



# The Church Bell

The Federated Church of Christ  
Brooklyn, CT



## December 2015

**Sunday Worship**  
**Sunday School**  
10:00 AM

**New Office Hours**  
Tue 1 PM - 5 PM;  
Thu 1 PM - 3 PM;  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed 1 - 5

### *Notes from Pastor Mary*

**Advent**, meaning “to come”, marks the beginning of the Church year. Advent reminds us as Christians that we live in accordance with not one, but two, calendars. While the Gregorian Calendar puts the New Year on January 1st, the church calendar starts over while the secular calendar is winding down. Advent slows us down. In the church, we do not join with our wider culture in Black Friday sales and Christmas shopping rushes. Advent bids us to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, remembering his first coming as a newborn child, and waiting expectantly for the second coming.

This Advent, I am also finding myself slowed down by the news headlines reporting on the darkness in the world... terror, earthquakes, floods, famines, violence, human suffering, creation suffering. It is an awful clash of stories: Advent hope and peace, joy and love with the wailings of families and communities torn apart by violence, deaths of hundreds of innocent people at the hands of a few, the perversion of religion and blasphemous use of the name of God/ Allah/ YHWH to defend and carry out violent acts.

In the midst of a grief-stricken world, it is time in the church to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world. How ironic - and yet how like God - to come in such a weak and vulnerable way. Rather than God coming down in full glory with power and might to smite enemies, God’s entrance into our world came as a baby’s newborn wailing cry. The cries of an infant God are an answer to the cries around the world for hope and peace.

I rather like this image of a crying God. A God who is vulnerable, completely dependent on grown ups’ attention and care in order to grow up safely and then change the world. That puts a lot of responsibility on us, to care for God as though God were our own child. Maybe this is the shift we need, to keep us from sinking into despair or cynicism, putting up walls to keep some out *continues*

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Articles 18th each month to:

ChurchBell@  
FCCBrooklynCT.org

Pastor: Rev. Mary L. Apicella  
Christian Education Director: Therese Carpentier

Worship Accompanist: David Gonzalez  
Secretary: Carrie Taylor

## Notes from Pastor Mary (continued)

and others in, to just give up believing and trying. The idea of our Creator also being created and birthed into the world, needing us and relying on us to make the world safe and peaceful, is compelling. We all know, either by experience or witnessing the reaction of adults to the cries of a baby. What do they need? Does something hurt? Are they hungry? Do they just need to cry? Why don't they stop?! I'm so tired..."

The tears of children grab our attention - we shift our focus and attention, even if the child isn't biologically related, and attune ourselves to how the child will be comforted. And sometimes, it is exhausting to continue to care. When our 24/7 news cycles and instant access mean we know about bombings in Beirut, earthquakes in Mexico, and acts of terrorism time zones away are reported like breaking news, so that emotionally it feels like it's happening to us, I sometimes find myself just sitting, numb; too sad and shocked to cry; wondering whether I'm getting used to such tragedy and violence being part of my day, and how in the world I'm supposed to pray when I half expect some other tragedy to happen while I'm in mid-prayer.

After the violence in Paris, France, a local news reporter's interview with a father and his son got picked up by the international press. The son, around 5 or 6 years old, had lots of questions about why so many bad things had happened and how could

they protect themselves from so many guns. The father responded, look at the flowers. Flowers are how we respond to the guns - and lighting candles to remember the people who are gone. Everyone putting flowers outside meant that hope and beauty and peace was still alive. The boy was comforted, and both the father and reporter had tears in their eyes. Though flowers and candles cannot literally protect us from bullets and violence, they do speak to something deep within each of us - the response to comfort and wipe away the tears of others, and to keep the light burning brightly to shine through the darkness.

This Advent, Jesus as the Light of the world is the Light that calls us to tend the spark that each of us holds as beloved children of God, and bids us to hold on to joy, hope, courage, peace, grace, and love. This is how the darkness is overcome: one light, one flower, one resolution to love, at a time.

Holding you all in the light.

*Pastor Mary*

## **KBIC**

The Killingly Brooklyn Interfaith Council had its November meeting on Wednesday the 18th at Our Lady of LaSalette in Brooklyn. Sixteen members were in attendance from eleven different faith communities.

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**KBIC** (continued)

St John's Women's retreat the first weekend in November went well. Women from several churches participated. The group attended the Pilgrim Pine Center in New Hampshire.

