



The Epistle

*Be Rooted in God's Love
Grow in Grace
Bear Fruit of
Justice and Peace*

The Official Newsletter of United Methodist Church of Hartford

MAY 2015



Pastor's Corner

It has been over a year since my mother passed away. She departed this earth and into the arms of God on April 16, 2014. I can still remember giving the eulogy at her home going service on April 26 as if it were yesterday. As family and friends gathered to pay tribute to my beloved mom, we sang her favorite hymns and read her favorite scriptures.

There were moments of laughter and tears as her siblings shared their favorite moments about their beloved sister. I also remember my father kneeling down at the coffin, taking a final look at his beloved wife, and saying to her, "I will see you soon".

I am forever grateful to Jesus and my family for giving my mother such a beautiful sendoff. There was no drama amongst the family and everyone offered a helping hand. My mother would have been proud of her family for handling such a sad occasion in the most dignified manner. Kudos to the Beckwith and Gravely families!

With mom in the arms of the Lord and surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, the Lord gave me the strength to give the message, "*Living with No Regrets*" at her service. The message not only blessed the people, but also challenged them to live differently.

My hope is that when my time here on earth is complete, I will have lived with no regrets. No regrets because I loved all the people God placed in my path. No regrets because I offered a helping hand to someone in need. No regrets because I prayed for others as well as myself. No regrets because I confessed all of my sins to my Savior and asked for forgiveness. No regrets because I have finally forgiven myself for all the wrong I have done. No regrets because I offered a kind word to someone who was about to give up. No regrets because I used my God given gifts and talents to welcome others as Christ welcomed me, and so on...

May 10 is Mothers Day. Although my mom is no longer physically here with me and my earthly family, her memories are forever etched into our memory and hearts. If my mother were to give a "news" interview from heaven, she would tell the world, "Rhonda was an excellent daughter". It is because of those words I am able to live with no regrets.

You may have done something you now regret. No need to worry. God is a forgiving God. His mercies never fail. They are new every morning. You can let go of all the wrongs you've done. God will give you a clean slate. Therefore, be encouraged and live with no regrets as you forget what lies behind (the past) and strain forward (the hope) to what lies ahead. For when you live with no regrets, you can press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:12-16).

Peace, Pastor Rhonda

Lectionary Readings for the Month of May

May 3 - 5th Sunday of Easter (Color: White)

Acts 8:26-40 † Psalm 22:25-31 † 1John 4:7-21 † John 15:1-8

May 10 - Festival of the Christian Home / Mothers Day (Color: White)

Acts 10:44-48 † Psalm 98 † 1John 5:1-6 † John 15:9-17

May 17 - Ascension Sunday (Color: White)

Acts 1:1-11 † Psalm 47 † Ephesians 1:15-23 † Luke 24:44-53

May 24 - Pentecost Sunday (Color: Red)

Acts 2:1-21 † Psalm 104:24-34, 35b † Romans 8:22-27 † John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 31 - Trinity Sunday (White) / Peace with Justice Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8 † Psalm 29 † Romans 8:12-17 † John 3:1-7

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

Spring has sprung! Now that Holy Week is behind us and we are basking in the joy of Easter, let's take a quick look back at what the music ministry accomplished in the last few weeks.

We were joined during Holy Week by several guest violinists, colleagues of mine from Yale: Hye Jin Koh (Good Friday), and Seul-A Lee and Xi Liao (Easter). Many in the congregation expressed their appreciation for their playing, and these musicians told me they were just as moved by their participation in our worship services. Last, but not least, the choir should be congratulated for their hard work in preparing and performing varied and moving choral works for Holy Week services.



Perhaps the biggest surprise of my experience in church music was the power outage on Easter Sunday. I had been gearing up for a big pipe organ bonanza to make up for using piano throughout Lent, but God had other plans. Disappointed, however, I was not! The stillness of the sanctuary that morning (those ceiling fans do make quite a bit of ambient noise, if you've never noticed) let our voices resound with even more joy and power. The Spirit was strong, and worship went on without a hitch.

As May inches closer, we look forward to the Brightest and Best community event on May 9. This year's celebration centers on Peace and the Arts. A canonic hymn (#376 in our hymnal), "Dona nobis pacem," Latin for "Grant us peace," will be a musical thread connecting the numbers presented by the choral and instrumental ensembles of Noah Webster school and our church. Although the event celebrates all the arts, it is a special time to acknowledge the universal power of music to help us relate to each other. We look forward to spreading some "good vibrations" with you.

Yours in worship and music,
Stephen

2015 *A Festival of Music & Story* **2015**
Brightest and Best
COMMUNITY • CHURCH • SCHOOL

Come Enjoy our new Expanded Format!

