

The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

DECEMBER 2017

Dear friends,

It's that time of year again. Another trip around the sun, and the season of Advent is upon us again. It's probably the busiest time of the year, but it's also one of my favorite times. The holiday decorations in the Meetinghouse, Advent hymns, the Christmas Open House (this year to be held at the church, on Friday December 15), holiday films, *The New York Times* best books of the year list (one of the most suspenseful "reveals" of the year for me – yes, I'm that much of a book nerd), holiday food and drink, our Christmas Eve services, the way the kids start hyperventilating when they think about Christmas morning...it all combines to make December a fabulous month. We all have different ways of approaching the season, and I recognize well that it has different meanings for many of us. But I hope something within it brings you joy or delight, even if it's only a glimmer.

But of course the themes of the season run far deeper than decorations, songs, and gifts. It has to do with the word Emanuel, the name applied to Jesus. It's a Hebrew word meaning "God with us." We affirm God drawing near every time Christmas rolls around. We affirm that presence in the flesh of an infant, a God far humbler than we wished, but one who arrests and captivates and obligates us in mysterious ways all the same. The singer Bruce Cockburn puts it this way: "Redemption rips through the surface of time in the cry of a tiny babe." Even in the furnace of the world, we dare to affirm that Emanuel, God with us, continues to draw near. Christmas is an annual reminder of where and how to find this elusive God, who shows up in manglers on the edges of empire, rather than the cathedrals and capitols of the earth.

Several weeks ago, a friend in our congregation forwarded me an article written by a professor of religious studies at Connecticut College, named David Kyuman Kim, alongside a philosophy professor from Emory University named George Yancey. For me, their article captures the essence of Christmas, and the best parts of the Christian tradition. It's entitled "An Open Letter of Love to Kim Jong-un." David Kim, a Korean American who learned deeply from both Christianity and Confucianism, and Yancey, an African American who draws upon the legacy of Abraham Heschel, James Baldwin, and MLK, address the North Korean leader in a spirit of lament, of confession, and of prophetic challenge, openly acknowledging the failure of both the American and North Korean peoples to understand one another, while also deploring the belittling and belligerent insults the leaders of both countries have hurled at one another.

David Kim writes, "These feel like especially loveless times. We write from the conviction that the values of a love-driven politics can transform how we engage each other not only as nations but also as human beings. Which is to say, a love-driven politics insists that we seek compassion, generosity, kindness, forgiveness and mercy for each other as much as we do for ourselves." In like manner, George Yancey writes, "(The) kind of love (practiced by Heschel, King, and others) refuses to hate, it refuses to believe that we are "enemies" by birth. We are brothers and sisters born of a common humanity. We believe in a love that *remembers* the humanity that binds us together, that opens us to hear the other's voice, the other's mourning... We believe that reciprocal love can take us to that place together and heal our wounds."

David Kim and George Yancey are clear that Kim Jong-un's emphasis upon land and nation has produced a legacy of suffering in North and South Korea alike. But they are equally clear that American notions of exceptionalism, fear mongering, and racism have been debilitating. That's why they turn toward a deeper, fuller, and richer ethical tradition, found in the American civil rights movement, but in many other places around the globe as well.

Here is how they conclude their letter to Kim Jong-un: "We come to you as citizens of an America not yet fully realized, one that insists that the ways of love can be the ways of democracy, that the challenge of loving one's neighbors and enemies is fundamentally a call for freedom and justice and hope. We write to you with love and an appeal for forgiveness and mercy because history and our lot demand this of us. And our hope is that it will demand the same of our fellow citizens." (The full article can easily be found on the *NYTimes* website. It's far more eloquent in its entirety than what I can reproduce here, so I hope you search it out!)

I don't know if anyone in the halls of power in North Korea or the United States will read David Kim's and George Yancey's epistle of love. I don't know, ultimately, if it will alter the trajectory our countries seem to be on. But I do sense the presence of Emanuel, the Prince of Peace, the Spirit of "God with us" in the lines they've composed. I sense the embodiment of the spirit of Christmas in the ethic of love they articulate, where remembering the humanity of the other binds us together, opening us to the other's voice, to the other's mourning. I still believe, against the odds, that the spirit of the living Christ child can and does take us to the place where our individual and collective wounds can be healed.

With Kim and Yancey, I'll doggedly believe that it's possible in international affairs. But I'll also doggedly believe it's possible around holiday tables, with our families, and in a community such as ours. The spirit of Christmas encourages me to believe that, beyond the pleasures and trappings of the season, the cry of a tiny babe still has the power to heal our wounds, and to call us toward the best of who we are.

