speaker
The Reverend Traci Blackmon**

**Community
Leader Civil
Rights Activist**

Pastor, Christ the King United Church of Christ
Florissant, MO

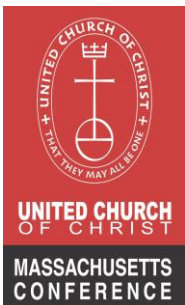
Recipient Antoinette Brown Award 2015
Co--- Founder "When Women Gather"

March 12th 2016
Super Saturday

Worship, Workshops, Networking
For lay and clergy leaders from across
the **Connecticut – Massachusetts –
Rhode Island** Conferences of the United
Church of Christ

Hosted by the CTUCC, MACUCC and RI Conferences

For more information: ctucc.org/supersaturday





MONTHLY CALENDAR WORSHIP
March 2016

March 6	Adult Choir
March 13	The Praise Team
March 20 (Palm/Passion Sunday)	The Praise Team
March 27 (Easter	The Accidentals Handbell Choir & The Adult Choir

*subject to change due to volunteer choirs availability

SAVE THE DATE!



Music
Sunday

APRIL 24, 2016

MARCH

"I am the resurrection and the life."
JOHN 11:25

2016

Every Sunday

8 & 10 am Worship
12:30 New Birth Community Church



Every Monday

6pm Bell Choir
7pm Narc. Anon.

March 6

8 & 10:00am worship

Communion Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Lent

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Lectionary Possibilities: Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; **Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32**

7

Loaves & Fishes

Preparation on
Mon Mar 7

Serving on
Tues Mar 8

March 13

8 & 10am worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Amistad Sunday

Lectionary Possibilities: **Isaiah 43: 16-21**; Psalm 126

Philippians 3: 4b-14; John 12: 1-8

Daylight Savings Time Begins

14

March 20

8 & 10am worship

Palm Sunday

Missions Second Hour

Lectionary Possibilities: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29; Isaiah 50: 4-9b; Psalm 31: 9-16;

Philippians 2: 5-11; **Luke 19: 28-40**; Luke 22: 14-23:56

21

March 27

6 & 10am worship

EASTER

Lectionary Possibilities: Acts 10: 34-43 or Isaiah 65: 17-25;

Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15: 19-26; **John 20: 1-18** or Luke 24: 1-12



28

April 3

4

MARCH

2016

<i>Every Tuesday</i>	<i>Every Wed.</i> 9:30am Jump Bunch 7 pm Alc. Anon.	<i>Every Thursday</i> 10:00 am Bible Study	<i>Every Friday</i> 7:30 pm Alc. Anon	<i>Every Saturday</i>
1 9:15 am Exercise	2	3 6:30 pm Wintonbury Flying Club	4 9:15 am Ex	 <p>Lent 2016 Renewing our spirituality through mission-driven Faith</p> <p>Palm Sunday March 20</p> <p>Maundy Thursday March 24</p> <p>Good Friday March 25</p> <p>Easter March 27</p>
9 9:15 am Exercise	9	10 6:30 pm Faith Formation	11 9:15 am Ex	
15 9:15 am Exercise	16 Labyrinth Church Council 7:00 pm	17 Labyrinth 12:00 pm HAEC  St. Patrick's Day	18 9:15am exe	
22 9:15 am Exercise	23	24 Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm	25 9:15am exer	
29	30	31	1 April	
			2	

2016 Counselor-in-training

Take a weekend to get ready for summer!



Do you want to be a counselor for Silver Lake? Then this is the conference for you! Join us for a three-day interview and training session and become one of the future leaders of Silver Lake! You will learn how to lead games, how to quiet a roomful of conferees, how to keep them safe, and how to help God change their lives while enriching your own. You'll get all the training you need to make you a great counselor!

Successful completion of this weekend program will make you eligible to be a counselor or CIT in Summer 2016.

Participants must be at least 15 years old by June 15, 2016.

