

# THE HERALD

March & April 2017



## HOLY WEEK

**LISTENING to God and to Each Other:**

**Mini-Retreat: - Saturday, April 18th**

**Palm Sunday – All-Ages Worship – Sunday, April 9th**

10:00 am – Saugatuck Church Sanctuary

**Tenebrae Service – Maundy Thursday, April 13th**

7:00 pm – Saugatuck Church Sanctuary

**Community Good Friday Service-- The Seven Last Words, April 14<sup>th</sup> – 12noon-3pm,**  
hosted by Saugatuck Congregational Church with Christ and Holy Trinity, Saugatuck  
Church Sanctuary

**Easter Sunday – Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

*Sunrise Service* at Compo Beach, 6 am

*Worship Service* – 10:00 am – Saugatuck Church Sanctuary

\* Art: *Lent* block print by Memphis artist, Martha Kelly



**Lenten Small Group Discussions**  
**Four Sundays in Lent - after worship:**  
**March 19, March 26, April 2, April 9**  
**11:30 am - 12:30 pm - Room 109/110 Lenten Small Group Discussions**

Join Pastor Alison for conversation inspired by short, provocative videos produced by [The Work of the People](#).

March 19, 2017

**Preparing for More** - Lent is not about scarcity, it's about preparing us for more...for resurrection. Dale Ryan invites us to give up shame for lent.

March 26, 2017

**Jesus Wept** - Author Brené Brown on why the church should be more like a midwife than an epidural. On growing through the struggle.

April 2, 2017

**Creation Heals** - Artist and teacher Lanecia Rouse Tinsley talks about living through and after the loss of her daughter, A.J. and learning to be creative again.

April 9, 2017

**The Human One** – Richard Rohr on suffering and atonement. "Chosen crosses" are hardly ever "crosses." The cross is an invitation to live in solidarity with human suffering.

Contact [Pastor Alison](#) with questions, to request childcare or to confirm your participation.

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The Westport/Weston Interfaith Council, Westport Country Playhouse and TEAM Westport held a Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration on Sunday, January 18th at the Westport Playhouse. The Keynote speaker was Professor Tricia Rose, Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, Brown University.

## “What Makes Your Heart Sing?”

Dear Members and Friends of Saugatuck Church,

I'd like to share with you plans for my upcoming sabbatical. My Call Agreement provides for two months of sabbatical leave after five years of full time ministry. May 1st marks the fifth anniversary of my arrival at Saugatuck Church. It's been a full, rich five years of shared ministry! Now, I am preparing to take time away.

*Sabbatical* is related to *Sabbath*, which refers to the Biblical day of rest, or the seventh day. In Genesis, God is described as resting on the seventh day of creation. In the book of Leviticus, God's people are instructed to cease all work and let the land rest for an entire year, after six years of labor (Leviticus 25:3-5). Early in my reflecting about how I might spend my sabbatical, I came across this observation by The Lilly Foundation:

*“Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the pastor's heart sing. Pastors serve a variety of roles ...the pace and demands of parish life can be relentless, often leaving even the most dedicated pastors recognizing the need to replenish their own spiritual reservoirs to gain energy and strength for their ministry.”*

How might I “replenish my spiritual reservoir?” I wondered. What makes my heart sing? I prayed over these questions as I explored sabbatical opportunities. Being outdoors, hiking and exploring the natural world: these things feed my spirit, as do the creative and performing arts: culturally diverse dance, music and worship, writing and storytelling. I began to look for ways to combine some of these elements. Here's what has unfolded.

To begin my sabbatical, I will take two weeks in May to attend a clergy wellness retreat in New Hampshire, and to spend time with my extended family (May 15-29). The retreat, called CREDO, is an opportunity for mid-career clergy to reflect on spiritual, vocation, physical and financial health. I anticipate that the week will provide material for reflection during the remainder of my sabbatical.

I'll be at Saugatuck for the first three weeks of June, after which I'll join the youth group on their mission trip to Colorado. I'll be back to lead worship on July 1st.

