

# The Meetinghouse News

The First Congregational Church of Madison

November & December 2020

## Minister's Reflection

Let me get the obvious out of the way right off the bat. Thanksgiving and Christmas will probably look very different to many of us this year. And even those things we can preserve will, perhaps, take on a different meaning in light of the reality of life in a growing pandemic. Maybe the trees and greens, and the stockings and the dinners will remain, but decorated with a deeper sense of the absence of family members separate this year by more than distance.

And the shorter days and earlier darkness will no doubt feel somewhat more oppressive to some of us this year.

And all this is perfectly appropriate, given everything that 2020 has thrown at us.

And it is appropriate to consider all of this, because at its heart, Advent is best experienced as a season of patient and hopeful waiting for the future that will be illuminated once again in the birth of God's light into our darkened world.

It is possible that we will know the joy of that Christmas light a little more acutely this year, as we have known darkness all too well over the past several months.

The writer and pastor John Pavlovitz writes of Advent, this season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, as a spiritual journey, spent largely in 'low and shadowed places,' in the 'beautiful lowness' in which an attention to humility invites a change in perspective, a new way of seeing the world that allows us to see possibility and promise of new life in places we long see as desolate, that allows us 'to become agents of love in a way that actually resembles Jesus.'

So this year will feel different perhaps. But that can be really good news; because in the difference lies an opportunity for us to imagine new ways in which God is inviting us to use this time in the darkness to consider all the way we are empowered to bring the light of Christmas into a world yearning for new life. Blessings to you all this Thanksgiving and throughout the journey of Advent. And Merry Christmas.  
Todd

## Missions & Poinsettias for Christmas

*It has long been our tradition to have the Sanctuary filled with Poinsettias at Christmas.* Given the unique nature of this Advent and the reality that COVID will likely keep us from gathering in large numbers, **we are planning a differing offering this year.**

We will still have Poinsettias in the Sanctuary, to give color to our Facebook Live broadcasts. Instead of inviting members and friends of our church to dedicate a plant in memory of a family member or friend, we are inviting you to make a gift or multiple gifts of \$10 to one of our Foundational Missions: Called to Care Uganda, the Village Mountain Mission Project or Christian Community Action.

This offering will allow us to both honor the memory of loved ones while at the same time making a gift in support of our mission partners, who work so tirelessly to bring clean drinking water, new homes and food security to people and communities in our neighborhood and around the world.

To make a gift, please see the *Dedication Form on page 6 of this issue of Meetinghouse News*. You can fill it out and mail it in to the Church with a check.

Please be sure to note which of our 3 Foundational Missions you would like to support.

## Worship Calendar



### Worship In Person

As state regulations allow, we will offer in-person worship in the sanctuary. Those wishing to attend must register with the church office. Please see registration instructions on this page.

### Worship Virtually

Worship will also be streamed live on Facebook. You do NOT have to be a Facebook member to join us. Simply click on this link and you will be directed to our page ([www.facebook.com/fccmadison](http://www.facebook.com/fccmadison))

### Worship on TV or our Website

You may also watch the service on Madison Public Access as usual, and a recording of the service will be available on our website Sunday afternoon. ([fccmadison.org](http://fccmadison.org))

<b>Nov. 29</b> 10:00am	<b>1st Sunday of Advent</b> Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching
<b>Dec. 6</b> 10:00am 11:00 am	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching Outdoor Communion Service
<b>Dec. 13</b> 10:00am	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> Rev. Sarah Vetter, preaching
<b>Dec. 16</b> 7:00 pm	<b>Long Night Worship</b> Service of Hope and Healing
<b>Dec. 20</b> 10:00am	<b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> Worship including our Virtual Christmas Pageant
<b>Dec. 24</b> 5:00 pm 10:00 pm	<b>Christmas Eve</b> Outdoor Candlelight Worship Outdoor Candlelight Worship
<b>Dec. 27</b> 10:00am	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b> Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching

## Weekly Registration for Indoor Worship

1. To register for the upcoming Sunday service, send an email to [worshipatFCCMad@gmail.com](mailto:worshipatFCCMad@gmail.com) by Friday indicating how many people from your household will attend. In order to include as many people as possible, **we will be taking registrations one week at a time.** We will not be able to register you for later Sundays.
2. Worship will be limited to 50 people. If 50 people have registered before you, you will receive an email giving you priority for the next week.
3. Please do a health check Sunday morning before you arrive. Anyone with a temperature above 100.5 Fahrenheit or exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19 listed by the CDC should not attend.
4. When you arrive, we ask that you sanitize your hands, find a seat in a pew with an open door, and wear a mask through the duration of worship.

