

# The Meetinghouse News

The First Congregational Church of Madison

December 2022

## Minister's Reflection—Gifts at Christmas

Most of us are fortunate enough to recall waking up as children on Christmas morning and charging down the stairs to see what Santa had left under the tree. It remains for me one of the most enduring joys of childhood. And, as our family was often in places like Pakistan or the Philippines for Christmas, it always amazed me how Santa somehow, mysteriously and miraculously was able to find us. Every year. Without fail.

For many of us, it has been the receiving of gifts that has shaped our understanding of what Christmas is. The generosity of Santa, or whomever was responsible for the presents under the tree is an experience of joy we work hard to allow our own children and grandchildren to know as well.

But we also know that Christmas is more than the giving and receiving of gifts within our own families and neighborhoods. At its heart, Christmas is about a greater gift received, the blessing of Emmanuel, very literally, *God-with-us*. The promise of Christmas is that salvation is born again, insistently, each year, almost as an intrusion into the world as it is, bearing with it the hope of a world that could be. So it is perhaps necessary to think of the gift of Emmanuel as not simply *God-with-us*, but as *God-through-us* as well, as an invitation to share the gift of salvation through our offering to God's wider world.

Martha Hoffman, founder of *Called to Care Uganda*, with Susanne Kos, FCC Madison chair of Outreach.



Women of Bulaya Village, Uganda, collecting clean water from a deep water well constructed with funds contributed by FCC Madison

Over the past six years, our church community has contributed nearly \$30,000 to fund the construction of deep water wells to provide clean drinking water to 5 Ugandan villages. Through our partnership with *Called to Care Uganda*, we have given the gift of health and well-being to hundreds of people.

Recently, our Outreach Committee approved funds for a sixth well. As Christmas approaches, preparations will begin on its construction, bearing with it the hope of good health for another village community.

It is a gift worthy of our Christmas faith. Many thanks to Outreach for their leadership in making this life-giving mission possible; and to you for your support. May you and your families all enjoy a wonderful and joyous Christmas season. Peace, Todd

## Thanksgiving Offering 2022 *Christian Community Action*



Many Thanks to all who donated turkeys, food and funds to our collection for Christian Community Action! Our youth loaded up turkeys and drove them into New Haven, where they also helped assemble and organize the 1,500 Thanksgiving Food Baskets that CCA distributed to people in need of a little extra help this Thanksgiving.



## **Worship with Us!**

### **Worship Indoors**

*Join us in the sanctuary for worship.  
Masks are recommended.*

### **Worship Virtually**

*Worship will be livestreamed on Facebook  
([www.facebook.com/fccmadison](http://www.facebook.com/fccmadison))*

### **Worship on TV or our Website**

*You may watch the service on Madison Public Access,  
and on YouTube or Facebook*

## **Advent and Christmas Worship**

The season of Advent is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. This Advent, we will focus on slowing down, being present in the moment to receive all the gifts God is generously pouring out for us. Join us in worship as together we make room in our hearts for the good news of Christmas.

### **November 27 - 1st Sunday of Advent - 10 am worship**

Receiving God's Gifts: HOPE

*Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching*

### **December 4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent—10 am worship & Advent Lunch**

Receiving God's Gifts: PEACE

*Rev. Sarah Vetter, preaching*

### **December 11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent—10 am worship**

Receiving God's Gifts: JOY

*Rev. Todd Vetter, preaching*

### **December 18 - 4th Sunday of Advent— 10 am worship**

Receiving God's Gifts: LOVE

**The Christmas Pageant**

### **December 18—Christmas Caroling —5:30 pm on the lawn**

hot chocolate, songbooks, and candles provided

### **December 21—Longest Night: An Advent Service of Healing and Hope—7 pm**

### **December 24 Christmas Eve Worship**

*Rev. Sarah Vetter, preaching*

4:00 pm—The Christmas Story in Word and Song with handbells and special music

10:00 pm —Lessons and Carols with choir and orchestra

### **December 25 - Christmas Day—10 am worship**

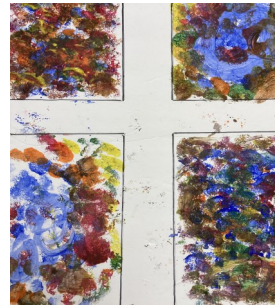
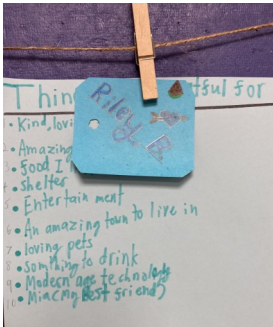
come in your PJs!





