

# CHURCH AT THE CENTER

JANUARY 2021



## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH "CENTER CHURCH"

United Church of Christ  
One Church Street  
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075  
(413) 532-2262



Email: [centerchurch@verizon.net](mailto:centerchurch@verizon.net)

Website: [centerchurchsouthhadley.org/](http://centerchurchsouthhadley.org/)

Facebook: Center Church of South Hadley MA

Instagram: @centerchurchsouthhadley

*ALL ARE WELCOME AT CENTER CHURCH ON THE COMMON,  
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING UCC CONGREGATION,  
WHERE THE SPIRIT OF GOD STIRS US TO EMBRACE OUR DIVERSITY,  
DEEPEN OUR FAITH IN JESUS, SHARE OUR TEARS AND LAUGHTER,  
AND EXTEND GOD'S ABUNDANT LOVE AND JUSTICE INTO THE WORLD.*

Advent is over. Christmas is behind us. Soon Epiphany will arrive (the visit of the Three Kings who followed the star to Jesus). Before us is an invitation from Howard Thurman (theologian, educator and civil rights leader) to take Jesus seriously, faithfully, joyously.

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.*

*I'd like to thank all the members and friends who contributed to the Advent season with music, producing the services, videographers and those sending in photographs of light, lighting of candles, reading, Advent bags/bundles and other leadership. We are most fortunate for your gifts and in your commitment in sharing them with Center Church, UCC.*

I am eager to look forward with hope following in the footsteps of Jesus. Are you?

Joyfully, Lori

The Council will meet in early January to discuss a **new date for the Annual Meeting**. Reports can arrive later than originally projected. With CT&C (Covid Time and Christmas) we are doing our best to make due and believe it is best to delay the Annual Meeting. We will find a way to conduct the Annual Meeting with as many as can be involved.



*Please remember to fulfill payment of your 2020 pledge by December 31<sup>st</sup> so that we may close the books for fiscal year 2020.*

## THANK YOU



**Vigils for Racial Justice:** Following our years-long tradition of vigils for social justice, Center Church has sponsored weekly vigils for racial justice for almost 40 weeks. The vigils have attracted loyal participants from South Hadley, Amherst, Hadley, Ludlow, Chicopee, Hatfield, Holyoke and other surrounding towns. A community has formed that we hope will not dissolve due to inclement weather after our January 16 vigil. There have been several suggestions, including continuing to vigil biweekly or monthly, gathering together on Zoom, and offering short programs on YouTube. But the most important suggestion was to keep in touch, share ideas and resources, and inspire each other through a dedicated email.

If the vigils have been important to you, you please sign up to be on the email list at [southhadleyvigil@gmail.com](mailto:southhadleyvigil@gmail.com). Share your suggestions and resources, and get updates. Racial injustice will not stop because of the cold weather. Our efforts in support of racial justice should also continue.



**How can you be supportive of Bobbie Ayers recuperation,** you may be asking.....well...could you be available to sit with her should a caregiver fail to show or should there be a short gap in coverage? - Email or call the Church Office and we will add your name to the list. If you wish to provide a small meal or side dish, you are encouraged to do so; and please use a container that can be recycled or thrown away. She avoids spicy and uses little salt. We will keep you updated on her rehab progress. This will be a long haul for Bobbie; however, as she has reached out to us, may we reach out to her.



You can visit the Center Church YouTube page anytime, and watch any of the Mid-week Musings or Sunday Worship Services.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCenAmZ4uhw49Oe3m\\_qxyBTg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCenAmZ4uhw49Oe3m_qxyBTg)



### Center Church on the Web

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Instagram: @centerchurchsouthhadley



## PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

### Continual:

Emily Bangs-Orsini (at Mt. St. Vincent)  
Barbara Blank's great-grandson, Cayden  
Luke Bradley (lifelong battle with cancer)  
Muriel Graham  
Audrey Heinrichs  
Tom Hazen  
Phyllis Lacoste  
Anna Sibley  
Art Stanley  
Ruth Thornton, on hospice



*We keep all those affected by the Coronavirus, in our prayers including medical personnel and first responders, food preparers/ deliverers, grocery workers, truckers and all "essential workers".*

*We keep the incarcerated, those who have lost their jobs or are furloughed, all our elected officials and the world at large in our hearts and prayers.*

*We keep those serving in the military in our prayers, as well as the residents and healthcare workers at the Holyoke Veterans Home.*