## What to know about Indoor Worship

**Please be aware that due to the dangers of spreading Covid-19, in-person worship will necessarily look very different than we are accustomed.** Worshippers will be asked to sanitize their hands as they come in. Pews will be marked so that people sit 8 feet apart. Everyone will be required to wear a mask through the duration of worship. We will try to keep windows open, so we encourage people to dress warmly and bring a blanket if necessary. Because singing creates a higher risk of spreading infectious particles, we will not be singing hymns during worship and there will not be a live choir. On Communion Sundays, individually packaged elements will be available as you enter the sanctuary. We will ask people to leave the church by sections to avoid crowding at the doors, and circumstances at this time discourage us from socializing with one another in close proximity or for extended periods of time. As we have done outdoors, we ask that the Peace be shared from a safe, physical distance.

We understand the challenge of a worship service in which many of our most cherished traditions will be absent, and we remain grateful for our church's willingness to act in ways that keep us all safe. We look forward to the time when we return to the full worship services we have enjoyed together over the years. In the meantime, we will still gather in the Spirit and lift our hearts to God. We will find creative ways to adapt and continually seek to reach out to keep us all connected, both in and outside the sanctuary.

Please be aware that CT guidelines discourage at-risk populations from participating in in-person worship. Those with pre-existing or underlying conditions and people age 65 or older are considered at-risk and are encouraged to participate in alternative forms of worship from home.

**\*Communion Sundays** (the First Sunday of each month)—In addition to our regular 10 am worship, we will offer a brief, in-person, outdoor communion service at 11 am. We hope this option will help us stay connected with those who are not comfortable, or able, to come indoors.

## Long Night

Advent service of Healing & Hope

Wednesday December 16

7 pm



In-person and on Facebook Live - [Facebook.com/fccmadison](https://www.facebook.com/fccmadison)



As we are able to, we will hold Sunday School for children through 8th Grade in Hubley Hall on Sunday mornings. Parents, you can drop your children off from 10:00 -10:45 even if you are not attending in-person worship. Children must wear masks. Nursery Care is available in Hubley Hall as well.

## Mid-week Breath

Wednesdays 7:00-7:30 pm

First Church Madison



Join us in the sanctuary (or on Facebook Live) for a half-hour worship experience on

### Wednesday evenings.

Worship is contemplative and meditative in nature, and consists of guided meditations, prayer experiences, and learning ways to ground, de-stress, and connect deeply with God.

*Who couldn't use a deep breath these days!?*

In-person attendance is limited to 25 people, so registration is required.

**You can register at: [bookwhen.com/fccmadison](https://bookwhen.com/fccmadison) or by calling Rev. Sarah (203) 245-2739 x12**

Videos of worship will be available on our website.

## Wednesday Bible Study

Everyone is welcome to join us in the Chapel and via Zoom for our weekly conversation on a passage from Bible, about its history and how scripture and gospel speak to our world today.

We meet at 10:00 Wednesday mornings . No experience in necessary.

If you join in person, please remember to wear a mask and keep safely distant from one another.

The Chapel can accommodate 10-15 people, if we spread out.

Zoom link:

10:00am - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81383760051>

Meeting ID: 813 8376 0051

Over the past few weeks, we have had a limited turnout for the evening study. If there is still interest, we will convene the 7:30pm '**on demand**.' Please contact Todd Vetter at [tcvetter@gmail.com](mailto:tcvetter@gmail.com) to confirm that you will attend the evening session and information and a Zoom link will be sent.

And if you would like to receive the weekly bible study email update, with some background notes and other resources, please feel free to contact Todd Vetter at [tcvetter@gmail.com](mailto:tcvetter@gmail.com) or by calling (203) 245-2739, ext 11.

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND GO TO  
YOUTH  
GROUP**

### Youth Group

**Sunday November 22**—in the Activity Center (downstairs in Hubley Hall)

Grades 9-12 meet in person during worship (10-11)

Grades 6-8 meet after worship (11-12:30)

\*wear a mask

Stay tuned for fun events in December!

You can reach our youth minister, Justin, at: [justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com](mailto:justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com)







*Here's where to get the latest scoop on what's happening musically in the church! For even more information, call Nathan at: (203) 245-2739, ext. 14.*



### **VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

Yes, you read that correctly—we plan on putting together the Christmas Pageant, only virtually! There has been a great response to our e-mail asking if people might record themselves, and all the parts were sent out by e-mail just a few days ago.

There is **still time to participate** in a non-speaking role as a shepherd, angel, or animal if you have not received information about it, so contact me ([nbayreuther@fccmadison.org](mailto:nbayreuther@fccmadison.org)) or Kristen Skonieczny ([kmsketch@gmail.com](mailto:kmsketch@gmail.com)) if you or your child want to join in. Instructions on how to do it will be sent to you, and all videos **need to be sent to me no later than December 4th**. We hope you enjoy the result!



