



THE BELL TREE
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

A Newsletter for
FEBRUARY 2024

The Mount Carmel Congregational Church
(A United Church of Christ)
3285 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518

From the Pastor's Desk...

Happy February, everyone!

It is difficult to keep from beginning each month without talking about how quickly time passes. I feel like I am writing a monthly article every couple of weeks. As I came out of the grocery store the other day, I saw a bumper sticker that said, “Life is short. Play with your dog.” I suspect some sort of canine conspiracy—masterminded by our Schnauzers—to challenge my priorities in life.

What we do with our short time on earth runs deeper than bumper stickers. In Paul’s letters to the Ephesians, he talked about “redeeming the time”—making the most of it. That sentiment lies at the heart of the Lenten season, which begins February 14th. (“Happy Valentine’s Day! We’re all going to die”—how’s that for a greeting card?) Reminding ourselves of our mortality, and not rushing too quickly to Easter, is good and sobering work. We are not here for long; we need to make the best of our time together.

Before it blossoms into Easter, Lent also reminds us of Jesus’ mortality, of his humanity. God became one of us, entered our temporary lives, to show us how to redeem the time, even when Jesus knew he was going to die. So we begin by marking ourselves with ashes and end the season at the Cross. It is a profound journey if we will take time to make it.

This year, our combined Ash Wednesday service will be at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 7 pm. During the day, I will be participating in offering Ashes to Go from their church parking lot. I hope you will participate as you are able.

Peace,
Milton

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Please join every Sunday at 10am in the Church for service, followed by coffee hour in the Parlor! Note: These are lectionary passages for your own devotional purposes. Weekly scripture readings are subject to change.

<p><u>February 4th, 2024: Holy Communion</u> <i>Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</i> Scripture: Isaiah 40: 21-31 Psalm 147: 1-11, 20c 1 Corinthians 9: 16-23 Mark 1: 29-39</p>	<p><u>February 11th, 2024: Transfiguration</u> <i>Sixth Sunday after Epiphany</i> Scripture: 2 Kings 2: 1-12 Psalm 50: 1-6 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6 Mark 9: 2-9</p>
<p><u>February 18th, 2024</u> <i>First Sunday in Lent</i> Scripture: Genesis 9: 8-17 Psalm 25: 1-10 1 Peter 3: 18-22 Mark 1: 9-15 Sermon: Aren Alberico</p>	<p><u>February 25th, 2024</u> Souper Bowl Sunday: Potluck Luncheon <i>Second Sunday in Lent</i> Scripture: Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22: 23-31 Romans 4: 13-25 Mark 8: 31-38</p>



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:

Mark Leach February 10th

If you would like to add your name to our birthday list, please contact our office.

Ash Wednesday

For Ash Wednesday this year (which falls on February 14th), our Church has been invited to participate in two very special programs right here in Hamden. First, Reverend Milton will be participating in the Ashes-To-Go program at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, located at 600 Shepherd Avenue. Ashes will be given from the comfort of your vehicle from 7:30-9:00am, and from 12:00pm-1:00pm.

Second, all members of the MCCC are invited to attend an Ecumenical Worship Service at Grace & St John's Episcopal Church, located at 2927 Dixwell Avenue. The service will begin at 7:00pm and will feature music from the Hamden Clergy Band! We hope to see you there!

-Church Staff

Outreach

OGHS. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is our next special offering. Monies received for this offering are sent to international places lacking health and educational resources and/or where disaster has struck. We will collect the offering on Sunday, March 10th. Please note OGHS in the memo line on your check and place it in the offering plate. Thank you.

-Debbie Wooley

Souper Sunday Potluck Luncheon

All are invited to attend our 'Souper Sunday' Potluck Luncheon, which will be held on Sunday, February 25th immediately following our regular worship service. If you are a soup maker and would like to bring your favorite soup to share, please sign up by contacting Debbie Wooley or Aren Alberico. As usual, bread and crackers will be provided, and cookies and brownies would be greatly appreciated for dessert. If you are able, we also encourage everyone to donate a can of soup to help support the Hamden Food Bank! Please let us know if you will be attending by Sunday, February 18th so that we know how much food to have prepared. The snow date will be the following Sunday, March 3rd. Thank you!

-Church Staff

Stewardship

As of January 23rd, pledges to date are \$87,000 with 42 individual pledge units. If you have any additional questions regarding stewardship and pledging, please contact me by email at ce@mccucc.com.

"We are surrounded by God's benefits. The best use of these benefits is an unceasing expression of gratitude." – John Calvi.

-Debbie Wooley

Faith Formation

Church School. We are still meeting twice each month and hope to continue doing so.

ARK Banks. Please keep the arks floating! Fill one up, drop it off in offering, and pick up a new one from the narthex or parish hall entrance.

-Debbie Wooley

GENERAL ANNOUCEMENTS

Bell Tree Submissions. Do you have an event to announce? A story to share? We would love to hear it! Send us an email at office@mccucc.com by the second to last Tuesday of the month and we may include your article in our next publication.

Ushers. We are always looking for more Ushers – no experience necessary! Please see Dave or Bev Jurkiewicz, or Debbie Wooley, for more information!

Joys and Concerns. If you wish to have a joy or concern announced during worship, please forward to them to Aren at office@mccucc.com or call the church office at (203) 248-7408.

