

Elmwords

PASTOR'S CORNER

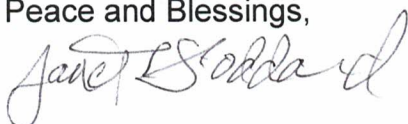
I heard on the news that it has been over a year since the first report of the Coronavirus in the United States. Personally, I didn't notice until late February mainly because I had plans to travel with my sister in mid-March. It is hard to fathom that we have all been dealing with COVID 19 for a year. Besides some savvy epidemiologists and others in the know, many of us didn't imagine living like we have in the past year. I never thought I would spend most of my time at work wearing a mask. Did you ever think it would be ok to grab a cup of tea or coffee and sit in your favorite chair at home to watch church on Facebook or YouTube?

This week after church I walked the dog in the park near my home, and a woman who lives nearby flagged me down to ask what had happened on the street adjacent to mine. On Saturday night, she had seen the ambulances and heard the sirens on her street and was concerned, because she didn't know what had happened. I let her know that there had been a fire, but as far as I knew, everyone got out safely and that the house was badly damaged. She was relieved to hear that the people had gotten out safely, but then she said, "do you think this is the end of the world? You think nothing else can happen that is bad, but then bad things keep happening. I think the world is ending." People have been struggling with when the world will end for as long as human beings have thought about such things I imagine but in the last year this has been something I have heard more and more about from people who are wondering aloud. To be honest, I don't think the end of the world is coming and even if it is, I don't know what I can do about it. It is a debate that I don't think needs our time or our attention right now because if you believe in God, whether we live or whether we die, we are with God. The fire on our street was just one more thing that has happened recently in a world where too many terrible things have and are happening.

So how do we as people of faith continue to cope with all that we see and hear on a daily basis? One suggestion is to keep praying and to pray fervently. Philippians 4:5-7 reminds us to, "Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." It is of course easier said than done but worth an attempt still. Another possible source of solace is to read scripture, especially the Psalms. In Psalm 62:8 we are reminded to, "Trust in God at all times, O people; pour out your heart before God; God is a refuge for us."

It is also important to stay connected. It can be difficult, but pick up the phone and call a friend or someone from your church family. If someone calls and leaves you a message, call her or him back. It matters, you matter, your church matters and your faith matters. It is for such a time as this that our community of faith can make all the difference. Stay safe, stay healthy, pray unceasingly and trust in God at all times. Remember that you are surrounded by God's light and love, you are safe and protected.

Peace and Blessings,



Rev. Janet Stoddard

Council Moderator's Report

Monday, January 18, 2021

In attendance: Cindy Gauthier, Colleen Peterson, Jerry Gray, Pastor Janet Stoddard – in person, Bill Alberti, Susan Wiley, Wendy Leonard, Gail O'Connor – by Zoom

Meeting called to order at 6:36 pm

Colleen opened the meeting with a prayer and scripture reading from 1 Kings 19:11-12
After killing the prophets of Baal, Elijah fled for his life to Horeb the Mount of God and hid in a cave. Then the word of the Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a sound of sheer silence." When he heard the silence, Elijah stood at the cave entrance and the Lord spoke to him. Elijah knew that God was in the silence. May we quiet our fears, our racing thoughts and all the noise in our lives so that we too may hear God speak to us. Amen.

Minutes for December 2020 were reviewed and accepted with one correction

Pastor's Report: Pastor Janet Stoddard

- Pastor Janet kindly joined us for this meeting having sat in on the Trustee's meeting last week to meet people. Cindy Gauthier, Moderator and Colleen Peterson, Clerk signed her contract dated 11/1/2020 – 4/25/2021. Susan Wiley, Controller will also be signing.

Deacon's Report - Jerry Gray

- Continued prayers for Craig Croxall and Charles Shorter.
- Pat MacDougall's service will possibly be on May 21st if allowed to congregate by then. Will be in Conte Hall as there will be a reception.
- New website is up and running and looks great. Checked with web service to see about being hacked with Janet's picture off the website sent out to people asking for money. They could only tell us that it was not done by a robot but by someone personally. Statistics will be available at some point. Because of the year's delay, we are still in a grace period. Eventually we will have to pay for the site. They only take credit or debit for monthly payments of \$29. However, we can get a 10% discount and pay for the year in full up front by check so will do that when the time comes.
- Because the food wagon was very full and we wanted to get the food to WH Food Pantry to give out sooner than later, we blessed the food wagon this week.
- Communion will be on January 31st as Pastor Janet will be off the week of 2/1-2/7.
- Reverend Tom Anderson, Coordinator of Spiritual Services at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain will be preaching on Sunday 2/7.
- There will be no service or ashes on Ash Wednesday, 2/17.

Christian Ed – Gail O'Connor

- No Pancake Supper this year.
- Will make and send Valentine's cards to our home-bound members.
- Gail asked if we could do a Google Meet or Zoom Bible Study or book club.

