



THE BELL TREE
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

A Newsletter for the Month of
OCTOBER 2022

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

“Masks”

A Reflection by Aren Alberico

Happy October and Happy Fall! In the spirit of Halloween, I thought I would talk about masks. Not the ones we had to wear for just over two years, or the creepy ones you can find at the Halloween store. No, I'm talking about the social devices that we, as people, use to conceal the most vulnerable parts of our own identity. Whether we are hiding scars from our past experiences, facets of ourselves that we don't think other people will like, or fears and insecurities that we hold close to ourselves; when we wear a mask, we conceal our true natures from the world. The fact is that each of us has worn a mask at least once in our lives. Whether it be for something minor like a guilty pleasure or for something major like trauma, we each want to conceal some part of our identity from the world in fear of judgment. Masks can be our way of getting by, of trying to survive in a world that can, at times, be cruel and malignant. Masks can be our way of ignoring a problem that we don't believe we can solve by ourselves. Masks can be a way of shielding ourselves from feeling like we have value.

When I reflect on this topic, I feel myself drawn to the example of Bruce Wayne, who is better known as Batman. Although Bruce is a billionaire philanthropist, he has undergone a lot of traumas in his personal life that has caused him to feel weak, scared, and unable to protect anything he holds dear, let alone himself. However, when he dons the mask and cape of the Batman, he becomes a hero strong enough to take down supervillains that far outclass him. Like superheroes, we use masks to conceal our identities from the world, and to give ourselves a sense of strength. However, like superheroes, our masks do not make up who we are, and masks do not give us true strength. There is a saying from Batman that goes, "It's not who you are underneath; it's what you do that defines you". It is not the cape or cowl that makes Bruce a hero; neither is it his fears or insecurities. Rather, it is his intellect, his courage, and his never-ending pursuit of justice that gives him the strength to overcome any obstacle that comes his way.

In order to achieve true strength like Bruce, we need to examine and confront what lies behind our masks. Acknowledging our faults and shortcomings, and further, facing them head on, helps us to

understand our own strength and the strength that God has given us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Only through examining ourselves thoroughly can we love ourselves as God loves us and love others as Jesus has asked us to do. In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul states that, “For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). In other words, Paul is urging us to embrace all that we are, the good and the bad, and to live as authentically as we can. Not only that, but he is also asking for us to go forth as children of light, to embrace the Holy Spirit within us in order to bring our light to others.

I like to end my reflections with a challenge, and this is no different. My challenge for you is to smile at someone today. That's it, just smile. Smile at a stranger, smile at a friend, smile at the person next to you right now! Smile at yourself in the mirror! That smile, though a small, seemingly insignificant gesture, could very well make a difference in someone's life. Sometimes, that's all someone needs: a glimmer of light in the darkness. By smiling at someone, you can let them know that they are not alone, that they are worth something. A smile from a stranger can make someone feel appreciated and validated, and we all need that validation, don't we? That validation that comes from another person looking at you through your mask and still caring despite the flaws or imperfections that we perceive ourselves to have. I encourage you to be that person for someone else, to be the rainbow in someone else's cloud.

OCTOBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

<p>October 2nd, 2022: Holy Communion <i>Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost</i> Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:3-14 Psalm 37:1-9 Luke 17:5-10 Sermon: “Rekindling the Gift” Rev. John Van Epps</p>	<p>October 9th, 2022 <i>Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost</i> Scripture: Psalm 111 2 Timothy 2:8-15 Luke 17:11-21 Sermon: “The Kingdom in our Midst” Rev. John Van Epps</p>
<p>October 16th, 2022 <i>Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost</i> Scripture: Genesis 32: 22-31 Psalm 121 2 Timothy 3: 14-4:5 Luke 18: 1-8 Sermon: “Wrestling with Our Faith” Aren Alberico</p>	<p>October 23rd, 2022 <i>Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost</i> Scripture: TBA Sermon: Reverend Edward Cornell</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <p>October 30th, 2022 <i>Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost</i> Scripture: TBA Sermon: Reverend Edward Cornell</p>

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:

Gail Traester	October 8 th
Jan Hewitt	October 10 th
Patricia Williams	October 11 th
Deb Wooley	October 12 th
Martha Buller	October 12 th
John Spencer	October 14 th
Gil Spencer	October 15 th
Ezra Kroon	October 31 st
Linda Vanacore	October 31 st

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.

