

News from the Hill

The Congregational
Church of Easton

December 2020

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

Meditations from the Pastor

"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world."

C.S. Lewis, 20th century

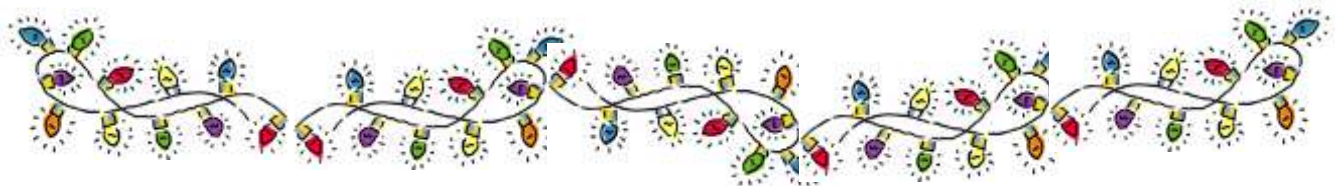
This Christmas Season is promising to be profoundly different from any year in the past, as Covid-19 continues to hamper our abilities to gather for in person worship in the beauty of our fellowship and our sanctuary. Yet perhaps this Christmas resembles the very first Christmas when Christ was born. Perhaps, with the smaller, quieter, more sedate Christmas, we can use this time to contemplate and honor the birth of Christ. In the quiet, we can reflect on the simplicity of his birth in a manger with only the animals to welcome him into the world. Yet he was destined from birth to die for our sins upon a cross. We can contemplate the hope, the joy, the love, and the promise of a newborn child to Mary and Joseph in their newly formed family and how those feelings extend to us as we think about the enormity of what his birth meant for the world throughout history.

This year, our holiday season at the church will resemble the simplicity of that first Christmas. Quiet and contemplative. Because of the risks associated with gatherings, we will not be having our traditional Christmas Carol sing-a-long with Joel Barlow. But we can take the time to listen to our favorite Christmas carols and contemplate the meaning behind their verses and the way the authors share how the spirit of Christmas has shaped their daily lives. To that end, start with *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* and find the promise and hear the hope of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863, who he faced devastating personal loss and the country faced devastating divisions and death with the civil war. See his hope as he listened to the reminders of Christmas on Christmas morning and felt a deep sense of gratitude. Then move onto some of your favorites.

Because of Covid, our traditional cookie walk has been revised, yet we are doing preorders this year so we can still have some of our Christmas traditions. So don't forget to volunteer, to bake, and to order cookies. Though we can't gather, we can still enjoy the treats of the season remembering just how sweet it is that we have the love and dedication of a God who gave his only son for us. Our Christmas Eve service may be remote this year but we still will have worship together, we will hear the account of Christ's birth and we can still join with the wisemen in our search for the manger. Remember that sometimes it is in the quietest moments that we get to feel the power and gravity of what was happening in that manger the night Christ was born.

We will keep you updated on Christmas Eve worship. Remember in this season, the best way we prepare for the coming of Christ is by living into his teachings every single day by loving God and loving our neighbors. So reach out to loved ones, friends, Church members, and neighbors this season and let them know that you are thinking of them.

Blessings, Rev. Amanda



Boards and Committee Reports

Board of Christian Outreach

In lieu of the formal Food Kitchen, we delivered bagged lunches to the parking lot of St.Luke/**St.Paul's on Tuesday, November 17th. We have recently been informed that the church will no longer** be continuing this service. Outreach will be looking at other alternatives for the New Year.

A big thank you to everyone who donated and delivered the lunches!

Please call the church office (203.261.2527)

or email (cchurcheaston@gmail.com) during the week if you have any ideas or suggestions for further outreach projects.

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.

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, we will be sending out the list for volunteers.

Gifts should be in the church hall by Sunday, December 20th.



Boards and Committee Reports

Christian Education

Children's Worship and Education

We continue to send out remote learning activities for our Christian Education opportunities this year. **We ask that if you haven't been receiving the emails or know someone else who might be interested in receiving the activities please contact this Church office.** Thank you very much to Connie Wing for putting in the time and energy to put together these weekly lessons.

