

## FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD – March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b>  1pm-2:30 Book Group 6pm-7:30 QCRR Volunteer Meeting <b>7pm Ash Wednesday Worship Service</b>	<b>2</b>  7pm Choir	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  10am-2pm Kristin Marley Fellowship Hall Rental
<b>5</b>  8:45am – 1 <sup>st</sup> Hour Labyrinth 10:15am Worship	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>  10-Noon Staff Meeting	<b>8</b>  1pm-2:30 Book Group	<b>9</b>  7pm Choir	<b>10</b>  6pm St. Patrick's Day Dinner & Variety Show	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>  8:45 1 <sup>st</sup> Hour – Reflective Yoga 10:15am Worship 2 <sup>nd</sup> Hour – Overview of Bylaw Revision	<b>13</b>  9am –1pm Sewing & Service	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  1pm-2:30 Book Group	<b>16</b>  7pm Choir	<b>17</b>  9-Noon Set-Up for Breakfast	<b>18</b>  7am-11 Monthly Breakfast
<b>19</b>  8:45am – 1 <sup>st</sup> Hour Labyrinth 10:15am Worship	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>  7pm Ministry Leadership Team Meeting	<b>22</b>  1pm-2:30 Book Group 7pm Interfaith Working Group	<b>23</b>  7pm Choir	<b>24</b>  5pm-8:30pm Special Olympics Dinner	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>  8:45 1 <sup>st</sup> Hour – Reflective Yoga 10:15am Worship	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>  1pm-2:30 Book Group	<b>30</b>  7pm Choir	<b>31</b>	

## **FIRST CHURCH FAITH FORMATION IN MARCH**

Beloved of God,  
March 1 begins a period of time when the church prepares itself to celebrate the great mystery of our faith: that in Christ we know the fullness of life, even in the midst of death. That period of time is called "Lent" which comes from the Latin word meaning to slow down. Over the course of the next forty days, you are invited to slow down to listen and to engage in creating places of safety for transformative conversation. The readings we will be reflecting on as a community find Jesus in deep discussion with people from a wide variety of backgrounds: men and women, foreigners and neighbors, the elite and those seen as disabled. In each instance, Jesus brings transformation, healing, and new perspective to the one he encounters. As we encounter Jesus this Lent, may we too be touched with those same gifts.

### **March 1: Ash Wednesday**

We gather at 7pm to mark the beginning of Lent by recognizing our earthy-ness, our mortality, and our dependence upon God with the celebration of Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes.

### **March 5: The First Sunday in Lent**

First Hour meets at 8:45 for a time of reflective yoga with Winky Gordon in the Children's Worship Room downstairs. All are welcome; please wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat if you have one. In Worship, we listen for God's Word in Matthew 4:1-11 and Jesus' encounter with the Satan in the wilderness. The children worship with the theme, "A Day in the Wilderness" and all will celebrate the sacrament of Communion.

### **March 12: The Second Sunday in Lent**

First Hour again meets at 8:45 for a time of reflective yoga with Winky Gordon in the Children's Worship Room downstairs. In Worship, we listen for God's Word in John 3:1-17 and Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus about the need to be born anew. Our children gather with the theme, "The Night Visitor." Following Worship, the Steering Committee hosts a conversation on Bylaw Revision.

### **March 19: The Third Sunday in Lent**

In Worship we celebrate Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan Woman and her recognition of Jesus as living water in John 4:5-43. The children's Worship Circle gathers around the theme of "God's Love for All" as they collect for an international water project... bring your loose change!

### **March 26: The Fourth Sunday in Lent**

In Worship we hear of Jesus' encounter with a man born blind in John 9. Our children worship with the theme, "Seeing

Something New" and will be collecting old, gently used glasses for the Lions Club.