Kat Vogt from Westfield reported on the very successful Roast Pork Supper on Saturday, November 7th at St Joe's in Dayville. Kat and her husband did the food prep along with Barb Schreier who made the apple sauce. Dozens of cakes, pies, cookies, brownies were prepared by all the faith communities for desert. Dragonfly Diversion added the musical background for the event. As part of the two dozen volunteers, nine children assisted clearing plates and distributing desserts. The Federated lent out its china plates and silverware to lend a little class to the event. After expenses over \$1500 was raised for the Fuel Bank. One member who has been organizing such events for forty years said it was the best he had ever seen. For Naomi, it was her first church supper... Everyone agrees that this should become an annual event.

The Temple has made two donations to KBIC, one of which was to honor Naomi.

The final CROP Walk figures are in. This year we raised \$4,322, which will be more than enough to buy the turkeys for next year's Thanksgiving distribution through the Food Bank and St James. This year's turkeys will

be purchased with \$1,000 from the 25% we got back from the CROP Walk last year. The Federated Church of Christ won the "Hole in the Shoe" award again this year for the most money raised (over \$1500 of the total).

Pastor Gregg Thomas, who is retiring in January, took the opportunity to note that never in his decades long ministry had he seen such camaraderie, common purpose, or such dedication to a common call as he has enjoyed with KBIC.

The Fuel Bank reported ten more household helped since our last meeting in October. A solicitation letter that went out a couple of weeks ago has netted another \$360 so far. With the proceeds from the Supper, the Fuel Bank has close to \$4,000 as we get ready for the winter of 2015-16. The State's Operation Fuel program, administered by Barb Schreier will start on November 29th. This program provides assistance for electric and gas bills.

Earl noted that another local group which meets monthly to discuss local service provision is not clear on the role of the Fuel Bank. He will attend their next meeting to explain its operation.

There was a presentation by the Native Community at QVCC on the 17th and 18th entitled, "What's The Big Deal" which we missed.

*continues*

**KBIC** (continued)

It raised the question about greater sensitivity to the use of pejorative native American terms used by local and national sports teams. (i.e. The Killingly Redmen)

The Prescription Assistance program at Big Y pharmacy remains underutilized. Earl will be discussing it with the other caregivers' group along with the Fuel Bank operation.

The food donations for the Thanksgiving distribution should be brought to St James on the 22nd. (750 pounds of potatoes, 400 cranberry sauce, 400 stuffings, etc...)

On Tuesday evening, November 24th at 7:00pm, Temple Beth Israel and The Federated Church of Christ celebrated the 60th anniversary of their joint Interfaith service at the Temple in Danielson. The Reverend Paulette Harwood will preside. The son of a founder of the event will be coming in to mark the anniversary. This will be a truly special event in the lives of our two faith communities. The whole community is welcome.

Pastor Jon discussed the second annual "Luminary Night" in Danielson which will feature thousands of luminaries being lit around Davis Park, a bon fire, a petting zoo and activities for kids and families provided by member churches. (We will have a table as we did last year) Pastor Jon will welcome helpers to set up beginning at 11:00 that morning. The candles

will be lit at 3:30pm. Sue Cory from Trinity is working with WalMart to try to get 500 hand warmers donated to distribute as hand outs at the KBIC table.

On Wednesday, the 18th, Westfield and St John's coordinated a Peace Vigil at Davis Park to honor the people lost in the Paris terror attacks and the millions of other victims of the Syrian War. Jon noted that simply observing a Vigil like this is holy and sacred work. People, he noted, are desperate for hope.

Pastor Gregg is working on a statement on the troubles that would come out from KBIC.

Among the many bazaars and cookie sales, Sue said that there will be a Carol Sing in the old Trinity Church on Church Street on December 27th. The time was not indicated, but it will probably be in the afternoon as they have no electricity in the building.

At Pastor Gregg's suggestion, the Interfaith Council will be looking into the feasibility of sponsoring a Syrian family in our area.

Events: Westfield will hold its Victorian Christmas at 7:00pm the first three Sundays of December.

- St Joseph's will hold its Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 5th from 9:00 to 2:00pm.
- The Federated Church of Christ will hold its Sugar Plum Fair on Saturday, Dec. 5th from 9:00 to 12:00

*continues (really!)*

## **KBIC** (continued)

- Danielson Methodist will hold its Snowflake Bazaar on Dec. 4th from 4:00 to 8:00 and on the 5th from 9:00 to 12:00.
- Our Lady of LaSalette will be selling Christmas cookies on December 19th from 9:00 to 2:00.
- On Dec. 21st, several churches will be commemorating National Homeless Day in Davis Park to honor those homeless who have died over the past year.
- The 21st is the longest night of the year. More information on the time will be forthcoming.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 16th at Westfield, and will be a pot luck honoring Pastor Gregg Thomas and his wife Cheryl as they prepare to retire to South Carolina. His last service at Cornerstone Baptist will be the first Sunday in January.