Our Sunday School kids have been busy in discussion, art and fun. Our older youth have been tackling the hard questions of faith, leading to amazingly deep conversations. Our younger children have been learning the scripture and have been creative in their interpretation and understanding.

Here are some snapshots of the creative fun we've had!



**Our Christmas Pageant will be during worship on Sunday, December 18!**



## Youth Group

December 4th & 11th - Youth Group 5:30 - 7:00

December 18th— Cookie Decorating time TBA !



## STEWARDSHIP- Restoring our Souls

Our theme originated with Jordon Sylar's summer sermon, on the 23 Psalm. Parke Johnson mentioned that it might make a great Stewardship theme. We tossed it around and decided that it would work. After a meeting or two we had our plan, divided the 23 Psalm into sections and charged up the path.

We had a great and dedicated team of workers. A huge thank you to Parke Johnson and Rev. Sarah Vetter for all of the writing for the mailings and pledges and Debbie Scillia for the mailing. A thank you to Jean Pfeifer, Marcia Nye, Parke and Craig Johnson for making our sheep ornaments. Donna and Pete Larkin were wizzes with a jig saw as we saw from our cut-out sheep and chalice. Pamala Brown painted our sheep (or is

one a cat?) and Dean Singewald installed them on the church lawn. Christine Sima, lent her rocks, plant and baby lamb and Donna Larkin loaned us her rod and her staff, as well as Finn (the dog/sheep) and her talents as a shepherd. The clouds were designed by me and the words of concern, were from the congregation. Our third giveaway was homemade bread, which was organized by Vanessa Ballantine and baked by: Helen Strobel-Glaser, Pamela Brown, Lisa Brown, Tiffany Sweet, Lisa Kitchell and Donna Larkin, Jan Seibert, Paula Steere, Peggy Nordgren and Vanessa and Joe Ballantine.

The sanctuary was transformed into the 23 Psalm by Sarah Vetter, Donna Larkin, Ross Tutschulte, Parke Johnson, Christine Sima, Wally Stone, Dean Singewald and me, the set designer.

Now as the staging of Stewardship has wound down, REMEMBER to turn in your pledge and watch the chalice fill and overflow with the abundance of your generosity.

Thank you all, Kathleen Bidney Singewald

**Many thanks to all who have pledged to give in 2023! There is still time to turn in a pledge if you have not done so! Pledge cards are available at church or you can donate online from the Tuesday Newsday. Thank you!!**



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.



### SING FOR ADVENT AND/OR CHRISTMAS EVE

As in past years, anyone who would like to sing with the Adult Choir during Advent and/or for the 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service is welcome to start attending Thursday evening rehearsals in the Chapel from 7:00-8:30 pm. **Any interested singers are requested to start attending no later than Thursday, December 1st.**

On December 4th, the Adult Choir will sing Patrick Liebergen's *Prayer to Emmanuel* which cleverly incorporates the familiar tune of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. On December 11th, they will sing *While By My Sheep*, a German carol from the 1600s. Both Spirit and Adult Choirs will combine to sing the festive *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* on Pageant Sunday, December 18th.

For the 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service, the pieces the Adult Choir will be singing are absolutely beautiful. *Candle Carol* by K. Lee Scott speaks of the symbols associated with candles during the season, and the presence of warmth and light are prevalent throughout the anthem. *Long Time Ago* by Joseph Martin comes from his exceptional cantata "Appalachian Winter" and speaks of the prophets foretelling Christ's birth. *Star Carol*, by John Rutter, is a fast, upbeat anthem imploring us all to "hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary." A combination of *Joy to the World* and *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*, arranged by Jonathan Willcocks and taken from his "Festival of Lessons and Carols," will be sung by the choir as well as the congregation. All of these pieces will be accompanied by organ, string quintet, brass quartet, and percussion.