Wishing you peace and love this Christmas season,



CHRISTMAS SEASON SCHEDULE

December 17 — Sunday

5:00 PM ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 11 AM

No Sunday School.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 PM Service for families with young children

THE LIVING MANGER

8:00 PM and 10:00 PM

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE MEMORIAL MUSIC & FLOWERS

If you would like to make a contribution to our special Christmas Eve music and flowers in memory of a loved one, please leave a message at the church office, <fccol@fccol.org> or 860-434-8686 by *Monday, December 11th.*

Welcome one and all to our

Christmas Open House

Hosted in Fellowship Hall

Friday December 15th 5:00 - 7:30 PM

We'll have delicious snacks and libations for all. Come sing your favorite carols with the beautiful voices of our choir, visit with friends and celebrate the beauty of the holiday season. As a special treat for parents and caretakers, you are welcome to bring your children to Sheffield Auditorium for an evening of supervised fun while you relax with the big kids in Fellowship Hall!

And if you'd like, bring your Christmas list! Our own FCCOL Artists will showcase their beautiful wares, and a portion of the proceeds will help support our Partnership Collective. A special selection from our Partnership Co-Op will also be available. No need to RSVP, but please do stop by!

Baptisms

Mia Lynne Swan, daughter of Melissa and Jeffrey Swan. November 5, 2017.

Weddings

Hazella Pease and George E. Veillette, Jr. September 17, 2017



Church News



New Members It is our custom to receive new members twice a year. If you have been attending, or visiting, and would like to talk about membership (ask any question you might have), Steve, Carleen or Joan would love the opportunity to sit down over a cup of coffee and chat! Please call any one of us and let's set up a time and place. ***We will be receiving new members on December 3rd.*** The New Members orientation meeting will be *Thursday, November 30th, at 7:00 pm* in the Sheffield Auditorium. There will be a New Members luncheon on *December 3rd at 12:00 pm.*

Growing Through Grief Group, Friday, December 8, 10:00 a.m. in the Hoag Parlor The Christmas Season is typically steeped with tradition, when families gather and everyone around you seems to be celebrating. All this can make holidays painful when you are grieving the loss of someone who has been a significant part of your life or any painful loss you are facing. We gather this month to share ways to help each of us navigate through the holidays this year. Come join our Growing Through Grief Group. New members are always welcome. Our next meeting will be Friday, December 8. If you would like to meet one-on-one or have any questions, feel free to contact the Rev. Joan Priest, 860-434-4629.

Care-giver's Support Group, Friday, December 15, 10:00 a.m. in the Hoag Parlor Even though more than 39 million Americans provide unpaid care for an adult loved one with a disability, an illness or an addiction, many family caregivers tend to feel isolated and alone. If most of your loved one's needs fall on your shoulders, it is important to realize that you are probably overloading yourself and need to take some steps to safeguard your physical and mental well-being. Getting together with others can be a wonderful place to share encouragement, guidance and hope. Come join our Care-giver's Support Group. New members are always welcome. Our next meeting is Friday, December 15. If you would like to meet one-on-one or have any questions, feel free to contact the Rev. Joan Priest, 860-434-4629.

Love Flowers? We're looking for someone to coordinate our Sunday morning memorial flower schedule. If you'd like to know more about what this entails, please give Carleen a call at 860-434-0058. Susan Griggs has carried this responsibility for a good number of years, and we are very, very grateful for her service. But now it's time for her to step aside. She'll share all the contacts and information she has gathered with the next person and will be helpful as the new person takes over.

Haiti Trip 2018 for Senior Pilgrim Fellowship: Our 5th annual SPF trip to Deschapelles Haiti is scheduled for April 13 to April 20. The experience includes a wide variety of activities from learning about the culture and history of Haiti, to engaging with young children through arts and crafts projects, and older youth through soccer games and tutoring English. The youth will also experience Haitian life through walks to the market and visiting Haitian artists' homes. The trip is fun and emotionally challenging, and we recommend travelers be at least 15 years old to travel with us. If you or your child is interested in joining us this year, **please contact Becky Crosby by email rtcros@ftcrosby.com. First meeting will be Sunday, January 21 at 12 noon in the Sheffield Auditorium at FCCOL.**

Food Pantry at FCCOL – Volunteers Needed Fridays, 8:30-10:00 am, or Saturdays, 8:45-11 am. You do not have to commit to every week; just come when you can. It's a great community service and fun people to work with. When you come, be sure to find Marie so she can give you direction. Any questions? Contact Marie Farrell, 860-301-5770, or Henry May, 860-767-7467.

Help Wanted to Count Sunday Offering Volunteers are needed to join teams of offering counters. Please contact Allan Kiem, the Financial Secretary, by e-mail, at Kiem36@live.com; or phone at 860-434-5216.

Ladies Who Stitch After the December sales, we'll take a break until January. All proceeds go to the church's outreach programs.



More Church News



PLUM ISLAND

Located a few miles off the end of the North Fork of Long Island is 800 acre Plum Island so named after the beach plums which thrived there. The island has a long history of high security but the reason it is in the news latterly is the plans for the federal government to move the animal research lab sited there to Kansas where a new research lab is being constructed.