~ *Earl McWilliams*

## **Deacons**

The turkey is gone and Advent is upon us. The familiar yet mysterious unfolding of the coming of Christ will be guiding our worship. Instead of transforming our sanctuary on the first Sunday of advent, each week we will be adding decorations in preparation of the coming of Christ. Everyone is invited to join in the Moravian Christmas Lovefeast Saturday, December 12 at 7pm.

Note the Christmas Eve celebration is also at 7pm.

In the past month the Deacon's have assisted Pastor Mary in the preparation for the baptism of Skylee Ann Lambert and Madison Ennis. We Shared the wonder of new life and hope with the families of these new members of God's family. We further assisted Pastor Mary with her guidance by leading worship on Nov 15th.

We are updating our contact list in preparation for weather induced cancellations. That is code for the white stuff that blanketed our world last winter. Please check the list to be sure your preferred contact number is correct. We are also checking on emails so the Bell and other updates are getting to you. We want to know who prefers a paper copy of the bell instead of receiving it online.

The Deacon's continue their on going care about our church family members. Please let us know of folks that need a call, visit and or prayers.

For the Deacons,

*Mary Ann Thomen*

## **New Secretary**

Linda Huber has retired, and we all wish her well. Please Welcome **Carrie Taylor!** Carrie's office hours will be Tuesdays 1:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Thursdays 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM and the second and fourth Wednesdays from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM.

## Christian Education

The holiday season is upon us, let us prepare the way for Jesus to come into our hearts. We have been busy in Sunday School with our new curriculum. The children seem to like it! We will be adopting a family again this year so please be on the look out for the tree in the front foyer of the Church with the tags on it. Let us help make a family enjoy the holidays more.

If anyone has any mason jars to donate for our table at the Sugar Plum



Fair it would be greatly appreciated. We are making some special baking jars and the purchase of these jars will benefit our adopt-a-family.

Also, we are planning a special Coffee Hour Event on Sunday, December 20th called "The Miracle of Jesus." Mark your calendars for that date! Bring a friend or extra family members to enjoy the journey through the time of the birth of our Savior. We will provide you with a map to help you on your journey through all the stations. Come enjoy with us!

May God's blessings be upon you all this wonderful Advent and Christmas season.

Yours In Christ

~ Therese H. Carpentier

## Upcoming Events

- **Sugar Plum Fair** - December 5.
- **Moravian Love Feast** - December 12 at 7:00 PM
- **Committee Reports** *due* in the Church Office by 12/31/2015.

## Partyline

It was great to see Paul Fitze back in church on November 16th. At the beginning of November Paul had surgery and getting back to normal.

Jan Geer had was laid up in November due to a retina problem. Happily she is just about back to normal now.

Shirley Leach is home once more. Her son and daughter, Maggie have been spending as much time as possible with her as she transitions back to her house.

On Saturday, October 24th Lori Bailey and Paul Rajchel were married in a lovely ceremony in our sanctuary, followed by a reception at the Imperial Room. It was certainly a happy occasion for our church family. Best wishes to Lori and Paul!

Melisa and Mckenzie Ennis welcomed a new addition to their family on October 30th. Madison Charley Ennis weighed in 6lb 11oz. Madison shares her older sister's birthday.

At the end of October, the Nichols took a trip to Las Vegas and California to reunite with Alan military buddies.

~ Kathryn Stellitano

## WBPOTFCCMTM

What being part of the Federated Church of Christ means to me.

"I belonged to the Catholic church for approximately 43 years and never really felt at home. In 2013, I decided to have my daughter Mackenzie baptized here and began attending services regularly. Everyone made me feel so welcome and at home that I decided to become a member in March 2014. I became a Deacon in January 2015 and will have my second daughter baptized in November, 2015."

~ Missy Ennis

## Coffee Hour

A big thank you to everyone who has provided coffee hour through the fall. This social time after church is very special for many of us.

At this point we need a host for December 13 and 27th and just about any Sunday in January is available. Remember, coffee hour doesn't need to be a lavish affair. Coffee, juice and a few snacks are sufficient and gratefully accepted.