**If you have submitted one of these requests for prayer, please let us know when it is time to remove someone's name from the list.**

### Situational:

Bobbie Ayers, home, recuperating  
Barbara Blank  
Valerie Bonzek's daughter Pamela, hospitalized with Covid  
Julie Burke's cousin, David Driscoll, on waiting list for liver transplant  
Emily Carle's dad, Jim, continuing health issues  
Loxley Coffin, granddaughter of Karol and Art, born premature, back in the hospital  
Family and friends of Richard Compton, friend at Loomis, who passed away December 20  
Ruth Cowan, recuperating at Loomis  
Family of Peter Diehl, Center Church's first Associate Minister, who died this month  
Joan Duffy, home recuperating  
Audrey Heaphy's brother-in-law, Bob Brandt  
Betty Kelsey, for the loss of a loved one  
Chelsea Korzeniowski on the loss of her friend Margo  
Lucio Perez, in Sanctuary in Amherst FCC  
Eric Tipton, needing a kidney transplant  
Joy Weigel, and her grandson, Michael Martini, Recuperating  
Wendy Williams, broken wrist



Luminaria  
displayed  
on the  
front steps  
of the Church.

And the  
"Christmas Star"  
shining bright.



## Youth Group



In December, we led weekly devotionals on the four weeks of Advent - Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love from Illustrated Ministry. The Youth completed crafts and coloring pages that corresponded with each week's theme. Sophie G made some beautiful creations! Ten of us participated in a Youth Group Secret Santa gift exchange, and we had a fun time gifting our friends with small tokens of appreciation. A few of our youth participated in a Zoom Christmas Pageant on the 19th, and although it wasn't the same as in person, they said it was still meaningful. In January, we will start the YOUnique curriculum about discovering yourself and your God given gifts.

Warmly, Emily and Emma

## Adult Christian Education

### A Peek at the Bible

#### Genesis 1:14

*And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years..."*

This Peek reminds us why God sprinkled stars throughout the night sky: to serve as signs and to create seasons. The Star of Bethlehem was one such sign, that signaled the birth of the Messiah. Since creation, the position of stars marks the advance of the seasons and these celestial hosts herald the celebrations of great religious festivals since days of old. The heavens are telling the glory of God, as the song says. Now a new year is at the threshold and surely some constellation above is prepared to fulfill its ancient, heavenly-ordained role: to recall that God is with us always.

Randy Purinton is ordained in the U.C.C. and is a member of Center Church. He serves as a trustee.

## Stewardship 2021

As of late December, more than \$130,000 has been pledged to Center Church, in our "Connecting Around God's Love Stewardship Campaign. Thank you for your financial support! Haven't made your financial pledge yet? There is still time to help! Please review the Center Church pledge materials that were mailed to you in October. Didn't get a pledge packet in the mail? Contact the church office for information. We hope you will prayerfully consider this appeal, and offer your own generous gifts to support all of us as we connect through God's love. You can return your pledge card through the mail (we've enclosed a return envelope in your pledge materials), OR you can save a stamp and fill out our online pledge card at this web address <https://tinyurl.com/centerchurchpledge> OR call the church office to submit your pledge.

*Thank you for your generosity and continuing connection to Center Church!*

# News from the Trustees for January 2021

As 2020 was a very different year, this article is a bit longer than usual. Happy New Year greetings as we start what we trust and hope will be a better year going forward. The 2020 year has been a trying one at best, fraught with a variety of unexpected events and issues, which none of us had even remotely imagined as the year began. Through it all, members of Center Church have been steadfast in their support of what we normally can do in person. You have maintained your pledges, you have learned how to follow our church services via YouTube, you have used email more to reach the staff and each other, you have worn masks when stopping quickly by the building, and you have reached out to everyone with physical distancing. Many thanks and congratulations!

In February, we said thanks and adios to Tom Waller for his service on the trustees, and we welcomed Karen Anderson back to the board. As usual, when the fiscal year ended in January of 2020, we did not know what our final financial numbers would look like. In February, we saw that our final pledge payments came in at 94.49% of what we had projected and that our overall total income stood at 99.7%. That was pretty amazing! Our total expenses for 2019 came in at 99.37% of what we had projected and it left us with a deficit of about \$17,000 which we cleared with some operating budget reserve funds and additional monies from the Charlene Johnson bequest. Following up on the excellent help one exterior camera gave us, we installed an additional five cameras which Thia can monitor from her office. This has made being in the office(s) at any time much safer. Our investments have managed to return to an earlier positive slope and we were able to realize all the money we had projected back last January.

