

News from the Hill

The Congregational
Church of Easton

December 2018

Minister

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Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9 am to 2 pm

Friday

9am to 1 pm



"There is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is, keeping Christmas".

Henry van Dyke

I always love the Christmas story of the birth of Christ. It is so full of hope, joy, and love. The Christmas season is a time to contemplate our lives and to see the light of hope in our lives, for our communities, and in the world. Christ came to the world to offer hope of a better life, of a better world, to a people living under the harsh rule of the Roman Empire. His birth in a lowly manger signified that the hope and love being offered was to be to all peoples and that God was reaching out to a hurting world to embrace them and guide them towards his light just as he guided the wise men to the cradle side.

We can find hope and comfort in this story. Yet we tend to meditate on it and act on it by helping others this one season of the year. The Christmas story is supposed to be the reminder to us about how we keep Christmas throughout the whole year long. We are called to consider how we live into the hope of Christ, how we allow the love of Christ to transform our lives, and how we work to bring about peace to a hurting world so that others might feel the joy that God seeks to ignite in our world.

So this season consider making life more about touching the lives of others. Meditate upon how Christ is calling you to live into Christmas year long. And seek to spread the joy of Christmas through the works of your hands, the sharing of our lives, and the peace we seek to extend to all who seek.

This year we have a busy holiday season. We kick everything off with our annual Cookie Walk fundraiser, followed by our Hanging of the Greens Service on Sunday. There will be caroling, a Christmas pageant, and a visit from Santa. Please consider joining us for one or all of our special events and experience the hope of the season allowing it to set the tone for your holiday season and the year to come.

And remember, this is the season to consider your hopes and dreams for you church family through you annual pledge which helps us enact the love, hope, joy, and peace of the Christmas season every day through our continued ministry in the world.

Please read on for a fuller list of our events and special services with more details.



Boards and Committee Reports

Deacons

Two key members of our church family had birthdays in November: Rev. Amanda-the 16th and Jeanne-the 24th. Belated Happy Birthday Wishes.

The Veteran's Day, November 11th, introductory outreach/service project was a heartwarming success. The worshipers packed over 100 boxes (thanks to the generosity of all who donated) of useful items, as suggested by the sponsor, to be sent to members of the military serving abroad.

Our annual and spectacular "Harvest Dinner," on November 17th was a gourmet's delight. Again, - thank you seems inadequate - to all who worked and donated time, food, talent and money.

Our stewardship campaign is in full swing. This is a good time to take the opportunity to add your most welcome contribution to the ongoing ministries of our church.

On Sunday December 2nd, **the beginning of Advent, we will celebrate the annual "Hanging of the Greens."** At that service the names for the Covenant for Care outreach Christmas gifts will be available for pick up. Also, among the festivities of the day, there will be the dedication of a new, recently planted evergreen tree, at the corner of Westport and Center Roads.

For December, the celebration of Communion will be changed from the first Sunday of the month (12/2) to the second Sunday-December 9th.

The Joel Barlow Select Choir will be leading our annual carol sing-a-long at 6:00 PM on December 15th, with a snow date for December 22nd. There will be a reception featuring pizza, cookies and hot chocolate following the caroling.

Our Candlelight Christmas Eve worship will be at 5:30 PM on December 24th. Always a moving experience! The Sunday, December 23rd, service will be as usual, at 10:00 AM.

Pastor Amanda and the Deacons are scheduling a "Membership(s) Sunday" on January 13th for the convenience of anyone wanting to become a member of the church.

The next Deacons meeting will be January 6th at 11:30 AM. All Deacon meeting minutes are readily available at the church officer for your perusal.

Though this epistle started with announcing a joy, I end it on a sad note. I mention the death, mid-November, of Lee Hanson, one our most revered and dedicated church family members. Once again, the Hanson family is in our caring thoughts.



Boards and Committee Reports

Board of Facilities

As many of you know, we had some repairs that involved considerable plumbing and carpentry work. The bills totaling \$3,373 was unexpected and did not appear in the church budget. We are asking, if you can, to contribute just a little extra toward these bills.

Christian Education

Children's Worship and Education

The children are looking forward to participating in worship during the Hanging of the Greens on the first Sunday of Advent.

Also preparations are underway for the Christmas Pageant (December 16th) Everyone is welcome to take part in the pageant. Please let the office know if you would like to join us.

Bible Study

Our last week of Bible Study of 2 Samuel and the story of King David and the story of King Solomon is December 5th. Look for the announcement of our Spring Bible Study in February.

Final Fall Bible Study

Wednesday, December 5, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Turn Around Church

TAC has been meeting to discuss our upcoming plans, our calendar of events, and plans for more activities centered around alternative types of worship outreach projects. If you have any new ideas please send them our way.

