



From the
Pastor

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2Chronicles 7:14

Maybe it's just a figment of my imagination, but, especially within the last year, I keep hearing people express how mentally exhausted they find themselves. One can certainly assume that there are a variety of reasons as to why people feel that way. Things like: the contentious political climate; the social and justice issues surrounding: sexual harassment, racism/bigotry, and immigration; environmental issues such as global warming and pollution; national and international issues such as nuclear weapons; the economic markets; peace talks; and the appalling behavior of some of our leaders. These are just some of the reasons why people find themselves anxious and exhausted. The list can go on, but you get the point. There's so much that needs to be addressed that one may ask them self, where to even begin.

I believe we need to begin with God. We need to ask God to clean our hearts. This is a simple act of our worship and obedience to God. The constant demeaning of humanity is something I'm sure is not pleasing to God.

With all that is being said and done in our world, one has to wonder where is the church? Where are the prophetic voices of the church? Has the church become complacent in allowing the ills of the world and the people who promote such hateful rhetoric to become the voice of reason? According to the Bible that I read and meditate on God loves us all, welcomes the stranger, and wants all of us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Is that too hard to accomplish?

One thing is for certain, we cannot be the people that God desires if we don't take time to repent, ask God for forgiveness, and seek God's will for our lives. It is why the Season of Lent is such a reflective time for prayer, penitence, fasting, and seeking a deeper connection with God.

Yes, there's a lot happening within our society. Hurtful words are being exchanged. People being denied basic human dignity and the earth and its inhabitants are in need of the basic necessities just to remain alive.



During this Lenten season, I invite you to join me in seeking a closer walk with Jesus. For only Jesus can fix the current climate. Only Jesus can fix the people and the world. In seeking a closer walk with Jesus, we will discover that Jesus is in the business of saving all creation. In this Lenten journey, take some personal alone time with God, be in constant prayer with others, or join a small bible study group. Just do something. It is time we turn away from the ills of this world and its rhetoric, and turn to God. Because it is by the presence and working of the Holy Spirit along with our obedience and following the paths of the Lord, we will experience change that we can believe in.

Peace,
Pastor Rhonda

Lectionary Readings for the Month of February 2018

February 4 - 5th Sunday after the Epiphany (Color: Green)

Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-1, 20c; 1Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

Liturgist: Jane Brubaker

February 11 – Transfiguration Sunday (Color: White)

2Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

Liturgist: Mary Cockram

February 14 – Ash Wednesday (Color: Purple)

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17; 2Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Liturgist: Richard Muirhead

February 18 – 1st Sunday in Lent (Color: Purple)

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15

Liturgist: Kevin Loveland

February 25 – 2nd Sunday in Lent (Color: Purple)

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:25-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38

Liturgist: Ashley Blount



Remember: Wednesday, February 14 is Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday Morning Meditation Service: 7:30 a.m.

Evening Service of Worship for Ash Wednesday: 7:30 p.m.

Both services will include imposition of ashes

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2018 Lenten Journey - Rehab Worship Series

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship>

<i>Sermon Titles:</i>		<i>Dates:</i>
Mortality	Ash Wednesday	February 14
Wilderness	1st Sunday in Lent	February 18
Intervention	2nd Sunday in Lent	February 25
Program	3rd Sunday in Lent	March 4
Recovery	4th Sunday in Lent	March 11 also UMCOR Sunday
Promise	5th Sunday in Lent	March 18
<i>We enter into Holy Week</i>		
Joy & Pain	Palm/Passion Sunday	March 25
Service	Holy/Maundy Thursday with Foot/Hand Washing & Holy Communion	March 29 Service: 7:30 p.m.
Yield	Good Friday	March 30 Service: 7:30 p.m.
Celebrate	Easter Sunday	April 1

40 DAYS OF LENT PRAYER LINE

You are invited to participate with Pastor Rhonda for a 10 minute prayer time from 7:15am to 7:25am and a 20 minute prayer time of praise and testimony from 6:15 pm to 6:35pm, beginning Thursday, February 15 thru Saturday, March 31.

To prepare for this sacred time with the Lord and fellow Christian brothers and sisters, you are encouraged to purchase a journal and a copy of "Draw the Circle: 40 Day Prayer Challenge" by Mark Batterson.

Please Note: Pastor Rhonda will lead the first prayer conference call on Thursday, February 15. Afterwards, our prayer time will begin each week with a different person.

The structure of the calls is simple and basic:

Morning

Welcome and greetings. The leader of the call will open up with greetings and welcome everyone to the call. We especially welcome any first time callers and thank them for joining us and encourage them to join us again.

Devotion - (6 minutes). The leader will share a meaningful thought from the book, Draw the Circle.

Prayer time - (4 minutes). The leader will lead in prayer whatever is on their heart.

Group exits conference Call

Evening

Welcome and greetings. The leader of the call will open up with greetings and welcomes everyone to the call. We especially welcome any first time callers and thank them for joining us and encourage them to join us again.

Check-in with the Group (10 minutes). The leader will open up the call for praise reports and testimonies. Participants are encouraged to share how they saw God in their midst.

Call courtesy instructions. Participants are asked to be mindful to keep their prayer requests & petitions to one to two minutes because we want everyone to have an opportunity to lift up their prayer requests.

Leader's closing prayer (10 minutes). The leader prays over all the praise reports and testimonies, and then closes the call, praying over the prayer requests.

Group exits conference call.