I hope you will join us—please get in touch with me beforehand so I can prepare music for you. Thank you!

### CHRISTMAS EVE HANDBELL ROTATION

The Handbell Choir will be playing for the **4:00 pm Christmas Eve service**, and you are invited to ring with them! Here is the rehearsal schedule:

- **Thursday, Dec. 1st, 6:00-6:45 pm**
- **Thursday, Dec. 8th, 6:00-6:45 pm**
- **Thursday, Dec. 15th, 6:00-6:45 pm:** rehearsal
- **TUESDAY, Dec. 20th, 6:00-6:45 pm:** rehearsal
- **Saturday, Dec. 24th, 3:00 pm:** warm up for service

As a reminder, you must be able to make at least three out of the four rehearsals, and you must be over 12 years of age. Also, it helps if you have a sense of rhythm, you can count to four, you know your right from your left, and you have a good sense of humor! Don't be afraid to try it—we have a blast, and there is absolutely no experience necessary. Just let me know so I can prepare music for you. Thanks, and I hope you'll consider playing!







## **A Fantastic Whiffenpoofs Concert!**

It was great to see so many people attend the Yale Whiffenpoofs concert on November 11th. Performing more than 200 concerts each year, they are one of Yale's celebrated traditions, and it was wonderful to welcome them into our sanctuary for the first time.

## ***Upcoming Music at the Meetinghouse:***

### **MADISON 'ABC' CONCERT**

**Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm**

Since Madison 'A Better Chance' began in 1970, this annual Holiday Concert has featured many performers in the past including the Shoreline Chorale, the Shoreline Youth Symphony Orchestra, 'Encore' from Daniel Hand High School.



### **SHORELINE RINGERS**

**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm**

A community handbell ensemble formed in 2006, their holiday performance is truly stunning as they highlight a variety of techniques and rhythms in their ringing of familiar and unfamiliar songs of the season. A must-see concert!



### **CHRISTOPHER GRUNDY**

**Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm**

Bass-Baritone Christopher Grundy has performed as a soloist throughout North America and Europe in opera, oratorio and recital. Join us as he sings both classic and contemporary works accompanied by keyboardist Nathan Bayreuther.





Mission Trip 2023

Change the World, Transform Your Life

All in one week in central Appalachia.

June 24 to July 1 2023

Contact Todd Vetter at [tcvetter@gmail.com](mailto:tcvetter@gmail.com) with any questions.

Or ASP's website at [www.asphome.org](http://www.asphome.org)

## ~ ONGOING PROGRAMS ~

**All are welcome!**

**Men's Group**—Tuesdays 8 am in the Parlor

**Bible Study**—Wednesdays 10 am in the chapel and on zoom

**Connection: A Ministry for Women**—2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 7 pm in the Parlor

Contact [svetter@fccmadison.org](mailto:svetter@fccmadison.org) or [tcvetter@gmail.com](mailto:tcvetter@gmail.com) for more info

**tech**  
VOLUNTEERS

### Volunteers Needed!

Would you like to help broadcast our worship services?

We are looking to build up a team of videographers to help run our worship broadcasts.

No experience necessary.

We will train you!

If you are interested, please contact Charles Reese at [chas.reese2@gmail.com](mailto:chas.reese2@gmail.com)



**Coffee Hour** - Join us after worship in Hubley Hall! Coffee

Hour is a great time to welcome visitors, find out information about church events, and reconnect with friends.

Fellowship provides coffee, tea, and juice. Food contributions are welcome! We are looking for people to bring deviled eggs, cheese & crackers, fruit, vegetables & dip, cookies, dessert bars, coffee cake, etc. 8 items are needed every week! To volunteer, please sign up at Coffee Hour or email [adamhubley@aol.com](mailto:adamhubley@aol.com).

