

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

JULY



From the
Pastor

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

A few years ago, my girlfriend and I were driving to New York to attend an evening revival service at my home church. We were both looking forward to experiencing some awesome praise and worship, powerful praying and preaching. We agreed to take the Merritt to the Hutchinson Parkway. I volunteered to drive my girlfriend's vehicle. Traffic was moving smoothly as we headed to Queens, New York.

Upon signaling to merge onto the Hutchinson Parkway (Exit 15 off of the Merritt Parkway), one of the tires blew out. Mind you, I was on the far left side of the highway when this misfortune occurred. Cars were zooming by us as if they were part of a NASCAR racing tournament. As one who normally doesn't panic under pressure, I was able to drive to the far right and off to the side of the highway without bringing harm to anyone. WHEW! Now if you are familiar with the Hutchinson Parkway, you know that there are no street lights and the area is completely dark.

My girlfriend and I called my pastor to inform him that we wouldn't make it to the revival service and we called my girlfriend's parents who lived nearby in the Bronx. We also contacted AAA. To our surprise, we were told by AAA that they could not assist us because our car was located within New York State, but they would call a local towing company for us. So, my girlfriend and I sat there laughing, praying, and singing.

While sitting in the dark and waiting for the local towing company to come as well as my girlfriend's parents to arrive, she and I noticed the darkness around us. Despite our current situation, we were both able to see God in the dark and feel His calming presence.

I thought of this story as I was reading my June 5 morning devotional from The Upper Room Disciplines 2017, based on Genesis 1:1-30. God does not eliminate darkness. It remains a part of the created order.

As Christians, we often speak of God's light shining into the dark places of our circumstances and world, and in the places to expose injustices, or to share light to the human need. While this is true about God's light, we, if not careful, can miss valuable lessons of God's grace if we are scared of the dark. Before a flower can bloom into its fullness, seeds have to be planted in damp soil under the earth where there is no light. Once exposed to the sunlight, little buds begin and the flower continues to grow and serves its purpose for God, but not until it has spent sometime in the dark.

I've learned to find new meaning and understanding about darkness in connection to my personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with others. Running away from darkness will not bring peace. Darkness does not always equate to a lack of faith. I've become fully aware that God is with us in the dark. We just need to remain calm long enough to experience His holy and awesome presence. I've also learned that acknowledging darkness is part of our Christian life and caring for people who are in the midst of uncertain places in their lives is also part of what it means to trust God and to be there for one another, even if we occasionally find ourselves in the dark.

"Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you."
Psalm 139:12

Peace,
Pastor Rhonda

Lectionary Readings for the Month of July 2017

July 2 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13 (UM746); Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42
Liturgist: Marcia Ramos

July 9 – 5th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67; Psalm 45:10-17; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
Liturgist: Beverley Nepaul

July 16 – 6th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112 (UM840); Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
Liturgist: John Brubaker

July 23 – 7th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 28:10-19; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 (UM854); Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
Liturgist: Guetty Antiste

July 30 – 8th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11, 45 (UM828); Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
Liturgist: Mary Cockram

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

JULY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

6 - Stephen Derby
12 - Markus Gabbidon (Mathews) (c)

19 - Ethan Atkinson (c)
Owen Atkinson (c)
28 - Rae Thompson

29 - Carol Fisher
31 - Sharon Kirton

ANNIVERSARIES

Ava Nepaul & Jason Siegal - 7/4/99
Rae & Eddie Thompson - 7/5

THE COMMUNITY MINISTRY HAS BEEN SERVING BREAKFAST FOR OVER A YEAR! OUR NEXT COMMUNITY BREAKFAST IS JULY 9 - *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, JULY 9 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."

Congratulations to the Class of 2017

Rebecca Corrigan

Graduating from 8th grade at Annie Fisher STEM Magnet School, and will be going to the University High School of Science and Engineering in the fall.

Olivia C. Craig

Graduating from William Hall High School. Member of the National Honor Society. Will be attending Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York, majoring in dance. Recipient of a Coombs Scholarship.

Adam Muirhead

Graduating from Windsor High School, and will be attending the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

We're so proud of all our graduates!

WISHING YOU A SUMMER FULL OF BLESSINGS!