



THE BELL TREE
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

A Newsletter for the Month of
JANUARY 2023

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

“Life Moves Pretty Fast...”

A Reflection by Aren Alberico

I hope that you all had a happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year’s celebration! As we enter into a new year, we enter into the liturgical season of Epiphany, a word which means “new understanding”. During this time of year, after the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season (and all the stress that comes with it), I tend to remember this quote from the 1986 cult film *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*: “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it”. In today’s world, we so often allow ourselves to be swept away from one event to the next, without giving ourselves the opportunity to look back and appreciate that which came before. But during this time of Epiphany, this time of “new understanding,” we are reminded to take a moment to reflect on those past events with fresh eyes and a new perspective, and to find meaning in what we may have thought was mundane or meaningless. In last year’s January reflection, Reverend Olivia would dub these specific points in time “aha moments”, moments of grace-filled clarity where you think to yourself “Aha! So that’s what that means”.

With that in mind, let us look back at this past year of 2022, with all its struggles and all of its joys, with fresh and rejuvenated eyes. Let us take a moment to appreciate all that we may have missed in this past year, those times that we let pass without a care or thought. Let us take a moment to find meaning in those events both extraordinary and mundane, to learn new things from those times of strife and turmoil. Let us try to understand where we may have gone wrong, and where we may have gone right, so that we can apply those experiences to that which we do in the years to come. And finally, let us reflect on the good we did for others this past year, and what good we can do for others this year. Now that we have reflected on the past, let us look towards the future with this, a Holiday Wish shared with me this past month by Greta Edelman:

“May we break down boundaries, tear down walls, and build on the foundation of goodness inside each of us. May we look past differences, gain understanding, and embrace acceptance. May we reach out to each other, rather than resist. May we be better stewards of the earth, protecting, nurturing

and replenishing the beauties of nature. May we practice gratitude for all we have, rather than complain about our needs. May we seek cures for the sick, help for the hungry, and love for the lonely. May we share our talents, give our time, and teach our children. May we hold hope for the future very tenderly in our hearts and do all we can to build for bright tomorrows. And may we love with our whole hearts, for that's the only way to love.” – Uncredited.

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Please join every Sunday at 10am in the Church for service! Note: Weekly scripture readings are subject to change.

<p><u>January 1st, 2023</u> New Year's Day Scripture: Isaiah 63: 7-9 Psalm 148 Hebrews 2: 10-18 Matthew 2: 13-23 Sermon: Tom Duffy</p>	<p><u>January 8th, 2023</u> Holy Communion Scripture: Isaiah 42: 1-9 Psalm 29 Matthew 3:13-17 Sermon: Rev. Milton Brasher-Cunningham</p>
<p><u>January 15th, 2023</u> <i>Second Sunday After Epiphany</i> Scripture: Isaiah 49: 1-7 Psalm 40: 1-11 John 1: 29-39 Sermon: Rev. Milton Brasher-Cunningham</p>	<p><u>January 22nd, 2023</u> <i>Third Sunday After Epiphany</i> Scripture: Isaiah 9: 1-4 Psalm 27: 1, 4-9 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 Matthew 4: 12-23 Sermon: “Fishers of Men” Aren Alberico</p>
<p><u>January 29th, 2023</u> <i>Fourth Sunday After Epiphany</i> Scripture: Micah 6: 1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31 Matthew 5: 1-12 Sermon: TBA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>JANUARY BIRTHDAYS</u> <i>Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:</i> Laraine Patterson January 4th Jane Dringoli January 15th</p> <p>If you would like to add your name to our birthday list, please contact our office.</p>

Protocols for In-Person Worship

Masks are optional for Church Worship. You can find our updated protocols on in-person worship by visiting our website at <https://mccucc.tiny.us/protocols>. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

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 Sunday of the month and we may include your article in our next publication. We are especially in need of monthly reflections and devotionals in this time between pastors.

-Aren Alberico

2023 Directory

We are currently working on the 2023 Directory! Please take some time to review this past year's directory and report any mistakes or changes that need to be made to the office by Tuesday, January 10th. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

-Aren Alberico

Outreach

Gift Giving Trees. Once again, we fulfilled two projects for the VNA. We delivered a big box of unwrapped gifts for the annual Hamden Senior Gift Run early in December. Then we dropped off 25 wrapped gifts for Christmas. Thanks to all who made this possible. There are two 'thank you' notes from the VNA on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

Ark Banks. Please don't forget to keep bringing in your ark banks. The monies collected go into a discretionary fund which can be used to help people in need. We recently did just that and were able to pay for two hotel nights for a homeless person who called the church looking for help. Thank you so much.