Saturday, May 9, 2015

Noah Webster Microsociety Magnet School

Whitney St. between Farmington Ave. and Cone St.

(Parking available in the Bank of America lot)

From 2:00 – 4:00 pm

A lively street festival with food booths, poetry & art displays, crafts, face painting and MORE! See how church, school, church & community are working together.

From 4:00 – 5:00 pm

Move inside for a festival of story & song! Enjoy music from the Advanced String Orchestra and a chorus from Noah Webster School, along with the United Methodist Church of Hartford Chancel Choir. Hear stories & poems on the theme of peace. Purchase flowers for Mother's Day.

WHY? To support our community working together for the good of the city, the neighborhood, its residents & its children. To encourage joining together in the sanctuary of our community as we celebrate "peace through the arts."

LAUNCHING "THE EPISTLE" VIA EMAIL

The expected date for the email launch of our newsletter, **The Epistle**, is with the June edition. If you have requested to get your newsletter by email, it will come as a pdf attachment to an email entitled Monthly Newsletter. The sender address will be staff@umcofhartford.org. The plan is also to send an email out several weeks prior to the launch to test correctness of email addresses. For those requesting postal delivery of The Epistle, nothing changes. (You can always sign up for email delivery by sending a message to dianne@umcofhartford.org)

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE DATE CHANGE

Beginning immediately, all articles for the monthly newsletter, The Epistle, must be submitted by the first Sunday of the month **BEFORE** it must run. For example, if the information is for something happening in July, the article needs to be in by the first Sunday in June. All articles should be sent to swansongraphics@gmail.com, or you can hand deliver them to John Swanson at church on Sundays.

THE MAGIC BANK ACCOUNT

Imagine that you had won the following *PRIZE* in a contest: Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules...

The set of rules:

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "Game Over!". It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do? You would buy anything and everything you wanted, right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right? You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you would know it would be replenished in the morning, right?

ACTUALLY, this GAME is REAL ...

Shocked? YES! Each of us is already a winner of this *PRIZE*. We just can't seem to see it. The PRIZE is *TIME*...

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is Not credited to us.
3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
4. Yesterday is forever gone.
5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time *WITHOUT WARNING*...

SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars. Think about it and remember to enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think. So take care of yourself, be happy, love deeply and enjoy life!

Here's wishing you a wonderful and beautiful day. Start "spending"

"DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT GROWING OLD!" SOME PEOPLE DON'T GET THE PRIVILEGE!

The author is not known. It was found in the billfold of Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant of Ala-

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN MEETING TO BE HELD ON MAY 5

Potluck Supper at 6:30pm • Business at 7:15pm • Program at 7:45pm

PROGRAM TITLE: "THE CHRISTIAN CONSUMER: LIVING ETHICALLY IN A MATERIAL WORLD" Led by Beverley Nepaul

Consumption is an ethical issue because it has an impact on all different levels - self, community, world, etc. Program hopes to explore how Christian tradition can give us wisdom, how historical texts add context and to ask questions such as:

What does God intend for humans in their interaction with the material world?

What is creation, and what are humans to do with it?

How are humans to relate well to one another concerning the proper use of the material conditions of life?

Come with your passion, your questions, and your desire to challenge some of our consumption habits relative to clothing, eating animals, other food choices, routine transportation, and household energy.

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

If you will be attending please call the office (860-523-5132) today!

ANNUAL UMW "QUIET DAY" SCHEDULED FOR MAY 16

Saturday May 16, 2015 is "Quiet Day". You may ask what is "Quiet Day"? It's a day when the Craig family opens up its rural home to **ALL THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH**. The day can be whatever you want it to be. You can visit with your church family, read a book, meditate, pray, have a nap, or take a walk in the woods and meadows. You will be fed Sandra Ann's awesome cooking. It is always a very refreshing experience for the body and soul.

Date: Saturday, May 16, 2015 • Time: 10am-7pm

Address: 119 Ashley Road, Winchester Center, CT

Cost: \$5.00

Call the church office at 860-523-5132 by May 11 to RSVP and if you need transportation. *Hope to see you there!*

☼ ☼ ☼ MAY CELEBRATIONS ☆ ☼ ☼ ☼			
BIRTHDAYS			ANNIVERSARIES
3 - Willis Peters, Jr.	23 - John Swanson	28 - Annette Bacon	Edith & Jim Tresner 5/31/80
9 - Jocelyn Cudjoe	25 - John Bacon	Julie Wacht	
11 - Evelyn Todd	Robert Cudjoe	29 - Jess Bracket	
13 - Eugene Lehrer	27 - Egya Aggrey	30 - Erin Connor	
15 - George Morrill	Jessica Nix		
16 - Aisha Connor (c)	Doris Turner		