

News from the Hill

The Congregational
Church of Easton

December 2019

Minister

Rev. Amanda Ostrove

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Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9 am to 2 pm

Friday

9am to 1 pm



BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM,
“DO NOT BE AFRAID.
I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS
THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY
FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.”

LUKE 2:10, NIV

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern."

Mother Theresa

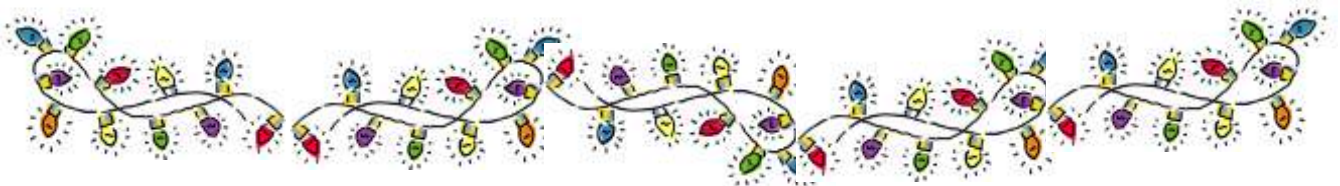
Each Advent, I try to find time in the busy schedule to reflect upon the birth of Christ. In so doing, I often find myself rereading the birth stories from the Gospels. This year in particular, I am taken by the very pregnant Mary, in labor, and unable to find kindness, warmth, and a place to welcome her child into the world. Now perhaps this has something to do with being in my third trimester during **the Christmas season this year. But, I can't imagine the coldness and the hurt she must have felt in** those moments. This world could not find room for the birth of a new baby. She was relegated to a dirty, smelly, barn surrounded by animals to birth her child; her first child at that.

I then think about our world today. If Mary were to find herself on the road and in labor today all she would have to do is visit a hospital and they would find a room for her to have her child. However **that doesn't mean that if Christ were to come to this world today that he would be met with warmth** and love. Each year when we celebrate Advent and Christmas, we are called to think about whether our hearts are welcoming enough, warm enough, caring enough, and open enough to recognize **Christ's presence and offer him the warmth he did not receive in life. We do this by caring for others, offering community and support to those who don't have any, and loving the very people that Christ** himself loved enough to sacrifice his life for.

This year our church is offering several opportunities to do this. First join us on December 1st for our Greening of the Church Service where we will learn about Christmas traditions and choose names of children and parents in need to provide gifts for. We would welcome the warmth of community by asking you to join us in our cookie walk on December 7th from 10 to 2, or in a moment of fellowship with us for our Joel Barlow Carol sing-a-long on December 14th at 6:30PM, or supporting the children of our church in our pageant on December 15th, and joining us on Christmas Eve as we officially welcome Christ into our hearts once more this Christmas season. You may also consider volunteering at our December food kitchen as well. All of these are great ways for us to prepare our hearts for **Christ, to let him find the warmth of God's love there when he comes once more.**

Blessings,

Rev. Amanda Ostrove



Boards and Committee Reports

Deacons

A key member of our church family had a birthday in November: Rev. Amanda on the 16th. Happy Belated Birthday, Amanda.

Veterans and Veteran's Day, November 11th, was recognized in Rev. Amanda's meditation on Sunday, November 10th. During the service she welcomed several guests from the American Legion, one of whom spoke of their mission.

Our annual and spectacular "Harvest Dinner," on November 23rd was a gourmet's delight – again. Thank you seems inadequate to all who worked and donated time, food, talent and money.

Keep our stewardship campaign in mind. 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 1st, the beginning of Advent, we celebrated the annual "Hanging of the Greens." At that service the names for the Covenant for Care outreach Christmas gifts were available for pick up

For December, the celebration of Communion will be changed from the first Sunday of the month, December 1st, to the second Sunday-December 8th.

The Joel Barlow Select Choir will be leading our annual carol sing-a-long at 6:30 PM on December 14th, in the sanctuary, with a snow date for December 21st. Following the caroling, there will be a reception featuring pizza, cookies and hot chocolate, in the Fellowship Hall,.