REGISTER ONLINE

Counselor-in-Training March 11-13, 2016

Deans: Betty Geiling & Maureen Montrose

For 15- to 18-year-olds

Cost: \$130 www.silverlakeect.org



**SILVER
LAKE**
Conference Center
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MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Sara Glad	March 16
Carolyn Delgado	March 17
Pat Robair	March 22
Allan Thompson	March 28



March 6

One Great Hour of Sharing offering
UCC Women's Week 6-12

March 13

Amistad Sunday
Daylight Savings Time begins



- *Family of the late Jan Thatcher.
- *Family of the late Cyprien Cyr.
- *Michelle Alves – radiation treatments.
- *Keep Calvin and Estelle Cole in your thoughts and prayers. Calvin is at Bloomfield Center for Nursing and Rehab, Estelle is in rehab at St Mary's Home, W.H. Cards and calls would be appreciated.
- *Carol Wolcott, would appreciate cards and calls.
- * Michael Edwards, praying for release.
- *Prayers that God will speak to us and through us as we seek God's leading and vision for our Church.
- *Family & Friends of All Soldiers Who Have Fallen In Iraq & Afghanistan.
- *Our friends at Community Solutions, Inc., that God will support them as they find new opportunities and hope for the future.

Doris Ahrens	~	Charlotte Babcock
Julie Cato	~	Gladys Dunbar
Charles Miles	~	Elaine Nelson

Please send me names and dates of anniversaries and birthdays for all family- Month & Day



An Update from Council

We are pleased to announce that Priscilla McCatty has agreed to serve on the Church Council through June 30, 2016. During the past seven years Priscilla has been actively involved in the ministries and work of the church and we are delighted that she has chosen to share her talents, knowledge and wisdom as a council member. Thank you Priscilla!

REMINDER!

Please read the information regarding the Search Committee that was mailed to you last week and return your recommendations for membership on the committee to the Church Council, c/o the church office. If you want an electronic version of the recommendation form please contact Andrea in the church office. Questions??? Call or contact Carolyn Delgado.

A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING.....

You may recall that as one way to honor Doug and Carol Morrill for their many contributions to the life and ministries of our church, we decided to collect monetary gifts that would then be donated to a charity of their choice. In typical fashion and from North Carolina, they continue to bless this church. Doug and Carol have decided that the \$810.00 collected be shared equally among four of the ministries this church supports. These ministries are the

Community Clothing Closet, Loaves and Fishes, the Backpack Program and FIBUSPAM, the health facility in Ecuador founded by Paul Martel.

As Carol explained, these ministries do so much to help so many that she and Doug simply could not choose one over another and decided to support each of them. Many thanks to Doug and Carol for their generous gift! May God bless them as they continue to be a blessing to others!

SAVE THE DATE!!!!

On Saturday, April 9, 2016, from 10am-12noon, a joint meeting of Ministry Teams, Council and Staff will be held. We will be discussing the progress made while implementing the new governance structure, Ministry Teams membership for 2016-2017, Stewardship campaign 2016 and exploring ways to grow our church. And we will have fellowship and fun while we do this!! Please plan to attend this important meeting in the life of our church.

We also extend a special invitation to anyone who would like to learn more about how our ministries work or who are considering joining a Ministry Team. PLEASE JOIN US!

Carolyn Delgado



Selecting a Search Committee

February 19, 2016

Dear Church Family,

We are writing to invite your help and participation in one of the most spiritual and important ministries

in the life of our church: the selection of a Search Committee whose task will be to identify our next settled pastor.

We are inviting you to make recommendations of church members to serve on the Search Committee. Please read the enclosed information prayerfully and carefully. We have included a description of the qualities and attributes of a positive Search Committee member, as well as the commitments vital to this position. Instructions for sending your recommendations to Council are included.

It is an exciting time in the life of our church. We continue to build and strengthen our community of faith and remain active in the ministries of our church. Each of these are significant in the lives of so many inside and outside our walls.

As we all join together to call our next settled pastor, let us continue to be hope-filled, enthusiastic, and intent upon making our vision and mission a reality in the lives of our church, our community and the world.

Yours in faithful service,

The Council

Carolyn Delgado, Coleen Dobo, Scott Goetjen, Clay Hart, Priscilla McCatty,

Carol Wilson and Pastor Edwin Ayala

Carolyn Delgado, chair, Church Council

OUR MISSION

Responding to God's Call, our mission as The First Congregational Church in Bloomfield, United Church of Christ, is to go out into the world proclaiming God's love for all creation, working for justice, bringing Christ's peace and growing in love and faith through service to others. We are a safe and sacred community that welcomes all people and supports each individual journey of faith.

