

2016



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

OCTOBER



From the
Pastor

LOCKED OUT

It was midnight, when my friend/colleague and I finally arrived at JFK, following a two hour delay at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. I appreciated the late hour; the crowds were minimal and the noise volume was down. After picking up our luggage from baggage claim, we were greeted by my friend's husband. With our luggage packed in the car, we were off to Connecticut. Thankfully, traffic to Bridgeport was not too bad. We arrived at my friend's residence around 1:45am. Following a quick stop at the restroom, I was on my way to Hartford. It was approximately 2:40am when I arrived home. As I gathered up all of my items along with my suitcase, I remembered that my house key was in the pocketbook that I had packed away in my suitcase, which had a security lock.

Quietly, I said to myself, "No problem; let me use the key to open up the security lock". This is where the story gets interesting. THE KEY DID NOT WORK! Apparently, the lock was damaged during the transporting of my suitcase between airports. I was fully stunned and locked out of my house, when my car alarm went off, and you can just imagine how loud a car alarm can be to the ears, especially at three in the morning.

Remaining calm, I began to pray and think, "Ok, Ms. Rhonda what are you going to do?" Well, the first thing I did was drive to a gas station to see if the attendant had a pair of pliers. No luck. The second light bulb came on, "Go to a fire or police department. Surely, somebody would have a pair of pliers or something comparable." I drove to West Hartford, and to my surprise, the police department was right next door to the fire department. "Great," I said!

With a sigh of relief, I made my way to the police department only to have my bubble burst. The police department was closed! How strange for a police department to be closed. But, hey, the fire department was right next door. Surely, someone would be there. Nope, the fire department was also closed. Now it was 3:20am in the morning and I was still locked out of my house.

Heading back to my car, I began to pray more fervently. Then the third light bulb came on, which sealed this situation in the Trinity for me. The Holy Spirit quietly spoke to me and said, "Go to the 24-Hour CVS on New Britain Avenue." So I did just that! To my relief, I was able to purchase a pair of pliers. I drove back home and was able to wiggle the lock, open up my suitcase, retrieve my house keys, and enter my house safe and sound.

This experience caused me to think about the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Despite our sinful nature, God loves us so much that it is His desire that none of us should perish or be locked out from His Kingdom. Therefore, He gave us Jesus, who provided an opening for us to come back home to God.

I'm grateful that God the Father/Mother, God the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit always gives us hope in the midst of darkness, in the midst of us being "locked out". *"Our Lord hems us in, behind and before; He lays His hands upon us. Where can we go from the Lord's Spirit? Where can we flee from His presence? If we go to the heavens, the Lord is there; if we make our bed in the depths, the Lord is there. If we are locked out of our house, the Lord is right there. Even the darkness, even the dark morning hours are not dark to the Lord, for night will shine like the day."* (Psalm 139, Adapted)

Truly thankful that God covered and protected me under the shadow of His wings, even in the midnight hour...

Peace,
Pastor Rhonda

Lectionary Readings for the Month of October 2016

October 2 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

World Communion Sunday

Lamentations 1:1-6; Psalm 137 (UM852); 2Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10

Liturgist: Timothy Smith

October 9 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7; Psalm 66:1-12; 2Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

Liturgist: Levar Johnson

October 16- 22nd Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Laity Sunday

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 119:97-104; 2Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8

Liturgist: Lay Servants

October 23 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

Joel 2:23-32; Psalm 65 (UM789); 2Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

Liturgist: Marcia & Elle Ramos

October 30 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)

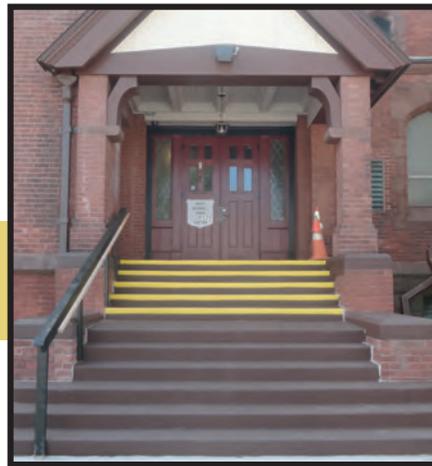
Reformation Sunday

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm 119:137-144 (UM840); 2Thessalonians 1:4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-10

Liturgist: Timothy Smith



*New
Parsonage
Windows*



*New
South Whitney
Stairs*

2016 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN IS OFF TO A GOOD START

The capital campaign that is underway to raise funds to pay for the new South Whitney Street entrance stairs, new parsonage windows, and parsonage walkways is off to a very encouraging start. As of mid-September thirteen contributions of \$6,450 have been made. This is a great beginning and we thank God for the generosity of those who have contributed. However it is only about 30% of the \$22,000 cost of these three essential repairs. Two of the contributors to the campaign were Walter and Nancy Everett, our beloved former pastor and his wife. In the note that accompanied their contribution Nancy and Walt wrote: "We know that these repairs had to be made and are so glad the UMC of Hartford is exercising good stewardship of the property. We had a wonderful 12 years there and pray God's continuing blessing for you." Please consider how God's grace has blessed you in your life. Be a good steward of the property that God has blessed us to use for our ministries by making a capital contribution before the end of the year.