Then Covid-19 hit and we had to close our buildings. That impacted not only our church business but the therapist Tanya, and the CNS (Center Nursery School) staff and all the children, as well as the other small groups which use our church for meetings and the SH Chorale. We have missed them all since!! With a very sparse group of volunteers, our Food for Friends program has been able to continue once/month. And the monthly vigils have been keeping us out there in the community on the front lawn and appreciated by many. Like many other organizations, in May the trustees turned to Zoom after not meeting in April, and learned how to log on (either through our laptops or cell phones) through an invitation from Lori, how to "enable video", and "mute or unmute", how to manipulate individual vs gallery views, and how to not talk while others are speaking (well, we are still trying to conquer that)! We investigated some "outside" sources for grants to help us with larger outer building needs. We have maintained the interior of our buildings throughout the past year and with some elves got some smaller projects done as well. The choir room and Fellowship Hall floors have been stripped and refinished and we have new lights in the choir room and outside, the non-Rose windows have all been scraped and repainted. Treasurer John Hoffman applied for a Payroll Protection Plan loan, which had a successful outcome and has now been "forgiven." Those monies were used primarily to help with staff salaries. John wrote an excellent article about the PPP for the September CAC.

Heading into this new calendar year, we would be remiss if we did not give a huge **THANK YOU** to our staff who throughout all of this Covid time, have adapted to the new demands of their jobs. Cindy, Larry and Cheryl have been recording music for services and figuring out music and corralling singers (very small number) for hymns or sung pieces. Sexton Bob has been adapting to new cleaning procedures. The CE staff, especially Martha and Emily, have been working with the children/youth

through Zoom and/or leaving activities for pickup by the outer office door. Thia and Lori have been incredible and have learned so much about Zoom, working from home, how to reach out to all of us and so much more. And our YouTube guru, Gretchen LaBonte, has been absolutely amazing as we began this endeavor and continues to this day.

Here's wishing good health, many sunny days, getting the promised vaccines so that we can be together in person again at some point, and most of all, peace in this brand-new year. May we feel renewed and refreshed through all that Center Church has to offer. Blessing to all -

*Cindy Morrell, secretary*

## Notes from Church Council

The Council met virtually through Zoom on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Pastor Lori Souder led the meeting. Activities completed a seasonal project for the "reaching out" program. They hope to do a similar project for Valentine's Day. CE delivered over 125 Advent Bags and Luminaria candles to our members. They will deliver the Christmas Eve "food collection" for the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program. Also, mittens, hats and scarves will be delivered to that program. Outreach is continuing the weekly Saturday vigils until mid-January. Trustees are looking into expanding parking on the Park Street side of the church. Stewardship reported that 71 pledge units pledged \$116,000 at the time of the meeting. John Hoffman, Treasurer, reported that the PPP loan forgiveness was accepted and the loan is now forgiven! Lori reported that there have been some changes of conference ministers in our tri-state conference which affects Western Mass and our direct representation. Our Hampshire Association sent letters expressing disappointment and she will keep the Council updated. The Annual Meeting date is still to be determined. Annual Reports are still needed. Our next Zoom Council meeting is at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5.

01/21

*David C. Morrell, Clerk*

## Outreach Partners of the Month

*"Hearts to Hands to Hope"*



For the past few years United Methodist Church here in South Hadley, joined forces with Neighbors Helping Neighbors to bring a little Christmas joy to the children of NHN's clients. This year the need was great. 73 children were looking for a Secret Santa. With a spending limit of \$25, many people stepped up to provide gifts for children in our community and all 73 children will receive gifts this year. The generosity shown by the community was humbling. Not only did the children receive gifts but, with the abundant financial donations that came in, the families will also receive Big Y gift cards. Many churches have hat and mitten trees and bring those donations to NHN. That was not possible this year but again, the community showed up and there was enough money to buy a little warmth for these families in need. It was overwhelming to go into the room where the organizing committee was staging everything for distribution and see tangible evidence of our town's generous spirit. For our part, we took on 23 children and gave them a Christmas that they would not have had. Thank you to all who volunteered to be a Secret Santa. Quite simply, it feels good to take care of others.



## Outreach Team: Support to Local Shelters



In response to the tremendous increase in need during this pandemic and the increasing cold, two new shelters for our neighbors without homes have been opened, one in Amherst and one in Northampton.