The Sunday, December 22nd, service will be as usual at 10:00 AM. Our Candlelight Christmas Eve worship will be at 5:30 PM on December 24th. Always a moving experience!

The next Deacons meeting will be January 5th, 2020 at approximately 11:30 AM. Members of our church family are welcome to visit a meeting at any time and all Deacon meeting minutes are readily available at the church officer for your perusal.



Boards and Committee Reports

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 15th) Everyone is welcome to take part in the pageant. Please let the office know if you would like to join us.

Bible Study

We finished off our fall Bible Study in November. We will be taking a break from Bible Study until **the Spring following Easter. Then we will be studying Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. This is a** perfect opportunity for us to see the development of Christianity and the struggles of the early communities as they struggled to find their footing as Christians in a very hostile world. I invite everyone to think about joining me.

Turn Around Church

TAC

Ways to Support our Turnaround Process

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



Board and Committee Reports

Board of Christian Outreach

Next St. Luke/St. Paul's Food Kitchen — Menu for December 17th

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

For questions or to make monetary donations towards miscellaneous items, please contact the office.

We could always use more volunteers to transport and serve. Please note that we will not be meeting at the church until 4:15 pm on Food Kitchen Tuesdays.

Food may be dropped off and put in the freezer or refrigerator ahead of time. Please mark that it is for the Soup Kitchen. Paper/pens/tape are next to the refrigerator.

On the day of the soup kitchen, food should be fully defrosted and delivered to the church hall by 3:30 pm. Volunteers are asked to arrive by 4 pm to help load cars. We will carpool to St. Luke's/St. Paul's in Bridgeport, leaving Easton church hall at 4:15 pm. Volunteers will return by 6:30-6:45 pm.

On November 19th, we served approximately 45 meals. Thanks to our cooks, bakers and shoppers: Barbara Trup, Connie Wing, Daisy Colonnese, Sue Farmer, Claudia Nielsen, Steve and Pat Glaser, Susan March and Caren Laskay.

Thanks to our preppers, transporters and servers: Cynthia Landry, Connie Wing, and Sue Farmer.

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 1. If you cannot attend, check the sign up sheet or call the church office .

Gifts should be in the church hall by Wednesday, December 18th.



Stewardship Campaign 2019

Stewardship Campaign

Typically, this is the time of year where we ask people to consider their donation for the next fiscal year. Donations are essential to the life of our church and your donations have allowed for us to continue on our work in Christ extending our ministry from only about 4 years left 5 years ago to maintaining that 4 year goal each and every year. Our goal is to keep extending those years from year to year, so we can continue to make a difference in the lives of our parishioners, local community, and community at large.

We are very grateful and appreciative to each and every one of you for your continued generosity to our church community. We would not be where we are today without the various ways that you support the work that we do. To that end, the council, who are diligently working and planning for 2020, would like to have a clearer idea of people's intentions to complete their 2019 pledges. This number helps us plan for our pledge goals for the coming year. So we would greatly appreciate it if friends and congregants alike would be willing to recommit themselves to finishing their 2019 pledges. If you need reminding about what those pledges are please feel free to contact the church office and if there are discrepancies between your records and those of the office please contact us and let us know.

Many Blessings and Thanks,

Rev. Amanda Ostrove

Pastor



Harvest Dinner

Many thanks to everyone who made such delicious food and drink and volunteered their time.

We had a record 72 people attend!

A true thanksgiving dinner.



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 10 bags of food and gift cards! Your continued support is much appreciated by the families and by our adopted Social Worker, Jorge Ball.



4th Annual Cookie Walk!

It's Almost Here!

Saturday, December 7th

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 homemade 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 1 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 14th at 6:30 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 15th 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!

If you would like to sing in our Christmas Eve Choir, please speak to Rev. Amanda.

Choir rehearsal dates will be announced.