CHURCH BUDGET NEEDS MORE SUPPORT

The church budget is running a deficit. Contributions and other income to the church budget are less than expenses as of the end of August. **Income** attributable to the January through August period **was \$151,700** while **expenses were \$159,400, a difference of \$7,700**. We had a great stewardship campaign last year with a number of contributors stepping up to tithing, pledging to contribute at least 10% of their income, and most of those who did are following through on that commitment. We've also been blessed to receive about \$2,600 in additional special tithing gifts beyond pledged amounts. However a few contributors have not been giving at or near their pledged amount, special event income did not meet expectations, and we still need about \$2,300 in additional special tithing gifts to reach the budgeted amount. Fortunately expenses are running about \$3,000 less than the budgeted amount which partially offsets the shortfall.

We need your help:

- If you are behind on your pledge and have the ability to catch up, please do so.
- If you are fortunate enough to come into some extra money, please prayerfully consider tithing 10% or more of it to the church as a special tithe contribution.
- If you are up to date with your pledge and have the ability to give more, please consider doing so.

We give as a response to the blessings God has bestowed on us. Please respond to God's grace in your life by giving generously to our church.

UMC OF HARTFORD CHARGE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2017 AT 10:00 AM

We are asking for all ministries and committees to please start gathering information for our conference booklet. To obtain conference forms, please go to the New York Annual Conference website: www.nyac.com. On the right side of screen under "Resource", please select the "Conference Forms and Policies" tab. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the church office.

What is a Charge Conference?

The charge conference is the basic governing body of each United Methodist local church and is composed of all members of the church council. The charge conference must meet at least once per year.

What Does the Charge Conference Do?

Directs the work of the church and gives general oversight to the church council
Reviews and evaluates the mission and ministry of the church
Sets salaries for the pastor and staff
Elects the members of the church council, including Trustees
Recommends candidates for ordained ministry

What are the Primary Responsibilities of the Charge Conference?

Some of the responsibilities of the charge conference include:

Reviewing and evaluating the total mission and ministry of the church, receiving reports, adopting objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church.

Establishing a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any or all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, except where otherwise mandated. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same office.

Examining and recommending candidates for licensed or ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least one year; whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and call to the ministry clearly establish them as candidates; and who have met the educational requirements.

Inquiring annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of the Lay Servants and Certified Lay Ministers related to the charge and recommending to the district and/or conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries those persons who have met the standards set forth for a local church lay servant and/or for certified lay servant and/or for certified lay minister.

Receiving reports annually on all local church organized United Methodist Volunteer In Mission (UMVIM) teams, and the total number of local church participants in any UMVIM team, and forwarding the combined report to the annual conference and the general church through the regular annual local church statistical report.

Receiving and acting on the annual report from the pastor or membership chair concerning the membership.

WHAT IS THIS?



Maybe you have seen some of our church members using one during the worship service. It is called a hearing assist device. Plugged into a small portable radio receiver, this ear piece allows the user to better hear the spoken word over our sound system. Currently we have four such devices available for use. Speak with Peter Antos before a Sunday service to learn more about this device, or to get one to try. They are located in the sacristy.

In keeping with being a welcoming congregation for those with physical challenges, these devices were purchased and donated by the Living Endowment Fund committee.

The Living Endowment Fund was established in 1974 by the Trustees to receive and invest gifts of \$100 or more, given during one's lifetime. Contributors to this Fund meet annually to recommend the use of the income. In this way, contributors can participate in a meaningful endowment program while they are alive. Upon the death of a contributor (or moving from this church), his or her contributions to the Fund are transferred to the Church's permanent endowment fund. Gifts to the Living Endowment Fund are deductible for income tax purposes.

UMC OF HARTFORD JOINS OTHER CHURCHES IN RESETTLING SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY



When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19: 33-34)

Our church is working with a group called Welcome to Connecticut (WTCT) comprised of the Universalist Church of West Hartford, the First Presbyterian Church of Hartford, and UMC of Hartford to resettle a Syrian refugee family. This is the Al Masri family, formerly of Homs, Syria. The Al Masris are a family of five; Khaled, the father, Rasha, the mother, their eight year old daughter, Ran, and five-year old twin boys, Abdullah and Abdul-Rhaman.

