

Saugatuck Congregational Church is one busy Church

- May 15 Welcomed 6 new members, baptizing one*
- 22 Story Tent Sunday*
- 29 Fellowship Hour at Evergreen Cemetery*
- June 5 Confirmation Sunday*
- 11 Troop 36 will hold Eagle Scout Court of Honor*
- 12 Recognition of High School Seniors*
Ice Cream Social
Frank Basler's Ordination
Women's Spirituality
- 26 Reception for Linda Bruce (also*
Preaching)
Summer Beach Service
- 27 High School Youth Group Mission*
Trip to Cuba June 27-July 2, 2016

June Herald



All Day Long

By Pastor Alison

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised! – Psalm 113:3

Every year, about mid-June, it happens. I tell my children it's time to get ready for bed. "But it's still light out!" they protest. I glance out the kitchen window; they are right, of course. The clock tells me the day must be coming to a close, but the sun still shimmers above the tree tops. It is summer, when we all want to linger outside just a little longer: dabble toes in the water or play one more round of whiffle ball; linger over a picnic dinner or prolong an absorbing conversation with a friend. These extra hours of daylight are one of summer's treasures.

What will you do with those hours, this season? Some of us will take vacation; others may work long past sunset every day. Until July 5th, Our Muslim sisters and brothers will observe Ramadan, during which many Muslims fast from sunup to sundown. I just listened to a set of interviews on "the delights and gravity of Islam's holiest month." It is a beautiful collection of testimonies about what it's like to praise God from the rising of the sun to its setting (to quote Psalm 113). Those who fasted said they felt more connected to God and more compassionate toward those who suffer hunger every day. (You can listen to this and other excellent interviews on a range of topics with Krista Tippett at www.onbeing.org.)

Perhaps we could all use part of these longer days to draw closer to the Divine. Give thanks to the Creator of sun, sea and sand and honor the Author of all our days. Dust off a favorite book of prose or poetry; play your favorite music – whatever makes your soul sigh and your heartstrings quiver; whatever it is that helps you to connect with the Sacred. Check out www.5minpraycation.com for daily musical clips designed to offer a five minute "praycation." Maybe even read a psalm. Below are a couple of good ones for summer: verses from Psalm 65 (as paraphrased in Eugene Peterson's *The Message*,) and Psalm 33 (Inclusive Version). I'm also including two beautiful verses by the Muslim poet Rumi (from *The Essential Rumi*, Translations by Coleman Barks). Is there a word or a phrase that resonates? Consider carrying it with you, to repeat throughout the day.

Rumi:

*The morning wind spreads its fresh smell.
We must get up and take that in,
That wind that lets us live.
Breathe before it's gone.*

*Today, like every day, we wake up empty
And frightened. Don't open the door to
the study
And begin reading. Take down a musical
instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and
kiss the ground.*

Psalm 33:1-9

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous.

Praise befits the upright.

² Praise the LORD with the lyre; make melody to God with the harp of ten strings.

³ Sing to God a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is upright, and all God's work is done in faithfulness.

⁵ God loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of God's mouth.

⁷ God gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe.

⁹ For God spoke, and it came to be; God commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalm 65:9-13

Oh [God], visit the earth,
ask her to join the dance!
Deck her out in spring showers,
fill the God-River with living water.
Paint the wheat fields golden.
Creation was made for this!
Drench the plowed fields,
soak the dirt clods
With rainfall as harrow and rake
bring her to blossom and fruit.
Snow-crown the peaks with splendor,
scatter rose petals down your paths,
All through the wild meadows, rose petals.
Set the hills to dancing,
Dress the canyon walls with live sheep,
a drape of flax across the valleys.
Let them shout, and shout, and shout!
Oh, oh, let them sing!



Whether at the beach or in our Saugatuck Church sanctuary; in your work or in your play; far away or close to home: this summer, may you find ways to praise God all day long!