Upcoming Events

Hanging of the Greens	Sunday, December 1st 10 AM
4 rd Annual Cookie Walk	Saturday, December 7th, 10 AM – 2 PM
Joel Barlow Concert	Saturday, December 14 th (<i>snow date 12/21</i>) 6:30 PM
NAPS Breakfast with Santa	Saturday, December 14 th , 8AM – 11 AM
Christmas Pageant	Sunday, December 15th, 10 AM
Christmas Eve Service	Tuesday, 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



The Easton Senior Center Annual Holiday Boutique

November 4th - December 18th 8:00 am—3:00 pm weekdays.

There are sensational new gifts for the holiday season. The 12 Days of Christmas Raffle tickets will be available on October 22nd.





Christmas Poinsettias

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 7” pot (1 plant) is \$18.00.

If you wish to purchase a “virtual” Poinsettia you will continue to remember and honor loved ones. The “virtual” Poinsettias offering will also be \$18.00.

Name: _____
(*exactly as you want it to appear in the Order of Worship*)

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

“Virtual” Poinsettia order

_____ @ \$18.00 each Virtual Total \$ _____

Poinsettia Plant order

_____ Red or _____ White _____ @ \$18.00 each

Plant Total \$ _____

Please make check payable to: **The Congregational Church of Easton** and memo: **“Poinsettias”** or **“Virtual Poinsettias”** Order forms with checks can be mailed or left in the church office or put in the offering plate.

Flower Orders due by December 9th / Virtual Orders by December 16th

_____ Please bring my flowers to someone in need.

Serving Schedule



December Welcoming and Confirming Deacon — Leon March

	Offering	Collectors/Counters	Coffee Hour
December 1	Leon March	N. Taranto / C. Partridge	Jon Stock
December 8	P. McCarty / N. Taranto	D. Colonnese / M. Perkins	Daisy Colonnese
December 15	D. Colonnese / T. Linley	The Glasers	Nathalie Taranto
December 22	S. Lovejoy / N. Taranto	The Twomblys	Suzanne Lovejoy
Christmas Eve	P. McCarty / T. Linley		No Coffee Hour
December 29	Leon March	N. Taranto / C. Partridge	Jon Stock

January Welcoming and Confirming Deacon — Jon Stock

	Offering	Collectors/Counters	Coffee Hour
January 5	S. Lovejoy	D. Colonnese, M. Perkins	Daisy Colonnese
January 12	The Marches	The Glasers	Nathalie Taranto
January 19	P. McCarty, N. Taranto	The Twomblys	Suzanne Lovejoy
January 26	D. Colonnese, T. Linley	N. Taranto, C. Partridge	Daisy 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 2020

Please see our ***Flower Calendar*** for 2020 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 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>Hanging of the Greens</i> 10 AM Worship 11 AM Coffee Hour 11:30 Deacon's Meeting	2	3	4	5	6	7 Cookie Walk 10-2
8 10 AM Worship w/Communion 11 AM Coffee Hour COVE	9	10	11	12	13	14 Joel Barlow Concert 6:30 pm (12/21 snow date)
15 10 AM Christmas Pageant 11 AM Coffee Hour COVE	16	17 Food Kitchen 4:00	18	19	20	21
22 10 AM Worship 11 AM Coffee Hour COVE	23	24 Office Closed 5:30 PM Christmas Eve 	25 Office Closed	26	27	28
29 10 AM Worship Children's Church 11 AM Coffee Hour 11:30 TAC Meeting	30	31				

January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2	3	4
5 10 AM Worship w/Communion 11 AM Coffee Hour 11:30 Deacon's Meeting	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 10 AM Worship 11 AM Coffee Hour COVE	13	14	17 Food Kitchen 4:00	16	17	18
19 10 AM Worship 11 AM Coffee Hour	20 MKLJr. Day Office closed	21	22	23	24	25
26 10 AM Worship 11 AM Coffee Hour 11:30 TAC Meeting COVE	27	28	29	30	31 	



Christmas Eve

5:30 PM

Candlelight Service



NEWS FROM THE HILL . . .
THE CONGREGATIONAL
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