



Cross Ways

The Newsletter of
The Congregational Church of Brookfield
160 Whisconier Road,
Brookfield, CT 06804
(203) 775-1259

December 2016



Candlelight Christmas Eve **Saturday, December 24, 2016**

- 5:00pm** With a children's story from Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, and our traditional Christmas Eve carols and candle-lighting. *(Nursery is open at this service only, but children of all ages are always welcome in worship.)*
- 8:30pm** With special instrumental music, a Christmas message from Rev. Jennifer Whipple, and our traditional carols and Communion by candlelight.
- 11:00pm** Sing carols by candlelight, share Communion, and enjoy special music from our Chancel Choir, plus a message from Rev. Jennifer Whipple, before departing into the magical darkness of Christmas.

Church Council Notes: November 8, 2016

Long Range Planning Committee Report: Since the appeal to raise funds to complete the sewer line connection was so successful, the projects that were approved in April can proceed as planned. Contractors are ready to start work on the connection on Nov. 14. LRPC will advise Council if construction will affect any church activities.

Refugee Resettlement: Ezat's first attempt at getting a Learner's Permit was unsuccessful, but once his English improves the test should be easier for him. He is using public transportation to get to his two temporary jobs. It is not realistic at this point for Kumar to get a job. Finding child care and transportation volunteers has been difficult.

Ministerial goals for Bryn and Jennifer were distributed to Council members (see page opposite.) Council approved the goals unanimously. There will be a Congregational meeting on January 8 to vote on a target budget for fiscal year 2017-2018.

Treasurer's Report: Income is \$5,000 under budget. All sources of income were below budget except for plate income, which was above budget. Expenses were \$15,000 below budget. Net income is \$10,000 above budget.

Committee Reports

Worship: Advent wreath making and Hanging of the Greens will be on Sunday evening, Nov. 27th. The Christmas pageant will be in 10:30am worship on Dec. 11. The Christmas Cantata will be in the 10:30am worship on Dec. 18. On Dec. 11 & 18, 8:30am Worship will be traditional Advent sermon and communion. There will be one 10:30am service on Sunday, Dec. 25 and Sunday, Jan.1.

Church House: The boiler in the cottage may need to be replaced in spring. The path connecting the parking lot and the Parsonage/Cottage is complete for now. Work will resume in spring. A handicapped-accessible door will be installed in Fellowship Hall. The organ swell box needs repair.

Deacons: Laura Westby's report on the Coordinator of Member Care position is being reviewed by Personnel Committee. Communion by intinction will be given at the single January 1 service.

Stewardship: Two PushPay tutorials were given. The next campaign starts on January 22 with pledge dedication on February 26. The theme will be "*What Would You Bring?*"

Welcome: Six new members were welcomed at the 10:30am service on Nov. 6, and 2 more were welcomed at the 8:30am service on Nov. 13. The committee would like to recruit more greeters.

Nominating: Council approved new Committee members: Linae Wutzl on Welcome Committee, Toni Sullivan on Nominating Committee.

Christian Education: The Great Pumpkin Challenge was well attended. Pageant planning is under way.

Church in Society: Lyn Lyon is the new CIS chairman. A collection box for the Association of Religious Communities (ARC) Winter Warm Things Drive has been placed in Brooks Hall. Tags for "One Warm Coat" will be on the Giving Tree. One Warm Coat collects coats for kids in Philadelphia. The collection is in memory of Melanie Shapiro's brother, Matthew MacKenzie, who was a teacher in Philadelphia.

Pastors' Reports: Jennifer thanks everyone for the time she was able to spend with her kids while on sabbatical. During that time she also took an on-line class that can be compared to an MBA for church leaders. Jennifer visited St. Lydia's Dinner Church in Brooklyn. She is considering the dinner church idea at CCB as an outreach program for young adults. Two new adult studies are about to start. The Monday morning group will read *Glorify* by Emily Heath. The Monday evening group will read *Convictions* by Marcus Borg.

