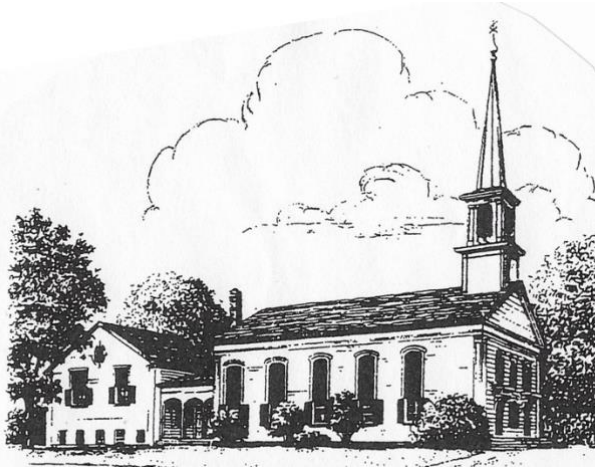


The Steeple Chimes

FEBRUARY 2020 EDITION

Columbia Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Established in 1720



Mission Statement

The Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ as part of the United Church of Christ and the worldwide Christian Church is called by God to be disciples of Jesus, the Christ. Therefore, the mission of the Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ is to worship God and to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ; to promote Christian fellowship among our members and friends, and to live in Christian fellowship with the Church Universal and the whole creation; that we might live faithfully, serving God and humanity, and striving for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Staff:

The Rev. Dr. Barry McCarthy, Interim Pastor
Cell: 774-314-0223 eMail: bjmccarthy@mac.com

Alexander Chiu, Organist and Choir Director

Michelle LaBrec, Administrative Assistant
Phone: 860-228-9306 eMail: ccchurch@snet.net

Friends in Christ,

This month the Christian church enters the holy season of Lent. This period of forty days is a reminder of the forty day fasting times of Moses when he received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:27-28); Elijah fleeing into the wilderness for forty days (1 Kings 19:1-18) and, most importantly the time when Jesus withdrew into the desert to fast for forty days in preparation for the beginning of his public ministry (Luke 4:1-2). It is also a time that follows the life of Jesus as he moves to his death on the Cross and then the miracle of His resurrection on Easter. Lent is the traditional preparatory time that calls Christians to introspection and sacrifice in order to move closer to Jesus' Way.

The sacrifices made during Lent often arise from some poor habits that we feel need addressing or, we may choose to give up something that we really enjoy. Both are noble thoughts, however, Lent really isn't about giving up bonbons for 40 days. A true move onto a Lenten journey with the Christ might better seek to prayerfully let go of the baggage that keeps us separated from the Savior. Very often that baggage is filled with old hurts and unresolved grudges. Should we choose instead a forgiving attitude, it will take us a long way towards the reconciliation and the newness of life promised by the empty tomb on Easter.

When I first entered ministry, Rev. Bruce Bunker, my pastor and mentor in Wallingford, offered me some sage ministerial advice that I've never forgotten. He said to me, "Whenever someone comes into your office, listen closely for their need for forgiveness or their desire to forgive others." Over many years, I've come to appreciate the importance of that statement. The unresolved wrong is often the most painful wound we carry with us. Forgiveness, whether towards others or ourselves, is not easily accomplished and frequently holds us back from enjoying life fully. To be sure, forgiveness is often the most difficult of the spiritual practices.

To forgive others, including persons who don't feel remorsefulness or may not even be alive, requires facing our pain and freeing ourselves from its hold and accepting that it may always be a one-sided release. It is however a positive move toward resolving those past hurts that goes a long way toward renewing and strengthening our faith and brings us closer to the Almighty.

Our society speaks all-too-often to retribution. Politicians, movies, television, news stories and more all seem to point to vengeance as the natural order of life. To follow in the Way of Jesus is to take a totally different direction. To offer mercy, and a reprieve from the past is the beginning of a renewed life and demonstrates the presence of healing amidst the brokenness of the world.

Spiritual writer, Frederick Buechner, offers this thought, "When you forgive somebody who has wronged you, you are spared the dismal corrosion and wounded pride. For both parties, forgiveness means the freedom again to be at peace inside their own skins and to be glad in each other's presence."

At times forgiveness can seem a bitter pill to swallow, but once accomplished it can prove much sweeter than the most delicious candy--- and a huge step forward on the path of your Lenten journey. Along that pathway, we'll make a stop at a Cross where the crucified Master said "*God forgive them for they know not what they do.*" That unmerited love for each of us is the grounding that leads us to be Resurrection People for others. May it be so.

Blessings,

Pastor Barry

Get Together Breakfast

Come and linger for a while!



Saturday, February 8th

8:00A.M to 11:00A.M

Columbia Congregational Church

Parish Hall, Route 87

Breakfast Buffet Menu:

Belgian waffles, omelets, eggs, toast, bacon, sausage, ham, potatoes, juice, milk, coffee, tea, fruits, homemade muffins & coffee cakes

\$10.00 per person

\$28.00 - 2 adults and 2 children

***“C’mon people now, smile on your brother,
everybody get together. Try and love one another right
now.” Youngblood, Kingston Trio, J. Collins***



The Board of Christian Concern is looking for people to volunteer to prepare a meal for The NO FREEZE Shelter every third Saturday of the month from November through April. Meals include:

Soup, Main Dish (crockpot examples: homemade mac & cheese, stew, chili, chicken & rice), salad, finger sandwiches, fruit, desserts, and bottled water.