Pastoral Support. If you require pastoral support or guidance, feel free to contact our minister, Reverend Milton, by email at Pastor@mccucc.com, or by calling our office.

Coffee Hour. Coffee Hour volunteers are needed. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact the office directly or use the signup sheet now located at the entrance of the Parish House.

Altar Flowers. Altar flowers are needed. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact the office directly or use the signup sheet now located at the entrance of the Parish House.

Rentals. If you or anyone you know would be interested in renting out our parish hall to host a small private event, please feel free to visit our website for scheduling, rates, and conditions.

Food Bank. Donations for the Food Bank are always needed if you are able to contribute. Non-perishable items such as canned beef stew, hearty soups, canned fish, peanut butter, mac and cheese packages, and oatmeal would be greatly appreciated.

Prayer Shawls. As a reminder, Prayer Shawls are always available to those who need them. If you or anyone you know needs one, please contact the office and we will arrange a shawl for you.

Lost & Found. As of the time of writing, we have a number of items in our Lost & Found: 1) A pair of unbranded leopard-print glasses left from the Shirts and Skirts Christmas Party; and 2) A pair of Foster Grant leopard-print glasses. If either of these items belong to you, then please contact the Church Office at your earliest convenience.

Mount Carmel's



Souper Bowl SUNDAY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH
Directly Following 10am Service

Please join us for a very special Potluck Soup Luncheon
to Celebrate the Lenten Season!



If you would like to sign up to bring a soup
or if you just plan on attending,

PLEASE CONTACT:

Debbie Wooley (ce@mccucc.com)

Or

Aren Alberico (office@mccucc.com)

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

Figure It Out!

Noah's Ark

Many years after Adam and Eve lived, the people had become very wicked. So God told a man named Noah to build a boat called an ark.

Work the arithmetic puzzles to learn some facts about the story. Write your answer in the boxes.

1. Noah was _____ years old when the flood began.

$$3 + 3 = \underline{\quad\quad} \times 100 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$$

2. The ark was _____ feet long. $4 \times 100 = \underline{\quad\quad} + 50 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$

3. The ark was _____ feet wide. $7 \times 10 = \underline{\quad\quad} + 5 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$

4. The ark was _____ feet high. $3 \times 3 = \underline{\quad\quad} \times 5 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$

5. Besides Noah's wife, he took his _____ sons

and their wives into the ark. $3 \times 5 = \underline{\quad\quad} - 12 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$

6. Noah took _____ of each kind of bird and animal into the ark.

$$2 \times 10 = \underline{\quad\quad} - 18 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$$

7. It rained for _____ days and nights. $8 \times 10 = \underline{\quad\quad} + 2 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$

8. After about _____ months, the ark settled on Mount Ararat.

$$4 \times 6 = \underline{\quad\quad} - 10 = \underline{\quad\quad} \div 2 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$$

9. After about _____ months, other mountaintops could be seen.

$$50 + 50 = \underline{\quad\quad} \text{ Drop one zero. } \boxed{\quad\quad}$$

10. After about _____ months, Noah and his family were able to leave the ark.

$$4 \times 5 = \underline{\quad\quad} - 6 = \boxed{\quad\quad}$$

Then Noah built an altar on the dry land and brought an offering to God. God made a covenant (promise) to Noah that God would never again flood the whole earth. As a sign of the covenant, God promised to put something in the sky. Work the puzzle below, adding and subtracting letters, to find out what God put in the sky.

 - T +  - F +  - L =

New Testament Miracles

While Jesus was on earth, He did many miracles to help people, and He gave His followers the power to do miracles in His Name. The New Testament has many stories of miracles Jesus and His followers did to bring glory to God.

Fourteen miracles from the New Testament are listed below. We need to know who did the miracle and for whom the miracle was done. Use the words in the rectangle to fill in the blanks. You will need to use some words more than once.

5000 PEOPLE	DISCIPLES	JESUS	PUBLIUS
AENEAS	DORCAS	LAME MAN	SAUL
ANGEL	ELYMAS	LEPERS	YOUNG MAN
BARTIMAEUS	EUTYCHUS	PAUL	
CRIPPLED MAN	JAIRUS	PETER	

WHO DID IT?

FOR WHOM?

- _____ fed _____ with a small lunch. (*John 6:1-14*)
- _____ healed a _____ at Lystra. (*Acts 14:8-10*)
- _____ raised _____ from death at Joppa. (*Acts 9:36-41*)
- _____ healed ten _____ at one time. (*Luke 17:12-19*)
- _____ calmed a storm for His _____ who were afraid. (*Mark 4:37-39*)
- An _____ freed _____ from Herod's prison. (*Acts 12:6-11*)
- _____ restored _____ to life. (*Acts 20:9-12*)
- _____ healed a _____ at the temple gate. (*Acts 3:2-7*)
- _____ raised a _____ from death at Nain. (*Luke 7:11-15*)
- _____ made _____ become blind. (*Acts 13:8-11*)
- _____ raised the daughter of _____ from death. (*Mark 5:22-24;35-42*)
- _____ healed _____ of his palsy. (*Acts 9:33-34*)
- _____ healed the sick father of _____ who had a fever. (*Acts 28:7-8*)
- _____ restored sight to _____ who was blind. (*Mark 10:46-52*)



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