Ways to Support our Turnaround Process

Regular church attendance and giving
Inviting friends, family, and neighbors to join us on Sunday mornings
Support our many outreach projects
Sharing ideas for church growth, fellowship, education, and finance
Volunteering to sit on committees

Board and Committee Reports

Board of Christian Outreach

Next St. Luke/St. Paul's Food Kitchen — Menu for December 18th

Chicken — any style — or your specialty, Starches, Vegetables, Salad, Fruit, Desserts

We served 50 guests with some people having seconds on November 20th! Thanks to our cooks/bakers/shoppers Phil Doremus and everyone who contributed to the Harvest Dinner — the leftovers were brought to the Food Kitchen! Claudia Nielson, Connie Wing, Jane Kondratovich, Barbara Trup, Barbara van Achterberg, Sara Scoran, Caren Laskay.

And our Preparers, Transporters and Servers Sara Scoran, Sue, Anthony and Lucas Farmer, Suzanne and John Herlihy, Barbara van Achterberg.

St. Luke/St. Paul's Food Pantry

Non-perishable food is collected on the First Sunday of the month, when we share Communion and remember **those in need of experiencing God's abundance**. They are delivered the day of the food kitchen and can be dropped off at the Old Academy building during the month.

Merton House — We continue to collect sample or travel sized toiletries for Merton House. Please drop them off anytime and place in the basket at the entrance to the church hall.

Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Christmas Gifts for Families of Covenant to Care

Our adopted Social Worker Jorge Ball has given us the names of children and adults who need some help with Christmas gifts this year. If you would like to **play "Santa" for someone in need there will be an opportunity at the Hanging of the Greens service on December 2**. If you cannot attend, check the sign up sheet or call the church office .

Gifts should be in the church hall by Monday, December 17th.



Stewardship Campaign 2019

The 2019 Stewardship Campaign is underway. You should have received your letter and pledge card. Thank you to those who have returned their pledge cards already!

If you would like a pledge card, please call the office. Your early return of your pledge enables us to better budget our resources in the coming year.

Pledge challenge goal 2019: 58,000

Current Pledges: \$33,920

Current Pledge Count: 14



On January 13th, we will be having a special worship service where we will be accepting into our church family new members. If you would like to join our church membership please email Rev. Amanda or call at pastor.echurch@snet.net or 203-261-2527 for more details.

Why join?

Membership allows one to help with the decision making of the church and allows for one to sit on committees to help with the activities of our church family.

Joining a church shows one's dedication and support for their new church family.

Joining a church helps the church make plans for the future and how we make a difference in the world and our local community.



Thanksgiving Baskets for Covenant to Care

Thanks to everyone who provided gift cards and food for the families from Covenant to Care for Thanksgiving. We made up 11 bags of food and gift cards! Your continued support is much appreciated by the families and by our adopted Social Worker, Jorge Ball.



3rd Annual Cookie Walk!

It's Almost Here!

Saturday, December 1st

10:00 AM to 2 :00 PM

Join us for the Cookie Walk. As you enter you take your box or boxes! And fill them with delicious goodies home-made by our wonderful Baker Volunteers. Tell your friends and neighbors about it too. Early birds get the best selection. This year we will have a raffle for a beautiful Christmas Plate and cookies to fill it.

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 2 at 10 am

First Sunday of Advent

Join us as we celebrate the traditions of Christmas with readings and songs of the season!



*Join us for An Evening of Carols with the
Joel Barlow Select Choir on
Saturday, December 15th at 6 PM
in the Church Sanctuary*

*Come and sing along with the choir as we celebrate the season
with an evening of Carols and Christmas Songs*

*We'll end the evening with some pizza,
hot chocolate & cookies in the Old Academy
Bring the kids! Bring your friends!*



Join us for our Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 16th during worship.

Everyone is welcome to participate, please call or email the office and let us know if you would like to take part.

Christmas Eve Choir

Everyone is invited to join the choir!

Practices will be

Sunday, December 16 and 23 following worship

We will have a choir “warm up” at 5:00 p.m. just before worship on Christmas Eve.



Upcoming Events

3 rd Annual Cookie Walk	Saturday, December 1 st , 10 AM—2 PM
Hanging of the Greens	Sunday, December 2 nd 10 AM
NAPS Breakfast with Santa	Saturday, December 8 th —8 to 11 AM
Joel Barlow Concert	Saturday, December 15 th (<i>snow date 12/22</i>) 6 PM
Christmas Pageant	Sunday, December 23 rd , 10 AM
Christmas Eve Service	Monday, December 24 th , 5:30 PM

Keep an eye out for details about these events in the coming week’s bulletins.



A Christmas Cradle

Let my heart the cradle be
Of thy bleak Nativity!
Tossed by wintry tempests wild,
If it rock thee, Holy Child.
Then, as grows the outer din,
Greater peace shall reign within.