Our Search Committee: Next Steps

In the February issue of the Spire there was an article about the Search and Call process and the commitments required for a Search Committee (see enclosed). Council is asking the church family to make recommendations of individuals for potential membership on the committee. As you reflect on this important ministry in the life of our church, please keep the following in mind:

Personal qualities and attributes that Search Committee members should have:

- a passionate commitment to Christ's church;
- a positive attitude;
- a capacity to approach the task with openness rather than a pre-determined agenda;
- integrity and respect for others;
- an ability to be absolutely confidential;
- a capacity to listen, participate in a group, and come to consensus;
- an active supporter of the church as indicated by worship attendance and a demonstrated commitment and care for the ministries and spirit of the church;
- be trusted and respected by the congregation;
- be willing and able to make this important responsibility a very high priority.

You can make recommendations, by completing the enclosed form and leaving/ mailing it to the Church Council in care of the church office. You may also e-mail the form to Carolyn Delgado at carolyn-delgado@sbcglobal.net.

Search Committee Nomination

Form

Please be aware that you may nominate more than one person for membership on the Search Committee. You may also nominate yourself. Use this form to recommend yourself or others by describing the qualities you and/or they would bring to the committee.

I am recommending myself *and/or* the following individuals:

1.

2.

3.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Print your name: _____

Return to Church Council c/o the church office or email to

carolyn-delgado@sbcglobal.net by 3/15/2016

The First Congregational Church in Bloomfield

Slate of Officers and Team Leaders for 2015-2016 Church Council

Chair – Carolyn Delgado
Vice Chair – Open
Member-at-Large – Clay Hart
Member-at-Large – Coleen Dobo
Member-at-Large – Priscilla Mccatty
Financial Manager – Scott Goetjen
Church Clerk – Carol Wilson
Ex Officio – Pastor Edwin O. Ayala

Ministries

Spiritual Life

Deacons/Worship – Carol Johnson
Music – Marnie Clark
Faith Formation – Dee Hart
Stewardship - _____

Congregational Care

Parish Care – Karen Blanchard
Fellowship – Open

Outreach and Witness

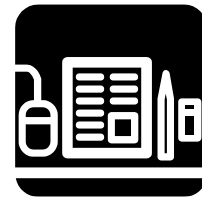
Mission – Tim Johnson
Membership – Open
Visibility – Sophia Gray
Nursery School – Open

Business Team

Financial Manager – Scott Goetjen
Treasurer – Linda Markiewicz
Investments & Trusts – Ralph
Blanchard
Facilities – Mary Laiuppa

Other Positions

Financial Secretary – George Zars
Memorial Secretary – Dorly Brunner



SPIRE OPTIONS

If you would be interested in receiving your copy of the SPIRE electronically, there are several new ways to get the monthly news.

Let us know if you would like to receive:

- an email containing a PDF
- an email with a link to the website PDF
- or if you will pick up your copy when you are at church.

These alternate delivery options will help us save a few trees. Contact office@firstchurchbloomfield or call 860-242-0776 to let us know your preferences.

An Update on the Refugee Project



There is good progress on the plans to resettle a refugee family in Bloomfield. Our church is partnered with friends at Seabury and Duncaster as well as with a wonderful group of organizations. We are working with the Unitarian Society of Hartford, the Bloomfield Muslim Community Center, the Bloomfield Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, the Flagg Road UCC in West Hartford, the First Church of Windsor, the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford, and Old Saint Andrews.

Along with individuals from these organizations we have formed the IRRC (Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Committee) and have made plans to co-sponsor the resettlement of a refugee family with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services). IRIS was established in 1982 as a program of the Episcopal Social Service of the Diocese of Connecticut. IRIS plans to resettle 400 refugees in Connecticut this year. Its headquarters are in New Haven, and it is affiliated with two resettlement agencies, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) and Church World Service (CWS).

Hopefully we will be ready to receive a family by April. Once we tell IRIS we are ready there will be a waiting period while refugee families are screened for resettlement in the United States. At some point we will receive a call from IRIS informing us that a family is coming. Then we have two weeks to lease an

apartment, furnish it, stock a pantry, and arrange support for transportation, medical care, schooling, banking, and plan for the introduction of the refugee family to our Bloomfield community.

