
News from the Hill . . .

Rev. Amanda Ostrove, Pastor

NOVEMBER 2020

E-Mail: CChurchEaston@gmail.com

Reflections in the Midst of the Pandemic

"I think that the world will not be converted to the heavenly hope of Christianity if first Christianity does not convert itself to the hope of the world."

Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, 20th century

As we begin to think about the holidays during pandemic and what they might look like, I thought this might be a good time to also remember the world as a whole, to remember some of our Christian activities and ideals that often get forgotten when our lives are focused on keeping ourselves safe. This is the time when we traditionally think about reaching out to those who are in need. But it is also a time that we need to be thinking about how we could better use our Christian principles, our faith in God, to bring hope to one another as well as to those who are in need. This is the perfect time to remind the world that kindness still exists, that people do still care, and that there is still hope for the world.

It is so easy to get caught up in the drama of the world political sphere, the drama of the world health crisis, and in so doing we forget that there are so many people doing great and wonderful things because they believe in humanity and they believe in the goodness of what God has created. Let us do the same and subscribe to and live into that hope. Let us make kindness the most important part of how we enact Christ's will in this world. Let us live into his call to care for his sheep. So continue to find new ways to feed those who are hungry, to clothe those who are naked, and to provide comfort to those who struggle and are grieving.

This is our call as Christians; this is our responsibility as fellow human beings in this world. With this in mind, please read on to find out how to help with our church projects from Thanksgiving Baskets, to making bag lunches for St. Luke's/St. Paul's, to supporting our Holiday Cookie Bake Sale. There are so many ways to work together to get ourselves out there doing the work of Christ, being his caring hands in this world. Hands that will slowly give hope back to a world that is in turmoil.

I wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. Some highlights for the month of November. Council met and made a decision on how to respond to the town about the crosswalk situation so please read on for more information on that. Also, as of November 13th Laura Tulley, our church administrative assistant, will regretfully be leaving us. So please take the time to say goodbye and to wish her well as she moves on to new ventures. We will greatly miss her and I will miss her presence and help in the church office. She has kept us organized and on track and has been a caring presence in this position. I sincerely hope she will continue to visit and stay in touch.

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

Sexton—Sara Scoran Secretary—Laura Tulley

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Boards and Committee Reports



Council

On October 25th the church council met to discuss a proposal made by the town to make changes to the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Center and Westport Roads to accommodate pedestrians going to the Post Office, Greiser's gas station, and Greiser's Coffee and Market. The proposal involved the use of church property and the redirection of our sidewalks. Attached you will see the short letter sent to the Town's Land Use Director and the First Selectman regarding this request for changes to our grounds. Please note that for more details you may request to read the minutes taken in that meeting.

To Justin Giorlando,

The Congregational Church of Easton's Church Council, a group representing the various boards and committees of the Church, met on Sunday, October 25, 2020 to discuss the town's proposal for improvements to the pedestrian patterns at the intersection of Center and Westport Roads (Rt. 136). After a thorough review of the pros and cons of the proposal, the Church Council unanimously voted not to endorse the proposed work as it applies to the Church property.

Respectfully,

Phillip A. Doremus, Chair of the Church Council



Board of Deacons

Reverend Amanda is guiding we Deacons as together we are attempting to honor our long revered and beautiful Advent and Yuletide celebrations within the limitations, rules and regulations of the COVID-19 epidemic dangers.

Thanks to procedural challenges from the virus threat, Reverend Amanda has been forced to do additional research, learn and implement new ways and means to keep our worship services, ongoing Christian education, outreach and church business safe and operational. Thus, acting with appreciation from the Deacons and on the recommendations of several of our church members, we have opted to grant Reverend Amanda a one thousand dollar (\$1,000.00) meritorious compensation for services above and beyond her usual responsibilities. Thank you, Reverend Amanda.

Boards and Committee Reports



TAC Turnaround Committee

We are collecting recipes for our church family and friends cookbook. We are collecting favorite fall 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. This will be a fun and great fundraiser for the church.

We are also looking for ways to open ourselves to some of the new residents here in Easton in a way that will be safe for everyone. We will be sending out letters of welcome and invite them join us for one of three zoom sessions where they can come ask questions and get to know the congregation and Rev. Amanda. If you would be willing to join us for some of these zoom sessions please email Rev. Amanda at pastor.cchurcheaston@gmail.com so she can work with your schedules.