John Erskine

Historical Society of Easton
Annual Christmas Party
Adams Schoolhouse



The Easton Senior Center Holiday Boutique
November 5-December 20, 8am-3:00pm weekdays.

Brand new gifts. Holiday décor, hand knitted gloves, hats, and scarves, kids' corner. Outstanding selection at a fraction of the retail cost. Free gift wrapping is also available for purchases of \$5 or more.

In addition, we are holding a "12 Days of Christmas" raffle until December 19. Twelve drawings (\$50 value each) will be held on December 19th at noon. Tickets are \$2.00 each and can be purchased at The Easton Senior Center. Please call 203-268-1145 for information.





Poinsettias are among the most beautiful decorations in our sanctuary at Christmas time. This year, as is our custom, we will have “virtual Poinsettias” as well as real plants. Your gift of a “virtual” Poinsettia will be used for Outreach. You may purchase either in honor or memory of a loved one. The list of donor and dedications will be included in the Order of Worship.

The Poinsettia plants will decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. You are invited to take them home with you after the Christmas Eve Service, or if you wish they will be brought to a homebound member.

The flowers this year will be from Rudy’s, they will be 7.5” pots and are \$18.00.

The “virtual Poinsettias” offering will also be \$18.00

Poinsettia Order

Name: _____

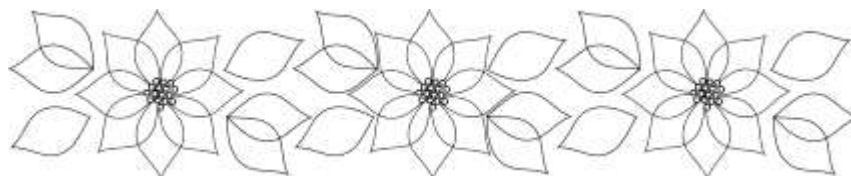
Poinsettia Plant order

_____ Red _____ White Total # Plants _____ @ \$18.00 \$_____

“Virtual” Poinsettia order

_____ @ \$18.00 Virtual Total _____

Flower Orders must be in by Sunday, December 9th



Serving Schedule



December Confirming and Welcoming Deacon — Leon March

	Ushers/Offering	Collectors	Coffee Hour
December 2	Sunday School	D. Colonnese, M. Perkins	B. van Achterberg
December 9	The Marches	The Twomblys	D. Colonnese
December 16	N. Taranto, P. McCarty	The Galsers	N. Taranto
December 23	S. Lovejoy, D. Colonnese	N. Taranto, C. Partridge	Looking for host!
Christmas Eve			
December 30	D. Colonnese, T. Linley	D. Colonnese, M. Perkins	J. Stock

January Confirming and Welcoming Deacon — Jon Stock

	Ushers/Offering	Collectors	Coffee Hour
January 6	S. Lovejoy	D. Colonnese, M. Perkins	B. van Achterberg
January 13	The Marches	The Twomblys	N. Taranto
January 20	P. McCarty, N. Taranto	The Glasers	S. Lovejoy
January 27	D. Colonnese, T. Linley	N. Taranto, C. Partridge	D. Colonnese

If you would like to participate in worship by doing the offering, or hosting coffee hour, please call a member of the Board of Deacons or call or email the church office. If you are unable to serve as assigned, please contact the church office.


Altar Flower and Coffee Hour Hosting for 2019

Please see our **Flower Calendar** for 2019 If you would like to celebrate a special date of a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion. You may order or provide the flowers yourself or have the office order them (\$35.00).



Hosting a Coffee Hour is a wonderful way also to celebrate a special occasion.

- Why: Celebrating a special day with your church family, to welcome people to a moment of fellowship.
- How: Call the church office or send an email if you would like to be on our rotation to host Coffee Hour or would like to just do a special date.

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Cookie Walk 10 to 2
2 <i>Hanging of the Greens</i> 10 Worship 11 Coffee Hour Cove	3	4	5 3:30 Bible Study	6	7	8 NAPS B'fast with Santa
9 10 Worship with Communion 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour Deacons	10	11	12	13	14	15  6 PM Joel Barlow Concert
16 10 Worship Christmas Pageant 11 Coffee Hour Cove	17 Covenant to Care Gifts Due	18 Food Kitchen	19	20	21	22 Snow Date Joel Barlow Concert
23 10 Worship 11 Coffee Hour	24 Office Closed 5:30 PM Christmas Eve 		26 Office Closed	27	28	29
30 10 Worship 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour TAC	31 New Year's Eve					

January 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10 Worship with Communion 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 10 Worship 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour	14	15 Food Kitchen	16	17	18	19
20 10 Worship 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour	21 MKLJr. Day Office closed	22	23	24	25	26
27 27 Worship 10:15 Children's Time 11 Coffee Hour	28	29	30	31		



Christmas Eve

5:30 PM

Candlelight Service



NEWS FROM THE HILL . . .
THE CONGREGATIONAL
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