
News from the Hill . . .

Rev. Amanda Ostrove, Pastor

SEPTEMBER 2020

E-Mail: CChurchEaston@gmail.com

Reflections in the Midst of the Pandemic

"Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God".

Thomas Merton, 20th century theologian

So from the depths of this pandemic, I find myself, by necessity, becoming more and more introspective, prayerful, and purposeful. One of the most obvious conclusions I have come to is that I HATE Covid-19. I miss socialization: my friends, church family, and family. But there are deeper realizations that have come out of this pandemic so far and a deep healing that can happen by being forced to stop and focus on our inward life. This can be a time to connect with God inwardly seeking healing of old forgotten and ignored wounds and seeking to reconnect with God in a way that the busyness of life won't allow.

Many of you know that in August I took five days off between Sundays to focus on some family needs. But what I discovered in those days was internal needs that had gone unnoticed and ignored now probably since 2016. My husband and I got to focus on reconnecting with one another spiritually in a way that we haven't been able to do since before we had children. In that time, I discovered that "Hey, I like doing bonding activities with him". He shared with me the guided meditation that he has been practicing since the start of the pandemic and I shared with him the release of regular exercise. He taught me how to sit and relax, something I have always struggled with.

By doing so, I found that there was some pain that needed addressing. By exploring that pain, I discovered God and by discovering him I felt I was able to let it go and give it to him. To do this, I needed to be forced to stop. I had to stop running around doing chores. I had to stop preparing for the next item on my to-list. I had to stop worrying about everything and everyone else. This is something we could all benefit from. We could all use the time to connect with God not just out in the world by doing his work. But to connect to God in the very spiritual and life changing internal way. By discovering him inside each one of us, calling to us to change our lives, to rely upon him, and to trust in him to offer us healing and guidance in this very difficult time of life.

Perhaps, this is the optimist in me, but it is up to us to not allow for this pandemic to destroy everything that is meaningful for us. It is up to us not to allow for this pandemic to overrun our lives with the bad and stress. We can use this time as an opportunity to strengthen ourselves spiritually and emotionally. Use this time to reconnect with old hobbies and activities that have fallen to the wayside. Pray, meditate, sing, praise God, and take care of your needs as we have not been allowed to for sometime. Such acts are important to achieving a deepening faith that can carry you through the struggles of life and remind you that with God there is healing and wholeness, and with God you can make a difference in your own lives as well as in the lives of others.

So, use this time to heal, reconnect, and discover God anew. It has brought new life into my daily experiences and I believe it can help each one of you too.

Council Chair—Phillip A. Doremus Deacon Chair—Nathalie Taranto

Sexton—Sara Scoran Secretary—Laura Tulley

Phone — 203-261-2527

Website — www.eastonchurch.org

Email: CChurchEaston@gmail.com

Boards and Committee Reports

Board of Deacons

Zoom worship attendance remains steady by those of you who have chosen to and/or are able to participate while Fellowship Hall in-person worship is well attended by those who prefer doing so. We will keep both going for as long as is needed and beyond.

Leon March and Rev. Amanda are researching ways and means to extend our Church Office Wi-Fi connection via router into the Sanctuary itself. Thus, all electronic advantages can continue when we return to full in-person worship in the sanctuary. Remote worship remains imperative for shut-ins and will allow worship in times of winter storms when in-sanctuary worship must be canceled.

There is much overlapping information/news re: church activities such as Bible Study, Church School, etc. so rather than repeating the information here, I direct to the other board's, committee's and the Pastor's portion of this publication.

The Deacons urge each of you to call or email a church friend or family member as a means of continuing our close fellowship and to give yourself a lift during our 'sheltering in place' time.

The Deacons will continue to meet remotely at approximately 12:00 noon the first Sunday of each month unless there is need for an alternate date.

Board member are: Daisy Colonnese, Leon March, Sara Trup, Jonathan Stock & Nathalie Taranto.

Daisy is the September Confirming Deacon.

Facilities

We are currently pricing service contracts and oil delivery prices with several companies to conduct a price comparison with our current company, Santa Fuel. Please look for the cost analysis results in next month's newsletter.

As mentioned in August's Newsletter, the hot water heater in the Old Academy building has been replaced with a more energy efficient system. The cost of the new pump was \$1,400 plus \$1,000 in installation fees.

Christian Education

This year Children's worship and Christian education will be offered online. Weekly online activities will be posted by Connie Wing our Sunday school teacher on the church website. Parents are urged to do these activities with their children either on Sundays or another day during the week to continue their religious education during this time of social distancing. We will email out the link to you on Fridays. And we hope by 2021 we will be able to start in person Children's Worship again.

