



THE BELL TREE
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

A Newsletter for the Month of
JANUARY 2022

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

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope you had a Blessed Christmas and New Year celebration. Now we enter the season of Epiphany! Epiphany means “new understanding”. The biblical stories associated with Epiphany and the season that follows share a common “aha” quality. The passages include the epiphany of the Three Kings who come to know the significance of the Messiah’s birth, then the epiphany of Jesus who embraces his baptism and his life’s unique identity and mission, and finally the epiphany of the first disciples who leave behind the familiar to explore the radical new.

Perhaps you are looking for a “new understanding” in a life circumstance you are facing. May we all pray for “new understanding” of things that overwhelm us, test us, frustrate us. We are grateful for those “aha” moments, those moments of grace. May God grant us a “new understanding” of who we are as a Church and the body of Christ here in Hamden. Happy Epiphany!

Blessings,
Rev. Olivia Robinson

Important Music News

We ask that you please keep our Music Director, Lynda Pedersen, in your prayers as she undergoes knee surgery on January 4th. We wish her a safe and peaceful recovery. We would like to thank Leon Fiftal, who has generously agreed to play the organ for us during her absence. We would also like to thank the members of our Bell Choir for blessing us with their special music these past few months! If you would like to contact her at any time, please use the email address listed at the back of this newsletter.

Thank you,
-MCCC Staff

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

For the month of January, we will continue worship in the Sanctuary. Please join us at 10am for service, and dress warmly! **Note: We are taking a break from Coffee Hour for the first two weeks of January. Coffee Hour will resume on January 16th.**

<p>January 2nd, 2022 <i>Epiphany Sunday</i> <i>Second Sunday after Christmas</i> Scriptures: Isaiah 60: 1-6 Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12 Sermon: “Star Sunday”</p>	<p>January 9th, 2022 <i>The Baptism of Christ</i> <i>First Sunday after Epiphany.</i> Scriptures: Psalm 29 Acts 8: 14-17 Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22 Sermon: “Renewing Your Baptism”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please join us after service for a “Second Hour” presentation hosted by Tom Duffy. A Teaser for this presentation can be found on Page 7!</p>
<p>January 16th, 2022 <i>Second Sunday after Epiphany.</i> Scriptures: Psalm 36: 5-10 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 John 2: 1-11 Sermon: “Extravagant Sign”</p>	<p>January 23rd, 2022 <i>Third Sunday after Epiphany.</i> Scripture: Genesis 8: 13-22 Sermon: “A New Beginning”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Michael Ciba, our Area Conference Minister of the UCC, will be preaching</p>
<p>January 30th, 2022 <i>Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.</i> Scriptures: Jeremiah 1: 4-10 Psalm 71: 1-6 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 Luke 4: 21-30 Sermon: “Prophet on the Edge”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>JANUARY BIRTHDAYS</u> <i>Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:</i> Laraine Patterson January 4th</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you would like to add your name to our birthday list, please contact our office.</p>

New Protocols for In-Person Worship

Due to rising concerns regarding Covid-19 and its variants, our church has decided to update our current protocols for our in-person worship services. You can find our updated protocols by visiting our website at <https://mccucc.tiny.us/covid>. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during these troubling times.

Thank you,
 -MCCC Staff

FINANCIAL REPORT

Following is the financial report for November 2021. The December financial report will be processed soon. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at treasurer@mccucc.com.

October 2021

Income:	Pledges and Offerings:	\$8,972.00
	Other Income:	\$2,147.00
	Total Income:	\$11,389.00
Expenses:	Total Expenses:	\$7,103.00
Net Income:	Gain	\$4,286.00

Reminder: Please do not file your taxes until after you receive a notice that your donation has been processed.

Public Relations

As you may have already known, our PR intern Angela Pachall, has been assisting us as part of her curriculum at Southern Connecticut State University, and she has gone above and beyond in helping us to craft a brand and identity for the Church. Through press releases, photography, contributions to the monthly Bell Tree, and presenting us with a report on her observations and suggestions, Angela has helped us all to better understand the untapped potential of our Church and how we can grow even further in the future. All of us here at Mount Carmel Congregational Church would like to thank her for the time she spent with us and wish her luck on all of her future endeavors.