The shelter in Amherst is called Craig's Doors. Craig's Doors has been opened 24 hours a day seven days a week and has been completely occupied for more than a month. There are 16 beds. The cost of adopting a bed is \$400. The Outreach Team has decided to adopt a bed and is directing \$400 to be sent from our Community Outreach Fund.

In Northampton, First Churches has answered the call to provide shelter space for the winter. In partnership with ServiceNet (who runs the Grove St Inn and Interfaith Shelter), First Churches will host about 30 cots for people experiencing homelessness, in their parlor and AA room, with Lyman Hall serving as a fellowship space, through May 1. The church will be staffed 24/7, and ServiceNet is hiring folks for this critical work. Please visit [www.servicenet.org/job](http://www.servicenet.org/job) for paid positions, and [www.northamptonma.gov/volunteersubmission](http://www.northamptonma.gov/volunteersubmission) for volunteer opportunities.

In response to the tremendous increase in need during this pandemic and the increasing cold, **two new shelters** for our neighbors without homes have been opened, one in Amherst and one in Northampton (see below). There is still **a pressing need for new or gently used, clean bedding. *Twin size* sheets, blankets and comforters are most welcome.** If you are able to share, please bring inside a clean bag to Center Church on Saturday 12/26, 1/2 or 1/9 between 10 and 10:30. Karen Hyvonen or Betty Innocent will be happy to receive them. Or call Karen at 538-4674 for other arrangements.



**Coming on January 10, guest preacher the Rev. Dr. Donique McIntosh, Racial Justice Team Leader of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUC)!**



"The mission of the Racial Justice Ministry is to engage every setting of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ to *eradicate racism* in our personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural realms."\* Dr McIntosh will speak to us out of her experience and faith perspective. We will have a zoom conversation gathering at 11 am following worship to reflect on and share responses to her sermon. A link to the zoom meeting can be found below and will be included in that Sunday's bulletin.

\*<https://www.sneucc.org/racialjustice> (visit this site for more in-depth information and resources, including a piece by Dr. McIntosh)

Lori Souder (she/her) is inviting you to a scheduled Coffee Chat Zoom meeting on Racial Justice.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84721107745?pwd=ckx0bHpEelgxdmt6RE1sQlJYUDU3QT09>

Meeting ID: 847 2110 7745

Passcode: 637815

One tap mobile +19292056099,,84721107745#,,,,\*637815# US (New York)



Collection of bags filled with groceries, hats and mittens.

Delivered to **Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry** by John Hoffman after the Christmas Eve collection. (John had already delivered a truckload on Wednesday with food folks had left at the Church.)

Total delivered was **587lbs! Over a quarter ton. Great Job Center Church!**

Santa's helpers for the Christmas Eve collection: Karen and Randy Hyvonen, the Griffin family, Brian Lapis, Mary Nelson, Lori Souder, and Kate Hoffman.



**Thank YOU!!!!**



# From the Church Historian - January 2021

## THE JOYOUS CHRISTMAS BELLS

The tradition of the ringing of Christmas bells goes back centuries! Bell ringing can be traced back to Pagan origins. Bells were used during Winter Solstice celebrations. Bells eventually migrated to Christian cathedrals and church towers. They rang out on Christmas morning calling the faithful to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Traditionally the bells would start at sunset on Christmas Eve. This was then the first service of Christmas tide. Bells were rung at midnight mass, but became a thing of the past when the local populace complained of the noise. Altar bells were then used by priests as they recited the "Gloria in excelsis Deo."



Choir Bell 1991

Starting in the Victorian Era, carolers used hand bells to enhance their caroling. Most of the time, they were the only instrument playing the tune. Hand bell choirs are still used in churches during Christmas season. Through the years, Center Church had its own bell choir. Popularity of public bell ringing came about through the song "Jingle Bells." It was written by James Lord Pierpont (1822-1893) of Medford, MA in 1850. It was originally written as a Thanksgiving song, but morphed into a secular Christmas song due to its "snowy" lyrics. In 1863 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote the poem "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Morn" about church bells ringing during the Civil War. It was set to music in 1872.

Bells have a deep symbolic meaning in our consciousness. They are associated with clocks which comes from the Latin word *cloca* meaning bell, e.g. the Westminster Chime which rings the hour. Bells are also associated with weddings, funerals and even boxing matches! Wind chimes are a form of bells which help us relax. For Christians, the bell is said to represent "the voice of God." It is also said that "bells communicate with the spirits."

