

2017



# The Epistle

The Official Newsletter of United Methodist Church of Hartford

Be Rooted in God's Love

Grow in Grace

Bear Fruit of  
Justice and Peace

JANUARY



From the  
Pastor

## HOW IS IT WITH YOUR SOUL?

John Wesley was an 18<sup>th</sup> century Anglican priest and the founder of the United Methodist movement. Wesley traveled throughout England preaching the Gospel to people. He also traveled to the United States in an effort to preach and spread the Gospel. He formed societies as a means to help people mature in their faith in Jesus, through an emphasis on holiness of heart and life. These societies were divided into small groups called Bands. The small Wesley groups met on a weekly basis to pray, worship, and discuss the spiritual condition of their hearts in the form of the question, "How is it with your soul?" As we enter into a new year with God who has blessed us with a new opportunity to renew our relationship with Jesus Christ, this simple, but profound question is certainly a good starting point for deep reflection.

Every year God invites us to journey with Him toward deeper spiritual growth. God does this because He cares for us. God does this because He is tuning and pruning us into something greater, which is why Wesley's famous question is so potent. Each day when we rise from our sleep by God's grace, we are given another opportunity to ask ourselves, "How is it with my soul?" We are given another chance to ask for the forgiveness of our sins, to confess, and to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are given another door of opportunity to share God's love to our neighbors, not just by our words, but by our actions. When we experience a new day, a new year, we are given another opportunity to give our cares to the Lord because He cares for us.

As we journey with God in 2017, it is my hope that we draw closer to Christ and that we encourage others to do the same. And when life challenges come our way, we will stand on the promises of God because we truly believe nothing can separate us from the love of God.

I pray that great things will take place for you. I pray that God will heal those areas in your life that require a double portion of the Holy Spirit. I pray that you will seek the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul. I pray that as God prepare you for a new thing, that you will open your heart in obedience to Him. I pray that as our church leadership continues to serve the Kingdom of God, they will trust the Lord, their God. And if you should so blessed to see the end of the 2017 year and is asked the famous Wesley question "How is it with your soul?" you will be able to say "FANTASTIC".

*Peace,*  
*Pastor Rhonda*

## **Lectionary Readings for the Month of January 2017**

### **January 1 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas (Color: White)**

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148 (UM861); Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23  
Liturgist: Mary Cockram

### **January 6 - EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Color: White)**

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (UM795); Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

### **January 8 - BAPTISM of the LORD (Color: White)**

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29 (UM761); Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17  
Liturgist: John Brubaker

### **January 15 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the EPIPHANY (Color: Green) HUMAN RELATIONS SUNDAY**

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11 (UM774); 1Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42  
Liturgist: Katherine Lahti

### **January 22 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the EPIPHANY (Color: Green)**

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9 (UM 758); 1Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23  
Liturgist: Timothy Smith

### **January 29 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the EPIPHANY (Color: Green)**

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15 (UM747); 1Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12  
Liturgist: Marcia Ramos

## **THE SEARCH FOR A NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR CONTINUES**

The future of our Music Directorship is still under consideration and the Search Committee continues its work. In the meantime we enjoy the wonderful experience and musicianship of Cheryl Wadsworth who is the present interim Director, and the special music of the season continues to be sung by our dedicated choir members. The choir is made up of seasoned vocalists who love to sing and serve in the ministry of music. They welcome and encourage others who love to sing to join the choir for this ministry. The music program of our church provides the necessary connection of a full worship with the pastor. We worship fully through the WORD and the MUSIC. If you know of any qualified church organists/choir directors please alert John Brubaker, Sandra Ann Craig, Timothy Smith, Deanna Swanson or any other member of the Search Committee.



## **A CONNECTICUT DISTRICT MISSION PROJECT**

**Days for Girls International** is a grassroots, non-profit organization, creating a more dignified, humane and sustainable world for girls through advocacy, reproductive health awareness, education and sustainable feminine hygiene, because no girl should go without.

When girls stay in school, the poverty cycle can be broken! But, this is a huge challenge in some countries. Not having sanitary supplies means days without going to school, and forced isolation. Days for Girls gives days back to girls! Days that can change their lives and their communities!

The CT District is joining the New York Annual Conference this year to support the Days for Girls program. For \$20, one kit will provide sustainable feminine hygiene for one girl for 3 years! Please give as you are able!

Please make checks payable to the CT District and mail to:  
CT District Office, Attention: Dorothy, 20 Broadfield Road, Hamden, CT 06517  
Please note on lower left corner of the check: Days for Girls

## CONFIRMATION CLASS!

Confirmation class will begin on Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 11:30am. Youth and adults will gather in the youth room following our morning worship service. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Rhonda at the church office: (860) 523-5132.