Christmas Fund. Donation amount is not available yet so I will post that in a later newsletter.

-Debbie Wooley

FINANCIAL REPORT: OCTOBER 2022

Following is the financial report for October 2022. The financial reports for November and December will be in the next edition of the Bell Tree. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at treasurer@mccucc.com.

Income:	Pledges and Offerings:	\$7,022.00
	Other Income:	\$4,626.00
	Total Income:	\$11,648.00
Expenses:	Total Expenses:	\$9,301.00
Net Income:		\$2,347.00

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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, please contact the office and our office administrator will put you in contact with someone who can help.

Committee Openings. Looking to get involved? There are several Committee Openings for Deacons (2 openings), Faith Formation (3 openings), and Music (3 openings)! If you would like to try out a committee (attend a meeting with no obligations), please contact the office and Aren will put you in touch with the committee chair!

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.

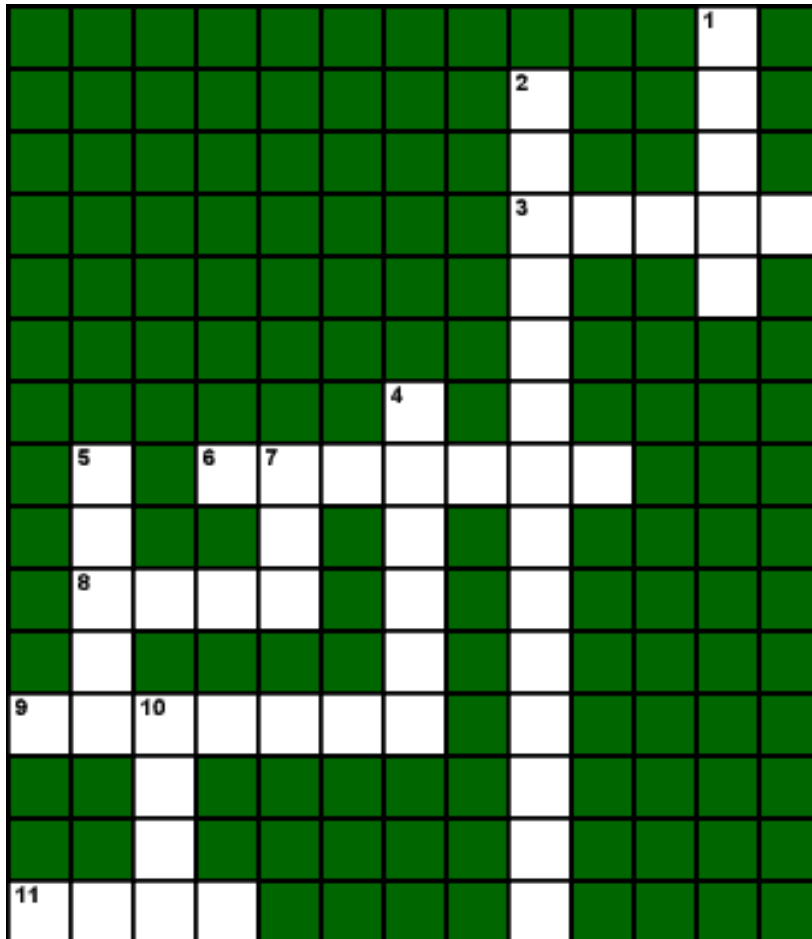
Altar Flowers. Altar flowers are needed. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact the office directly or use the signup sheet now located at the entrance of the Parish House.

Rentals. If you or anyone you know would be interested in renting out our parish hall to host a meeting, service, or 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.

A Puzzle for Adults!

Based on Matthew Chapter 3



Across

3. What nectar food did John eat?
6. Where did Jesus come from?
8. What did the spirit of God descend like?
9. What was John say he was not fit to clean?
11. Where will the non-bearing trees be thrown?