Blessings,

Rev. Alison J. Buttrick Patton



Here's the full summer beach schedule:

June 26 – Methodist Church

July 3 – Greens Farms – with communion

July 10 – Methodist Church

July 17 – Saugatuck Church - Pastor Alison Preaching

July 24 – Wilton Congregational Church

July 31 – Norfield Congregational Church

Aug 7 – Saugatuck Church – with communion & Pivot Ministry Choir- Rev. Willie Salmond Preaching

Aug 14 - Wilton Congregational Church

Aug 21 – Norfield Congregational Church

Aug 28 – Greens Farms Congregational Church

Or join us for worship at 10:30 am in the cool of Saugatuck's sanctuary through July (childcare will be provided)

New Members at Saugatuck on May 15th



Welcome to our newest members!

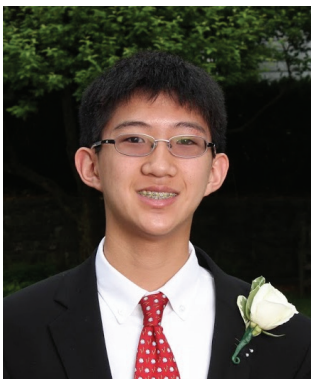
Matt & Michelle D'Auria (missing from the photo is baby girl Corinne Isabella D'Auria born in March.)

Doug Wyse, a Midwesterner by birth and commuter to NYC, married, 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren.

David Skow and Rafael Chui, with 11 year old twin boys, Jason and Jordan, who are in the 6th grade at Bedford Middle School. David and Rafael have been together for 19 years and have lived in Westport for the last 11 years.

Lillian Goss, mother of Holly Betts and Diane Farrell, was a teacher in the Westport Schools. She earned a Master's in Special Education and worked with special education students in Vermont schools for ten years.

Confirmands and Mentors



Testimony Given by Xavier Blyden at the 10AM Worship Service, June 19th

Xavier is concluding his brief internship with Saugatuck Congregational Church. He has been participating in the Thinking About Working for God (TAWFG) Apprenticeship Program of the CT Conference, UCC, Thank you Xavier!

Good Morning,

My name is Xavier Blyden and right now I'm very sleepy and skeptical. What I really mean is that everyday when I wake up, I hear something that is contrary to what I see.

My GPS says:

In 1000 feet, take the exit right, 48B, Wright Street. But as I approach the exit, I find out that it actually doesn't exist. Or I hear, You would be a great model. But I look at myself and think, oh, you must be talking about that person behind me. Because someone called me. Is my only response to those things, in addition to being sleepy and skeptical. Are you sure that you aren't requesting me? No, not a request. You must be asking me for a favor then. Nope, not a favor. A call.

There is a difference between a request, a favor, and a call. I'll break it down. Someone calls my cell phone and says, Hey! Xavier. Would it be possible for you to come in to work at five o'clock? A request. This question prompts a yes or no answer. With a possible explanation. Let's say that Someone calls my cell phone and says, Hey! Xavier. Can you come in to work at five o'clock for me. Something serious came up and I need to call out today. Asking for a favor. This question prompts a yes or no answer. With little to no explanation and well wishes. But, this is what is going on, Someone calls my cell phone and says, Hey! Xavier. You would be perfect for a job at five o'clock. See you then.

No address. No directions.

No information. But a feeling.

That's a call. I know that I wouldn't have just spontaneously arrived at my church in Bridgeport - had a selection of experiences and challenges for no reason. And go to Defiance college to study the world and religion. And apply for a program that brought me to the top welcoming hub in New England, Here in Saugatuck. I'm still sleepy and skeptical but I know that I'm doing what I should be now. And I know that because I'm not being requested, or asked to return a favor, I'm being called.