Missions -Cindy Gauthier

- Dates for dropping off dinner to South Park Inn for 2021 are: 2/21, 4/18, 6/20, 8/22, 10/24 and 12/19.
- No budget monies were allocated to OCWM for 2020.
- Due to crossed communications, we had 24-hour notice to pull off Adopt-a-Family at Christmas and we did it! Single mom with a 17 year-old boy, 11 year-old boy and 7 year-old twins (boy & girl). It was awesome! Those of us who contributed said that it totally made it feel like Christmas. Thank you to everyone.
- Chuck Peterson dropped off the scarves, hats and mittens to WH Social Services.

Trustees – Bill Alberti

- Currently \$179,000 in the Barnum Fund.
- Mark Janas applied for \$17,000 PPP (State of CT Paycheck Protection Program) loan that we are hoping will be forgiven.
- Gene Knorr's estate made a generous donation both to Scholarships and to the General Fund. Council thanks the family for that!
- Received \$4,031 from CVS for snowplowing this winter.
- So far this winter, snowplowing/salting from Precision Landscaping has cost us \$2,000. We are still looking for an alternative.
- Getting five \$100 Visa gift cards through Scrips program to give to John Marshall and his staff at Hartford Boiler to thank them for all the time they have donated working on the church furnace lately. Pastor Janet will write thank you notes to go with the gift cards.
- People are still finding the church warm at times when not in use. Discussed possibility of installing thermostats that can be remotely controlled by someone's phone.
- Trustees approved Pastor Janet Stoddard's contract at last meeting. She will be doing Sunday sermon, 2 hours in the office on Tuesdays 3-5 pm and parish care-phone calls and emergencies.
- Lots of activity and inquiries on renting the parsonage but no success yet. Thank you to Susan Wiley for all the time she has been putting into this.
- Trustees would like to find out what is involved in selling the parsonage – separating the property from the church deed, etc. since it is a hot market still. If separable and we sell it, we could double the amount in the Barnum Fund and start generating interest income.

- Church received a letter from the Town of West Hartford stating that since the parsonage is no longer used to house a pastor, we would owe taxes on it. Mark Janas estimates this will be about \$5,800 a year.
- Judy Williams, our new sexton, will be asked to drain the pipe on the furnace once every month or two. Hartford Boiler will show her how to do it.

Controller's Report – Susan Wiley

- No financial report for December.
- Rental income for 2020 was \$9,200, down almost 2/3 from last year due to Covid.

Member at Large - Wendy Leonard – No report. Daysha Haxton-Not present, no report.

Old Business –

- After reading what was involved with applying for a UCC Crossroads "Faith for the Future" grant of up to \$5,000 (to be paid back) with a deadline of 1/15/21, and discussing it with Pastor Janet, Council decided not to apply.
- Zoom meeting with Rev. Tamara Mooreland on Sunday January 10, 2021 at 12:00 am was cancelled as we had nothing new to discuss with her.

New Business –

- Pastor Janet offered to do a Bible study over Google Meet twice a month on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. starting February 9th & 23rd. An announcement
- Asked Board chairs and Council members to write up their annual reports for 2020 as soon as possible so that an Annual Report for 2020 could be put out to the congregation. Since not much happened last year due to the pandemic, reports will be brief. Colleen will put a notice in Elmwords about the 2020 Annual Report.

Upcoming Events –

- None

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm

Next council meeting scheduled for Monday, February 15, 2021 at 6:30 pm both in person and by Zoom

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Gauthier, Moderator

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

FEBRUARY/MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

February

05 Madelyn O'Connor
09 Michael McLarney
12 Tim Coffin
15 Robert Bucchere
17 Judy Janas
19 Sharon Lamb
21 Carl Moskey
22 Charles Peterson

March

04 Edie Gray
07 Eleanor Kibbe
08 Sue McLarney
12 Mickey Allgaier
22 Linda Kresge
28 Johanna Oppel (Brown)
Anniversaries
06 Johanna & Timothy Oppel
20 Ellen & Robert Bucchere

Bible Study



Join Us for Bible Study!

Let's gather as a community to delve into the Bible. We will gather via Google Meet and everyone is invited to participate. We will meet on Tuesdays, February 9 & 23, March 9 & 23 & April 6 & 13 at 7 p.m. Bible passages will be announced before the meeting. Looking forward to meeting with you, Pastor Janet Stoddard. - jestoddard9@cox.net

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Until it is safe for all to meet in church as a congregation, we cannot hold our Annual Meeting. However, Board chairs are currently working on their reports for 2020. We also have a proposed budget for 2021 that, though not yet officially approved by the congregation, we are using. Being too expensive to mail, Annual reports will be dropped off at local members' doorsteps by volunteers (no contact). An e-mail or phone call will notify you when the reports are being distributed. Council and Boards continue to work hard on the congregation's behalf. We are grateful to have Pastor Janet Stoddard with us through April 25th. We will keep the congregation apprised as to continuing discussions on where do we go from here as a church family, discussions we started a year ago that were ended by the pandemic. Pastor Janet Stoddard – jestoddard9@cox.net - and Board and Council members would love to hear from church members as to what they are thinking re ECC's future direction.