### ***Looking Ahead...***

April 13, Maundy Thursday Worship at 7pm

April 14, Good Friday Reflections from 12noon-3pm

April 16, Easter Sunrise Service and Worship at 10:15am

April 23, Church Family Activity Time and Pizza at Mansfield Community Center following Worship

Peace to you on your Lenten journeys, friends,  
Joe

## **REMINDER FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE:**

We have some important upcoming events that will assist us with planning for our Congregational Meeting in June. Please plan on joining us for the following discussions:

### **March 12 - Second Hour**

Review of new draft bylaws and constitution

### **April 30 Second Hour**

Review of recommended board structure and nomination process

### **June 11 Annual Meeting**

To finalize governance structure and elect vacant ministry team members and new board members

This fall the Ministry Teams, Steering Committee and elected officers had a retreat to review our behavioral covenant. As a result of recommendations from the retreat, the Steering Committee has convened a sub-committee to create a conflict resolution process/policy. Members include Louise Wright, Cheryl Chase, Jim McGaughey, Jean Bell, Howard Drescher, Bill Briggs, Julie Menard, Donna Clauson, Pat Felletter, Ann Plumley and Deb Richards.

We will be reviewing other church policies and practices, reviewing our own behavioral covenant, and reading a resource by Rev. Anita Bradshaw titled: Change & Conflict in Your Congregation (Even if You Hate Both) How to Implement Conscious Choices, Manage Emotions & Build a Thriving Christian Community. We hope to have a draft to share with members prior to the Congregational Meeting in June so watch the newsletter for opportunities to review and feel free to contact any member of the committee if you have input.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact a member of the Steering Committee:

Deb Richards, Janna Pedersen, Ava Little, Jim McGaughey, and Dave Hovorka

## ADMINISTRY

The AdMin Committee would like to thank everyone involved in the yearly budget process, with special thanks to Donna & Cheryl. It went very well this year and we were very happy with the process.

We have been working with our electrician on a few projects: first of all he took care of the final step in putting up the new sign, with great thank you to Steve Lane. We also changed out our old fuse box, so we now have a new, safer breaker box. Our next step with him is to install motion detectors on all the down stair lights both in our space and the McLaughlin space.

In April we will have a new cleaning company starting in our facilities. They will do all the cleaning that we have done now and more, including the lights in the sanctuary.

We have changed our phone and internet service provider to Charter Business. We no longer have a mandatory contract and you will not see other changes other than the faster speed of our internet.

Please feel free to contact any of us with any questions or concerns.

Jean Bell, Jo-Anne Roberts, Louise Wright

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION DINNER & VARIETY SHOW

It's almost the time again to celebrate the Irish in all of us. **Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 6pm-8pm.** Come enjoy a delicious corned beef and cabbage dinner and an entertaining program featuring fun, fiddles, and song!

The dinner and program is \$15 for adults and \$7 for children 10 and under. Call the First Church office at 423-9008 to make reservations.

Space is limited so reserve early! Best o' Luck to Ye and See Ye on St. Paddy's Day

**Volunteers Needed:** We are looking for volunteers for setup and prep work on Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from 10am-Noon and also to help serve on Friday. Please let Donna Clauson know if you are available. Donna can be reached at (860) 933-4289.

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

**One Great Hour of Sharing** collection will take place on March 26<sup>th</sup>. OGHS is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in 138 countries. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. The offering funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster related volunteer initiatives in the U.S

## SEWING & SERVICE

**Sewing & Service Hygiene Kits** - We are now working on preparing hygiene kits. We are in need of the following items:

- Hand towels
- Wash Cloths
- Band-Aids (1 inch)
- Large Tooth Combs
- Nail Clippers
- Toothbrushes (individually packaged)
- Soap (bath size and individually packaged).

A collection box for these items at the front of Fellowship Hall near Joe's office.

## SAVE THE DATE! COVENANT SOUP KITCHEN

When I consulted with Jan Czikowsky, who is the new kitchen manager after Pam Roger's retirement, it became apparent that many other area churches had already scheduled earlier Saturdays to offer their time and prepare lunch.