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 Genesis. This will span multiple Bible Study seasons. **But we will be able to see the development of God's relationship with humanity throughout time.** We will be meeting on Wednesday afternoons at 3:30PM. Plan to join us!

Turn Around Church

TAC

Ways to Support our Turnaround Process

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



Test Your Christmas Scripture Knowledge

1. Which Old Testament prophet had the most to say about Jesus?
 - A. Isaiah
 - B. Micah
 - C. Jonah

2. How many magi went to see Jesus?
 - A. 1
 - B. 3
 - C. None
 - D. **We don't know**

3. Two of the four Gospels don't mention the birth of Jesus. Which are they?
 - A. Matthew and Luke
 - B. Luke and Mark
 - C. Mark and John



Answers

1. A. Isaiah
2. D. We don't know. Tradition says 3 but a number was never given.
3. C. Mark and John

Stewardship Campaign 2019

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 think of financial giving as an opportunity to tangibly express our love, devotion and 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

If you have not yet pledged for 2021, it is not too late! If you need another pledge card please email or call the church office.



Thanksgiving Baskets

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 12 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 Sale!

It's Almost Here!

Saturday, December 12th

9:00 AM to 12 :00 PM

If you baked, please drop your cookies at the church office by Friday, December 11th before 10AM.



Send in you Christmas Carol requests to the church office and Rev. Amanda will work them into this season's worship services.

Christ's Nativity

BY HENRY VAUGHAN

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
 It is the birth-day of thy King.
 Awake! awake!
 The Sun doth shake
 Light from his locks, and all the way
 Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;
 Winds whisper, and the busy springs
 A concert make;
 Awake! awake!
 Man is their high-priest, and should rise
 To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far
 Above this inn
 And road of sin!
 Then either star or bird should be
 Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
 Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart
 Were so clean as
 Thy manger was!
 But I am all filth, and obscene;
 Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more
 This leper haunt and soil thy door!
 Cure him, ease him,
 O release him!
 And let once more, by mystic birth,
 The Lord of life be born in earth.

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=REEzdGVlVWhFNTFwMkZSMHlpU29LZz09>

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.

In Person Worship Updates:

While we remain in the red for infection rates, we will be continue offering only online worship. As soon as we return to safer numbers, we will return to in-person worship. Weekly emails will hold information on what type of worship is being offered each week. We will let you know about Christmas the closer we get to the date. We are currently working on 2 Covid-19 versions of Christmas Eve.



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

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.



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 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 |
| Christmas Gifts for Covenant to Care | Friday, December 18th |
| 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.



Christmas Poinsettias

Poinsettias are among the most beautiful decorations in our sanctuary at Christmas time. This year, since Covid-19 may restrict worship, we will have only “virtual” Poinsettias. 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.

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 \$ _____

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.

Virtual Orders by December 20th



Serving Schedule



Confirming Deacon for December 2020

Leon March

Confirming Deacon for January 2021

Jon Stock

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.



Time for Prayer and Meditation

This holiday season, if you are truly missing the beauty of our church at the holidays, call the church office and schedule a time to come visit and see the church all decorated for the holidays.

Please remember to wear masks at all times.



December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship with Communion 11:30 Deacon's Zoom Meeting	7	8	9	10	11	12 Holiday Cookie Bake Sale 9-12
13 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship 1PM Zoom New Resident Q&A	14	15	16	17	18 Christmas Gifts due	19
20 <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship 11:30 AM TAC Zoom Meeting	21	22	23	24 Office Closed 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas	26
27 First Sunday after Christmas 10 AM Zoom Worship	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2
3 <i>2nd Sunday After</i> <i>Christmas</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship w/Communion 11:30 Deacon's Zoom Meeting	4	5	6 Epiphany	7	8	9
10 <i>Epiphany Sunday</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 <i>2nd Sunday after</i> <i>Epiphany</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship 11:30 TAC Meeting	18 MKLJr. Day Office closed	19	20	21	22	23
24/31 <i>3rd and 4th Sundays after</i> <i>Epiphany</i> 10 AM Zoom Worship	25	26	27	28	29	30



Christmas Eve

5:30 PM

*Service More Infor-
mation on Format to
Come*



NEWS FROM THE HILL . . .
THE CONGREGATIONAL
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