

2017



The Epistle

Be Rooted in God's Love

Grow in Grace

*Bear Fruit of
Justice and Peace*

AUGUST

The Official Newsletter of United Methodist Church of Hartford



From the
Pastor

AT A CROSSROADS

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Matthew 9:37-38

Today, the United Methodist Church (UMC) and other mainstream denominations are at a crossroads. For some United Methodists, the future looks bright and hopeful. While for others, the future looks murky and helpless. Regardless of which side you are on, or whether you see the glass half full or half empty, one thing is for certain, the United Methodist Church, and clergy and laity alike, have work to do. We are called to do the work for the Kingdom because we are children of a Holy God who has invited each and every one of us to do something with a heart of love and service in the name of our blessed Savior Jesus Christ.

Before Jesus completed His earthly ministry, He challenged, encouraged, healed, led, preached, and taught. Jesus also chastised when necessary. Most importantly, Jesus loved. When people encountered Jesus, they were transformed and their lives were never the same. They gave up their sinful ways and lifestyles for a newly transformed and holy life in Christ Jesus. We are called in this present day to do the same. The change is not easy, trust me, but if we really want to be fruitful for Christ, we need to start doing things differently.

I believe that no church regardless of its denominational affiliation want to close its doors. I also believe most churches want to be fruitful and to make a difference. At least that's my hope. I've also come to learn that we must be willing to be transparent about who we are and what we are called to do as laborers in God's harvest.

Equally with our denomination, The United Methodist Church, UMC of Hartford is also at a crossroads having to face the rapid changes occurring within our local community and the world around us. In this season, I believe God is inviting us to take a deeper look at how we can effectively minister in a healthier, more meaningful, and proficient way. By doing this we will help develop disciples of Jesus Christ. This is essential to the future growth of the church.

Being at these crossroads, means that, we must begin to ask ourselves some fundamental questions:

As Individuals

Who am I? What is my purpose?

What steps do I need to take in order to fulfill my Godly purpose at UMC of Hartford, in the community and in the world?

As a Church

Who are we? Where are we going? How are we going to get there?

While churches like UMC of Hartford may be at a crossroad, God is not finished with us. The harvest is plentiful and God is looking for us to move from the sidelines and become a new and different type of laborer for His Kingdom. If we as individuals and as a corporate body become more proactive, then we can fully grasp who we truly are in Christ Jesus. We, not just some of us, then can become transparent and serve the Lord faithfully using all of the gifts of the church.

So as the month of September is approaching, I encourage you to prepare your heart and spirit as we take the road less traveled to journey with God to the next level. Come with me!

Peace,
Pastor Rhonda

Lectionary Readings for the Month of August 2017

August 6 – 9th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 17:1-7, 15 (UM749); Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21
Liturgist: Beth Ann Loveland-Sennett

August 13 – 10th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22 (UM828); Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33
Liturgist: Elaina Mends

August 20 – 11h Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133 (UM850); Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15:10-28
Liturgist: Richard Muirhead

August 27 – 12th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Exodus 1:8-2:10; Psalm 124 (UM846); Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20
Liturgist: Ashley Blount

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

There will be an update sheet for the church directory available toward the end of August. If you have additions or changes to what is presently in the church directory, now is your chance to get that information added or corrected. Send your updates to dianne@umcofhartford.org or call the church office. The deadline to provide any changes is August 15.

OUR NEXT COMMUNITY BREAKFAST IS AUGUST 13 - *DON'T MISS IT!*

For over a year the Breakfast Ministry has been providing a robust connection with our community. Please help us by donating the following kitchen items: **Knives, Cutting Boards, a Stock Pot, Hair Nets, Gloves.**

We are always thrilled to have new volunteers to assist with our ministry and we would also love it if you would share your favorite baked goods with us as a donation towards the breakfast.

You are all encouraged to invite a neighbor, co-worker, family member, or friend to have a great **FREE** meal and then come to our worship service. Together let's show the community the love of God.

Please ask Ashley Blount or Guetty Antiste how you can help or contact Ashley at (860) 994-0100.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13 2017 • 8:30 AM MENU

- EGGS
- PANCAKES
- SAUSAGE (PORK, TURKEY)
- BACON (PORK, TURKEY)
- BISCUITS
- ASSORTED BAKED GOODS
- JUICE (ORANGE, APPLE, GRAPEFRUIT)
- HOT TEA, COFFEE



UMC of Hartford will be serving breakfast on the **2nd Sunday** of each month. The prayer is that people of the neighborhood will know that they are loved by God and cared for by the UMC Hartford community.

Matthew 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in."

REMEMBER: YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TO PROVIDE SUMMER MUSIC FOR THE CHURCH



For the months of July and August we are in need of volunteer musicians for the Sunday Morning Worship services.

Background: In January, the Church Council adopted a negotiated, compromise budget for 2017 to address challenges this year that we have avoided addressing for years, but that we have seen coming as the Unrestricted Endowment Trust Fund has been gradually depleted. We have relied on those funds to help balance the budget. The approved budget for 2017 has a significant impact on our traditional church music program, leaving the two summer months unfunded. This means that for the Sundays of July and August the worship services will have music provided by volunteers only.