Already a good deal of planning has occurred. Potential landlords have been identified. The Bloomfield schools know a refugee family is coming. Furniture and clothing are being collected. Potential employment opportunities are being investigated.

BUT, there are many ways to participate in the refugee project, and we need volunteers to help.

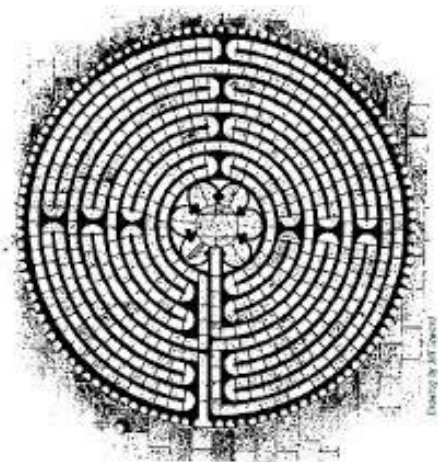
One person who needs help is **Jane Berg**. (janeberg@comcast.net) She is coordinating all the transportation needs of the refugee family. There are many needs which include trips to New Haven, to DMV, to Connecticut Department of Social Services, to Social Security, as well as trips to the grocery store, to the library, the post office, the bank, etc. Please let Jane know that you are willing to help with transportation needs, how many people you can carry in your car, and what times are likely. With many helpers, no one person will have to provide support very often.

Eunice Medwinter (eunicejmed@hotmail.com) is coordinating the furnishing of an apartment and the stocking of the kitchen. Let Eunice know if you have furniture old computers, kitchen ware or clothing which can be used by the refugee family. We will arrange for items to be picked up.

Teaching English is another area requiring support. In particular, anyone with an interest in teaching English as a second language should contact **David Hager** (dhager3207@comcast.net).

Our congregation has an opportunity to make a difference to a family which has left their own country because of religious, social, or political persecution. Please offer your support.

Easter Flowers



CHARTRES LABYRINTH
"Walk" the white path with your eyes.

The Labyrinth is Coming!

On Wednesday March 16 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and Thursday March 17 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. we will host a **Labyrinth experience** in our Fellowship Hall. The Labyrinth is a spiritual practice that helps us get closer to God as we physically journey into the center and then out again. A famous labyrinth is housed at Chartres Cathedral in France.

The labyrinth is not a maze. There are no tricks to it and no dead ends. It has a single circuitous path that winds its way into the center. The person walking it uses the same path to return from the center and the entrance then becomes the exit. The path is in full view, which allows a person to be quiet and focus internally.

Generally there are three stages to the walk: releasing on the way in, receiving in the center and returning when you follow the return path back out of the labyrinth. Symbolically, and sometimes actually, you are taking back out into the world that which you have received.

Please come and experience this deeply spiritual journey with us! No experience necessary.

Please use the form below to order Easter Flowers. If we receive more contributions than we need, the surplus will be put into a flower fund for future use or used for decorations and other spring flowers.

All orders received in the office by **Monday, March 21, 2016** will be included in the Easter Sunday bulletin.

Please enclose your completed form and check for **\$13.00** for each plant made payable to First Congregational Church with Easter Flowers noted in the memo.

You may take your plant home after the 10 am Easter Service on Sunday, April, 5, 2016, or leave it for delivery to our homebound friends.

Please call Cecelia Simmons (860-243-0798) if you have any questions.

Name _____

Phone number _____

Given by _____

In Memory / Celebration / _____

Of _____

Given by _____

In Memory / Celebration / _____

Of _____

Given by _____

In Memory / Celebration / _____

Of _____

_____ I will pick up my plant after the service.

_____ Please deliver my plant to someone who needs cheering up

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

10 Wintonbury Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002
Church Office: 860-242-0776
Nursery School: 860-242-0183
Church Fax: 860-243-8035

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The *Wintonbury Spire*, newsletter of the First Congregational Church in Bloomfield – United Church of Christ, is published monthly to provide information to and about our members and friends.

Spire Schedule The Wintonbury Spire will be mailed at the end of each month. Please join us for the “Spire Party” where we stuff, fold, label, seal and stamp the Spire from 10:30 – 11:30 am on a Friday morning.

Spire Parties will be held on:

March 25, 2016 April 29, 2016
May 27, 2016 June 28, 2016

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