Peace, Xavier



A Message from the Pastor

Five Responses to the Orlando Shootings

Dear Members and Friends of Saugatuck Church, On Sunday, as our faith community was celebrating several special events - baptism, graduation, ordination - news of the devastating mass shooting in Orlando, FL was breaking. Having listened and prayed over the last three days, I offer these responses. I believe that as a faith community convinced of God's unequivocal love, we are called to:

- 1) Lift up prayers of lament for all those whose lives have been shattered, prayers for comfort and for the powerful felt presence of God in this darkest valley.
- 2) Stand with and offer our heart-felt prayers and support to all those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), knowing that hate crimes feel like a sickening punch in the gut to all members of that community. In the face of fear, let us make a clear and unequivocal statement in support of human dignity and love.
- 3) Stand with the Muslim community, which is again under fire, because of the inhuman acts of one man; rigorously insist on separating extremism from the faithful practice of Islam.
- 4) Repent the ways we have contributed to a climate that diminishes the value of our LGBT sisters and brothers; remain vigilant for opportunities to unmask bigotry, confront bullying, and dismantle stereotypes that deny people the freedom to be themselves; learn to speak openly about human sexuality and gender identity - ask honest questions, do the homework, and make these conversations part of healthy human living (not dirty, shameful or taboo).
- 5) Refuse to be silent, except when listening deeply to those who are most directly impacted by the violence. In that case, honor what they have to say.

Will you join me?

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

Grace and Peace,

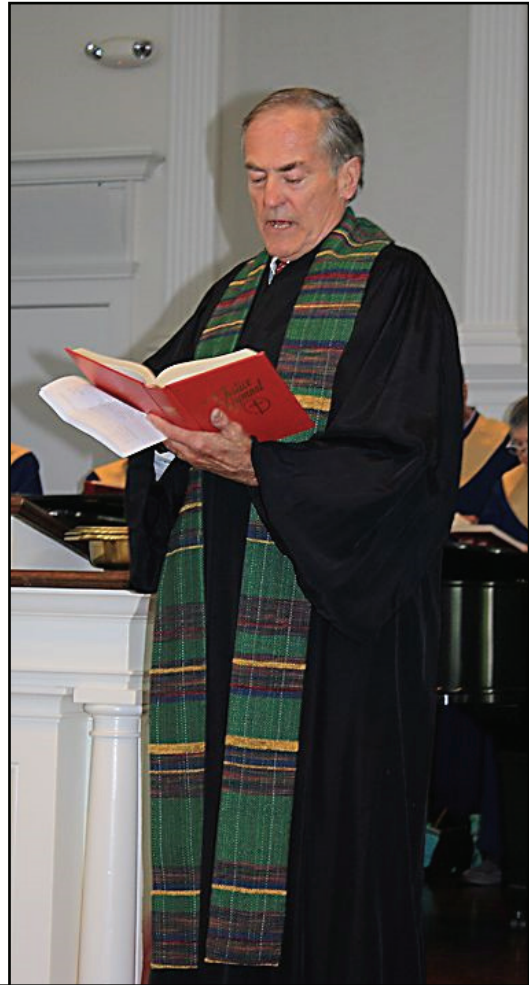
The Rev. Alison J. B. Patton



Orlando Vigil held in Norwalk, Connecticut on June 6, 2016. Photo by David Vita, Westport Unitarian Church

**Meet the Reverend Frank Basler
Ridgebury Congregational Church
Ridgefield CT 06877-1111**

**The Connecticut Conference of the
United Church of Christ
& the Fairfield West Association
Cordially invite your presence
for the ordination to the Christian
ministry of
Frank Basler
Sunday, June 12, at two o'clock in
the afternoon at
Saugatuck Congregational Church
245 Post Road East
Westport, Connecticut**



“God put me in this seat next to you.”

Recently I read a news report that Dr. Henry Heimlich had used his lifesaving abdomen-squeezing maneuver on an 87 year old woman who was choking during dinner at their senior residence community in Cincinnati. Dr. Heimlich who is 96, and still very active and in good health, said it was the first time he had actually used the technique he developed in 1974 to save a life.

Patty Ris, the 87 year old who had been choking said she found herself by chance at Dr. Heimlich's table. She was new to the facility and the dining room was at full capacity of 125. She said " I just sat down, bit into a hamburger, and next thing I knew I could not breathe I was choking so hard." Dr. Heimlich said he turned to start conversation and saw her face stiffen, her skin turning dark, and she could not speak. " I knew she was choking so I stood up, moved behind her chair, made a fist, and put my arms around her." He placed the thumb side of his fist just above the belly button and below the chest to compress the air in her lungs. "I did it 3 times and a piece of meat with a little bone flew out of her mouth." Color returned to her face and everyone went back to eating.