Bryn said Laura Westby led the funeral service for Audrey Marshall while Laura was on call for her. Anyone who would like to pair up with a friend to light an Advent candle can contact Patty Moran. Danbury ARC is opening a Winter Warming Center at Central Christian Church, specifically for 2-parent families and teens. (The current "family" shelter is only for women & children under 12.) They are looking for 2 volunteers a night for 17 weeks.

**Christmas Serendippers Gathering
Tuesday, December 13th at 11:45am**

Please join us for a special holiday concert as we welcome
the Brookfield High School Special Chorus - Small Group,
led by Mr. John LaMendola

Our menu:
Egg Nog
Ham with Pineapple Slices
Sweet Potato and Apple Casserole
Peas and Onions
Christmas Cookies

Please contact Eleanor Loesch for additional information
OR you can contact the Church Office 203-775-1259.
Hope to see you all there!

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ALTERNATIVE GIFTS FAIR!



When: Sunday, December 4th from 9:00am - 1:00 pm

Where: At the Congregational Church of Brookfield in Fellowship Hall

The Alternative Gifts Fair gives you the chance to help others as you help yourself. You can get some Christmas shopping done, while at the same time donating to a local, national, or international charity.

The way it works is that you pick any of the amazing charities that are at the fair and donate money in someone's name. Then you can give this person a card showing the donation you made on his or her behalf.

There will also be beautiful gifts for sale (ones you can wrap) plus delicious home-baked goods to buy with the proceeds distributed to the organizations represented.

Organizations that have been at the fair in the past include Simply Smiles, IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services), the Handy Dandy Handy Man, SERRV (Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation & Vocation), and Heifer Project International, which means you can help someone give someone a cow for Christmas!

This year's fair is being hosted by confirmands Evie Kelly and Catie Coneybear.

As part of our letters of call it is stated that each year “the Church covenants to study and review the priorities of the Church, including, but not limited to, the following: program and administrative goals; the Pastor’s relationship with the Congregation; and stated goals agreed to with the Pastor for effectiveness of mutual ministry.” To that end we wanted to share our goals with our church family, so you can get a sense of the priorities and direction for this program year, along with our regular duties of pastoral care, worship leadership, education, and administration. Blessings, *Pastors Bryn & Jen*

Senior Pastor Ministry Goals – 2016/17

- 1. Proclaiming/Equipping: Reach out & empower members for shared ministry**
 - a. **October worship focus on SHARE Mission**, i.e., Yankee Fair & Refugee Resettlement
 - b. **Brookfield Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service**, connecting worship with mission.
 - c. **Advent theme on gifts**, leading into Stewardship theme, “*What Would You Bring?*”
 - d. **Support Stewardship campaign** with worship & sermons on sharing our gifts
 - e. **Support Nominating** with one-on-one visits to help “call” volunteers to ministry
- 2. Leading: Build staff cooperation and facilitate feedback to Personnel Committee**
 - a. **Distribute Personnel Manual to staff** & invite feedback to improve job descriptions
 - b. **Empower staff to use weekly meetings** to assist one another in SMART goals
 - c. **Work on Technology Proposal** with IT team and staff, to improve church database
- 3. Equipping: Implement vision for coordinated congregational care**
 - a. **Meet regularly with Deacons & Stephen Ministers**, equipping them with resources
 - b. **Improve system for visitor follow-up**, working with staff & Welcome Committee
 - c. **Improve congregational care system**, working with staff & Deacons
- 4. Engaging: Resource CCB with better connections to ARC, FEA, CTUCC, UCC**
 - a. Continue on board of **Danbury Association of Religious Communities (ARC)**
 - b. **Work on vision for Fairfield East Association (FEA)**, connecting our youth to our **United Church of Christ (UCC) Baltimore General Synod** in June 2017
- C. Support Racial Justice vision for CTUCC**, as a trained facilitator for events across CT