### Nine To Dine Winter Session

Sign up by December 25 for the Winter session of Nine to Dine dinner groups! These groups will meet once a month for dinner in January, February, and March. All adults are welcome, whether single, married, divorced, widowed, or separated. Those signing up will be placed in a group of 9 people. The group leader will contact members of his/her group to find a common date for dinner (on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday) at someone's home. You do not have to host a dinner unless you so desire. Nine to Dine is a great way to meet new people and reconnect with other FCC members. Sign up on the Fellowship bulletin board in Hubley Hall or email [alisonhubley@gmail.com](mailto:alisonhubley@gmail.com). Bon appetite!



### ADVENT LUNCH

Join the FCC church family on Sunday, December 4th at 11:15 a.m. for lunch provided by the Fellowship Committee.

All adults and children are welcome.

Get your picture taken with Santa Clause!

Hope to see you there!



### Christmas Caroling

**Sunday, December 18 at 5:30 pm**

Join us outside the church to sing our favorite carols. Hot chocolate, songbooks & candles will be provided!



# Welcome

## New Members



**William Burkhardt** is a retired teacher and has lived in Madison for 13 years. He has 3 children and one granddaughter. He enjoys the beach, reading, walking, nature, music, writing, football, spending time with family and helping to take care of his granddaughter.

**Annjea and Christian Cormier** have been calling Madison home for 4 years. In their free time, they spend every free minute with their 3-year-old son Cooper, and enjoy volunteering, tennis, paddle, pretending they are in a band, and being outdoors. Annjea is an officer in the Coast Guard, Christian is a Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway and they also own a home health care business. Their motto is “even though we’re getting older, we should never stop having fun”.



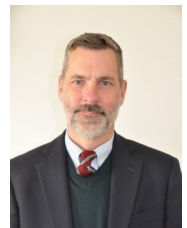
**Jill and Ryan Johnson** moved to Madison in 2012. They like to hike and kayak, and they both volunteer coaching first generation college students. Ryan works in supply chain for a dogfood company and Jill works in human resources within the eyecare industry. They have a son named Quinn who is a student at URI.

**Pamela Rowland** moved to Madison in 1991. In 1999, she started renting her Madison home when she moved to the Dartmouth community. Pam has more than 30-years of clinical experience focused on performance improvement for surgeons and physicians at Brown, Tufts, Dartmouth, UNC and UT. She funded the first sober living environment (post-detox/burnout) for ‘physicians only’ in Madison. She continues to teach a national surgery certifying examination review course. She is currently a Professor of Surgery at the University of Vermont. Pam has 3 grown children and is especially grateful for all the travels and adventures she has had with them, with neighbors and colleagues. Pam also enjoys tennis and skiing and has already purchased a season ski pass for ‘22-23!



**Gladys Waltemade and Fred Scholl** moved to CT from Nashville 4 years ago. They have 3 grown children. Fred is a faculty member at Quinnipiac and enjoys reading and music. Gladys is retired from a long career in community relations. In her free time she enjoys playing with and walking her English Cream Golden Retriever. She volunteers at Hole in the Wall in Guilford, and is learning watercolor, swimming, tennis and golf.

**Matthew Simpson** grew up in Newburyport, MA. In August, he moved to Clinton, CT from New Mexico where he worked as a freelance writer, editor and professor of Political Science at the University of New Mexico. He currently works as an academic editor, and moved back East, in part, to be closer to his brother Christian, sister-in-law Annjea and nephew Cooper, who are also joined the church.



**Reni and Michael White** have lived in Madison for 7 years. Michael is a novelist who has published 8 books of historical and contemporary fiction. Reni is a physician specializing in breast cancer detection, and faculty at the Yale School of Medicine, teaching medical students about cancer diagnosis. They have 4 adult children – Caitlin, Wesley, Patrick, and Brian - ranging in age from 41 to 30, and 2 Labrador Retrievers – Falstaff and Lincoln. They love to travel, hike year-round, and work in their vegetable and flower gardens during the growing season.



# The First Congregational Church of Madison

26 Meetinghouse Lane, Madison, CT 06443

Overlooking the Green

*An Open & Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

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## The Meetinghouse News December 2022

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 worship on Facebook.com/fccmadison

Or watch it later in the day from our website:  
fccmadison.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*

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**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.**