### **UPGRADES TO OUR AUDIO/VIDEO SYSTEM**

During the time we have been worshipping outside, Jeremy Clark and I have been working extremely hard on a new audio and video system for the church. This new system is completely different from traditional, hard-wired cameras as we have always used; instead, it utilizes the **latest in WiFi and Bluetooth technology** to provide high-definition video and sound, vastly superior to our current setup. Our live stream on both Facebook and YouTube as well as our recording for the Madison cable access television channel will look and sound better than it ever has. The versatility of the new system is truly outstanding, and we're really **looking forward to getting it installed soon**.

Special thanks to Jorge Prego at St. John Bosco in Branford for demonstrating their equipment for us!



### **ORGAN HISTORY TO BE PRINTED**

During the restoration of our pipe organ last year, I wrote a complete history of the instrument which was printed as a 40-page booklet. I'm proud to say that the history is **scheduled to be published** in an upcoming edition of "The Tracker," the Organ Historical Society's seasonal journal. A nationally-based organization dedicated to celebrating and preserving historic pipe organs in America, the Society recognized our instrument as a "National Heritage Pipe Organ" with a citation declaring it as "historically, culturally, and musically significant" as a symphonic organ of the early 20th century. Keep an eye (ear?) out for some **upcoming recordings of the organ** which should be available soon.

# Organ Historical Society





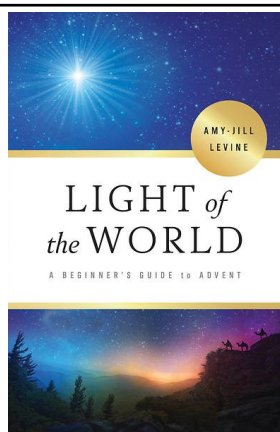
## Connection: A Ministry for Motherhood

Join us for candid conversations, advice, laughter and prayer as we strive to navigate our daily lives in a more meaningful way.

**Wednesdays at 7:45 pm in Hubley Hall**

(Connection meets directly after the Mid-week Breath worship service that runs from 7-7:30. )

Contact Sarah Seehusen [sarah.stoever@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.stoever@gmail.com) or Laura Jarvis [laurajarvis@live.com](mailto:laurajarvis@live.com) with any questions.



## A Great Advent Book Read!

**The Book:** *Light of the World a Beginner's Guide to Advent* by Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. In less than 150 pages, the author explores the connections of the Gospel Stories to the Old Testament and Jewish culture of the time. It is an enlightening read that enhances the understanding of the Advent season.

**The Discussion:** Carol Robbins will lead a discussion of the book via zoom on **Dec. 10 & 17 at 7:00 pm**. If interested, please contact her at [robbinscs@att.net](mailto:robbinscs@att.net) or call her at 203-245-1867 for details about ordering the book, the accompanying video, and the topics for each discussion session.

### To the FCC Madison Congregation

Thank you for your meals, cards, phone calls, kind words and prayers this year. As I've said to Todd, my parents & I feel the love.

Please know the following:

- My parents read and reread your cards, often looking up your addresses in old FCC address books to make sure they remember everyone, listen to voicemails (when I'm able to play them back), and cherish all pictures that are included in cards or meals.
- My mother thoroughly enjoyed the numerous sweets and birthday wishes this past September. She'll never forget her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, thanks to all of you, especially Vanessa!

Although you won't see us at church anytime soon, for obvious health reasons, we're thinking of you and hoping you treat yourselves as kindly and purposefully as you do us.

I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season!

**Paula Page** (Linnea & Seymour Page) 408-209-4083



### Healing Prayer Ministry

The Healing Prayer group continues to meet, both in person (safely distanced) and on zoom to pray and learn together. If you are curious or interested in joining us, please let Rev. Sarah know. The group is always "on call" for anyone who might like to receive prayer over the phone, on zoom, or safely distanced in person. Please reach out to Rev. Sarah : [svetter@fccmadison.org](mailto:svetter@fccmadison.org)

***Peace. Joy. Hope. Love.***

### **Mission & Poinsettias for Christmas**

It has long been our tradition to have the Sanctuary filled with Poinsettias at Christmas. This year, **we invite you to consider a gift of fresh water, shelter and food security to stand alongside the beautiful flowers that will adorn the Meetinghouse.**

As we have done in years past, you can make the dedication in memory of a loved one or in honor of a life celebration. Dedications will be printed in the December 20 bulletin, as well as posted virtually. Due to constraints of the pandemic, we are limited to 30 poinsettias this year. If you would like to have a Poinsettia for your home, you are welcome to pick one up in the Sanctuary on Saturday, December 27, from 10am to 2pm. If you cannot do so, and would like to have one reserved, please contact Rev. Todd Vetter.