Associate Pastor Ministry Goals – 2016/17

- 1. Proclaiming/Equipping: Reach out & empower members for shared ministry**
 - **Increase Viability of Youth Fellowship Programs**, with a focus on recruiting & equipping lay leaders and creating annual “winning” programs to help foster faith growth & relationship building.
- 2. Administration: Create process documentation for ongoing programs**
 - **Write (or oversee the writing of) process documentation** for annual programs.
- 3. Engaging: Increase engagement with Young Adults**
 - **Lead College Care Package Creation**
 - **Provide One-Time Mission Project Opportunities** during holiday/school breaks.
 - **Use Social Media to Connect**, creating opportunities to engage in faith conversation.
- 4. Intergenerational Ministry: Increase Opportunities for Intergenerational Engagement**
 - **Resource leaders of the Whole Church Retreat**
 - **Work with Worship & Fellowship Committees on Dinner Church idea** for Lent.
 - **Increase Intergenerational Mission/Outreach**

Advent 2016

Dec. 4: *"The Gift of Communion" Communion at 8:30 and 10:30*

Rev. Jennifer Whipple preaching on Isaiah 11:1-10 & Romans 15:4-7.

Dec. 11: *"The Gift of Worship" Christmas Pageant at 10:30*

Rev. Jennifer Whipple preaching on Psalm 146 & Luke 1:47-55.

Dec 18: *"The Gift of Healing" Lessons and Carols led by our choirs*

at 10:30 - Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia preaching on Isaiah 40:1-8 and Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19.



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Dec. 25: *Single 10:30am service for all ages* (No church school - nursery care only)

Jan. 1: *Single 10:30am Communion service for all ages* (No church school - nursery care only)

Christmas Flowers

Help us beautify the Meetinghouse with poinsettias & greens as we celebrate the glory of Christ's birth. Just complete this form and return it with your donation in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office by **December 12th**. Please write on your check that it's for **Christmas Flowers**. *Checks can be made payable to CCB.*



If you have any questions, please call either Kathy Wandelmaier or Tina Crepeau . *Note: Any donations that exceed our cost for Christmas decorations will remain in the designated Flower Fund until needed.*

- Please use my donation to provide a poinsettia to someone who is homebound or grieving.
- I would like to take a poinsettia home after the **December 24th** service.

Your Name _____

Amount of Donation _____

Given in Memory **OR** Honor of _____
(circle one)



Angels for Anthems

One of the highlights of the Christmas season is the wonderful Christmas music. The Music Committee is giving you the opportunity to be an "Angel for Anthems" by making a donation to help support the cost of purchasing extra music for the holiday. To make a contribution in memory or in honor of someone special, especially someone who really loved or loves holiday music, complete this form and place it in the collection plate, or mail it to the church office along with your check on or before **December 12th**.

Please write on your check that it's for **Angels For Anthems**.

Note: Any donations that exceed our cost for Christmas music will remain in the designated music fund until needed. Checks can be made payable to CCB.

Your Name _____

Amount of Donation _____

Given in Memory **OR** Honor of _____
(circle one)

My Blanket Story

By Margitta Savo



November, 1950. Thanksgiving Day. My family arrived in New York City Harbor after an arduous journey across the Atlantic Ocean. We were a refugee family who had just fled Communist East Germany. My father was a wanted man for his involvement in anti-Communist propaganda. Our destination was Iowa, where a Presbyterian Church sponsored us. We knew no English. We carried only a few suitcases.

After disembarking, we boarded a train. Halfway through the journey the train encountered a blizzard. The train had to stop, and power was lost. Our family took out our blankets to wrap ourselves in some warmth. The porter walked through, checking all the passengers and stopped in front of my family. My father was taken away. Several hours passed before he returned after all of the train's blankets were accounted for. The porter thought our family had stolen the blankets from the sleeper cars, as they looked identical. But these blankets were given to us by Church World Service (CWS), from generous donors just like you!