Beginning July 2, I will travel to Hilo, Hawaii for a cross-cultural immersion, hosted by the Church of the Cross, United Church of Christ and the Rev. Eric Anderson (along with his daughter). My time on the “Big Island” will include:

1. Rest and Renewal: I look forward to exploring Hawaii's rich and diverse natural ecosystem (one that is new to me), reconnecting with God's Creative Spirit in those wild places. Through hiking and movement classes (yoga and/or dance), I will tend to the health of my body and spirit. I will also be feeding my love for forest, coastal and marine environments.

2. Cross-Cultural Immersion: I have learned that my faith is stretched and deepened with every cross-cultural experience I have. By witnessing local customs and worshipping at Church of the Holy Cross and other local United Church of Christ (UCC) churches, I expect to be challenged and enriched in ways I can't fully anticipate. I look forward to witnessing culturally diverse expressions of worship, learning more about the complex history of the UCC in Hawaii and encountering the ways that Hawaii's island cultures and the UCC have influenced one another.

3. Creative expression: My daily routine will include both writing and prayer. I look forward to having space to write – about these sabbatical experiences, the CREDO seminar and my faith journey. I may develop a series of devotionals, to give structure to my writing. I'd like to see what "bubbles up" in response to being in new surroundings and witnessing God's hand at work on the land and among the peoples of Hawaii.

Upon my return, I will take vacation time with my family, followed by a two-day transitional retreat, to reflect on my time away and prepare for the fall season at Saugatuck Church.

I will return to work on Monday, August 28th.

I am grateful that the **Rev. Willie Salmond** and **Linda Bruce** have agreed to provide pastoral coverage and worship leadership in my absence. Linda Bruce has been licensed by the Fairfield West Association on Ministry for this purpose.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to you, members of Saugatuck Church, for giving me the gift of this time to recharge and reconnect with God's guiding Spirit. I look forward to sharing my adventures with you when I return!

Grace and Peace, Alison

It was our ancestors in the faith, New England Congregationalists, who first traveled to the Hawaiian islands as missionaries in 1820. In 2011, the president of our denomination formally apologized to Hawaiian congregations for the ways in which those early missionaries imposed Western values and denigrated local cultures. We continue to work to repair those relationships.

**The Annual Meeting of the Saugatuck Congregational** was held on Sunday, March 12, 2017, in Hoskins Hall. Prior to the meeting Brunch was prepared and served by the Youth Group. The Brunch proceeds were donated to the Youth Mission Trip,

Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting were read by the Church Clerk Janet Canning. The congregation listened to and approved the Trustees 2017 Budget Report. The 2016 Annual Reports were distributed to the congregation. The 2017 church officers were elected and installed. The moderator John Walsh gave a summation of other business. The meeting adjourned at 1:23pm.

**20 Years of the Herald:** It is hard to believe that it has been twenty years and/or 20 x 11= 220 issues of the Saugatuck Congregational Church Newsletter.

After my children were off to college I was able to get a great job in Stratford for the Oriel Company as assistant to the comptroller of finance. I had majored in accounting in college. When I interviewed for the job the Personnel manager asked me what I had been doing in the last ten years. I meekly said I was just a housewife. She almost jumped off her chair and began telling me why I was not “just a housewife.” It was a great job and the people were so great. The company was sold to a larger company. However, I still go back and have lunch with some of my friends.

Anyway, this company made light measuring equipment and they also had a catalog for their items. When the girl wanted to move on from catalogs, I asked if I could apply for the job and learn desktop publishing, I was told, “No, we want to hire a young person that will stay with us for a while.” It never happened, they hired, trained, kept the person long enough to learn desktop publishing and moved on. Again, I asked to be considered for the job and was given the same answer. But then. . . Dorothy Bryce, Church Moderator, came along wanting someone to do our church newsletter and I volunteered.

20 years later I am now retiring. This is a very painful decision for me. I loved doing the Herald and I was very proud of the Herald. We have some very good writers and photographers in our congregation. I have a copy of each Herald and we plan to have the Heralds available in the library. Before we had the Herald on the computer every month, we would have a large gathering of workers doing the printing, folding, counting, stapling, and mailing with lots of chattering. If I was ill or away my good workers would take over and produce a wonderful Herald.