At Center Church, we ring the tower bell on Sunday morning as a call to our worship service. Lately the tower bell has been tolling on Saturday morning to remember those who have died during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Sunday after Christmas, the congregation sings "On This Day Earth Shall Ring" to the hymn tune of *Personent Hodie* arranged by Gustav Holst. (In another article, Cindy has also written about this hymn.) We ring our bells during the refrain "Ideo gloria in excelsis Deo." The tradition began around 1991. Our former choir director of 45 years, Minister of Music Barbara (Susie) Conant had been playing the hymn for a few years prior and on one Sunday she arranged and hung some various sized bells in a cardboard holder and asked choir member Barbara Cushwa to shake them when Susie pointed to her. It had a wondrous effect! The next year (1991) Susie presented all the choir members with an engraved silver bell with the year each had joined. She asked that they be rung during the hymn at the appropriate spots. It wowed the congregation! They too wanted to participate. The next year, they were asked to bring their own bell and participate. If they didn't have one, one was loaned to them. On that memorable Sunday, Center Church rang out with most glorious and joyous resounding sound! It remains as one of Center Church's most beloved traditions along with the Christmas Eve candle lighting service!



Typical  
Christmas  
Sleighbell

# Tell Me the Stories - January 2021

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (PH 129, NCH 131) is one of the first carol hymns written by an American. Edmund H. Sears, born here in Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard Divinity and spent his pastoral time as a Unitarian minister in the state. He still preached about Christ during his ministry though. The text focuses on three levels of peace, "with God, with others and within ourselves" and is one of the first hymn carols to stress the "social implications of the angels' message." It is said that "hymns which stressed the 'social message of Christmas' are distinctly American." One source said that it was the first hymn of this type welcomed into British hymnody. If you look carefully, you will notice that there is "no mention of Christ, of the newborn Babe, or of the Saviour's Mission." That might be attributed to his background as a Unitarian. It was also written at a time of much unrest which eventually led to the Civil War. Sears wrote only two hymn texts, both for the Christmas season. This carol, from 1849, was written 15 years after his first less widely known one. The composer of the music "Carol," Richard S. Willis, was a well-known American who had been a good friend of Mendelssohn, and this tune was first used with another hymn. It also turned out to be a "worthy melodic vehicle for Sears' text." Willis spent his later career as a journalist and also wrote several books on church music. He wrote original compositions too in addition to arranging chorales and psalm tunes. It is interesting that neither text writer Sears nor composer Willis had any other hymns in either of our hymnbooks. CAC 1/05

One hymn which we did not sing this year on December 27, the Sunday after Christmas, is *On This Day Earth Shall Ring* (PH 136). David has mentioned it in his "bells" article. He explained why we have sung it at Center Church for over 20 years. The text comes from *Personent Hodie* in the *Piae Cantiones* of 1582. This text was translated by Jane M. Joseph and the tune was arranged by Gustav Holst. It became popular in England after Holst did an arrangement for unison voices and orchestra in 1916. The song is an example of a "macaronic" hymn which is a hymn sung in two languages - here it is English and Latin. The tune is a 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century Latin carol, which was originally published in the 1582 Finnish song book listed above. That book contained 74 medieval songs collected by a Swedish Lutheran pastor. It is said that the text is a parody of an earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century song, a medieval one honoring St. Nicholas, but it was rewritten for the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Our translation was done by Joseph in 1916-17, and it is thought that she added the refrain to which we ring our bells "Ideo, Gloria in excelsis Deo." Joseph was a conductor and also a student of Holst. The text is below. We ring bells during refrain.

(1) On this day earth shall ring  
With the song children sing  
To the Lord, Christ our King,  
Born on earth to save us;  
Him the Father gave us.  
*Ideo-o-o-o, Ideo-o-o-o,*  
*Ideo, gloria in excelsis Deo!*

(2) His the doom, ours the mirth;  
When he came down to earth,  
Bethlehem saw his birth;  
Ox and ass beside him  
From the cold would hide him.  
*refrain*

(3) God's bright star, o'er his head,  
Wise men three to him led,  
Kneeling low by his bed,  
Lay their gifts before him,  
Praise him and adore him.  
*refrain*

(4) On this day angels sing;  
With their song earth shall ring,  
Praising Christ, heaven's King,  
Born on earth to save us,  
Peace and love he gave us.  
*refrain*



Cindy Morrell, Associate in Music

Resources used: Robert G. McCutchan's *Our Hymnody* (1937); Robert J. Morgan's *Then Sings My Soul* (2003); Kenneth W. Osbeck's 101 *More Hymn Stories* (1985), *Amazing Grace* (1990); *Wikipedia*; and *The New Century Hymnal Companion*, ed. Kristen Forman (1998).

happy  
birthday!