Because of the isolation of the lab, the rest of Plum Island has become home to rare birds, seals, rare plants, marine life and miles of wild beach and tidal and fresh water marches. The environmental community has recommended that the island be turned over to the Fish and National Wildlife Service as a permanently protected nature sanctuary. However, the Federal General Services Administration wants to sell the island to the highest bidder, most likely a developer.

Enter the Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound's Chris Cryder, who has been leading the effort to save this ecological gem from being lost to condominiums and/or a golf course. All the congressional delegations of Connecticut, and New York are united in saving Plum Island from being sold to the highest bidder. Our own Senators Blumenthal and Murphy and Representative Joe Courtney have crafted legislation to that end.

On July 25, 2017 the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Plum Island Preservation Act (H>R> 2182) temporarily halting action on the sale of the island. Senators Blumenthal and Murpuly have proposed a bill in the Senate (S1737) that could put this environmental treasure on a path toward permanent protection. Despite lobbying and other efforts to bring this bill to the senate floor for a vote that has not happened. Chris Cryder doesn't have much hope for this bill because there are too many Republican senators from the West who want to see the Federal Government dispose of public lands.

That's where we come in. Public support for saving the island is vital. Calls to our senators and representative are important to keep the pressure on and letting them know we care. Calls can be made to Senator Blumenthal at 860-258-6940, Senator Murphy at 860-349-8463 and Representative Courtney at 860-886-0139. You can reach Chris Cryder with questions or suggestions at 203-787-0647.

Diana Blair

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT

Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut is a mission that the FCCOL has long supported. I checked in with Terri O'Rourke, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut, recently to see what they have been up to. Terri was quick to tell me how much HFHECT appreciates all that FCCOL does for the community and in support of Habitat's mission. This year HFHECT continued with their mission to build 5 houses a year throughout eastern CT. This year's builds were in Griswold, Montville, New London, Sterling, and Mystic. For 2018 the target builds are Raymond Hill Rd Montville, Chapman Rd Groton, Crescent St New London, (2) Single family homes on Baltic St Greenville Norwich, (1) Duplex, Golden St, Greenville, Norwich.

The Habitat website is full of valuable information on how to volunteer with HFHECT. Whether you want to volunteer in one of the retail stores in Waterford or Plainfield, work on a build, or volunteer in the office on Broad St in New London, HFHECT makes it easy. An Easy training video and more details can be found at www.habitatct.org In addition, the ReStore in Waterford or Plainville takes donations of household items and building supplies. See more details at www.habitatct.org.

Also, the 2018 HFHECT Holiday Cards are available on line for remembering those who are hard to shop for at holiday time. A donation to HFHECT fits everyone.

HFHECT continues to be an important mission at FCCOL, it's great to see them grow with the generous support of our church.

~Allyson Cotton

More Church News

Thank you to all our Newsletter folding volunteers:

*Nina Bazinet, Nathalie Fogg, Jeanne Clark, Carol Giuliano,
Doris Hungerford, Doris King, Sean McCarty, Jean McLean,
Bea Minson, Jeanne Nichols, Carolyn Randall, Hildegard Rennhard,
Priscilla Swanson, Barbara Traskos, and Nick Westbrook.*

LBS DECEMBER LUNCHEON

The ever-popular Lyme-Old Lyme High School's Select Choir, under the direction of Kristine Pekar, returns! After an unbroken 15-year run, last year the Choir journeyed to Pearl Harbor to perform at a national commemoration at the historic site. Now the Choir will again be with us to entertain with holiday music at the December monthly luncheon of the Ladies Benevolent Society of the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme on *Tuesday, December 5th, starting at noon*. The LOL High School Select Choir has been performing at the annual December LBS luncheon since the 1970s, when grandparents of current Choir members may well have performed! Luncheons are open to all and are served promptly at noon. The cost is \$5 with a contribution of canned goods for the Shoreline Food Pantry. The music begins about 1 pm. This program is always a sell-out. So please make reservations by calling the church office at 860-434-8686 before noon on Monday, December 4th. Gorgeous projects recently created by the LBS Ladies Who Stitch and holiday treasures from the Elephants-in-Winter sale was also be on offer. The Elephants-in-Winter treasures will be half-off on the morning before the Luncheon.

ELEPHANTS IN WINTER

The pre-Christmas Elephants-in-Winter sale takes place in the Fellowship Hall of the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme on *Saturday, December 2nd*, from 9 am to 3 pm; again on *Sunday, December 3rd* from 9 am to 1 pm; and at 50% discount on *Tuesday, December 5th* from 9 am to noon, prior to the monthly Luncheon. The Elephants-in-Winter sale features assorted Christmas decorations and gifts, handmade craft items, and special treasures from many of FCCOL's mission partnerships: from the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, from Haiti, and from Palestine.