**Therefore, our church will be providing and serving lunch on August 12<sup>th</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 1:30pm.** The menu has not yet been decided. So if anyone has menu suggestions or the time to help on either day, please let me know. The clipboard to sign up to volunteer or donate money will be available closer to summer. Thank you, Molly Fish

## THIRD SATURDAY BREAKFAST

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday breakfast will continue on March 18<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. The cost for breakfast is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$5 for children under the age of 12.

Please consider joining a fun group of volunteers to help prepare, cook, serve, and clean-up from a wonderful selection of **GOOD MORNING GOODNESS** that includes the following:

- A Variety of Omelets
- Your choice of eggs (scrambled, over easy, medium, or hard)
- Sausage
- Potatoes
- Pancakes
- Fruit
- Juice
- Coffee/Tea

Third Saturday breakfast is a wonderful way to have fellowship together so consider inviting a friend or neighbor to our table.

We have purchased new signs to place around the area and if you have a favorite bulletin board, we have posters available if you would like to distribute.

A huge thanks to last month's volunteers:

Laurel Thurman  
Jim McGaughey  
John Fisher  
Jack, Donna & John Clauson  
Maryann Baker  
Ava Little  
Diane Wright  
Wes & Jean Bell  
Sharon Foster-Chalecki  
Carol Tetzlaff  
Julie Menard  
Winston Hawkins  
Julia Sherman

To all our wonderful bakers, thank you for filling our bake sale table with your wonderful homemade baked goods.

## FIRST CHURCH INFORMATION YOU NEED

- We are a **Tuna Church!** This means you are invited to put a can of tuna fish into the net bag in Fellowship Hall every once in a while. We're committed to providing 30 cans of tuna each month to our local food banks, so add a can of tuna to your shopping list. Your help is greatly appreciated! Please look for dolphin-safe tuna. It is better for all God's creatures! Also, please be aware when purchasing tuna that Greenpeace indicates that Chicken of the Sea brand uses destructive fishing practices. We are also collecting canned fruit.
- **Care Cards:** Each week we suggest several people or groups who might be strengthened with notes of caring prayer and love. Stationery is provided. We invite you to take a quick minute during fellowship time to write a note, put the recipient's name on the envelope and leave it on the table to be mailed Monday morning. Thank you for this demonstration of our connectedness and love!
- **Haven't heard your favorite hymn in a while?** Let Ann know what it is and she'll try to work it into a worship service sometime soon.
- **Reminder:** if you need to reach Pastor Ann or Pastor Joe for an emergency, please call their cell phones: **Ann - 781-223-4914 and Joe - 608-354-3686**. Emails and texts are also another quick way to get in touch with them. They check office messages on days they are at church and irregularly on other days.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

### March

03/06	CAROL FINEOUT
03/13	KATHY FISHER JED LANE
03/20	CATHIE ROWE
03/21	MARK MESSIER
03/26	PETER DART

Dear QCRR Supporters:

Much has happened since the January meeting, especially in the wake of the President's January 27 executive order barring entrance to all refugees for 120 days. As a result, as of the meeting date of 2/1, there was currently no chance of our accepting a new refugee family before that time, as is explained in the IRIS update below (see IV). Our Feb. 1 meeting focused on our ambiguous situation and what steps we plan to take as a result. We are currently unsure how Judge Robart's block of Trump's refugee and immigration ban will affect our situation and will wait on IRIS for word.

Facilitator Julie Menard opened the meeting of 32 attendees at 6:00 pm, and, following introductions, Julie announced that the new volunteer coordinator for our next refugee family will be Jimmy Documet Clarke, who has been working with the first family.

#### **I. ESL UPDATE**

ESL volunteer coordinator Sarah Renn noted that the mother of our family has gotten a job, which has alleviated weekly paperwork for documenting her ESL requirements (proof of 35 hours of job training or searching, including ESL, weekly). With their work schedules, neither the mother nor father can take the library ESL courses. The parents are now just learning English through our tutors. The father's training is mostly focused on driver's ed. for passing the CT tests, still a vital motivation for the father in learning English. The father has another driver's test 2/20. Ev Hyde has been trying to get practice questions from State of CT in English, but this has proved difficult, even after consulting the DMV. ESL volunteer Ev reported that he has a record of costs for getting a license so it can be given to a reimbursement program through EastConn.