Since the technique was developed by Dr. Heimlich in 1974, it is estimated that 100,000 people owe their lives to this lifesaving maneuver.

Dr. Heimlich said he saw Ms. Ris the next day when she again sat next to him in the dining hall. Ms. Ris said she wrote him a thank you note saying " God put me in this seat next to you."

As I reflected on her wonderful expression of gratitude, I wondered about who had God put next to me at times, or conversely who did he put me next to, and why?

I thought of occasions in my life when circumstances put me in contact with someone that I barely knew, but something transpired that made the contact much more meaningful. One such situation happened some years when I was working on an important and complex business transaction. During the course of the work I was introduced to an investment banker named Alan. Our relationship was all business, but at some time during our work together I became aware that his 8 year old son had a life-threatening cancer. We never really talked about it as our time together was focused on business.

Several months later, our daughter Connie who was 4 had an ear infection. Despite several trips to her pediatrician and prescriptions for antibiotics the infection persisted. The day before Thanksgiving Sara's parents were arriving from Montana so I took Connie back to her pediatrician at NYU Medical Center. He did some blood tests and said I'd like you to see another doctor upstairs. We went upstairs for more tests, and Sara arrived just in time to hear the specialist say " I believe your daughter has leukemia; we need to hospitalize her immediately and begin treatment. "

Needless to say we were devastated by the diagnosis and somewhat overwhelmed by what was ahead. Sara took our daughters Elizabeth (2 years) and Alexandra (3 months), and her parents back home to New Jersey. I stayed with Connie at the hospital. The next day was Thanksgiving and about 8:00 am, Alan the investment banker and his 8 year old son appeared in Connie's hospital room. It turned out that the doctor who diagnosed Connie the previous afternoon made the connection between Alan and me based on a brief conversation about my work. The doctor was also the pediatric oncologist treating Adam. He called Alan, told him about Connie, and they came to see us immediately.

Alan and I went for breakfast in the hospital cafeteria while Connie and Adam hung out together. The comfort of having someone to talk to who had been through what we were dealing with was enormously reassuring that we, too, would get through this. It also began a friendship and bond that endured. Connie's road to recovery was rough especially during the early months of treatment. Alan was a regular visitor to Connie while she was in the hospital, and Adam was a fun diversion for Connie during some challenging days.

The connections may not always be dramatic, but the question of why God puts us somewhere or next to someone is worthy of our consideration. As with Alan and Adam, and Connie and me you never know what goodness may emerge.

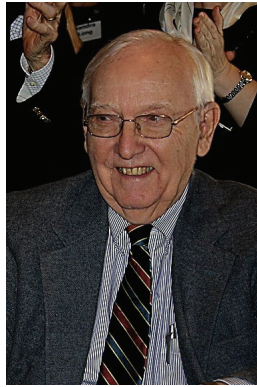
John Walsh

April 16, 2016

Dear Saugatuck Friends,

Thank you for your kind birthday wishes! Can't believe 90 on April 9th! I think of you often.

I'm sitting in the sun on my balcony watching the vapor trails in the sky. Sue and Kathy are here with me today, and both Don & Judy called to say "hi."



In March I had a nice visit with Judy, Abby and Kyle. Rebecca and 3 great grandchildren, who all came up from Kentucky. Also in Marcy my 4th great grandchild was born to Anna & Ted. She was named Eleanor Jeanne (the Jeanne being after Marjorie Jeanne Potter). In May two more great grandchildren are expected (Judy's Abby & Kyle and Sue's Matt & Jocelyn).

Wishing every one all the best—

Ed Potter

Edwin Potter
1 Harvest Circle Unit 31
Lincoln MA 01773-3216

Martha Aasen Given the "Service to Older Adults Award"

The Westport Commission for Senior Services held the annual meeting at the Center on June 17 where they reported on the CSS Activities and offered updates and discussions from senior agencies and organizations.

At the meeting, Marta Aasen was presented with the "Service to Older Adults Award" for her many years of active service to the Westport community affairs including her current participation in the committee exploring enhancement opportunities.