- 04 Thia Jubinville
- 06 Anita Sarro
- 08 Jim Noonan
- 09 Randy Purinton
- 14 Nancy Bozek
- 15 Madeleine Burke
- David White
- 17 Jean Lacoste
- 25 Rookie Tipton



Cathy (Bozek) was listening to Ella acting out the Christmas story. Mary was telling "Joe" that they needed to find a cave to stay in.

December 10, 2020 South Hadley, MA

Aaliyah Hall, a 5th grader at Fort River elementary school in Amherst, MA started a virtual storytime on March 30th to bring hope and inspiration during our nationwide quarantine period. The show is called "Dreamland with Aaliyah" and is produced by *SisterSister Studios*, a collaboration with her sister, Ava Hall, a 1st grader at Fort River. Dreamland aired live EVERY day between March 30th-September 30th, and during that time Aaliyah read over 200 books and raised over 10K for nonprofits. "Dreamland" can now be seen on Sunday nights on Facebook Live at 7pm ET and on her YouTube channel. For this accomplishment, Aaliyah is featured in a segment called "Acts of Awesome" on the first ever Nickelodeon & Time Magazine Kid of the Year show, hosted by Trevor Noah. The show is airing on all Nickelodeon channels, and will be seen on CBS at 9pm on December 21st, 2020.



Facebook: @aaliyahsdream Instagram: @dreamlandaaliyah

Youtube: [www.tinyurl.com/dreamlandYouTube](http://www.tinyurl.com/dreamlandYouTube)



### THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

Ministers: All Church Members  
Senior Minister: Rev. Lori J. Souder

#### Christian Education Program

Children: Martha Guild Simone Jacob  
and Chelsea Korzeniowski  
Youth: Emily Carle and Emma Martin

#### Music Program

Organist: Larry Schipull  
Choir Director: Cheryl Cobb  
Associate in Music: Cynthia Morrell

Office Administrator: Cynthia Jubinville  
Sexton: Bob Farman

## SAVE THE DATE - CELEBRATE TWO MINISTRIES

To: Clergy and Lay members of the Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Associations, UCC

Re: A Time of Celebration and Appreciation for the Rev. Jill Graham and the Rev. Kelly Gallagher

Date and Time: Sunday, January 10 at 3:00 PM via ZOOM

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Please join us for this special event as we honor Jill and Kelly for their ministry among us.

As Associate Conference Ministers, Jill (for 13 years) and Kelly (for 7 years) have provided leadership and guidance for our associations, churches and individuals. They have worked with Committees on the Ministry and Executive Committees, supported search and call, guided churches through times of sorrow and conflict as well as joy, brought new learning and fresh ideas to churches, pushed us as only a trusted and respected counselor can, participated in ordinations and installations, and helped us to live up to our calling to "be the church." We have been blessed and enriched by their ministries of leading and serving. As of the end of the January, Kelly and Jill will no longer be serving as our Associate Conference Ministers. At this event, we will have expressions of appreciation from each of our four associations, participate in a Service of Passages: Farewell from our UCC Book of worship, and more.

Everyone is invited to send an email of personal words of appreciation for Jill and/or Kelly to The Rev. Peter Johnson at [pastor\\_peter@firstchurchmonson.org](mailto:pastor_peter@firstchurchmonson.org)

Rev. Peter D. Johnston, Pastor  
First Church of Monson, Congregational United Church of Christ  
5 High Street, Monson, MA 01057

All of our email and snail mail words will be compiled and given to Jill and Kelly.

We are also invited to make a contribution to a group financial gift.

Financial gifts can be sent to the Monson church at the address listed above, or through [Venmo](#).