NEW LBS COOKBOOK PRESERVES THE WISDOM OF THE AGES

Tired of cooking the same-old, same-old for family and friends—especially for the coming holidays? The new Ladies Benevolent Society cookbook could save you. LBS has collected more than 300 tested and cherished recipes from members and friends. Some come from Grandma's table; some are almost as new as yesterday. One of the great treasures of our church family is a very deep reservoir of remarkable cooking wisdom accumulated over decades, centuries even. (Need an authentic vintage recipe for creating a complete New England clambake from start to finish? You will find it here.)

The new cookbook is \$10. Don't wait for it to appear on the Amazon best-seller list; you will be able to get an early copy at the church Office.

There are rumors of an earlier church / LBS cookbook which *may* have been published in either 1930s or the early 1950s. Even the rumors are contradictory! If you know of such a treasure, we would very much like to borrow it for study. There is no copy in the Church archives or in the other likeliest public collections in town.

More Church Business News



2018 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN - GAINING MOMENTUM!

We depend upon one another - and there are people who depend upon us

As of November 16, (eight weeks after Stewardship Sunday), we have received responses from 216 members and friends totaling \$416,951 toward our 2018 Stewardship Campaign goal of \$630,000. **We are gaining momentum and are now within 66% of our goal. THANK YOU!!**

Of the pledges received:

- 8% reflect a decrease in the pledge amount from last year
- 36% reflect an increase in the pledge amount over last year
- 49% reflect no change in the pledge amount from last year
- 6% are pledges from new members

The 2018 Stewardship Campaign is an opportunity to sustain and grow our investment in our church's life changing ministries and mission partnerships. Meeting our \$630,000 goal is key to achieving these goals. The Board of Stewardship will continue to provide regular status reports to ensure that all members and friends of our church are kept aware of our progress. If you have already submitted your pledge commitment, please accept our thanks for your support!

If you have not yet had a chance to do so, we ask that you...

- Review the inspiring information in our pledge brochure
- Listen to and reflect on the testimonials printed and/or presented during our Sunday services
- Return your commitment card to the church office at your earliest convenience. Your timely response will help make a difference!
- Contact the Board of Stewardship if you have any questions.

We depend upon one another - and there are people who depend upon us. **Thank you** for all that you do to support our vital ministries and mission partnerships!

Members of the Board of Stewardship: Mike Long (Chair), Diane Hart, Steve Hart, Wendy Knight, Sandy Long, Chuck Lynch, Wayne Mountz, Jeanne Thomas, Matt Winkler

More Church Business News

YEAR-END FINANCIAL MATTERS

As we approach the end of 2017, we hope all members and friends who have made giving commitments, and who are able, will complete those commitments as soon as possible so that we can end the year with the books balanced as our budget calls for. And of course, special extra gifts are always appreciated and put to very good use at this time of year! If you have any questions about the status of your commitment, or contributions, or any other questions of a financial nature, please call the church office and speak with me, or our bookkeeper, Teri Gedrys at 860-434-8686. Thank you for your generous support of our church!

WHEN SENDING A CHECK

Please be sure to note on the check where the offering is to be credited (i.e. pledge, food pantry, donation, Habitat, etc.). It is also important to note whether your contribution is for 2017 or 2018. Thank you for your help.

WHEN MAKING A GIFT OF STOCK

Please notify the Church of your gift, including the designated use, at the time you request your broker to make the transfer. You may also use the Church's broker, Smith Barney, to make the transfer if you wish. We occasionally receive gifts from a broker without knowing the donor, or whether the gift is intended for a 2017 or 2018 giving, or for another purpose. If you have any questions, or need further instruction, please feel free to call me or Teri Gedrys at 434-8686. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Bob McCracken, Treasurer

A Moment for Planned Giving

As the year end approaches, a law that was passed by Congress allows for the use of an IRA to be used as a charitable donation.

How it works:

The provision allows retirees age 70 1/2 and older to donate up to \$100,000 tax free from their IRA each year. Generally, when you take a distribution from your IRA, it is treated as taxable income. Under this provision, made permanent in the 2015 federal spending and tax package, those assets are excluded from income if the distribution is made directly to charity. The distribution is not included in your income, so you avoid the potential negative consequences that regular IRA withdrawals in retirement can create, including taxes on Social Security benefits. Distributions excluded from income are also equivalent to a 100% deduction. Normally, charitable contribution deductions are limited to a lower percentage (or are eliminated altogether) for taxpayers who do not itemize and take the standard deduction.

Turn your required distributions into charitable donations.

IRS rules mandate that individuals age 70 1/2 and older take RMDs from their IRA each year, regardless of whether the income is needed. These annual withdrawals are subject to ordinary income taxes. By making a charitable contribution from your IRA, you can satisfy your RMD amount without reporting additional income. This provision may be especially attractive for retirees who don't need all the income from their IRA to meet current living expenses. By donating the money to charity, you can enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to a worthy cause while effectively lowering your tax bill.