MISSIONS

There will be a Souper collection taken on super bowl Sunday. Proceeds will go to West Hartford food pantry.

The Mitten Tree items were delivered to West Hartford Social Services in January

Please continue bringing in your food donations all year - these are brought to the West Hartford Food Pantry.

Thank you to all who contributed to the Adopt-A-Family in December – it was much appreciated.

The 2021 South Park Inn dinners are not yet available.

Carol Alberti

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

UPDATING THE DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS & FRIENDS

**I am updating the church directory.
Please notify the office of any changes
to your data: address, phone numbers
(home and cell), email addresses.**

I hope to have it published in February.

**Barbara Trzcinski
Office Manager**

NEW WEBSITE!

We are pleased to announce that we have a new website for the Elmwood Community Church. We have partnered with UCCWEBSITES.ORG to develop and host a new website for our church. It has been a year in coming, but with shutdowns due to COVID-19 and server issues and many other distractions we finally got it done. You can check it out at

www.elmwoodchurch.net

There is still some work to be done on it, but we welcome your feedback. Most of the site is able to be edited so let us know what is messed up.

Oh, and our Sunday worship broadcasts on Facebook are available live on the web page.

SPIRITUAL INSPIRATIONS

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader" *John Quincy Adams*

"No problem of human making is too great to be overcome by human ingenuity, human energy, and the untiring hope of the human spirit." *George H. W. Bush*

Each of us shares a unity with Spirit and all life, and simultaneously each of us is an individual with free will. There is a duality to us as separate and as part of the whole.
- *Jonathan Lockwood Huie*

Anything done out of a sense of obligation or responsibility or duty becomes a burden rather than a spiritual empowerment.
- *Jonathan Lockwood Huie*



We collect food items for the West Hartford Food Pantry each week. Each Sunday of the month will have a different theme.

First Sunday: Dinner Basics: canned fish and meats (stew, ravioli) baked beans

Second Sunday: Kids Favorites: cereal, granola bars, mac & cheese, peanut butter & jelly

Third Sunday: Fruity Feast: canned and jarred fruit, dried fruit, fruit cups, jelly & jam

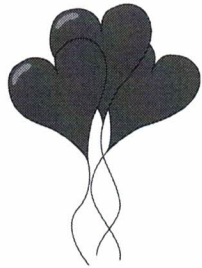
Fourth Sunday: Exciting Extras: fun stuff: coffee, tea, cooking oil, condiments

Fifth Sunday: Most Wanted: pasta sauce, rice, cereal, canned meat, peanut butter

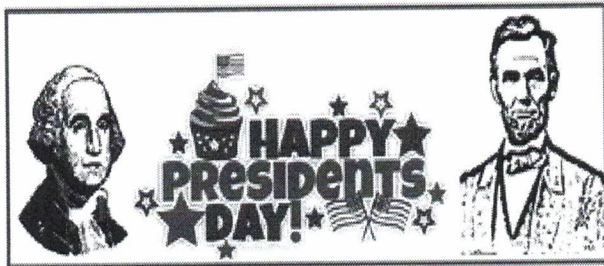
ON A PERSONAL NOTE



*BE SURE TO LIKE
ECC ON FACEBOOK*



*Happy
Valentine's
Day*





FEBRUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:30 pm Deacons	3	4	5	6
7	8	5	9 6:30 pm Trustees	11	12	13
14 Happy Valentine's Day 11 am Christian Ed	15 Presidents' Day 6:30 pm Council	16 Newsletter Articles Due	17	18	19	20
21 9 am Missions Newsletter Published	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

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Secretary's e-mail: eccsecretary@snet.net
Pastor's e-mail: elmwoodchurch@snet.net**

**PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY
DATED MATERIAL**

******* IF YOU NO LONGER WANT TO RECEIVE THIS PUBLICATION, PLEASE NOTIFY ECC AT THE *****
NUMBER ABOVE. THANK YOU!**

DATES TO REMEMBER

THERE IS NO BIBLE STUDY OR CHOIR PRACTICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**THESE ARE TENTATIVE DATES. DURING THE PANDENIC, MOST BOARDS ARE HAVING
VIRTUAL MEETINGS.**

**FEBRUARY 2
FEBRUARY 7??
FEBRUARY 9
FEBRUARY 14
FEBRUARY 15
FEBRUARY 16
FEBRUARY 21
FEBRUARY 21**

**6:30 PM DEACONS
SOUPER BOWL COLLECTION
6:30 PM TRUSTEES
11 AM CHRISTIAN ED
6:30 PM COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE
11 AM MISSIONS
ELMWORDS PUBLISHED**