Next TAC Meeting: November 15, 2020 following worship online. All are invited to join for our TAC meetings at 11:45 with the link below.

TAC Meeting Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85470790594?pwd=ZmhvRzMxQUVtelhKbWpXM3JYSHFVdz09>

Passcode: 932688

TAC Meeting Zoom Phone Number:

1-929-205-6099 followed by Meeting ID: 854 7079 0594 Passcode: 932688

Facilities

Please see Council Notes regarding the status of the town proposed sidewalk on the Church property.



For personal and family reasons, I've, with a heavy heart, resigned from my position as Secretary. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the Congregational Church of Easton community, and it has been such a pleasure getting to know all of you.

I hope to stay in touch with many of you and, as things reopen, attend Church functions and celebrations.

*Be well and best wishes,
Laura Tulley*



Boards and Committee Reports



Christian Education

Children's Worship and Christian Education

This year Children's worship and Christian education will be offered online. Weekly online activities will be emailed out to families by the church office. Connie Wing our Sunday school teacher has put a lot of thought into these activities and offers links to watch as well. 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 lessons to you on Fridays. And we hope by 2021 we will be able to start in person again.



Spring Bible Study

Bible Study

Thank you to all who joined us for our Fall Bible Study. Our Spring Bible Study will begin in Wednesday, April 7th at 3:30PM on Zoom. We will be studying the book of Genesis. This will be a 9 week course and since Genesis is very long, this will be split up over various Spring and Fall sessions. We hope you will join us.

Updates from the Fairfield East Association

The Fairfield East Association met on October 28th via zoom for their annual Fall meeting. This meeting consisted of inspiring worship and presentations from those who are doing interesting things in their churches. These presentations have given some new ideas that Rev. Amanda intends on sharing with TAC as new and interesting ways to reach out to the community. Please feel free to join our November 15th TAC meeting to find out more. It was also decided at this meeting that dues would not be raised in light of Covid-19.



Boards and Committee Reports

Stewardship Campaign 2021

Dear Members and Friends of the Congregational Church of Easton,

We are at a very important time in the life of our church. Though church has been suddenly and vastly changed because of Covid-19, we do still meet with limitations in-person with the option of joining us online. We are still offering services and working with our outreach programs. We are still offer educational opportunities and we are still thinking about maintaining the church. With this in mind, November 15th will be an important day in the life of our church. This will be the Sunday on which we will express our intended investment in the church for the coming year. Although we may not always think of financial giving as an opportunity to tangibly express our love, devotion and thankfulness to God, it is nothing less than that.

As this day approaches, I would ask that each of us make our offerings to the church a matter of prayerful and deliberate consideration. That way, whatever commitment we decide to make on the 15th will be a faith venture between us and God.

In uncertain financial times, many of us hesitate to increase our commitment. Yet, I believe that God gives us that strength to do what God leads us to do. For our pledges help maintain the beauty of our historic buildings, to continue our Children's Church programs, to continue our Adult education opportunities, and to continue in our outreach to families in need in Easton and in the Bridgeport area. And this year, these offerings will help us as we bring our church into the 21st century with internet in the sanctuary allowing for worship to be streamed live. Our response to Covid-19, has taught us that online worship is a must in this world allowing for our worship services to be more inclusive and available to those who might not be able to join us in person.

Although, we are still socially distanced, I pray to see all of you in 2021 if not before then. May God's blessings be with each of you and may your offerings: financially and of your talents and skills, be a reflection of your love, gratitude, and joy in the presence and work of the Lord.

Stewardship Goal 2021: \$60,000.00

Stewardship Pledge date: November 15, 2021



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 please follow the Sunday link. This link will remain the same each week. Please note you will need to use the passcode which is in place to ensure security during worship. The meeting ID will no longer be changing.

Zoom Worship Link for Sunday Mornings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88440646436?pwd=REEdGVlVhFNTFwMkZSMHlpU29LZz09>



Passcode: 469663

Meeting ID#: 884 4064 6436

Zoom Worship Phone Number for Sunday Mornings: 1-929-205-6099

Dial in using this phone number followed by the Meeting ID from above and the passcode.

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 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 be recording and uploading worship online.



Psalm 95:1-3

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*



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.



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.