It's important to consider your tax situation before deciding whether to make a charitable contribution from your IRA. Be sure to work closely with your financial representative to determine whether this tax provision is right for you. This information is not meant as tax or legal advice. Should you have questions concerning using this technique please contact the Church office at 860-434-8686 or call Tom Grant from the Board of Trustees at 860 --598-9419.



SENIOR CHOIR



Thank you for your wonderful singing throughout November! Here is the list of rehearsals and Sunday morning commitments for the month of December

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Sunday, December 3 | Singing at the 9:00 am service with a rehearsal at 8:15 am |
| Wednesday, December 6 | Rehearsal at 7:30 pm |
| Sunday, December 10 | Singing at the 11:00 am service with a rehearsal at 10:15 am |
| Wednesday, December 13 | Rehearsal at 7:30 pm |
| Sunday, December 17 | Singing at the 9:00 am service with a rehearsal at 8:15 am |
| Wednesday, December 20 | Rehearsal at 7:30 pm |
| Sunday, December 24 | Singing at the 11:00 am service with a rehearsal at 10:15 am, then Advent Lessons and Carol Services at 8:00pm and 10:00pm with a rehearsal at 7:00pm |
| Wednesday, December 27 | No Rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 31 | One service at 11:00am but NO CHOIR! |

Happy New Year!

Cappella Cantorum Holiday Concert December 2

The Cappella Cantorum Masterworks Chorus will present its Holiday Concert Saturday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Madison on the Green, Meetinghouse Lane (off Route 1), Madison. Start the holiday season with a joyful evening of music. Cappella's new director Simon Holt of the Salt Marsh Opera will conduct the chorus, professional soloists and orchestra in the performance of Bach's Cantata 140 ("Sleepers Wake!"), Rutter's "Gloria" and Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on Christmas Carols." Christmas carols will be sung at the end of the program.

Tickets are \$25 if purchased from a Cappella member or on-line before Nov. 26, \$30 at the door. Visit www.CappellaCantorum.org. Students are free. For more information, visit the website or call 860-526-1038.



Christian Education News



GOD'S NEIGHBORHOOD SUNDAY SCHOOL

Welcome to God's Neighborhood

In God's Neighborhood during the month of December we will be having an adventure to follow the star and find out the real gifts of Christmas. Everyone welcome—Please Join US!

Gifts Made With Love — December 10, 2017 10:30-2:30. Registration forms will be ready on December 1, 2017 through email and on Sunday December 3 in person. (SPF, please RVSP if you can help).

Christmas Pageant — December 17, 2017. Practice Starts at 2:30 and the performance is at 5. All SPF, JPF, and children are welcome to join us—snacks will be served before the performance.

Sunday School Parents: Please join us for a Parent Social during Rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant. 12/17, 2:30-4:30pm Hosted at the home of Shay and Matt Cantner. Bring a snack and/or drink to share. RSVP to shaycantner@me.com or amandajarvis03@gmail.com

Looking for donations of any sized used legos that are looking for children to play with them!

SPF and JPF service opportunities for December:

All RSVP's to LisaDoggart@gmail.com

December 10 — Help with Gifts Made With Love 10:30-2:30. You will help children make crafts, help with the food or help children with the wrapping station. RSVP if you are able.

December 17 — Right after the 11:00 service help to set up for the Pageant. RSVP

Pageant help — 2:30-5:30 You will help children dress in costumes, apply makeup and/or shepherd children through the pageant. There are also opportunities for lighting and other more technical needs. Please RSVP to let me know which you would like to help with.

Thank you to all the SPF youth who slept overnight in boxes to bring awareness to homelessness.

Tree of Life News

Tree of Life Journey January 2018 The Right of Return: 70 Years of Refugees in Palestine, Israel, and Beyond

January 2-14 with optional extension to Jordan through January 18

Over the past several years, images of refugees fleeing war torn zones around the globe have galvanized people of faith and conscience, leading many to enact myriad forms of hospitality. That hospitality, and the new relationships that have emerged as a result, have been transformative for many communities. But one of the most persistent, and largely forgotten, refugee disasters in the twentieth century was enacted against Palestinians in 1948, when nearly 800,000 people were expelled from their homes. Many fled to Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, while others were herded into camps within Palestine. 70 years later, those refugees continue to languish in camps, now numbering close to 6 million individuals. They have no legal or national status, and access to the basic resources needed to survive is severely limited. Moreover, the rest of the world has largely forgotten about the existence of this refugee population. In a time when the plight of refugees has again emerged as a moral concern, and on the 70th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, the ongoing refugee crisis among Palestinians dramatizes the struggle for justice among refugees everywhere.