The sign up sheet is on the side table in the church entryway. If you have questions, see Kathryn Stellitano.

## WCGCS

Thanks to all who supported our Lasagna Supper. The cakes/ cupcakes were wonderful. Approximately 120 serving were sold, and two whole lasagnas were frozen for our next pot luck lunch.

Our next project is the Sugar Plum Fair - December 5th from 8 - 1. To quote Cookie Monster - "COOKIES!" Please consider baking a batch or two of your favorite cookies for the Cookies by the Pound Table or some other baked item for the Bake Sale. We promise to serve the leftovers at coffee hour on Sunday! The Grayson family will be in the kitchen, frying up donuts - hot and delicious! There will also be plenty of Finnish Coffee Bread at the Bake table.

It's certainly not too late to donate your gently used Christmas decorations, books and jewelry or to create a themed basket for the Basket Raffle. And remember that the money raised by the Wreath makers goes directly to the church budget. We hope you will stop by!

~ Kathryn Stellitano

### Federated Church of Christ

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Find us on **FaceBook**:

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[/FederatedChurchBrooklynCT](https://www.facebook.com/FederatedChurchBrooklynCT)

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ABC of Connecticut Executive Minister:  
Rev. Judy Allbee 888-236-5421  
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## *Loving God, Hear Our Prayers...*

- For the veterans of our country: those who have gone before us, those who protect us, and those who remain among us.
- For all those grieving loss.
- For Michael T., who is paralyzed after a bad fall.
- For our families to be guided and comforted by the God's presence in all situations.
- For Robin's mother, who is hospitalized with serious medical issues.
- For Jan G., that her eyes and vision will be restored.
- For Lee L, who is recovering from recent back surgery.
- We continue to pray for and with all those who are fighting cancer and other illness.
- For Barbara, who is recovering from back pain after a recent fall.
- For the millions of people displaced and fleeing as refugees from the violence in Syria and other countries in the Middle East, and for the nations around the world receiving them.
- For all who are struggling with addiction.
- For our nation still in need of healing from racism, prejudice, and violence.
- For peace in our world.

## *Gracious God, we give you thanks for...*

- For the birth of Madison, second daughter to Missy Ennis and little sister to Mackenzie.
- For the joys of music and the leadership of David and our glorious choir.
- For the love and support of children who pray that their parents have a great week at work.
- For this loving and supportive church family who blesses others with the power of prayer.
- For the service, bravery and courage of our military veterans.
- For the people in our lives who remind us of God's love and presence, even in the midst of struggle.

## **SUGAR PLUM FAIR**

*An old fashioned Christmas bazaar!*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH  
8:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

FEDERATED CHURCH  
ROUTE 6, BROOKLYN, CT



*Fresh Wreaths - Boxwood Trees- Rada Knives  
Delicious Baked Goods- Finnish Coffee Bread  
Hot Donuts- Cookies by the Pound- Gift Baskets  
Quilted & Hand Sewn Items- Grandma's Jewelry Box  
Handmade Christmas Crafts- Gently Used Christmas Items  
50% off at the Thrift Shop*

# December Calendar - [www.federatedchurchbrooklynct.org / calendar.html](http://www.federatedchurchbrooklynct.org/calendar.html)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Dec 1 Joseph M. birthday 1pm Office Hours	7pm Choir Practice	2 1pm Office hours	3	4 8am Sugar Plum Fair
6 9am Choir rehearsal 10am Worship Service	7 1pm Office Hours	8 Paulette H. birthday 1pm Office Hours 7pm Choir Practice	9 1pm Office hours	10	11 11am Madison E. baptism George M birthday Holly M birthday Taylor M birthday 7pm Moravian Love Feast	12
13 Nicholas B-C birthday 9am Choir rehearsal 10am Worship Service 10am Poinsetta Orders of 4:30pm Luminary Night	14 Benjamin T birthday 7pm Executive Board 1pm Office Hours	15 Bell articles due 7pm Choir Practice	16 Cindy R - birthday 1pm Office hours	17 6pm Bell articles due	18	19
20 9am Choir rehearsal 10am Miracle of Jesus 10am Worship Service	21 1pm Office Hours	22 Jeff O birthday 1pm Office Hours 7pm Choir Practice	23 Christmas Eve 1pm Office hours	24 Christmas Day	25 Day After Christmas Day	26
27 9am Choir rehearsal 10am Worship Service	28 1pm Office Hours	29 7pm Choir Practice	30 Committee Reports DUE New Year's Eve 1pm Office hours	31		

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