Special Dates

All Saint's Day November 1



Daylight-Saving Time Ends November 1

Election Day November 3

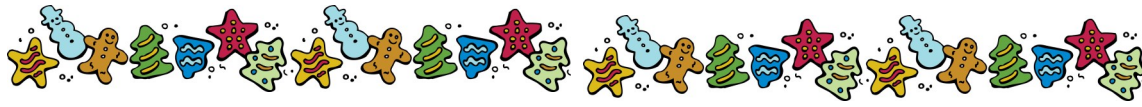


Veterans Day November 11

Thanksgiving Day November 26



First Sunday of Advent November 29



Holiday Cookie Sale December 12th

We will be having our annual cookie bake sale on December 12th from 9 to 12. This year we are asking that people preorder using the order form insert and send it into the church office. Then a box will be assembled and labeled with your name for pick up. You may also purchase an assorted cookie box on the day of or in advance as well. Each box of cookies costs \$18. We are also still looking for volunteers to make the cookies. So if you could make some cookies please let me know. You may contact the church office to volunteer.



**Cookie
Fundraiser**

When we try to focus on too many things at once, sometimes we end up doing nothing well. During a visit to their house (see Luke 10:38-42), Jesus tells Martha that only one thing is needed and that Mary has chosen rightly. Surely Jesus doesn't mean that quiet devotion is needed while serving others is not. But when we let ourselves get "worried and distracted by many things," we may lose sight of the one crucial thing: love.

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??

The precise number varies depending on the Bible version, but roughly how many times does the word "love" occur in the Old and New Testaments combined?

- A. 200-300
- B. 400-500
- C. 600-700
- D. 800-900

Love

Answer: C



If you have some suggestions or requests for Christmas Eve hymns, please email the church office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thanksgiving Baskets	Due in church hall by Monday, November 23rd.
First Sunday of Advent	Sunday, November 29th
Second Sunday of Advent	Sunday, December 6th
Holiday Cookie Sale	Saturday, December 12th 9:00 am – Noon
Third Sunday of Advent	Sunday, December 13th
Fourth Sunday of Advent	Sunday, December 20th
Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24th

Keep an eye out for details about these events in the coming week's bulletins and next month's Newsletter.

Poinsettia Pre Order

Name: _____



I would like to Pre-Order Virtual Poinsettia Plants for Christmas Eve :

Poinsettia Plant order Total _____

Please call/email me when the price is established _____

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	

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. Or, you may drop prayers into the prayer box by the Old Academy doors.
- 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)
- A Volunteer to greet people outside on Sunday mornings and explain the Covid-19 Sunday morning procedures.



In lieu of the formal Food Kitchen, we will be delivering bagged lunches to the parking lot of the church. We will begin this on Tuesday, November 17th and continue on the third Tuesday of each month until St.Luke/St.Paul's is able to reopen their doors.

Suggestions for bagged lunches are sandwich, fruit, veggie sticks, a snack and bottled water. Please do not include anything hot or perishable.

Please call the church office (203.261.2527) or email (cchurcheaston@gmail.com) during the week if you are interested in providing food .

The bin on the church office steps as well as the baskets inside the doors may be used for either the Senior Center or Covenant to Care.



Thanksgiving Baskets for Covenant to Care

Jorge Ball, our adopted social worker, has provided us with names of families who are in need of help to provide a dinner for Thanksgiving. We provide "baskets" of non-perishables and a gift card for perishable needs. THANK YOU to everyone who has signed up to provide non-perishables, a gift card or both! It's wonderful that we can be a source of light for some these families during the holidays.

Baskets are due in the church hall by Monday, November 23rd.

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 November 2020

Nathalie Taranto

Confirming Deacon for December 2020

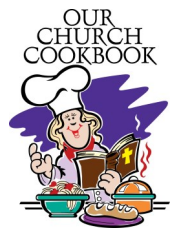
Jon Stock

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 your favorite fall time recipes and your favorite holiday cookie 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.







The simplest prayer

An eccentric blind man nicknamed Joybubbles reportedly loved Mr. Rogers so much he listened to 10 hours of the TV show daily until he'd heard them all. One night, when Joybubbles was in a kind of awake dream state, he said Mr. Rogers visited him and offered to teach him how to pray.


Joybubbles protested that he couldn't pray because he always forgot the words. To which Mr. Rogers said not to worry; the prayer he'd teach had only three words. "What kind of prayer has only three words?" Joybubbles asked.

"Thank you, God," Mr. Rogers replied.
—adapted from *The Wired Word*

November 2020

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

December 2020

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



NEWS FROM THE HILL . . .
THE CONGREGATIONAL
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