Some good news is that a friend of the mother's in New Haven, a Syrian who's been here many years, started an online tutorial for Syrian refugees in CT. The mother now learns English also by using this friend's tutorials through a "What's App" on her mobile phone for a couple hours a day.

Barb Giardina and Sarah Renn have been discussing getting more resources together for ESL tutor volunteers in preparation for our next family. They may hold weekend training sessions and collect resources from first set of tutors for distribution.

#### **II. EMPLOYMENT UPDATE**

Employment Coordinator Jen Stone reported that our family's mother is excited to be employed 15 hrs./week as a cafeteria helper at a Mansfield public school, where she is well-liked. The parents' employment has also alleviated QCRR rent expenses--a plus.

When we have a new family, we'll need an employment coordinator for them. Craig Smith has offered to do the computer/behind the scenes work for the position, but **we still need his counterpart** who will have more contact with the family.

The family spends a great deal of time outside work learning English, and so weekend time in New Haven with Syrian and Kurdish friends there is a welcome break on weekends. They are not currently looking for more work on the weekends, though this would be an option in the future.

The calendar coordinator has now adapted the system to allow for more independence, and she now reviews the schedule with the mother closer to once a week rather than daily.

#### **III. VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR UPDATE.**

Libby Scott, usually in charge of QCRR technology, served as volunteer coordinator for in the temporary absence of Charlotte Geniez. Libby noted to the group that we will send out a new volunteer form to QCRR volunteers before we get another family to collect more accurate info on availability and transportation means. [QCRRCT@gmail.com](mailto:QCRRCT@gmail.com) and [QCRR411@gmail.com](mailto:QCRR411@gmail.com) will be the e-mails used to send it out. Core team members will start using QCRR titled gmail accounts with core team roles in the addresses. These will be easily transferrable to new core team members and will be better for seeking answers from the relevant core team leaders.

#### **IV. IRIS UPDATE**

QCRR Co-leader Steve Lane reported IRIS interactions. In early January, we were trying to get a family here before the 20<sup>th</sup>. We were offered a Pashto speaking family but couldn't locate a Pashto speaker in time, and the family was located elsewhere. Then we were offered Farsi speakers, with the same situation arising. As IRIS receives refugees in 2-week cycles, we missed that cycle. Since then, we have been able to compile small lists of speakers of the languages IRIS said might be needed: **Pashto, French,**

**Farsi, Dari, and Swahili. We need to find even more. If you know of anyone who speaks these and might be interested in our cause, contact Julie Menard or Steve Lane.**

Steve explained to the group that, without a stay on the presidential executive order, we have no chance of getting a refugee family before the 120 days of the ban is up. While some refugees are being released even after the ban, it is only those 800 who had sold all their belongings, forfeited their housing, and were totally poised to leave for the US. Those 800 are already committed to sponsor groups. They're split among 350 relocation agencies in the US, so perhaps only a few are coming to CT.

Steve also reported that, according to IRIS, 26,000 refugees were currently in the pipeline. As of 2/1, those are on hold. The US has brought in 25,000 since October. The Trump administration has lowered the number of refugees from 110,000 last fiscal year to 50,000 this year. IRIS is lobbying for more.

Steve reported **that the house is about 80% ready** with the 20% remaining being beds that we don't want to obtain until we know the number of the family arriving. Bedding will be needed.

Good news: the IRIS race for Refugees in New Haven on 2/5 closed due to the exceptional number of participants. However, to accommodate the high interest and turnout for the event, organizers have planned a March for Refugees starting at Wilbur Cross High School and ending at the New Haven Green. See [irisct.org](http://irisct.org) for more information.