### OUR NEXT COMMUNITY BREAKFAST IS ON JANUARY 8 - *DON'T MISS IT!*

The Breakfast Ministry would like to thank the congregation for their continued prayers and support. We pray to see you ALL at the next Community 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 share with us your favorite baked goods as a donation towards the breakfast. Please contact Ashley Blount if you are able to help in any way (860) 994-0100.



### SUNDAY, JAN. 8, 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."

## UMC INCLUSIVENESS COMMITTEE – REPORT 2016

In the spring of 2016 we formed an inclusiveness committee to explore our congregation's thinking on Official UMC policy regarding marriage and ordination of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ. For over 40 years our own New York Annual Conference has been advocating for a change in the Church rules which prohibit same sex marriage and ordination of openly gay persons. In light of our own conference's position on this matter, it makes sense to see if our congregation would register its solidarity with the conference or not.

A team of nine have been holding one-on-one conversations with our active members, and as of December, we have talked with half of our active members and have found that 85% of us are supportive of a change in the rules.

We hope to complete our conversations this coming spring, after which the committee will consider next steps. A biblical study of the issues perhaps. Ultimately, we are looking to draft a resolution for the congregation to consider.

In the spirit of Christ, who loved all without reservation or restriction;

I remain:

Steve Derby, committee coordinator

# Save the Dates: Connecticut District Resource Days

**Sunday, Jan. 29, 2017, 2:00 – 4:45 p.m.**  
**Prospect United Methodist Church**  
**99 Summer Street, Bristol, CT**

**Saturday, Feb. 4, 2017, 9:00 – 11:45 a.m.**  
**Golden Hill United Methodist Church**  
**210 Elm Street, Bridgeport, CT**

Our District Resource Days will feature a wide selection of workshops with a sampling of topics including church finance, prayer, small group leadership, conversations with our Muslim neighbors, SPR 101, mass incarceration, and much more. Watch for a full list of workshop topics and descriptions, along with information on how to pre-register. We will offer information, inspiration, and opportunities to interact with United Methodists from around our District. Please plan to attend.

Questions? Contact Maggie Carr, Chair, District Council on Ministries at [jcarr01@snet.net](mailto:jcarr01@snet.net); phone: 203-284-8278.



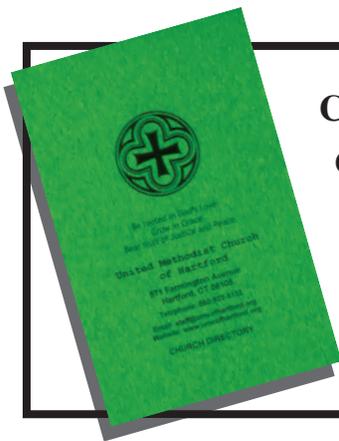
## COOMBS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Upon her death, Pat Coombs, a long-time member of our church, established a scholarship fund to help high school graduates of all ages to enhance their lives through continuing education. This fund is administered by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving through their scholarship program. There is a preference for members of our church, although others are considered for scholarship awards 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, you may obtain an application in the church office or download one from the

“info center” section of the church web site ([umcofhartford.org](http://umcofhartford.org)). The deadline for applications this year is March 3, 2017. If you have questions, contact Peter Antos ([peter@umcofhartford.org](mailto:peter@umcofhartford.org)).

## CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES NEEDED

Our church directory needs updating. If you are already listed there, please check to see if the information is accurate. Would you like a cell phone number there? How about your birthday (without the year you were born)? What about your email address? Or maybe you aren't listed there at all because you became involved after the last printing in 2015. Please get those changes/additions to Dianne Antos through the church office no later than the end of January 2017. Look for the new directory around the end of February.



## JANUARY CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS

### ANNIVERSARIES

1 - Robert Lange  
 Manuel Villegas (Connor) (c)  
 3 - Elaina Mendis

12 - Robert Drayton  
 14 - Dianne Antos

16 - Alan Vincent  
 21 - Donnalín Aggrey

26 - Agnes DeHaney  
 28 - Ava Nepaul

Steve Derby  
 & Gretchen (Vivier)  
 1/10/09

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



*Thank you to everyone who sent us  
Christmas cards this year. The  
growing list includes:*

- Dianne & Peter Antos
  - Dorey Boutwell
  - Val Bryan
- Harold & Sandra Ann Craig
  - Nancy & Walt Everett
  - The Farrer Family
  - Christina Guglietta
- The Honesty & Reality Group
  - Carolyn McGahie
  - George Morrill
  - Meletha Peters
  - Mrs. Paul Prevost
    - Don Ranger
    - Fay Taylor
  - The Tresner Family
  - The Welsh Family
  - Tempie Williams
- Sharon & Flora Wilmot