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

Annual Saint Francis Animal Blessing

In celebration of Saint Francis Day, we will be holding an Animal Blessing event on Saturday, October 8th at 10am on the grass in between the Church and the Parish Hall. All are welcome to attend and have their animal blessed by Reverend Olivia Robinson, who will be leading this short service!

-MCCC Staff

Fall 2022 Tag Sale

The next tag/craft sale is scheduled for October 15th from 9am-2pm. Table spaces are \$20 each. Please call Vera at (203) 239-7135 to make a reservation. As per usual, we will be selling delicious Cabot cheese and will be holding a NO BAKE (monetary donations only) bake sale. There will also be a variety of church craft and tag tables. We hope to see you there!

Thank you,
The Craft Ladies

Faith Formation News

Church School has begun, and we hope to meet one to two times per month. The first Sunday of the month is Communion so children may attend church with their families. If you would like your child/children to join us, please contact Debbie Wooley, Faith Formation Director at ce@mccucc.com or (203) 248-3047.

-Debbie Wooley

Outreach

Neighbors in Need (NIN). Sunday, October 2nd is the NIN (Neighbors in Need) special mission offering. Monies from this offering help support homeless and immigrant communities. If you would like to make a donation, please make your check out to the church with "NIN offering" in the memo line or put cash in an envelope marked "NIN". Thank you, Debbie Wooley.

Upcoming Projects. It is that time of the year again when we have several community events in which we participate. In particular, the Thanksgiving food baskets for the Keefe Center & the VNA will be coming up in November. Then we collect unwrapped gifts for the Hamden Senior Gift Run as well as wrapped gifts for the VNA in December. Watch the weekly announcements and future newsletters for these projects.

ARK Banks: Keep the ARKs floating!!! Bring in your filled bank, drop in offering plate, pick up new one in narthex.

-Debbie Wooley

All Saints Sunday

In honor of All Saints Sunday, we will be honoring the names of the deceased during our service on Sunday, November 6th. If you would like to submit the name of a loved one who has passed this year, please contact the office by phone or email by Wednesday, November 2nd at the latest. Thank you.

-Aren Alberico

FINANCIAL REPORT: AUGUST 2022

Following is the financial report for August 2022. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at treasurer@mccucc.com.

Income:	Pledges and Offerings:	\$14,552.00
	Other Income:	\$1,897.00
	Investment Income	\$12,000.00
	Total Income:	\$28,449.00
Expenses:	Total Expenses:	\$19,774.00
Net Income:		\$8,675.00

GENERAL ANNOUCEMENTS

Guest Preachers. During every Sunday in October, we will be having either Lay Preachers or guest Ordained Ministers in charge of our worship. The Board of Deacons are asking that you support them as much as possible by attending worship if you can. It truly makes a difference if the church service has a good attendance.

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 for the months of August and September. 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 for the months of August and September. 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.

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.

Food Bank. Donations for the Food Bank are still 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.

Hand Sanitizer. At the beginning of the Covid pandemic, we were given several boxes of small bottles of hand sanitizer. We have not used that many and would like others to take them. There is a box in the narthex, next to the free candles. Please help yourself.

THE STORY OF RUTH

Although Ruth was from Moab, after the death of her husband, she decided to go with her mother-in-law back to Judah, and worship the True God. There she found Boaz, who helped by providing grain to eat. Because Boaz was a close relative and a kind, caring, responsible man, he also agreed to marry Ruth. Boaz and Ruth began the royal family line of David, and of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Key words from the story of Ruth are hidden below. They can be found in any direction. Can you find them all?