Note from CIS: Your \$5 contribution to our CWS Blanket Fund, as you place a Christmas card on the Blanket Fund Tree, will allow CWS to purchase a new warm blanket for a family in need of help today. Thank you!



Join Us for our Annual "Instant" Christmas Pageant

Our Instant Christmas Pageant will be held this year on
December 11th during the 10:30am service.

All children are welcome to participate, and we ask that they **arrive between 10:00 and 10:15am** for wardrobe selection. Children's Choir members are asked to come at **9:45am**.

The early service on December 11th will be in our usual 8:30am format, with a traditional sermon from the Rev. Jennifer Whipple and communion worship.

CAROLING and MORE!! Sunday, December 11th from 5-7pm



Join us for an All-Church Supper, Singing, and Christmas Trivia! ALL ages are invited and encouraged to join us. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at 5pm for a simple supper and go out caroling to some of our Church Family members in groups from there. We will return to the church for Christmas Trivia and cookies. We hope you will join us for this evening of FUN and a chance to spread some holiday cheer!

PLEASE RSVP to the Church Office by Thursday, December 8th.



Notes from the Choir Room

This has been an interesting month. The celebration on November 13 was such a joy. I was so excited to design a service using music to express so many different ideas and feelings. Music has such a deep way of communicating to our souls. It came at a time when emotions ran high after the election. I found the words of the commissioned anthem “Be Still and Know That I Am God”, so appropriate to the events happening in this world.

*The world is filled with angry storms;
There is no place to safely hide
from noises of an endless war,
where race and faith divide.*

*Nations tremble, mountains shake;
A sea of fear is raging high.
O Lord, asleep within our boat
Please wake and hear your people’s cry!*

*Then in the storm the Lord will rise
and lift his hand
And give a clear command.*

*Be still and know that I am God.
You will find your peace in me,
From ev’ry fear be free.
The shelter of my wings will be your home.*

*Above the noise of earth and sky and sea,
Hear my voice, and know; You are not alone.
Be still and know that I am God.*

As I said in my reflection; God has always been with us, is with us now, and will always be with us. That is a comforting thought.

I thank all of you who contributed toward this wonderful anthem and my gift. Serving this church is a privilege and a pleasure.

December 4 - “Lost In the Night” (Chancel Choir)

December 11- Children’s Christmas Pageant (Cherub and Joyful Noise Choirs will sing; Joy Ringers will ring)

December 18 - Lessons and Carols Service

Toni Sullivan, Director of Music



Celebrating Christmas with Church in Society (CIS)

As with any request made at the Congregational Church of Brookfield, we hope you prayerfully consider which, if any, contribution you can make at this very busy time of the year!

We are continuing this year with collecting gifts under our Giving Tree.

How does this work? We receive gift requests from both Brookfield Social Services (approx. 5 families) and Interfaith AIDS Ministry (approx. 3 families). Under the guidelines of these agencies, adults are allowed one gift, children two gifts; gift costs are not to exceed \$30. CIS writes these requests on special shaped tags (one shape is for each family) and places these gift tags on the large Christmas tree in Brooks Hall. You and/or your family can choose a tag off the tree, purchase that gift and return it to **the Giving Tree in Brooks Hall by Sunday, December 11th** – in time for CIS to deliver the presents to these social service agencies.

Also on the Giving Tree will be tags for Baby Bundles, a ministry started to help new moms with items such as diapers and diaper wipes (items that cannot be purchased with food stamps). There will be tags for Holy Joe's Café (which supports U.S. troops); tags to support Providence Rescue Mission needs; tags requesting iTunes gift cards in support of Simply Smiles staff; AND requests for gift cards for gas/groceries/Target, etc, which are used at the discretion of the Pastors for those in need. We will also collect new hats, gloves, scarves for ARC.

Whew, what a Giving Tree with so many opportunities to share our blessings with those in need!