The family arrived in the United States on June 7th and was resettled in the Hartford area by our group of churches working with Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS). Weeks of preparation led up to their arrival so that they could immediately occupy their new home, a three-bedroom apartment on Farmington Avenue in West Hartford, just a short distance from our church. Fortunately the Universalist Church had raised a significant amount to support the family during their initial period in the country so we were not asked to contribute financially, although some members of our church have worked in providing non-financial supports to the family.

The children are enrolled in school in West Hartford and Khaled and Rasha, who did not speak any English upon their arrival, have been busy learning our language and looking for work. Khaled was an auto mechanic in Syria, but he does not have the technical skill set to work in that occupation in the United States. He has therefore had difficulty finding employment and it is likely that the family will need some ongoing support from our sponsoring churches beyond the initial six-month period originally envisioned. Please consider making a donation to our refugee resettlement ministry.



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@umcohartford.org).

OUR NEXT COMMUNITY BREAKFAST IS ON OCTOBER 9 - *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, OCT. 9, 2016 • 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."



JOIN US FOR LAITY SUNDAY ON OCTOBER 16

Laity Sunday is October 16, 2016 throughout the United Methodist Church. This year's theme for Laity Sunday, "Disciples Called to Action: Living Vital Worship," calls us to see worship not as passive spectators, but as active participants. Indeed, worship is something that we live! These scripture references for Laity Sunday unfold worship in several different ways:

- Worship as Love: Matthew 22:37-39 (The Great Commandment—to put love of God and neighbor above all else)
- Worship as Discipline: Matthew 16:24 (The Great Commitment—to embody God's love individually)
- Worship as Justice: Micah 6:8 (The Great Requirement—to live God's love through our actions)
- Worship as Evangelism: Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission—to go and take God's love into the world)

(Source: www.umcdiscipleship.org)

Join us on October 16 as we praise our Savior, Jesus Christ in worship and in Christian Discipleship!

UMW NEWS

CT DISTRICT UMW FALL GATHERING WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2016

at Mary Taylor UMC, Milford CT. The program is *'Racial Justice: Empowering Women'*.

Registration is necessary and the deadline is October 1, 2016.

Please see the UMW bulletin board for a copy of the registration form.



THE NOVEMBER UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S GATHERING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2016.

"Climate Justice – A Call to Hope and Action"

is one of the studies from Mission U this year. What is Climate Justice? Is there a biblical model of it? So, what about Climate Injustice? How do we, as God's people, foster the necessary changes? Together we will delve into these questions...

Part of our response will be our 2017 *Pledge Commitment Service* during the program.

SUPPER at 6:30PM • MEETING at 7:15PM • PROGRAM at 7:45PM

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!

☀ ☀ OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS ☀ ☀

BIRTHDAYS

8 - Alyssa Mikkelson (c)
Cheyenne Starling (c)

9 - Vladimir Caso (c)
Eli Williams
11 - Philip Dumont (c)
Edith Tresner

19 - Fay Taylor
24 - Kathryn Mikkelson
31 - Marcia Ramos

UNITED METHODIST WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 2

This is a very special Sunday so please give generously. Your gift makes World Communion Sunday Scholarships possible for graduate national and international students. Your decision to give enables students from all over the world to change the world for the better. Learn more and give online: www.umciving.org/givewcs.

PASTORAL “ONE-ON-ONE” CONVERSATIONS CONTINUE

As the congregation and Pastor continue to journey with one another in ministry, she would love to give each of you the opportunity, to have a sacred, and confidential, one-on-one conversation with her to reflect on your personal faith journey; as well as share each other’s hopes and dreams as disciples of Christ. People who have already had their meeting with Pastor have described the experience as “rewarding”, “very positive”, “enlightening self-examination”, “non-confrontational”, and “nothing to be afraid of”. If you would like to take advantage of this special opportunity please add your name to the list, found in the binder, under the Spiritual Gifts bulletin board.

DONATE ONLINE

A number of our members have asked if they could donate to the church electronically. It is now possible to contribute directly through our church web page (www.umcofhartford.org). To do so, go to the web page and click on the “Make a Secure Donation” button in the “Contact Us” area of the Home Page. Using a credit card or PayPal account, you can make one-time or monthly donations. There is a place on the donate page to let us know what your contribution is for...PayPal provides processing, bookkeeping and security for these transactions, and in return charges us 2.2% plus \$0.30 per transaction. So, if you wish to take advantage of electronic donations, consider increasing your contribution to cover this transaction fee....If you have questions, please speak to Peter Antos.

“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.