Search for Central MA SNEUCC, please add a note designating if the gift is for Jill and/or Kelly.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kc-2hqjopGNKub9PXD5ncvXK96x5a1AdR>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



### The Sayings of Jesus and Muhammad

Jan. 6, 7:00 PM Online

A Christian-Muslim dialogue hosted by Rev. Cindy Jacobsen (Lutheran Church of the Redeemer) and Shaheen Akhtar (Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland)

Join us for an online Christian-Muslim discussion led by Rev. Cindy Jacobsen (Lutheran Church of the Redeemer) and Shaheen Akhtar (Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland)

RSVP

[bookclub@icbwayland.org](mailto:bookclub@icbwayland.org)

Zoom link

<https://zoom.us/j/93773800848?pwd=Q0ZSYnIzY3ZsS3pXblBSNFg3RGtmdz09>



## Merry Christmas from Silver Lake!

For this month, we are promoting our [2021 Summer program](#) and our [Family Retreats!](#)

This Christmas season, consider Giving the Gift of Silver Lake! What a tremendous impact that could have on the life of a young person! We've created a slide to advertise the idea, as well as a printable card to include with your gift to a young person.

[Gift of Camp PowerPoint](#)

[Gift of Camp PDF](#)

[Gift of Camp printable card](#)

We are now booking Family Retreats for January, February, and March! Any family can rent a building for the weekend and create their own special time away to reconnect, unplug, and explore faith together. For information about rates and availability, email [slcc@silverlakeect.org](mailto:slcc@silverlakeect.org).

[Family Retreat PowerPoint](#)

[Family Retreat PDF](#)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!  
Jenn Kronholm Clark Program Director

P.S. Got questions about our plans for in-person camp in 2021?  
Check out this recording of our [Parent Information Session](#).



[Silver Lake Conference Center](#) A Ministry of the [Southern New England Conference UCC](#)  
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Find the brochure and additional information about summer camp  
at <https://www.silverlakeect.org/summercamp>.

[Download the brochure](#) here.

Watch the [Parent Information Session](#) here.

## Registration opens January 15!

**The Top 10 Reasons 2-Week Conferences at Silver Lake in Summer 2021 are Going to be Amazing!**

### 1. Friends

If you thought your camp friendships were unbreakable after one week at camp, imagine how close you'll be after 2 weeks!

## **2. Deeper Faith**

**Help us create, and immerse yourself in, an intentional Christian Community; listen for God calling; discover your spiritual gifts; engage in conversation and activities about faith and God; and learn what it means to Love God, Love Your Neighbor, Love Yourself, and Love Creation - all while playing, swimming, climbing, laughing, singing, eating, running, and enjoying camp at Silver Lake.**

## **3. More Ropes**

**Being at camp for 2 weeks will give conferees multiple opportunities to experience the low and high ropes courses. More chances to get off the ground (however high you want to go!), test your courage, and build your team interdependence.**

## **4. Boats, Boats, Boats!**

**More time at camp, means more time at the waterfront. More time at the waterfront, means more time to learn how to use the Silver Lake boats (or sharpen your boating skills!)  
Silver Lake has canoes, paddle boats, sail boats, and kayaks - there's something for everyone and every skill level.**

## **5. Special Saturday and Sunday Features**

**Never before have conferees (campers) stayed overnight at Silver Lake for a weekend in the summer. We'll stay up later on Saturday night, and sleep in longer on Sunday morning, have a special Sunday worship, and more!**

## **6. More Time Outside in Creation**

**Dig in the garden, walk on the trails, sit by the waterfall, splash in the lake - 2 weeks means double the amount of time to explore, learn about, immerse yourself in, and Love Creation.**

## **7. More Time to Create**

**Tap into the right side of your brain, and let the creative juices flow! More Ceramics and Arts & Crafts, more gifts for your family, more mementos of your time at camp.**

## **8. Leadership Skills**

**Living in community means learning to work as a team. Listening, problem-solving, sharing, learning to be flexible and compromise. All these things are taught, shown, and lived at camp; and two weeks at camp gives even more time to learn and strengthen these leadership skills.**

## **9. Worship**

**Worship in the chapel, worship at the waterfront; worship on the ballfield, worship in the amphitheater; worship with your conference, worship with the staff; worship in the evening, worship in the morning;  
the possibilities are endless for unique and meaningful worship experiences at Silver Lake.**

## **10. Camp Fires, S'mores, Swimming, Lynn's Amazing Food, Night Hikes, and more!**

**Two week sessions double the opportunity to experience all the things you love about camp and Silver Lake.**

**Learn more about Summer 2021, camp at Silver Lake, view the summer brochure, and register for camp [www.silverlakeect.org/summercamp](http://www.silverlakeect.org/summercamp).**