Next, we are pleased to announce that the red **Salvation Army Kettle** will again ring in the Christmas holiday in our Brooks Hall on **Sunday, Dec. 11th**. This mission is shared among all our Brookfield churches and has raised thousands of dollars over many years. Did you know that 90% of the proceeds stay right here in Brookfield? These funds go to the Brookfield Social Services and help pay for programs for which they don't have money in their budget. If you are able to participate, please know that we are grateful, and so are our neighbors in need.

Lastly, please look for **the Alternative Gifts Fair, on Sunday, December 4th**. This is an opportunity to purchase items, or make donations to worthy causes in lieu of buying traditional Christmas gifts.

CIS would like to wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season, and thank you for your outpouring of generosity to our neighbors in need .



Youth Fellowship in December:



Our Junior Youth Fellowship (grades 6-8) and Senior Youth Fellowship (grades 9-12) groups will meet during the month of December for discussion (12/4), service (12/11), and Ugly Sweater FUN (12/18)! Please consult our website (www.uccb.org) for more information about dates and times, as well as details about events. Please be sure that Pastor Jen has your email address if you are interested in receiving weekly updates and reminders about youth fellowship events as well. You can send your contact information to Pastor Jen at jennifer@uccb.org.

Fellowship Of Concern



CONTINUING CONCERNS:

Lillian Covill,
Evelyn Gerowe,
Anne Hardin,
Vivian Henley,
Ruthie Maxim,
Millicent Morrison,
Pat Roehling,
Lavinia Schmaling,
Rod Schmaling,
Shirley Stoppel,

WITH SYMPATHY:

- Sue Ronan and Edith Weighart and families on the death of Pete Cushnie on October 26th.

Brookfield High School Special Chorus Concert – Monday, Dec. 12th at 7:00pm – CCB Meetinghouse



Our annual visit from the Brookfield High School Special Chorus, led by Mr. John LaMendola, is always a wonderful way to start the Holiday season. All are welcome to attend. The Fellowship Committee invites all BAKERS who can provide cookies for this event to please drop them off in the Upstairs Kitchen on Sunday, December 11th. We will serve cookies and bottles of water as refreshments to the chorus and guests. *Thank you.*



Confirmation Class:

Confirmation Class will meet on Sunday, December 11th from 12-2pm in the Parsonage to discuss the Holy Spirit. Confirmands, plan to bring your questions about this most elusive member of the Trinity.

Wanted: Office Volunteers

From time to time the need arises for office volunteers to “man the phones” when Jeannine McCullough, our CCB Office Manager, is away. If you are interested in being a part of the team of wonderful volunteers already helping out, please let Jeannine know by calling 203-775-1259 or emailing her at office@uccb.org.

Lives of the Saints

Welcome Committee works to help our entire congregation show openness and friendliness both to visitors and each other in Christ's name. However, even our current congregation's membership doesn't do it all alone. We do it with the people who inspired us. They were and are the mentors who are forever in our hearts.

Last year, Welcome Committee began an occasional feature in Crossways for the stories of our own Saints who are no longer on this earth. These narratives will be similar to the bulletin biographies of Greeters. We invite you to nominate friends and family members and tell their stories. Below are the prompts that will yield the raw material for the bios.

Please e-mail Tom Young for more discussion and to get an electronic copy of the prompts.

- A. *Full name of Saint. (Nicknames.)*
- B. *Date and place of birth.*
- C. *Family / faith / educational background.*
- D. *Profession.*
- E. *How did he/she come to the area?*
- F. *How did he/she come to CCB?*
- G. *What did he/she love about / enjoy at CCB?*
- H. *What CCB projects / committees / initiatives was he/she involved in? (Examples: Men's Fellowship, Bible studies, prayer groups, prayer shawl ministry, usual booth or service provided at Yankee fair, mission trips, choir, bells).*
- I. *Hobbies or passions.*
- J. *Favorite story/stories about the Saint.*
- K. *Anything else of interest.*
- L. *These are only guiding questions; by all means, add any ideas we have left out.*

*"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."*

Got Advertising space?