First Selectman Jim Marpe made the award along with state legislators Toni Boucher, Gail Lavielle, Jonathan Steinberg and Tom Hwang who congratulated and thanked her for her many contributions. Our thanks to Margaret Pinheiro and Phyllis Grotin for sharing their photos.



Senior Center Facebook, June 18, 2016



Charlie James Hall, son of Erin and Peter Hall, Godparents Emily Livezey and Bill Hall Baptized on June 12th.

Samuel Nicholas Leeper and Benjamin Matthew Leeper, sons of Jennifer and Nicholas Leeper, were baptized during the worship service on June 19. Photos of the baptism will be in the July/August Herald.

Nicole Mathias Awarded Scholarship

Nicole Mathias, a Staples High School senior, has been awarded the first Joyce and Bernie Zimmerman Foundation Music Scholarship. The presentation took place at the recent Staples Choral Concert.

The scholarship from the Zimmerman Foundation is awarded to a member of the Staples Class of 2016, as well as three succeeding years, who plans to major in music. Applications were subject to "a rigorous review process that included the evaluation of GPA in music classes, participation in various musical and civic experiences, and completion of an essay," according to an announcement of the scholarship. *Westport News, Friday, May 27, 2016*



Long Time Saugatuck Member Dies

Hugh Sweeny, Jr. "Jim", 101, died on May 21st following a very brief illness. Jim was born Hugh B. Sweeny, Jr. "Jim" of Redding a former Westport resident, died May 21 following a very brief illness. He was born Sept. 24, 1914 in Plainfield, N.J. He later resided in Fanwood, N.J., where he served on the Town Council, and after 1975 in Westport.

He graduated from Princeton in 1935 and served as a field artillery officer in the Army from 1940 to 1945, reaching the rank of Lt. Colonel while in Germany.

In his long career as national program director for Junior Achievement in New York, he helped thousands of teenagers to learn the fundamentals of American business, a number of whom kept in touch with him until his death. He directed the annual summer conference that grew from 60 in 1949 to 3,000 in 1977 under his guidance.

He retired in Westport where, for almost 25 years, he was involved as a volunteer for home delivered Meals and Visiting Nurse and Hospice. He was president of the Covlee Association and of the Y's Men and taught the AARP 55 Alive driving course.

He was also very active in the Saugatuck Congregational Church. He was grand marshal of the Westport Memorial Day parade in 2000.

Jim often recalled a turning point in his life when he had a chance encounter with the head of the Princeton Alumni Association. Money was short during the depression and he had vague plans to commute to Rutgers as a day student.

"Why not apply to Princeton?" the man suggested. "Maybe they will accept you." He did, they did, and for four years he literally worked his way through college.

Jim is survived by his wife of nearly 74 years, Jeanne (nee Alling), a son Hugh III and his wife Amy, a daughter-in law Andrea Sweeny and a niece Barbara Rice. He was predeceased by a son David Alling Sweeny.

Services will be conducted on Monday, June 6 at 10:30 a.m. at First Church of Christ, Congregational in Redding.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to The Hugh B. Sweeny Jr Memorial Grant, c/o Paul Brady, The Achievement Foundation, 460 Smith St., Suite E, Middletown, CT 06457-1594. or to First Church of Christ, Congregational, P. O. Box 1055, Redding, CT 06875.

Westport News, June 3, 2016

The Fairfield West Association of the United Church of Christ held its Annual Meeting at the Second Congregational Church of Greenwich on May 4. Twenty-seven clergy, delegates, and church leaders attended. In addition to conducting the normal business of the Association, the attendees listened to Regional Minister Michael Ciba say that the Connecticut Conference continues to grapple with how God calls us to be the Church. He said this was both a great challenge and great opportunity. Conference priorities include leadership development that involves both clergy and laity as well as congregational vitality.

Association Moderator Holly Adams, pastor of the United Congregational Church in Norwalk, said that the Association tried to foster interdependency during the past year, and she cited the Association's Leadership Saturday in February as an example. This successful program allowed moderators and church presidents, deacons, treasurers, and clergy to share ideas and learn from each other. Participants had asked for more such sessions, and Holly promised that the Association would build on this program next year, saying, "When we come together and share, something wonderful happens." The attendees approved a proposed amendment to the Association's Bylaws establishing a Unified Fitness Review Committee.