Because of the use of Zoom, we were able to have people join us for Bible Study who have long ago moved away or whose churches do not offer Bible Study. This fall we will be offering a study of 2 Corinthians. It will be an 8-week long zoom class starting on Thursday, September 17th at 7PM. We are playing with the day and time this fall to see if this opens the study up to a larger group. If you would like to attend or have friends and family who would like to attend the link will be found on the church website at www.eastonchurch.org and all materials will be posted on the Christian Education page of the website. We hope you will consider joining us for one or all of our evening sessions this fall.

Boards and Committee Reports



TAC Turnaround Committee

We are collecting recipes for our church family and friends cookbook. We are collecting summertime recipes that we can share. You may send in handwritten recipes to the church office, or, even better, email them to suzanneel612@gmail.com. What a fun way to pass the time of quarantine! We do plan to send some recipes into the Courier to remind the community that we are here and functioning amid the crisis.

This will be a fun and great fundraiser for the church.

Next TAC Meeting: September 20, 2020 following worship online. A special zoom session will be established for the meeting. All are invited to join, just let us know and we will send you the sign in information.

Stewardship



Even though we are not meeting in person on Sundays, your gifts are essential to keep the church running in this unprecedented time. So please mail in your pledges and your weekly gifts to the church office.

We appreciate your support in this time.



Instructions for Zoom



Zoom worship will continue even when we start in person worship in the hall. You will still be able to join from online if you are not quite ready to join us in person yet.

To join us on Zoom follow the link or call the phone number that I will email to you before worship. To follow along in worship open the files posted on the church website or emailed to you earlier in the week. You do not need the files to join. All are welcome to come and feel the community at worship, to join us in prayer, and to hear the scriptures and feel the word of God.

Come and Join us for worship on Sunday mornings online at 10:00AM. Come just as you are giving new meaning to the hymn "Just as I am, without one plea". Come with your tea, with your coffee, in pajamas and comfortable clothes and still worship God and seek support and a word of hope.

Please note that in the event that there is a glitch of problems with the internet on Sunday morning, you are always welcome to join in-person worship or tune in on Monday morning from the link to the YouTube page. It will always be recorded and uploaded online.

What Does Worship Look Like?

Worship in the era of Covid-19 will look very different. These are the recommendations made by the CDC, the State of CT, and the United Church of Christ.

- Unison and Responsive readings and prayers would be done by the pastor with the congregation encouraged to read along silently
- Hymns will be sung by a soloist (likely Rev. Amanda) from the pulpit
- Offering will not be taken in the traditional way but offering plates will be located at the doors for people to drop their donations on the way in or out
- Bulletins will be located in the pews or on the chairs in the fellowship hall
- People will be asked to leave slowly allowing each family to leave one at a time
- Communion will be observed but individually wrapped communion will be picked up on the way out to be taken in each person's car
- Everyone will be required to wear masks at all times
- Coffee hour will be virtual and at a later time in the day on Zoom
- Temperatures will be taken at the door – temperatures of 100 degrees or more will be asked to seek medical attention and we will offer up prayers for you
- Prayer requests must be sent into the church office in advance of worship. There will be no sharing from the floor.
- Announcements must be made by email to the church in advance of worship. There will be no sharing from the floor.

The CDC believes that in person worship will be risky because of the prolonged period of time so many people are in one room together and the size of the room and distancing doesn't make a huge difference. If you have compromised health please stay home and join us online.

What Do I Need to Do to Join In Person Worship

- Come wearing a mask
 - Be willing to have temperature taken at the door
- Hand sanitizer will be offered at the door for use upon entering and leaving
 - Let us know in advance if you plan to join us and with how many people
 - If you are able volunteer to help with needed volunteer positions

Volunteers Needed

- Taking temperatures at the door (thermometer will be provided with gloves)

Zoom Social Hours

In response to an expressed need for community and socialization, TAC has decided to establish zoom social hours during the week. If you are interested please email the church office so we can start figuring out the best days and times.



Ways to Stay Connected to the Community

Just because for many of us social distancing is continuing this doesn't mean that we can't stay connected. This would be a great opportunity to pick up your directory and to call people and develop relationships just through a conversation. If you would like a directory, please contact the church office.




Sermon Series

I had a lot of fun researching and thinking about our last sermon series on Creationism and Evolution. If you have any other sermon series themes or ideas please email or call Rev. Amanda.

?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

What seemingly small act did Jesus specifically say would be rewarded?

- A. Giving a child a toy
- B. Giving a lost traveler directions
- C. Giving someone a cup of cold water
- D. Giving a sad person a hug




Answer: C (See Matthew 10:42.)

?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Which of the following are mentioned in the list that follows?

- A. a time to teach, and a time to learn
- B. a time to mourn, and a time to dance
- C. a time to fast, and a time to eat
- D. a time to work, and a time to rest



Answer: B (See Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.)