The Tree of Life journey in January 2018 will highlight the ongoing refugee crisis in Palestine and beyond by examining the tragic aftershocks of 1948. We'll visit refugee camps in the West Bank, and we'll visit communities threatened with erasure in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. But we'll also explore other manifestations of the aftershock of settler colonialism in Palestine, visiting occupied Syria (the Golan Heights) and other sites throughout Palestine and Israel where those aftershocks are especially visible. Throughout, we'll be hearing from voices of conscience speaking from various social locations (Israeli, Palestinian, Bedouin, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Druze), all of whom are committed to building a future inhabitable by all, and not only a privileged few. The journey is conceived as a way of reckoning with a painful legacy, even as we imagine a hopeful future.

A Tree of Life collaboration between the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, the Islamic Association of Greater Hartford, and the Amistad Church of Hartford, the journey will be led by Rev. Dr. Steven Jungkeit (Senior Minister of FCCOL), Dr. Reza Mansoor (President of the IAGH), and Bishop John Selders (Senior Minister of Amistad UCC). It will be an opportunity for travelers to reflect on how Islam and Christianity both speak to the condition of refugees (Jesus and Mohammed were themselves both refugees). It will also be an opportunity to learn about and to experience places sacred to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, while also learning from the wisdom and expertise of fellow travelers. In addition, there will be an optional extension to Jordan, where we'll have an opportunity to witness the refugee situation in a different country, while also visiting historic sites such as Petra and the Wadi Rum. Travel dates are January 2-14 (Palestine and Israel only) or through January 18 with the Jordan extension. The cost for this journey is \$2100 for double occupancy and \$450 additional for a single room. Cost of the extension is \$700 for double occupancy and \$200 additional for single. Contact Mary Tomassetti, Tree of Life Executive Director for more details, at mary@tolef.org.

Tree of Life News

The Partnership Co-Op Annual Holiday Sale

Thursday, December 7th – Sunday, December 17th

Featuring Native American crafts, Haitian art and Palestinian goods

Join us for our Grand Opening Reception Thursday, December 7th 6pm - 8pm

Wine, snacks and a raffle on Main Street in Old Saybrook!

264 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

(the old Southern Exposure building located between Cartier Optical and Nail Spa)

Storefront hours:

Opening Reception Thursday, December 7th 6pm – 8pm

Friday's, December 8th & 15th 10am – 6pm

Saturday's, December 9th & 16th 10am – 6pm

Sunday's, December 10th & 17th 11am – 5pm

The Partnership Co-operative is a collection of several non-profit organizations based out of the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme. All proceeds are returned to the artisans of the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, participating Haitian artists and the Tree of Life Educational Fund.

To learn more about our collective of non-profits, please visit our websites.

Tribal Crafts, Inc. featuring Lakota art and crafts: www.tribalcrafts.org

The Crosby Fund for Haitian Education: www.crosbyfund.org

Tree of Life Educational Fund: www.tolef.org

Help Us Lift a TON off the Backs of Others . . .

Help the next generation of Palestinian students achieve university educations and support Palestinian organic farmers maintain their orchard and their crops during the Occupation.

Tree of Life Educational Fund at FCCOL has just unloaded ONE TON of the first fruits of the summer olive harvest: the remarkable, tasty, prize-winning, organic OLIVE OIL produced by the Al'Ard farmer co--operative based in the Nablus region.

ToLEF sells 750 ml bottles for \$25: half supports the Fund's university scholarship program, and a quarter directly supports the farmers in the regional agricultural co-op; the balance covers shipping, customs, US distributor over-head—nothing to FCCOL or ToLEF.

There may be cheaper olive oils at your local grocer. None as tasty! None support Palestinian university educations as ours does! Get your olive oil at FCCOL from the office, or at the Tribal Crafts Partnership Room during Fellowship Hour.

Each bottle comes with an attractive gift bag, produced for us in Palestine. Don't take another boring bottle of wine to a holiday gathering! Take a bottle of our wonderful Al'Ard organic olive oil and help spread the word! **You** can change the flavor of this world, one bottle at a time. (For special holiday discounts on case-lots, email westbrooknicholas@gmail.com.)

ToLEF also has available **za'atar** (the ubiquitous Middle Eastern spice for everything—tastes sort-of like oregano), and **olive oil soaps** in hard bar and squirt-bottle form.

Adult Enrichment Programs

BOOK STUDY

We'll meet on *Sunday, January 7th*, following the 11 am worship service to discuss The Book of Joy: conversations with the Dali Lama and Desmond Tutu, edited by Douglas Carlton. This is a delightful little book chronicling conversations between these two faith leaders – conversations about some of life's challenges and joys, and the ways in which their faith has guided their living. Perhaps this is a good book to consider as a Christmas gift! Martha Beaudoin and Carleen will lead the discussions. You are surely welcome even if you haven't read the book! 12 noon in the church library, January 7th. A Christmas book recommendation from the Environmental folks: The Water Will Come by Jeff Goodell. This recently released book sheds light on the effect rising seas will have on our coastlines, cities, and communities. A good read on an important subject!