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



RUTH
NAOMI
MOAB
BOAZ

ELIMELECH
ORPAH
BARLEY
GLEANNING

THRESHING
KINSMAN
REDEEMER
SANDAL



WHERE:

MOUNT CARMEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
3284 WHITNEY AVENUE, HAMDEN CT 06518

WHEN:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15TH
9AM-2PM

WHAT:

TAG/CRAFT TABLES!
SNACK BAR!
NO BAKE (MONETARY DONATIONS ONLY) BAKE SALE!
CABOT CHEESE!
& MORE!

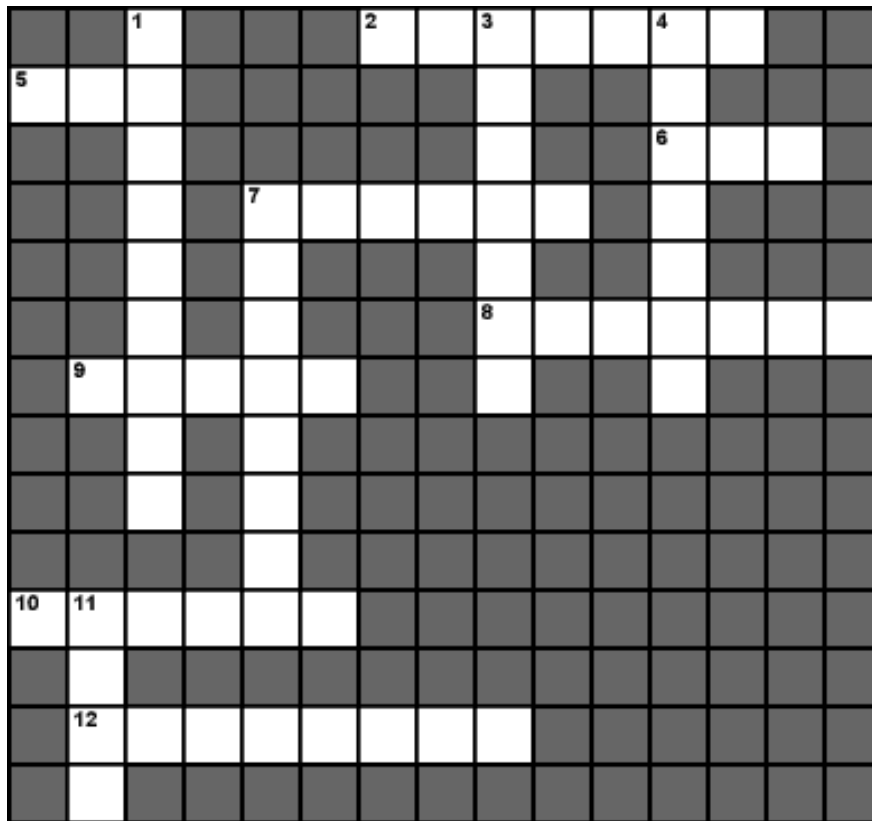
BOOK NOW:

TABLES ARE \$20 EACH AND CAN BE BOOKED NOW BY CALLING
(203) 239-7135

MASKS FOR THE EVENT ARE OPTIONAL AT THIS TIME.

A Puzzle for Adults!

Based on Luke Chapter 18



Across

- 2 Where was Jesus going when he met the blind beggar?
- 5 Who according to Jesus to be the only one who is good?
- 6 What did the judge who did not fear God not care about?
- 7 Jesus told his disciples they should always pray and never what? (4,2)
- 8 What will happen to him who humbles himself?
- 9 What will the Son of Man find on earth?
- 10 What did the tax-collector beat?
- 12 Who did Jesus say the kingdom of God belongs to?

Down

- 1 Who did the widow plead with the judge to grant her justice against?
- 3 What did those who led the way do to the blind man?
- 4 Who did the Pharisee pray about?
- 7 Who did the prophets say the Son of Man would be handed over to?
- 11 Who finds it hard to enter the Kingdom of God?



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