There should be enough in your dish to feed 12-15 people. **The next meal is for Saturday, February 15th.** Please call Sue Milici at 860-228-4427 to let her know you are bringing something and/or would like to help serve.

Food can be dropped off at the church on Saturday and left in the kitchen anytime between 9AM and 5PM. **Your help in this ministry is greatly appreciated!**

FOOD PANTRY IN URGENT NEED OF FOOD:

The Church is collecting food for the Soup Kitchen and the Columbia Food Pantry. **Items especially needed: cereal, pasta, canned fruit, salad dressing, mayonnaise, and quart size Ziploc bags** If you would like to contribute, please leave items in the basket found at the front of the sanctuary or deliver directly to the Soup Kitchen.

Lay Readers

Anyone wishing to share in the leadership of worship by reading the Scripture or bringing a children's sermon, please sign-up on the list in the Parish Hall.

Deacon of the Month

February – Ross Koning

Trustee of the Month

February – Dave Pearce

300th Anniversary Update

As part of the 300th Anniversary celebration, the Church will publish a book commemorating the past years. Jan and Carmen have agreed to be responsible for this task. The book will be about 75% pictures and 25% narrative. We have access to historical pictures and renderings through the Historical Society and the Town Historian. What is needed are pictures from the last 25 years or so. That is where you come in.

Two things are needed from you:

- 1. Think about any memorable/meaningful events at the church and jot them down**
- 2. Look for any pictures you might have related to these events, noting the year and names of the key people**

Give your notes and any pictures to the secretary, Michelle, at Columbia Congregational Church, 325 Rt 87 Columbia, CT 06237 or email to her at ccchurch@snet.net

Your recollections are important because even if you do not have any pictures for some of the events, someone else might have some. If you do not want to give up a picture it can be scanned or a picture taken of it. Just let us know and we can be of assistance.

Any specific questions can be directed to: Carmen at 860-336-8119 or Jan at 860-465-6321 or to Carmen at carmenvance1@gmail.com

We want this to be a publication that is interesting and a celebration of our history. Without your assistance this cannot happen. Please respond as soon as possible so that the book can be published during the final year of the 300th celebration 2020.

Also: please helps us by self-selecting only your best pictures to save us time going through

Holiday Assistance

A huge thank you goes to all who helped out this holiday season. Whether you picked up and sorted food, helped make food baskets, bought Christmas gifts or gift cards, knitted scarves and hats, or helped deliver; your participation was greatly appreciated. What a blessing to be in a congregation that opens its heart to others. Wishing you all the best of the New Year. Debby Smith & Dixie Silvestri

Cardless Holiday Emergency Fund

Thanks to all who contributed to the cardless holiday fund this season. Did you know that this fund was set up to help any Columbia resident that run into hard times and fall “in-between the cracks” of public assistance. With your contributions we have been able to help with food, clothing, emergency repairs, fuel oil and this year helped with a family that was temporarily homeless because of a fire. Donations can be made at any time during the year.

SUPER SATURDAY IS MARCH 14th at

Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham, MA from 8:00AM to 3:45PM. Come and Explore Workshops, Worship and More. **Registration deadline is February 29th.**

You can register online at www.sneucc.org/supersatreg

SAVE THE DATE:

Palm Sunday April 5, 2020 at 2PM

**Brass Quintet of the
United States Coast Guard Band**

Columbia Congregational Church Brass Quintet of the United States Coast Guard Band. Refreshments to follow. Part of our 300th Anniversary Celebration. Volunteers needed to provide finger food, greet and usher, prepare beverages and food for self service and clean up. Sign up sheets will be available in February.

**Celebrating 300+ Years
"Lebanon Crank" and
Columbia Congregational Church
United States Coast Guard Band
Brass Quintet**

Free Community Concert
2pm Sunday April 5, 2020

Columbia Congregational Church
325 Rt. 87

Classic, Popular and Patriotic Music
and
music by **Samson Occom** (1723 -1792)
arranged by
Gabriel Kastle

***refreshment reception follows concert ~ all
are cordially invited!***

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR

HOME BOUND AND FRIENDS RESIDING IN CARE CENTERS . . .

Edie Klemark

Creamery Brook
36 Vino Lane, Apt. 411
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Dot Davis

Mansfield Center
for Nursing and Rehabilitation
100 Warren Circle
Storrs, CT 06268

Jean Peters

Hattie Ide Chaffee Home
200 Wampanoag Trail, Room 15
East Providence, RI 02915

Mary Jane Johnston

C/O Westview Health Care Center
150 Ware Road
Dayville, CT 06241

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7th

8:00am- Breakfast Prep (all are welcome)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8th

Church Breakfast

8:00AM -11:00AM in the Parish Hall

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15th

5:00PM-No Freeze Meals

MARCH Newsletter Deadline –February 18th

If you do not submit your meeting schedule by the deadline, it will not appear in the Newsletter. If you are unable to meet this deadline, your submission can be included in the following Newsletter.

UPCOMING DATES FOR THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

April 5,2020

May 2, 2020

June 7, 2020

2:00PM Coast Guard Concert

Tea Fundraiser

Wrap Up Worship Service