The Welcome Committee is reaching out to all congregants, especially our youth, for ways to spotlight our church in a variety of local publications -- program ads for music, sports, or drama events; program ads for area charitable fund-raisers, social media outlets, etc.

So, if you are selling sponsored advertisements for a local community program or event, please contact Tom Young or Merredith Christos
Your church would love to buy an ad!

Youth Deacon Spotlight: Chris Wutzl

I am in 10th grade at Brookfield High School. I grew up at this church and became a member last year through the Confirmation process. I live with my Mom (Linae), Dad (Rodger), and brother (Stephen). I am always looking for fun and extreme activities to do such as cliff diving, climbing, slack lining, etc. I also am on varsity tennis for BHS.

I have been involved at CCB in many ways, through Church School, youth fellowship groups, and in worship. I went on my first mission trip (to Tennessee with the SYF) over the summer, have helped prepare for and participate in the Yankee Fair, and I am currently babysitting our Syrian Refugee family's three kids.

I love CCB because of the caring environment and how we are so welcoming. I said "yes" to be a Deacon because I always love helping my church and thought that this was a good way to show it. I love knowing that I am always helping this church because I want to give back for how it shaped me as the human I am today.

CCB Thrift Shop - THANK YOU!!!! (and we still need your help!)

The CCB Thrift Shop continues to be open in the Parsonage the first Saturday of every month with great success!

- Please remember us for your gently used clothing donations which can be dropped off outside of the church office during regular office hours or at the Parsonage during the monthly sale.
- If you know of someone or a family in need of clothing, please contact someone on the team below so that we may help them.
- If you would like to join us, we sort clothing on the Wednesday before the sale in the parsonage with both morning and evening shifts, and we can always use help during the Saturday morning sales.
- Come shop on the first Saturday morning of each month from 9am – 12noon.

Remember all proceeds go directly to Brookfield Social Services.



Thank you for your support!
Joni Park, Sue Slater, Karen Underhill, Sally Markiewicz,
Monica McInerney, Lyn Lyon and Marianne Gaffey

Are You Experiencing the Christmas Blues? – A Stephen Ministry Moment

The joy of Christmas can turn into a time of painful loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a loss or who are going through a difficult time. Some people live far from family and miss seeing their loved ones this time of year; others have lost a loved one and dread going to holiday parties and New Year's Eve celebrations without their loved one and end up staying home. Others are dealing with difficulties at home, illness, or may feel distant from their faith and feeling quite blue this season. If you're experiencing the Christmas Blues this holiday season please do not hesitate to speak with a Pastor.

Stephen Ministry is YOUR Ministry! Our Stephen Ministers are ready to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care. It is an important way we at The Congregational Church of Brookfield care for and pray for one another. If you are going through a difficult time, consider having a Stephen Minister. If you know someone else who is facing difficulties, suggest that he or she request Stephen Ministry. **God never intended for us to go through these experiences alone.** That's why God has brought us together as a congregation, and why we have Stephen Ministry. Make use of it. Stephen Ministry belongs to you! Find out more about Stephen Ministry by talking with one of our Pastors or Stephen Leaders.

May God Be With You This Holiday Season. With Love, CCB Stephen Ministers

Stephen Leaders: Leslie Sands or Gordon Markiewicz

Stephen Ministers: Carol Howe, Jan Labas, Sharon Santi, Doug Fisher, Jeanie Bergman, Jeanine Hanewicz, Holly Hackney.



CrossWays Deadline

The deadline for the January 2016 issue of CrossWays is **December 12th**. You can e-mail articles to Jeannine McCullough at office@uccb.org or leave them in the CrossWays mailbox outside of the church office. Please e-mail or call Jeannine McCullough, Office Manager at 203-775-1259 if you have any questions.

Note: Because of the short holiday week the presses will run on this CrossWays very soon after Dec. 12th, so be sure to submit your article(s) by the deadline.

SHARING OUR GIFTS

We are a living church that seeks to serve God through our actions of faith, fellowship and charity; with each person sharing according to their own personal devotion, ability and means—all for which we at CCB are truly grateful.