This is both a challenge and an exceptional opportunity for church members and friends. The Worship Team is looking to schedule volunteer musicians for July and August. Each Sunday there is opportunity to provide music for the whole service, or for an offertory, a prelude, or postlude, or accompany for the congregational hymns and service music when others are presenting the solo music. These opportunities include both vocal and instrumental music.

If you are interested, please call Alberta Elliott at 860-232-0169 to arrange a date and discuss the arrangements.

Sandra Ann Craig, Worship Team Chair

OUR INCLUSIVENESS COMMITTEE REPORT

At the June 25, 2017 Church Council meeting, the Inclusiveness Committee presented a report on its one-on-one conversations with the congregation on human sexuality. The committee also proposed a resolution on the matter for the Council's consideration. The report demonstratively indicated that an overwhelming majority of our congregation is supportive of same-sex marriage, ordination of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered (LGBT) persons and supports the removal of discriminatory language from the Methodist Book of Discipline. The proposed resolution was a simple statement to the effect that we, as a congregation, would no longer tolerate discrimination against our LGBT brothers and sisters in Christ and that we would support same-sex marriages and the ordination of LGBT persons within the United Methodist Church. To more fully engage the congregation on this issue, we agreed to conduct a Bible Study on human sexuality and to organize a panel discussion on the issue. The goal would be to complete this congregational engagement in time for a final decision on the resolution by vote at our next Charge Conference.



Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all your well wishes and expressions of love! Our 50th anniversary event on July 9th was a joy-filled time with so many of you able to be there. After our renewal of vows service and luncheon, the Harp Twins (Camille and Kennerly Kitt) presented a concert that filled the sanctuary with enthusiasm, merriment and fun.

Love, Dianne and Peter Antos

JULY - AUGUST CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARIES

JULY (omitted from last month's Epistle)

30 - Sal Pinna

AUGUST

3 - Emme Miller (c)	13 - Carol Williams	24 - Natalie Rose Bacon
8 - Angel Villegas (Connor) (c)	21 - John Boyce, Jr.	25 - Christine Atkinson
12 - Pastor Rhonda Taylor	23 - Brendan Loveland	27 - Thomas Sennett

AUGUST

Beth Ann & Tom Sennett - 8/7
 Katherine Lahti & Frank Caso - 8/8
 Heather & Tony Muirhead - 8/8
 Robert & Jocelyn Cudjoe - 8/23/13
 Christine & Silbert Welsh - 8/25
 Kate & Chad Mikkelson - 8/31/03

ANTISTE EATERY IS COMING BACK TO CT!

In June over 50 dinners were sold, 17 meals were paid for and given to some members of the community in need. I was able to donate \$100 to our church's Building Fund!! The mission is to go beyond the last service and sell even more dinners in August. I am blessed that God has provided me with the vision to do something I am passionate about which is cooking and supporting my church home.

August 5th I will be selling meal platters for \$12 by pre-order only. Please order your dinner by August 1st. I would greatly appreciate your support by buying a meal or three :) (smile). Spread the word to all your friends and family as a portion of the proceeds will be donated to our church's Building Fund. As you all know people in our community are hungry, so the highlight is the PAY IT FORWARD meals. If you are not interested in a meal for yourself pay it forward for someone in need. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to me by phone or email.

Payment can be accepted by Paypal: AntisteEatery@gmail.com
Guetty Antiste 908-397-2197



ALTAR FLOWERS

Our sanctuary is enhanced by flowers on the altar during worship on Sunday mornings. You can sign up now for an upcoming date on which you would like to honor or remember an event or loved one. The cost is \$35, and you should note "flowers" on the memo line of your check. You can sign up in the schedule book, which is now kept in the mail slots near the elevator outside the church office, or by phoning (860-523-5132) or emailing the church (staff@umcofhartford.org).

FUNDS NEEDED FOR OUR FEEDING MINISTRIES

Our various Feeding Ministries (Loaves & Fishes, South Park Inn, and West End Food Pantry) rely on money to keep serving hungry people. Currently the funds are quite low for Loaves & Fishes and South Park Inn. Consider making a donation in honor or memory of someone; write Feeding Ministries on your check memo line. Look for the "Spare Change" coin containers where we can drop our loose change weekly; one is at the back of the sanctuary as you enter. Join in the effort to refill our Feeding Ministries Fund.



"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK

If you're a Facebook user, our church Facebook page is a great way to keep up to date with what's going on at church, and to share the good news with your friends and acquaintances. Do a search for "United Methodist Church of Hartford CT Facebook page," then "Like" the page, and "Share" articles and pictures about bible classes, concerts, community breakfasts, worship services, etc. with your Facebook friends. Help spread the good word about all the exciting things going on here.

WISHING YOU A SUMMER FULL OF BLESSINGS!