



THE BELL TREE
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

A Newsletter for the Month of
MARCH 2023

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

From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Church Family,

I have been basking in the memory of last Sunday's soup and bread (and dessert) lunch all week. I think one of the hallmarks of good community is table fellowship. One of the things I love about our congregation is the way we linger around tables, even at coffee hour. I often think it would be good to share Communion where we didn't have to rush but could take our time—and eat bigger pieces of bread!

This Sunday we will gather at God's Table as we worship together. We will also be looking at the story of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, a religious leader who came to Jesus secretly at night to ask questions about faith because he wasn't ready to ask them in the open. Jesus focused on the fact that he came rather than questioning his courage. We may be afraid of our questions, but God is not.

As Lent continues throughout the month of March, we will be looking at Jesus' encounters with several folks he met along the way. Each one of them will offer us a chance to look at ourselves as well. On Sunday, March 12, our own Aren Alberico will be preaching. I hope you will be there to support and encourage him.

I am making some pastoral calls each week. If you would like a visit or would like to meet for coffee or lunch, please reach out to me at church or email me at pastor@mccucc.com and we will find a time to get together.

Peace,
Milton

MARCH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

<p><u>March 5th, 2023</u> Holy Communion <i>Second Sunday in Lent</i> Scripture: Genesis 12: 1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4: 1-4, 13-17 John 3: 1-17</p>	<p><u>March 12th, 2023</u> <i>Third Sunday in Lent</i> Scripture: Exodus 17: 1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5: 1-11 John 4: 5-42 Sermon: Aren Alberico</p>
<p><u>March 19th, 2023</u> <i>Fourth Sunday in Lent</i> Scripture: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5: 8-14 John 9: 1-41</p>	<p><u>March 26th, 2023</u> <i>Fifth Sunday of Lent</i> Scripture: Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 8: 6-11 John 11: 1-45</p>

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:

Amos Hewitt March 3rd
Lynda Pedersen March 31st

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

Annual Meeting: Committee Reports Needed!

The 258th Annual Meeting of the Mount Carmel Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, April 23rd, following our regularly scheduled worship service. If you are the head of a committee, we ask that you send a typed copy of your report to Aren, preferably by email, by Thursday, March 30th to be included in the 2022 Annual Report. Please also include a list of your current members and officers for record-keeping purposes, as well as a list of any positions that need to be filled so that we can include them in the nominations for the year.

Sincerely,
Beverly Jurkiewicz
Church Clerk

Outreach

Special Mission Offering. The next special offering will be the One Great Hour of Sharing. The theme this year is “It’s time to share.” Sunday March 19th, 2023 is the suggested date to collect the offering. The Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ. OGHS donations allows the UCC to respond to a variety of global and local concerns.

-Debbie Wooley

Faith Formation

Ark Banks. Please keep dropping off your ark banks. We have already collected \$176.00 this year for the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. You may pick up an ark in the narthex or entranceway to the parish hall. When it is full, you may leave it in the offering plate on Sunday or drop off in the office during the week.

-Debbie Wooley

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.

Needed: Coffee Hour Volunteers!

Are you thinking you’d like to help out with coffee hour but are not sure what to do? Would you rather not make the coffee or have to get there early to set up? Well, there is something you can do! You can always drop off a coffee cake or some other treat, homemade or store bought, it doesn’t matter. There are a few of us, Bev, Debbie, Sandee, & Anna, who are usually around to do the setting up. They would really appreciate it if others would bring in food so they don’t have to do everything all the time. Please let someone know you’d like to do that. You can bring something in on Sunday or come by and put it in the freezer to be used when needed. If you would like to learn how to set up coffee hour, please see one of us and we will assist you. Thank you.

Prayer Shawls

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

Sincerely,
Vera DeAngelo

FINANCIAL REPORT: JANUARY 2023

Following is the financial report for January 2023. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at treasurer@mccucc.com.

Income:	Pledges and Offerings:	\$6,864.00
	Other Income:	\$1,400.00
	Total Income:	\$8,264.00
Expenses:	Total Expenses:	\$11,752.00
Net Income (Loss):		- \$3,488.00

GENERAL ANNOUCEMENTS

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 (1 opening), 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.

Samuel, A Good Ruler

I Samuel 1 — 31

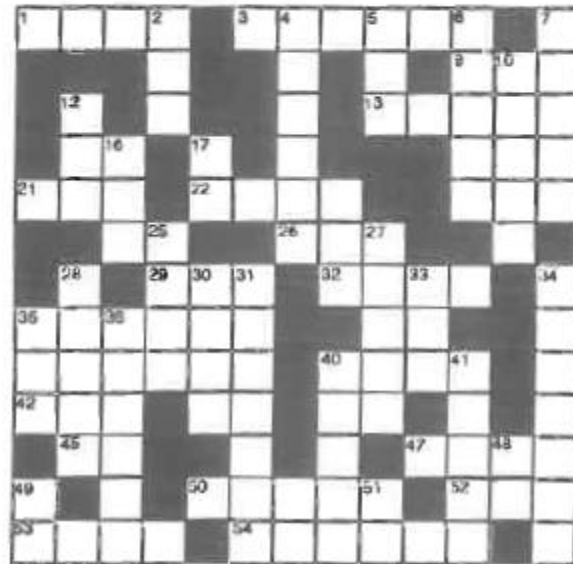
Samuel was a good leader of God's people. He helped the Israelites defeat their enemies and he judged Israel in peace. Use the clues about Samuel's life to fill in the correct words in the puzzle. If you need help, look up the Scripture verses.