We often refer to supporting the “work and ministries” of our church through the generous giving of our time, our talent and our treasure—and we are generous, indeed! But what are some of these “works and ministries” of our church?

Lives are changed within the many groups that use our buildings and grounds, among them:

- SYF (Senior Youth Fellowship)
- Church School
- Men’s Fellowship
- Women’s Fellowship
- Serendippers
- Bible Study
- Refugee Resettlement Program
- Thrift Shop
- AA
- BNI (local chapter of Business Network International)
- Danbury Chinese Alliance Church
- Our various committees, as we do the work of the church together
- Pastoral Counseling
- Music and Choirs
- Childcare
- Annual Yankee Fair
- and, of course, our Sunday services of worship and sacrament—plus Baptisms, Weddings, Confirmations, Funerals.

What are some of the ways you contribute in the sharing of your time and talent?

Do you commit to faithful pledge-giving to support all the many *works and ministries* of our church?

In this season of giving, have you thought about making a second-mile-end of the year gift to your church? Is giving appreciate stock an advantageous way for you to give to your church?

Your Stewardship Committee

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.*
~Cecil Frances Alexander

With some trepidation, Pastor Jen and I chose our Advent theme this year as a call for us to examine the practice of public and communal ministry itself – as we take a look at the gifts that CCB has to give that is uniquely “ours.” In other words, we might ask ourselves, “What gifts can a local church like ours offer the world that no other worthy nonprofit organization can offer?”

We hope our theme, “*What Gift Will You Receive?*”, may help all of us find some interesting and inspiring answers as we each explore – we hope with renewed hope and wonder – our own deep emotional and spiritual needs, especially during this season of increasing darkness and cold.

One special seasonal gift that we on the Worship Committee identified right away is revealed in the way we have set up the lighting of the Advent candles each week. Instead of recruiting the usual nuclear “church families” to light the candles, we have invited pairs or groups of “church friends” to light candles together. This idea emerged as we got to thinking about what an enormous gift it can be to get to know people OUTSIDE our own families because of our involvement in worship, classes, groups, committees, mission trips, and other church activities.

On the First Sunday of Advent, this past November 27, our Advent Wreath Workshop and Worship was such a joyful event – over 80 crammed into Fellowship Hall to eat pizza and make wreaths together. We did tend to sit together as families, but the large tables meant families shared space and got to know one another better. And in a spirit of welcome, there was always room at the table for a newcomer or someone who came late or came alone.

My Sunday morning sermon, it turned out – “*The Gift of Light*” – was truly prophetic as one lone visitor showed up just because she saw our lights on in the Meetinghouse as we began the “hanging of the greens.” She helped with both setup and take-down (like a truly seasoned Congregationalist) and her eyes gleamed with tears as she sang the familiar carols of the season and watched our eager children take turns lighting the Hope candle on each wreath. As she was leaving, she gave Pastor Jen’s grandmother a hug and was profoundly disappointed that her new “church friend” was going home to Naugatuck and wasn’t actually a local member with us!

The making and sustaining of healthy friendships is an important mission and ministry in thriving and vital churches like ours with many different kinds of opportunities to learn, serve, pray and share together. We can learn so many life lessons from one another – many that get passed down from generation to generation – perhaps more in informal gatherings or in our day-to-day church work together than in formal educational settings.

Just think about it – “holy” communion is a broad sacrament among us Congregationalists. What laughs and mutual support happens during Morrison’s Gang “coffee time,” as they take a break on Tuesday mornings doing repairs around the church? Or think of the Serendippers Crew and the way they connect members old and new over a hot Tuesday lunch.

As you begin to explore with us “*What Gifts Will You Receive?*” we hope you may not only join us for worship and fellowship this Advent season, but perhaps invite a loved one or neighbor to join us as well. After all, this is the season of giving. This Christmas, don’t limit yourself to trips to the mall and the kind of wrapped presents you can put under the tree. Give someone you care about one of these special Advent gifts only the Church of Jesus Christ can give.