## V. **MOVING FORWARD**

Co-leader Ann Plumley clarified that, while we're in a state of ambiguity, we plan to pay the lease on our rental house for another month (at \$1100/month + minimal utilities). We're going to invite fundraisers, possibly a "Rent Party." Outgoing money has slowed since first family is employed, and we're not pinched. So far fundraising has happened in a variety of ways. We're relying on IRIS for information on what to expect, even if generally. If it becomes apparent our family will be delayed beyond a certain point, we will relinquish the house if the renter will allow us to break the lease. A reminder that all checks should be addressed to WAIM with QCRR in the memo line.

Ann reminded us that, behind the scenes, the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry functions as our treasurer. They accept, segment, and disburse money on our behalf. **Now it's time to solidify the relationship to protect both our organizations.** This will bring us more into alignment with what the IRS expects of people in this fiscal-sponsorship relationship. Ann reports that we're drafting the agreement now with the help of an experienced consultant to nonprofit boards. We'll be changing the PO Box address for contributions and directions about how checks be written in the future. **We're also professionalizing and standardizing our relationship with WAIM by paying them a percentage of our donations.**

We're going to be gathering info on political events, interfaith dialogue, hospitality, immigrant and refugee issues as well. There are certain things we can't do as a non-profit, but **we can advocate for social justice and services that are part of our mission, such as refugee and some immigrant issues, interfaith dialogue, and hospitality.** Within the rough area of the Quiet Corner, we want to know what's going on in these areas. **Let Jen Stone know at [jstone77@gmail.com](mailto:jstone77@gmail.com).** She'll coordinate the info, and Jen Beck will send it out to the listserv. Regularly.

Jen Stone, who put together a chart of political representatives to call and distributed these, noted these events:

1. Sun. 2/5, IRIS is having a fundraising race and a March for refugees.
2. Thurs., 2/9, 6-8 at the Fitch House, 563 Storrs Rd., there will be a gathering to talk about people might like to respond to not only the refugee situation, but to what's going on in Washington.
3. Every Fri., from 5-6 PM, people will be standing in solidarity at the corner of Main and Jackson Streets in Willimantic across from Frog Bridge.

Pam Roberts is running an advocacy table at all Storrs Congregational Church Events

**An important note: Ann has produced a list of QCRR leaders**, to show "who's in charge of what" to make it easier to contact the person in charge if you have a task to do for the family and need answers. **If you would like this list, please e-mail Jen Beck at [jenbeck411@gmail.com](mailto:jenbeck411@gmail.com).** The new gmail QCRR addresses will be listed there in the future.

Ann reminded that we have a speaker's bureau to present on the QCRR. Ann will also be updating our brochure so that it reflects our now more ambiguous situation.

## **VI. FUNDRAISING UPDATE**

Facilitator Julie Menard reported on the month's fundraisers. Amy Marwood organized the Tuesday Saints concert at Studio 88 in Willimantic, where about 40 people came; it raised \$625. Thank you to Amy Marwood and her friend for renting the space. Studio 88 is a lovely, ideal space for musical and fundraising gatherings and is very reasonable to rent for an evening.

E.O. Smith High School's Amnesty International group had their after-exams coffee house. They raised \$370 for QCRR. The students also gave lovely talks about their feelings about what's going on.

Julie emphasized that all should feel free to do their own fundraisers (anything legal) and we'll support you in it.

In closing, Julie noted that we're talking about doing another volunteer training session when appropriate. Jen Beck will send out any announcement of that once it's organized.

Thank you to all who support this vital mission in this trying time. We know we will welcome another family and look forward to that day with great hope and energy.

In hope and peace,  
Jen Beck  
QCRR Communications Coordinator

**THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD (UCC)  
(CONGREGATIONAL)**

**Ministers**

All the People of the Church

**Pastors**

Rev. Ann Plumley & Rev. Joseph Blotz

**Music Director**

Cathie Rowe

**Organist**

Erik Haeger

**Office Administrator**

Wendy O'Connor

**Childcare Provider**

Emely Salman

**Church Office Hours**

Tuesday - Friday. 9am-1pm – Closed Mondays

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