After the completion of the business portion of the Annual Meeting, Shawn Garan, Youth Director of the Second Congregational Church, Greenwich, and Jack Davidson, Youth Minister at the First Church of Christ, Redding, talked about their middle school and high school youth program. They said churches should not try to fit kids to program but rather should fit the program to their kids. The key, they said, was to find the passions that currently exists in the kids at the church and build on them.

Submitted by John Canning, Delegate

Annual Meeting Speaks Out On Restrooms, Minimum Wage, Greenhouse Gases

by Tiffany Vail, Associate Conference Minister for Communications, UCCT Conference

Delegates to the 149th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference called on churches to provide gender neutral restrooms, support a \$15 an hour minimum wage and take action to reduce greenhouse gases. They also voted to increase the per capita rate paid by churches to the Conference setting from \$8 to \$10 in 2017.

Gender Neutral Restrooms Resolution Approved: Delegates approved a resolution that recommends all future Conference annual meetings be held only in facilities with gender neutral restrooms, and called on the churches of the Conference to "consider creating a more perfect welcome" by designating such restrooms in their own facilities.

This makes the Connecticut Conference the first regional body of the United Church of Christ to make such a commitment for its meetings, according to the Open and Affirming Coalition. "I have to admit that when I began to consider this resolution I had no idea what an issue this was going to be in the news," said Greg Gray, chair of the Conference's ONA Ministry Team. "But we now have the opportunity to be a prophetic voice." Gray referred to a Kroger's grocery store sign, which has been taking social media by storm, declaring the store has unisex restrooms "because sometimes gender specific toilets put others into uncomfortable situations."

"We, as the beloved community, can do better than a grocery store," Gray said. Although there was some discussion about the exact wording of the resolution, it passed with overwhelming support.

Minimum Wage Resolution Approved: Delegates also passed a resolution calling on the Conference's Legislative Advocate, and on local church members, to work in support of legislation to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. The resolution also asks churches to examine their own compensation to assure all staff are paid at least \$15 an hour by 2019, and it calls on the Conference to make educational resources on the issue available and to forward the resolution to the national General Synod.

David Biklen, of the Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford, referred to the earlier comment on grocery stores and said "we can make the grocery store itself better" by increasing the minimum wage. He pointed out that the state's current minimum wage of \$9.60, soon to be increased to \$10, leaves a family of four still thousands of dollars short of the federal minimum poverty level. And The Rev. Damaris Whittaker of the First Church of Christ in Hartford said a two-bedroom apartment in Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven rents for \$1500 - \$1700 a month – unaffordable to someone making \$10 an hour, or \$1600 a month if they are working full-time.

The Rev. Denise Terry, of the East Granby Congregational Church, argued that minimum wage is not sustainable for her congregation or for many small businesses, and said it is not meant to provide a living wage above the poverty line. Terry said there are pastors and other professionals with master's degrees who barely make \$15 an hour, or \$31,200 a year.

Another delegate argued that raising wages for the least skilled and most inexperienced workers would cause all wages to be increased, something not affordable for most businesses, particularly small businesses. He said the poorest people would be the ones to suffer, because their jobs would be eliminated in favor of robots and automation.

Biklen said protections for small businesses have been built into legislation in other states, such as New York, that have increased the minimum wage.

Rev. Thea Racelis of South Congregational Church in Middletown, reminded delegates that those earning minimum wage are not just high school students anymore, but parents with children. "We're talking about these people as if they are not in this room, in our pews, and in some of our pulpits" she said. "To say that we can't aspire to more than making the bare minimum of the federal poverty line to me is sinful and reprehensible. We are church and we can aspire to more and God's people deserve more."

Resolution On Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Delegates approved a resolution in support of state legislation to rapidly increase renewable energy resources, and to "declare it imperative" that congregations, individuals, businesses and other entities act to reduce their own levels of greenhouse gas emissions.