Board of Trustees Report

Our Annual Budget Meeting was held December 12th and our congregation passed the 2022 budget unanimously. Our pledge and non-pledge donation income as of the end of November 2021 totals \$107,000. We are pleased to be able to say that we are doing well and working within our budget and have been able to take care of many much-needed repairs in the church and the Parish Hall this past year. But we couldn't do it without your faithful and generous donations and the incredible volunteer work of so many people. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!

Happy New Year!
Diane Scott, Co-Chair, Board of Trustees

Volunteers Needed – Snow Clearing

Winter weather will be here before you know it and we need to gather together a snow-clearing crew. Anyone who feels able and willing to help clear snow around the church property as

needed, please call or email Diane Scott at (203) 248-3998 or at dianescott@iname.com. Thank you for your support. We can do it if we are a team!

Volunteers Needed – Church and Hall Cleaning

We are looking for more volunteers to help with cleaning the church and parish hall. No experience necessary. Please contact Noelle Ioime for more information or if you or any one you know is interested in helping.

Cell: (203) 605-7171

Email: noelle_i@hotmail.com

Search Committee - Update

The Search Committee is excited to announce that our Church Ministerial Employment Opportunity is now posted on the UCC Ministry Opportunities website, and we are ready to start receiving applications from qualified candidates. Our posting can be seen by following this link <https://mccucc.tiny.us/pastorsearch>. Please feel free to contact any member of the committee with any questions.

Thank You,
-Eric Grantz

Outreach

VNA Gifts

Once again, we fulfilled two projects for the VNA. We delivered unwrapped gifts for the Hamden Senior Gift Run early in December. Then we delivered 24 more wrapped gifts for Christmas. Thanks to all who helped make this possible. The following message is from the Chair of the Hamden Chamber's Health and Wellness Council, Kim Vertrees:

*“Heartfelt Thank You for the donations to the 11th Annual ‘Senior Gift Run’!
Because of people like you, we were able to distribute 100 gift bags to seniors in
Hamden! We wish you a very Merry Christmas.”*

Kentucky Tornado Victims Relief Disaster Fund

As you know, parts of Kentucky and other states were devastated by the recent tornadoes. We hold those in prayer those in our Conference in Kentucky who may have been affected by these deadly storms. This hit a little close to home for Debbie Wooley and her husband Jim. Jim is from KY and has lots of family there. They are all ok but one of the tornadoes hit the Bowling Green area hard. Their niece is Vice Principal at an elementary school there and 10 students from her school died from the storm. If you wish to donate to the KY Disaster Preparedness and Ministry Response Team (DPMRT), here is the address. Indiana-Kentucky Conference United Church of Christ, 1100 West 42nd St, Suite 155, Indianapolis IN 46208.

Thank you,
-Debbie Wooley

CE/Faith Formation News - Kids

Our No-rehearsal Christmas Pageant went very well! The kids were wonderful and special thanks go out to the adults who helped in various roles too. Everyone got a kick out of the surprise at the end when Tom Duffy came in as a Wise Men dressed in a one-man camel costume! We had lots of nice treats at our Sugar Rush Coffee Hour, as well as the December birthday cake. Mark had three trains running down in the church basement which everyone enjoyed, making it a festive morning all around!

Church School will continue this month and we start Unit Four on January 9th. The theme for this unit is "The Season after Epiphany." It begins with the Baptism of Jesus and concludes with the Transfiguration. Green is the basic color for this season which symbolizes growth. On Transfiguration Sunday, white is the color showing the vision of Christ and the prophetic figures on the mountaintop. It is during this season the church focuses on mission to the world. Bookmarks and take-home pamphlets are on the bulletin board.

-Debbie Wooley

WE THE PEOPLE

Hello everyone. Sadly "We The People" was not an interest to our congregation, so I am officially closing this chapter. The families that did participate, I thank you and will keep them in an archive folder for future interest. BTW, they were wonderful!

- Bev Churchill

GENERAL ANNOUCEMENTS

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 Visits. If you are planning on having a procedure done at one of the local hospitals, please let Reverend Olivia know so that she can plan a pastoral visit - (203) 248-7408. Hospitals no longer call local churches with information about their patients. The church depends on others letting us know, and we thank you in advance for your assistance.