Phases of Reopening

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Zoom Worship in Church Hall	Zoom Worship in the Hall People Present	Worship in Sanctuary with Zoom Option	Return to Normal Worship
Carole and Amanda Present	Carole and Amanda Present	Carole and Amanda Present	Return to Normal functioning of church
No Parishioners yet	Open to those who want to join 18 or fewer	Roped off pews	
No Coffee Hour	Temperature taking at the door	RSVP	
Send out survey	Flow of traffic to be directed using signs	Temperature taking at the door	
Figure out what we need for next phase	No hymn singing/just soloist	Flow of traffic	
Office reopens with Appointments	No collectors/ushers	Sanitizing following worship	
	Chairs will be disinfected by Sara Scoran	Offering masks at the door/all people wearing masks	
	RSVP before hand	No Communion/ individually wrapped to be taken in cars	
	All people need to wear masks	No Coffee Hour	
	Prepackaged communion	Zoom option either during church or following church – No music	
	No Coffee Hour	No hymn singing/soloist	
	No passing of the peace/ hugs/hand shaking	No passing of the peace/ hugs/hand shaking	
	Office Open- Call first, masks, appointments	Office Open- Call first, masks, appointments	

We continue in Phase 2 which is worship in the fellowship hall as it is the safest and easiest place to set up and sanitize during covid-19. This means we do have a limit to how many people can be in worship. So, please remember to RSVP to let us know if you plan to attend worship on a Sunday and with how many people. Please RSVP even if you think you might attend.

Some things to remember when attending worship in person is that masks need to be worn covering mouth and nose. The restrictions to in person worship are for everyone's safety. The uptick in cases in Danbury has been linked to social gatherings, sports gatherings, and worship. So the safer we are the better.



UCC — Southern New England Conference

An online Zoom meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, September 26th. These are all day meetings.

If you would like to join, please contact Rev. Amanda or the church office.

Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

An online Zoom meeting has been scheduled for September 15 at 6:30 pm.

If you plan on attending please contact Rev. Amanda for information.



Board of Christian Outreach



St. Luke/St. Paul's Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is still closed due to the pandemic. We are hoping their doors will reopen soon.

Unfortunately, the extended power outage due to Tropical Storm Isaiah, all of the food in our refrigerators and freezers had to be discarded. We will need to pull together to restock our Food Kitchen supplies.



Easton Senior Center and Covenant to Care

We will continue to collect food for the Easton Senior Center. In addition, we will begin collecting food for Covenant to Care in conjunction with our adopted social worker Jorge Ball.



Backpacks and Supplies for Covenant to Care

Thanks to all of the volunteers who made donated —
Claudia Nielsen, Connie Wing, Cynthia Landry, Pat and Judy McCarty, Suzanne Lovejoy,
the Raymond Family, Carole Fanslow, Nathalie Taranto and Daisy Colonese.

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.





Confirming Deacon for September 2020

Daisy Colonnese

Confirming Deacon for October 2020

Jon Stock



Sunday Morning Worship Flowers

If you would like to order or provide flowers for Sunday morning in-person worship, we are now accepting sign-ups. We will send out an email weekly starting in September to see if anyone is interested.



Church Family and Friends Cookbook Fundraiser

Please share you summertime favorite recipes and those of your friends for our church cookbook.

This is a wonderful way to stay connected during this time of isolation.

Send all recipes to Suzanne Lovejoy at suzanneel612@gmail.com or if they are handwritten recipes without access to a computer you may mail them to the church office.

Don't assume that God will always work in your life the way he always has. A sunset is proof that God colors outside the lines. He has no status quo. Even the laws of nature are his to interrupt. As many times as you've prayed before, today may be the day when God sends the answer so swiftly — so divinely — that you're windburned.

—Beth Moore

September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Rev. Amanda Away worship will be on YouTube	7 Office Closed 	8 International Literacy Day 	9	10	11 	12
13 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship with Communion 11:30 Deacon's Meeting	14	15 CCGB Zoom delegate meeting on Zoom	16	17 7PM Zoom Bible Study	18	19
20 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship 11:30 TAC Meeting	21 International Peace Day 	22 	23	24 7PM Zoom Bible Study	25	26 SNEUCC Annual Meeting on Zoom
27 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship	28	29	30			

October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7PM Zoom Bible Study	2 World Smile Day 	3
4 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship with Communion 11:30 Deacon's Meeting 	5	6	7	8 7PM Zoom Bible Study	9	10
11 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship	12 	13	14	15 7PM Zoom Bible Study	16	17
18 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship	19	20	21	22 7PM Zoom Bible Study	23	24
25 10:00 AM Hybrid Worship 	26	27	28	29	30	31 



NEWS FROM THE HILL . . .
THE CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF EASTON
Westport Road at Center Road
P.O. Box 37
Easton, CT 06612-0037