Board of Deacons

Your Deacon Branch provides a way for you to have a specific member of the Board with whom to relate. If you have requests or concerns that you'd like to share with a lay person, your Deacon is available. Naturally, if you're more comfortable calling one of the other deacons, or one of your pastors, please feel free to do so. Such requests or concerns might include:

- a need for prayer
- a request for help (transport to a doctor's appointment, church function, etc.)
- a sorrow (illness, accident, death)
- a joy (a birth, graduation, upcoming wedding, etc.)
- something that particularly pleases you, or would better meet your needs in the worship service

Remember, if you don't know your Deacon, ask someone to introduce you. He or she will look forward to meeting you – in church or out!

Deacon Branches 2016-2017

A-BO	Leslie Sands (Stephen Ministry)
BR-CL	Doug Fisher
CO-DON	Jan Labas
DOR-F	Sherrie Ruschmeyer
G-HOR	Pete Lane
HOW-LEN	Mark Lyon
LES-MA	Sue Boughton
Mc-O	Alex DeLucia
P-RO	Mary Gallagher DeLucia
RU-SI	Marie Immohr
SL-T	Dan McKee
U-Z	Greg Labas

Youth Deacons:

Jillian DeLucia
Chris Wutzl

Committee Chairmen and Church Council Reps

Moderator: Dave Goral
Vice Moderator: Robin Murphy
Clerk: Kathy Wandelmaier
Treasurer: Greg Dorrell
Assistant Treasurer: Kristi McPadden
Investment Treasurer: Audrey Himebaugh



Committee Chairs

Christian Ed Melanie Shapiro
Church House Ken Arifian
Church-in-Society Lyn Lyon
Deacons Sherrie Ruschmeyer
Fellowship Kelly Kelly
Nominating Sharon Santi
Stewardship Sally Markiewicz
Welcome Tom Young
Worship Patty Moran

Church Council Representatives

Christian Ed Wendy Elsen
Church House Steve Waschak
Church-in-Society Luke Duval
Deacons Leslie Sands
Fellowship TBD
Nominating Tom Young
Stewardship Tom Brown
Welcome Jean Dorrell
Worship Martha Parvis
Historian Bob Brown

Long-Range Planning Committee

Michael Matson (chair), Roman D'Alessandro, Maurice Downey, Deseré Edwards,
Cindy Field, Sian Hunter, Larry Ruschmeyer

Pastoral Relations Committee

Robin Murphy (chair), Gordon Markiewicz, Bob Lambert, Larry Ruschmeyer,
Carol Eagan

Personnel Committee

Dave Goral (chair), Robin Murphy, Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Olivia Quinsland, Bill Robertson
Karen Underhill, Rick Hardin

Senior Pastor	Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia		bryn@uccb.org
Associate Pastor	Rev. Jennifer Whipple		jennifer@uccb.org
Organist/Choir	Toni Sullivan		toni@uccb.org
Church School	Barbara Crandell		barbara@uccb.org
Church Office	Jeannine McCullough	203-775-1259	office@uccb.org
Nursery Care	Debbie Marquardt	203-775-1259	lilstitchtoo@yahoo.com



Brookfield Ecumenical Caroling Concert 7pm Saturday, December 17, at St. Joseph Church

Once again, our choir leaders unite to bring us together with our fellow townspeople who want to share the joy of the Advent season with music. We will be able to listen to our various bell and vocal choirs both separately and together and to sing the familiar carols of our faith. Again, a free-will offering will go to the Fuel Fund of Brookfield Social Services, to help our neighbors in need stay warm all winter.

CrossWays – the newsletter of
The Congregational Church of Brookfield
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(203)-775-1259 Fax (203)-775-3466
Email: office@uccb.org



Sunday Worship at 8:30am and 10:30am
The Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Senior Pastor
The Rev. Jennifer Whipple, Associate Pastor