Bible Study. Starting back up on January 12th, Bible Study will be held on Wednesday nights at 7pm over Zoom. Hosted by Reverend Olivia Robinson, our Bible Study seeks to help our members develop a greater understanding and appreciation of scripture through thoughtful examination and discussion. If you would like to learn more about the lessons found in the Bible, reflect on what those lessons mean to you and your life, or just find a place to talk about those lessons with other people, then this group may just be the best fit for you. If you would like to sign up for Bible Study, please send us an email or sign up using the contact form on our website.

Committee Openings. These committees need volunteer members to meet their minimum requirements as specified by the bylaws: Deacons-2 more; Trustees-1 more; Music Committee-3

more. If you would like to try out a committee (attend a meeting with no obligations), please contact the committee chair(s): Leon Fiftal-Music; Bev Jurkiewicz-Deacons; Val Duffy and Diane Scott-Trustees.

Altar Flowers. Altar flowers are needed for the months of January and February. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact Karen Amato or use the signup sheet located in the Church Hall.

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

Mount Carmel Congregational Church
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thomasduffy67@gmail.com

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Board of Deacons: Bev Jurkiewicz, Chair

Board of Trustees: Val Duffy, Co-Chair:
Valerieduffy1234@gmail.com
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DianeScott@iname.com

Second Hour:

Please enjoy a brief preview of Tom Duffy's "Second Hour" presentation, which will follow service on Sunday, January 9th.



Light of the World – William Holman Hunt (1853)

In the 1850s, a group of English artists formed the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group that rejected the mechanistic approach to art first adopted by the artists who succeeded Raphael and Michelangelo. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was greatly influenced by nature and its members used great detail to show the natural world using bright and sharp-focus techniques on a white canvas. In many Pre-Raphaelite paintings, one can find competing sources of light – one from nature (secular) and one from the divine (sacred). William Holman Hunt's famous *Light of the World* portrays Christ as a common miner – the two competing light sources being the miner's lantern and Christ's halo. (Many thought the Pre-Raphaelites were a blasphemous group!)

Staffa: Fingal's Cave – Joseph Mallard William Turner (1832)



Tom Duffy will present a short analysis of Joseph Mallard William Turner's painting *Staffa: Fingal's Cave*, with its two competing light sources. Duffy will play a recording of his composition, *Staffa: Fingal's Cave*; which is comprised of music that reflects the two competing aesthetics, and features the conductor, split down the middle, conducting a different meter in each hand! The sacred light source (the Cave) is represented by the hymn, *O Sacred Head Surrounded by Crown of Piercing Thorn*.

Jesus Is Baptized

	L=	P=	T=
	C=	G=	D=
	N=	R=	K=
	I=	F=	M=
	O=	S=	V=
	H=	E=	A=

Matthew 3:13-17 tells us of the baptism of Jesus. But what happened when Jesus was baptized? Use the code to find the answer.





(Mark 9:2-8;
2 Kings 2:11)

Travelers From Up Above

God sent two men to earth to visit Jesus and several of His apostles. Use the code to fill in the blanks to learn about this story.

(Example: † * = apostles)

†	apostles	clothes	mountain	buried	fire	heaven
◆	changed	white	shelters	afraid	Moses	chariot
📖	travelers	Jesus	talked	Peter	James	John
😊	Elijah	died	horses	love	voice	alone
	*	☉	↑	❖	☆	♠

One day, Jesus took three of his _____ and led them up a high _____.

Suddenly, Jesus' appearance _____.

His _____ became dazzling _____. Then two people from _____ appeared before them. One had _____ many years before. His name was _____.

God took the other one to heaven in a whirlwind with a _____ of fire and _____ of fire. His name was _____. They _____ with _____.

The apostles were so _____ that they didn't know what to say. _____ said, "Let us put up three _____ for You and the two men." A cloud covered them. A _____ from _____ said, ... "This is my Son, whom I _____. Listen to him!" (Mark 9:7) Suddenly, the travelers from up above disappeared, and the apostles saw _____.

With the three shelters, Peter was suggesting that Jesus and the travelers from up above were on an equal level. Were they? No! That is why God said, "Listen to Him!" Jesus is God. He is above all people. Do you worship and adore Him more than any person or thing?