Down

1. From what animal were John's clothes made?
2. Both jet hatpins were in the desert!(4,3,7)
4. What did John say those from Sadducees were a brood of?
5. Where was the desert John was preaching in?
7. What is already at the root of the trees?
10. Where did John say the kingdom of heaven was?

Epilepsy C.A.R.E. Day

Conference for
Advocacy,
Resources, and
Education



EPILEPSY
FOUNDATION

CONNECTICUT

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

JANUARY 28, 2023

Sheraton Hartford South Hotel

A FREE in-person event for
patients, caregivers, and
medical professionals.



**LAWRENCE
HIRSCH, MD**

Yale Comprehensive
Epilepsy Center



**VEERESH KUMAR
NS, MD**

Epilepsy Center at Saint
Francis Hospital



**JENNIFER MADAN
COHEN, MD**

Epilepsy Center at
Connecticut Children's



**JOHN GREENFIELD,
JR, MD**

Department of Neurology at
UConn Health



**NOVELETTE
SPENCE, LCSW**

Hartford HealthCare
Neuroscience Institute
Comprehensive Epilepsy Center



**JOSE MONTES-
RIVERA, MD**

Department of Neurology at
UConn Health

AGENDA

- **FREE BREAKFAST!**
- EFCT Programs and Services
- Latest Developments in Epilepsy Treatments
- Pediatric Epilepsy Care
- Epilepsy Health Equity
- Epilepsy & Psychosocial Stressors

LEARN MORE & REGISTER

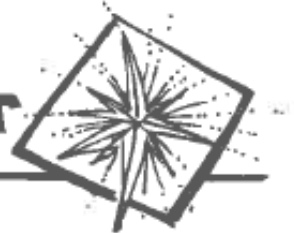
📞 860-346-1924

✉ elizabeth@epilepsyct.com



(Matthew 2:13-20)

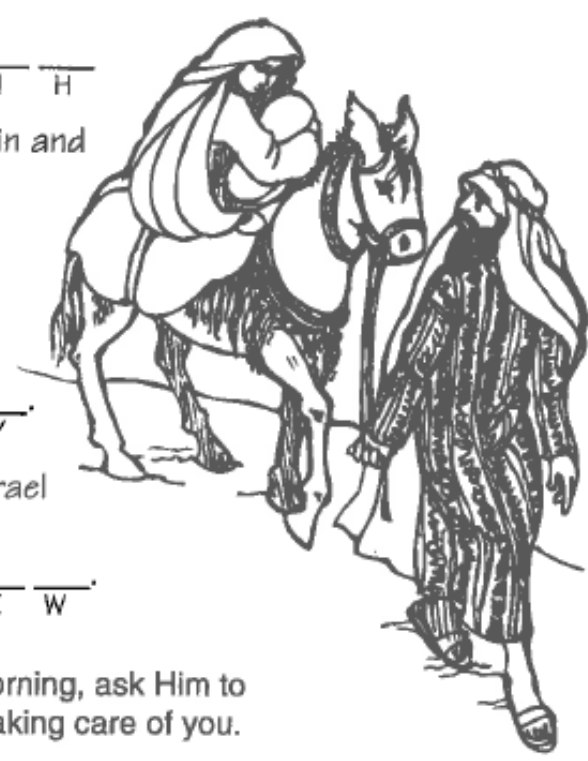
A Hasty Flight From Danger



God protected Jesus. When He was a baby, Mary and Joseph had to make an escape from danger. To learn more about this story, use the code to fill in the blanks below.

Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

After the D R H V N V M left, an Z M T V O came to
 Q L H V K S in a dream. He said, " G Z P V the
 X S R O W and N Z I B to V T B K G . Herod is going
to H V Z I X S for the X S R O W to P R O O him."
 Q L H V K S O V U G for V T B K G that
 M R T S G
 S V I L W gave L I W V I H
to P R O O all the Y L B H in and
around Y V G S O V S V N
who were G D L years old and under.
But Q V H F H was H Z U V .
Later, Q L H V K S returned to Israel
because S V I L W was W V Z W .



God protects us from many dangers, too. Each morning, ask Him to protect you. When the day is over, thank Him for taking care of you.



Mount Carmel Congregational Church

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ce@mccucc.com

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treasurer@mccucc.com

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Instagram: mountcarmelchurch1

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thomasduffy67@gmail.com

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Board of Trustees: Anna Anderson, Chair
aanderson545@gmail.com