#### **Mission Dedication Form** (Please *print clearly* all information)

I wish to support the following mission(s) with my gift of \$10 each:

- ☐ Called to Care Uganda, to provide clean drinking water to rural communities in east Africa
- ☐ Village Mountain Mission Project, to provide new home construction in the Dominican Republic
- ☐ Christian Community Action, to support our long-time mission partners in New Haven.



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please print my dedication(s) as follows:

Please make checks payable to: First Congregational Church of Madison, with "Poinsettia" in the memo line

You can drop this form with your check in the mail slot/drop box,  
or mail it to 26 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443.

***Form and payment must be in the church office by December 14<sup>th</sup>***

Or you can donate on our website: [fccmadison.org](http://fccmadison.org)

(Use the "contributions-general" option and type the name of the mission you would like to support in the memo line)

Please then email the office with how you would like your dedication to read. [mainoffice@fccmadison.org](mailto:mainoffice@fccmadison.org)



### **Angel Giving Tree**

Each year after Thanksgiving, Christian Community Action gives us names and a wish list so that we can provide gifts for families who are experiencing poverty at Christmas. In previous years, members of our church family have generously participated by selecting a gift recipient tag from the Angel Giving Tree placed in our sanctuary. This year, due to the pandemic, the Angel Giving Tree is going "virtual". It is being reimagined to allow as many of our church family as possible to participate in this beloved and important giving opportunity. Please watch for information to come soon in "Tuesday Newsday" and find out how you can be part of this giving tradition in 2020. Any questions, please contact Tiffany Sweet at [tiffanyharrisonsweet@gmail.com](mailto:tiffanyharrisonsweet@gmail.com) or Ann Archer at [ann.f.archer@gmail.com](mailto:ann.f.archer@gmail.com). In a year such as this, the need is greater than ever. We know we can once again count on our church family to help bring Christmas joy to our neighbors in need.



### **Online Offering!**

You can donate to the church through our website. Pledge or make other contributions, such as the CCA giving, by charging to a credit card or direct debit to your bank account. Of course, you can also mail your offering (checks only please) to the church office if you prefer. Thank you, as always, for your support!





Thank you to all  
who donated  
Turkeys  
for Christian  
Community  
Action's  
Thanksgiving  
Baskets!

### Pastoral Care

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Todd, Sarah or Justin if you need support, prayer, a listening ear, to be connected to resources, or any other way we can be of help.

We are here for you!

Todd (203)589-7949 [tcvetter@gmail.com](mailto:tcvetter@gmail.com)

Sarah (203)887-2463 [svetter@fccmadison.org](mailto:svetter@fccmadison.org)

Justin [justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com](mailto:justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com)



Do you knit? or want to learn? Join with others to pray, chat and knit together on zoom.  
Please let Sarah know if you'd like to join in:  
[svetter@fccmadison.org](mailto:svetter@fccmadison.org)

### We would love to include your voice in worship!

Would you like to read scripture? Offer special music? Create a Grace and Gratitude video to share? It is fairly easy to capture a video of yourself and send it in for us to weave into our online worship services. Reach out to [justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com](mailto:justinwaynezeigler@gmail.com) (while Todd and Sarah are away) or [nbayreuther@fccmadison.org](mailto:nbayreuther@fccmadison.org) (with music).



# The First Congregational Church of Madison

26 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443  
Overlooking the Green

Non-profit  
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Guilford, CT  
Permit #271

Change  
Service  
Requested

## The Meetinghouse News November & December 2020

This newsletter is available  
on our website and via  
email. If you would prefer  
an electronic version  
to a paper copy, please let  
the office know.

Mainoffice  
@fccmadison.org

### Sunday Worship

10:00 a.m.

Join our livestream wor-  
ship on Facebook.com/  
fccmadison  
Or watch it later in the day  
from our website fccmadi-  
son.org

Our Worship Service is  
broadcast on  
Madison Access TV  
Channel 18, Sunday at  
12:00pm and 10:00pm,  
check their listings.



**The Rev. Todd C. Vetter**  
*Senior Minister*

**The Rev. Sarah E. Vetter**  
*Minister of Community Life*

**Phone:** 203-245-2739  
**Fax:** 203-245-3341  
**E-mail:** mainoffice@fccmadison.org  
**Website:** www.fccmadison.org  
**Facebook:** fccmadison  
**Church Office Hours:**  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday - Friday



**GO.BE.LOVE.**