ACROSS

1. What Samuel's mother brought him each year. (2:19)
3. This nation asked Samuel to give them a king. (8:4-5)
9. Samuel said to Saul, "Thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his _____ heart." (13:14)
13. King anointed by Samuel. (16:13)
21. God said, "In that day I will perform against Eli _____ things which I have spoken." (3:12)
22. When Saul wanted David to marry Saul's daughter, David said he was _____. (18:23)
26. "The battle went sore against Saul, and the archers _____ him." (31:3)
29. Mixed feeling of reverence and fear.
32. To let fall; she _____ ped the vase.
35. He told Saul he would no longer be king. (13:13-14)
40. What Agag did because of Samuel. (15:33)
42. "All Israel from _____ even to Beer-sheba." (3:20)
45. Abbreviation for height.
47. Jonathan said his father troubled the _____. (14:29)
50. Hannah vowed that this would not touch her son's head. (1:11)
52. A tall man had six of these on each foot; singular. (// Samuel 21:20)
53. Samuel said, "To _____ is better than sacrifice." (15:22)
54. Samuel's mother. (1:20)

DOWN

2. Number of wives Elkanah had. (1:1-2)
4. Where Samuel was taken to serve God. (1:24)
5. To help; first _____.
6. Elkanah "_____ " Hannah. (1:5)
7. Where Saul went to consult the witch. (28:7)
10. What Agag's wife became when Samuel killed Agag.
12. Liquid Samuel used to anoint David. (16:13)
16. The name of the priest Samuel served. (3:1)
17. Saul said to the witch, "Bring me _____ Samuel." (28:11)



25. Samuel anointed him the first king of Israel. (9:27; 10:1)
27. Because Eli didn't _____ his sons to do the right thing, they did wrong.
28. Where Elkanah lived. (2:11)
30. Hannah did this because she didn't have a child. (1:7)
31. Father of Samuel. (1:19-20)
33. God told Eli both his sons would die in _____ day. (2:34)
34. God used this to discomfit the Philistines after Samuel offered a sacrifice and prayed for help. (7:9-10)
35. Hannah was _____ because she didn't have a child.
36. The witch said, "An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a _____." (28:14)
40. Philistine god that fell on its face before the ark of the Lord. (5:3)
41. Happened to Eli's two sons on the same day. (4:11)
48. What Hannah said when Eli thought she was drunk. (1:15)
49. Eli: "_____ in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition." (1:17)
51. Abbreviation for registered nurse.

MISSION STATEMENT

It's Time for Zero Hunger

Food sustains life. Responding to hunger is an affirmation of life. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The time is always right to do what is right." Ending hunger is always the right thing to do.

What does ending hunger in West Timor, Indonesia look like?—the Timor Zero Hunger program. With your support, CWS has been working with the Oe Ekam community in West Timor since 2018, where there are now five farmers groups.

Domingus is the leader of the Tosilo Toselo farmers group. "In the past, each family was only able to plant Chinese cabbage, tomatoes, and chili on about 100 square meters (2% of an acre) of land per family," says Domingus. After feeding their families, some community members were able to generate a small surplus and sell it in the local market, earning around \$3.50-\$7.00 each time they sold produce.

Before the Timor Zero Hunger program, the dry season made it difficult for the people of Oe Ekam to harvest crops year-round because they could only plant vegetables during the short rainy season from December to March. "The Timor Zero Hunger program has been a life changing experience for members," says Domingus. "We were able to expand our farmland to about 2.5 acres. We were also able to diversify: now we harvest white mustards, cabbage, kale, green beans, bitter melons, tomatoes, chilies, zucchinis, cucumbers and papayas. Over the past two years we have been able to harvest much more and eat vegetables every day. Once or twice in a week we sell our crops in the local market in the district capital. On average our members make \$17.50-\$52.50 for each harvest. Now we can harvest 3 to 4 times in a year," he added.

The Timor Zero Hunger program has trained farmer groups on how to make organic liquid fertilizer and how to ward off pests and disease. With CWS support, the Tosilo Toselo group also built a cistern and installed a pipe that is over half a mile long to bring more water from a spring directly to their land. The program

also taught them about the benefits of drip irrigation, and they have built a drip irrigation system for themselves.

All of this would not have been possible without your gifts through One Great Hour of Sharing, which support programs that address the root causes of food insecurity, bringing real and sustainable change to communities like Oe Ekam.



Domingus shares his gratitude for your generosity and the Timor Zero Hunger program: "Thank you, CWS. This program has changed the life of all our members."

The need has never been greater. The opportunity is now. It's time to share. "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up..." Galatians 6:9

The suggested Sunday for the OGHS Offering is March 19, 2023.



Mount Carmel Congregational Church
3284 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518
Church Website: www.mccucc.com
203-248-7408

Bridge Minister: Reverend Milton Brasher-Cunningham
pastor@mccucc.com

Office Admin: Mr. Aren Alberico
office@mccucc.com

Music Director: Mrs. Lynda Pedersen
lyndapedersen@att.net

Faith Formation: Mrs. Debbie Wooley
ce@mccucc.com

Treasurer: Mrs. Ellen Amato
treasurer@mccucc.com

Facebook: @mountcarmelcongregationalchurch
Instagram: mountcarmelchurch1

Officers:

President: Tom Duffy
thomasduffy67@gmail.com

Clerk: Beverly Jurkiewicz
bevjur@comcast.net

Board of Deacons: Bev Jurkiewicz, Chair

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