In preparation for the 40 Day Lent prayer journey, Pastor Rhonda will have a meeting on Sunday, February 11 at 11:30am. During the meeting, people will have an opportunity to ask questions. Pastor will also provide information on fasting. If you are interested and would like to participate in the 40 Day Lent prayer journey, please contact the church office at (860) 523-5132 and give Joy your contact information (name, telephone number, and email address).

	<h3>FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH</h3> <p>February is Black History Month, or National African American History Month. It is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history.</p>
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PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAT COOMBS SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE IS EARLY THIS YEAR!

Upon her death, Pat Coombs, a long-time member of our church, left money to establish a scholarship fund. This fund provides help to high school graduates of all ages to enhance their lives through further education. This can mean for college or for other learning opportunities. The fund is administered by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving through their scholarship program. While there is a preference for members of our church, others are considered as well. A church committee

works with the Hartford Foundation to provide input into the selection process. If you are interested in applying for this scholarship, application forms are available in the church office or may be downloaded from our website (www.umcofhartford.org). Applications must be postmarked by February 16, 2018. In addition to the scholarship fund, Pat also left money directly to our church. We are grateful to Pat for remembering her church in her will, and we encourage you to consider our church as you plan your estate. A gift such as this can make a real difference for years to come.

UMW NEWS



The February
United Methodist Women's gathering
will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2018.

**“A Call to Prayer and Self Denial –
Learning For a Lifetime: Developing Leaders”**
is the program for the evening.

Following a potluck supper and business meeting, SandraAnn Craig will present the program based on one of the oldest traditions of United Methodist Women. It originated with a predecessor organization proving to be a very effective program of self examination, education about missions and a way to support those missions. Come – find out where and how this year's focus fits into your life and development of mission work for yourself and others. The annual Call to Prayer and Self-Denial offering will be collected during the program. 100% of the offering supports national and international programs that develop leaders of all ages – programs that offer educational opportunities to the underserved and marginalized.

SUPPER AT 6:30 PM - - MEETING AT 7:15 PM - - PROGRAM AT 7:45 PM

Remember: It's a potluck supper. If you are unable to bring food, the cost is \$5.00. Also, please remember to bring your table setting!

If you are interested, please call the church office (860-523-5132).

All are welcome! We look forward to seeing you!



SM SOUPER BOWL OF CARING – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH

Now in its 28th year, **SOUPER BOWL of CARING** utilizes the football Super Bowl weekend in America to mobilize people, especially young people, to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities. The vision is to transform Super Bowl weekend into America's largest youth-led weekend of giving and serving. All funds raised remain in local communities.

Our church participates by collecting monetary donations for our Feeding Ministries and cans of soup and other non-perishables for the West End Food Pantry. Help us score numbers of “touchdowns” for hunger alleviation!! **On that Sunday, February 4, let's ring the sanctuary with canned goods, and fill the soup pots with money.** (Checks should be made out to UMC0H, with Feeding Ministries listed on the memo line.) **Score a touchdown for alleviating hunger!**

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATING

It's time to prepare a new church directory. If you are already listed there, please check to see if the information is accurate. Would you like a cell phone number included? How about your birthday (without the year you were born)? What about your email address? Or maybe you aren't listed at all because you became involved after the last printing. Please get those changes/additions to Dianne Antos through the church office no later than the end of February. Look for the new directory around the end of March.

☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀

BIRTHDAYS

1 - Timothy Smith (c)	6 - Harold Craig	11 - Kevin Loveland	24 - James Dinello
2 - Frank Wacht	8 - Elle Ramos (c)	18 - Matthew Welsh	28 - Mary Cockram
5 - Heather Muirhead	10 - Maria MacDonald	19 - Adam Muirhead (c)	Bruce DeHaney

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018 • 8:30 AM



Peace and Blessings from Missions and Outreach!

January was quite a busy month for our team! On Friday, January 12 we hosted a Vision Board Party which brought together ten women from our church and the surrounding neighborhood. Together we were led in meditation by our own Mensimah Shabazz, ate pizza and salad (balance), and fellowshiped with one another as we put our visions on paper. The next day a team made sandwiches at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, West Hartford in the morning with a vibrant bunch of Cub Scouts, and served the sandwiches for lunch at House of Bread, Downtown Hartford. Sunday Morning a delicious breakfast was served in Wesley Hall to forty people from the community. Monday, January 15 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day) we provided outdoor winter gear and hot chili and soup to anyone who needed. It was a

wonderful day with close to sixty people coming out to receive items or just to have a hearty lunch. Thank you to all who donated winter gear, Chili Weather Coat Drive would not have been possible without your generosity. The following Saturday a group of volunteers assisted Guetty Antiste (Antiste Eatery) in preparing and delivering sixty-four meals through the PAY IT FORWARD program. Church Family, we are blessed to be able to give to the community around us through *Missions and Outreach*. We thank you all for your prayers and support. You are appreciated.

We would like to thank everyone who volunteered with us in January:

Guetty Antiste, Christine Atkinson, Calina Barnum, Jackie Berg, James Leach, Elaina Mendis, Heather Muirhead, Tony Muirhead, Salvatore Pinna, Marcia Ramos, Ivan Reyes, Pastor Rhonda Taylor, Dawn Nurse, and Marcia Nurse.

The monthly Community Breakfast will take place February 11, 2018, starting at 8:30 am. We are asking for the congregation to donate bags of frozen potatoes, bottles of water, and ground coffee for the breakfast. If you would like to support us by volunteering please email adblount86@gmail.com.

UMC of Hartford serves 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 of 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: Wednesday, February 14, is Ash Wednesday



Jesus died for you. What will you do for Him?