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

This fall Becky Crosby will lead a study on the life and teachings of the Apostle Paul through his letters and the Book of Acts and discover how he shaped Christianity and transformed Jesus into the Messiah. To accompany and guide our study, we will read A.N. Wilson's book, "Paul: The Mind of the Apostle." The book can easily be purchased on-line. **Bible Study is on Thursdays at 10:45** in the church's Library, and we will meet every Thursday until December 21st, when we will break for Christmas. Please bring your own Bible (all translations are welcome). If you don't own a Bible, we have plenty to share. Led by Becky Crosby.

WRITING FROM THE SPIRIT

The writing group meets on alternate Wednesdays on December 13 & 27 at 4:00 pm in the Hoag Room. Led by Vicky Murphy. All are welcome!

POETRY READING

The Poetry-reading group meets on Alternate Wednesdays on December 6 and 20 at 4:00 pm in the Hoag Room. Led by Alan Bradford. All are welcome!

ADULT FORUMS

December 3 - Dr. David & Cary Walker reckoning with the changes in our lives.

December 10 - Write a letter, save a life. The Amnesty International chapter at the high school will be in Fellowship Hall after both services to hold the annual Write 4 Rights campaign here at FCCOL. Please join us as we learn about several of the world's most urgent human rights cases and how you can help with the simple act of writing a letter. Last year we sent out over 400 letters and gave a voice to those who have none. Please join us this year to make a life-changing difference together.

December 17 - Handel's MESSIAH: Come for live performances of excerpts from Handel's well know "Messiah" by "our own" Carleen Gerber, Simon Holt, Lisa Feltes and Brian Cheney. It will be informative and fun, and you can even sing along!

GROWING THROUGH GRIEF GROUP

Friday, December 8, 10:00 a.m. in the Hoag Parlor

CARE-GIVER'S SUPPORT GROUP

Friday, December 15, 10:00 a.m. in the Hoag Parlor

Seeking Employment:

Ironing: Yaldiz Hamou, who with the rest of her delightful family continue to settle into life as Old Lyme residents (a welcome change from their previous challenges in Syria), is happy to welcome your ironing needs into her non-smoking home. Please feel free to contact her directly for further details at 860-389-2788.

American Craftsmen need America's help. Let me restore your family heirloom as a furniture maker of 33 years. My work includes restoration of antiques, work on cherished family pieces, and general furniture repair. As well, my passion is designing and building fine furniture: large and small pieces include dining and side tables, beds, benches, and chairs; religious pieces, pet coffins, etc. Please contact Dick Humphreville at 860-442-5003 or www.humphrevillefurniture.com.

Experienced master carpenter, licensed and insured, looking for work. Call Tom Kratzert at 860-271-9633.

Home Designer Design & drawing from concept to construction documents for new homes, additions, and renovations. Servicing home owners, builders, and architects. Other services include drawings to help sell a house, develop & present an idea. Computer aided using DATA CAD 12 - 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional. David S Nelson-Building Design Service 860 434-5526 DSNdesign@comcast.net.

Handyman Service Light Carpentry, Installation Help, Painting, Seasonal & Holiday Preparation and Light Hauling. I have an enclosed pick-up truck, tools and a shop. If you need something done, just give me a call. Dave Nelson 860 434-5526.

The "Pet Nanny" Carol Giuliano, an Old Lyme resident, will provide loving care for your pets when you are not there. Over forty years experience with all types of animals. Call (203) 738-9932.

Paul Fitzpatrick-Nager Experienced master carpenter. Will design and build comfort zones for your home, indoors and out. Patios, pergolas and more. Call me anytime at 860-304-9916 or 860-434-4366.

Weaving Classes Always wanted to learn to weave? Start by weaving a rag rug on Stephanie Morton's ENORMOUS loom in her Lyme studio. Call her at 860-434-1188 or 917-3429.

Wendy Knight – Organizer, writer, researcher, editor, proofreader Happy to work on any project, big or small, update lists, prepare mailings. Also love to sort and organize closets, cabinets, libraries, photos, files and documents. Please contact Wendy Knight anytime at (860) 304 – 6665 or wendyknight@gmail.com.

Sue Mandeville Transportation and/or accompaniment to professional or medical appointments, outpatient surgeries and home stay following anesthesia. Airport, train or bus transport. Livery license, insured, references and medical training. Call Sue Mandeville 860-908-2310.

Lorelei Mitchell Mediator, Lorelei Mitchell, is available to assist with family dilemmas, landlord-tenant disputes or workplace conflict. Mediation is a better alternative to litigation and can often transform relationships, while giving you a say in the outcome. Call Lorelei Mitchell at (860) 536-0260 or email lmitchell18@comcast.net to schedule a consultation.

Guli Gvelesiani I lived in Old Lyme and worked for 7 years as a live-in caregiver for a church family. I am seeking a new full time, live-in position with a caring family. I can provide references. Please call Guli at 860-391-5691.

We periodically receive requests to post notice of people who can be hired to help transport, help in light housekeeping or help by offering companionship to those who are housebound. We are not able to make recommendations; but their names and number are listed below.

Marilyn Taylor 860-373-1789

Marion Campo 860-389-1872

Driver 203-871-7840

Martha Durfee 860-575-6518

Sissy Stinson 860-308-4756

December 2017

December 2017							January 2018						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
31							29	30	31				

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov 26	27	28	29	30	Dec 1	2
9:00am Service 10:00am Forum (S) 11:00am 11 AM Service 12:00pm New Members	LBS Luncheon Set Up 9:30am BOS (L) Mailing 7:00pm AA (S)	9:30am Staff Mtg 12:00pm LBS Luncheon 1:00pm AA Day Mtg (S) 1:30pm Music School	BOS 2nd Mailing 4:00pm Poetry Group 5:00pm Children's Choir 7:30pm Sr Choir (S)	Partnership Co-Op Holiday Sale - 12/17 9:30am BOS (S) 10:45am Bible Study (L)	EW Set Up (F) 1:00pm Haitian Ed (L)	FP/SK MM 9:00am Elephants In 1:00pm Katz Memorial
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:00am Service (Sunday) 10:00am Forum (S) 10:30am Gifts Made 11:00am 11 AM Service	7:00pm AA (S)	9:30am Staff Mtg 1:00pm AA Day Mtg (S) 1:30pm Music School 7:30pm Trustees (L)	4:00pm Writing Group (H) 5:00pm Children's Choir 7:30pm Sr Choir (S)	10:45am Bible Study (L)	10:00am Care Group (H) 5:00pm Christmas Party FCCOL (F&S)	FP/SK
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9:00am Service (Sunday) 10:00am Forum (S) 11:00am 11 AM Service 2:00pm Pageant (F&M)	7:00pm AA (S)	9:30am Staff Mtg 1:00pm AA Day Mtg (S) 1:30pm Music School (M)	4:00pm Poetry Group 5:00pm Children's Choir 6:00pm Pac 27 (F) 7:30pm Sr Choir (S)	10:45am Bible Study (L)	JANUARY NL DEADLINE	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve 5:00, 8:00 & 10:00 Services 11:00am 11 AM Service	CHRISTMAS DAY 7:00pm AA (S)	1:00pm AA Day Mtg (S)			9:30am NL Fold (S)	
31	Jan 1, 18	2	3	4	5	6
Carleen Organist 11:00am 11 AM Service (No Choir)						

The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme

**Our email address has changed.
The new email address is fccol@fccol.org**

Staff

The Rev. Dr. Steven R. Jungkeit, Senior Minister (860-434-8686)

The Rev. Carleen R. Gerber, Senior Associate Minister (860-434-0058)

The Rev. Joan W. Priest, Minister of Visitation

Simon D. Holt, Director of Music (860-705-3037)

The Rev. David W. Good, Minister Emeritus

The Rev. Rebecca T. Crosby, Minister for Haitian Outreach

Thomas Burke (4th year Yale Divinity School student) serves as minister to the South Lyme Union Chapel

The Rev. Cynthia C. Willauer, In Ministry for The Care of Creation

Lisa Doggart, Church School Leader

Mary Tomassetti, Assistant to Youth and Family Ministries(860-391-5384)

Lisa Doggart, Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Leader

Lisa Feltes, Director of Children's Music (860-691-2226)

Robert McCracken, Church Administrator

Joan Kelley, Church Office Manager

Teri Gedrys, Bookkeeper

Mark Testori, Sexton

Church Office Tel: 860-434-8686

Fax: 860-434-1135

e-mail: fccol@fccol.org

Website: www.fccol.org

Sunday Worship - 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.

Summer Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m. (June 4 to September 3)

South Lyme Union Chapel Worship - 9:00 a.m.

Pastoral Counseling Center Tel: 860-767-0221

Candace E. Wilson-Stanberry, MSN

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OLD LYME,

Member U.C.C.

The reproduction of our Meetinghouse on the cover is from a sketch by William Steeves.

*The First Congregational Church
2 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371*

U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #7
Old Saybrook, CT
Non-Profit Organization

*The next FCCOL Newsletter will be in January; the deadline will be December 15.
If possible, please send articles by e-mail as a Word document, fccol@fccol.org.*

THE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS HELP FROM ALL OF US

Whenever you come to church....worship, church events, meetings, or just to visit....

PLEASE bring some non-perishable food items each time to restock the food pantry.

Please let us know if you have some time to volunteer at the food pantry and/or with food drives.

THANKS!

Please e-mail the church office at [<fccol@fccol.org>](mailto:fccol@fccol.org) if you want to be removed from the newsletter mailing list and read it on the website. Each household that can read the newsletter on (and print from) the website rather than receive it by mail will save the church \$5.17 each and every year. We will ask for your e-mail address so we can alert you when the new issue is available on our website. Thanks for your help!