Now, I shed some tears and remember the good days. Marcia has been invaluable helping me collect the important information, proofing the Herald and ordering the supplies for the mailing. The ministers, members and church officers have also contributed good information. Plus my thanks to Mark Mathias for fixing my computer when I was in a state of great stress trying to finish the Herald on time.

Jane Mangold



**IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.**



A cartoon illustration of a young girl with blonde pigtails, wearing a purple tank top and blue pants, looking angry and shouting. A small brown rabbit is sitting in front of her. A speech bubble from the rabbit says, "I AM SO GOING TO BITE YOU AGAIN!".

**MAKE MINE CHOCOLATE!**

Penny Collins, Cartoonist; "A week after Easter, the candy will be forgotten, Sadly so will the rabbit."  
[www.makeminechocolate.org](http://www.makeminechocolate.org)

Make Mine Chocolate instead of purchasing a little Easter Bunny that you would tire of and decide to either turn it loose or take the bunny to an animal shelter.

# SCC Women's Retreat 2017

April 28<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>

Silver Lake Conference Center, Sharon, CT

Are you longing for a chance to get away, recharge, reconnect with God, or reclaim your own sense of purpose? We invite you to join us for this year's women's retreat:

*Listening for God: How to thrive in a discombobulated world.*

In selecting this year's theme, the women's retreat planners observed that we are all living in a "VUCA" world: Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Given this reality, we wondered: How can we stay authentic to ourselves and listen for God's purpose in our lives? What practical and spiritual tools could help us not just to survive but to *thrive*? Join us for a weekend of reflection, relaxation and fun. We'll connect with each other, play, pray, walk in the woods or sit together in the sunshine.

NEW this year: High Ropes Courses offer a chance for us to challenge ourselves (always by choice!) and cheer one another on. Because we are gathering later in the spring, we may have the option of trying out the high ropes course at Silver Lake, for an additional fee (to cover the trained facilitator). If you are interested in trying out the high ropes, email Pastor Alison at [Alison@saugatuckchurch.org](mailto:Alison@saugatuckchurch.org), call her at the office at (203) 227-1261 or speak with retreat planner Susie Benton, who has been on the course and is happy to answer your questions. Learn more about the challenge course here:

<http://www.silverlakect.org/challengecourses>

Event and Registration details:

Doors open at 5:00 pm Friday;

Dinner together at 6:15 pm;

We'll conclude at mid-day on Sunday

**Registration: \$150**

**Additional fee for high ropes experience - TBA**

For financial assist. see Rev. Alison Patton

Online registration @ [saugatuckchurch.org](http://saugatuckchurch.org)

Planning Team: Linda Agin \* Susie Benton \* Anne Patterson

Alison Patton \* Katie Phillis \* Judy Puchalski \* Colette Van Breems

**JOIN THE CHANCEL CHOIR! Thurs. night rehearsals 7:30-9:00PM**

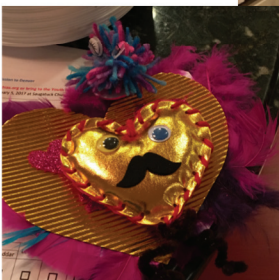
**Contact Heather for info. [heather@saugatuckchurch.org](mailto:heather@saugatuckchurch.org)**



Dr. Heather A. Hamilton  
Director of Music  
Saugatuck Congregational Church, UCC  
245 Post Road East  
Westport, CT 06880  
203-227-1261

In late January, a few SCC friends got together at Stephanie Martenson's house to craft and make a care package for our kids. If a messy table is any indication of success, we were triumphant!

Dana Johnson



***Meet Tom Burke, our Yale Divinity Student, with Rosie, a devoted Bible Study student and a beautifully trained dog. They are regular attendees at the Bible Study Class.***



My time at Saugatuck Church has been one of the most formative periods of my life. I am so blessed to spend such a critical time in my ministry training in this community. Between the mentorship I have received from Reverend Alison and the love and support I have been given by this congregation I have learned so much about my pastoral vocation and myself.

My internship started with a Holy Spirit filled mission trip to Cuba with the Saugatuck Youth Group. After seeing pictures of the joy in my face, my mother remarked when I got home that I have found my place. For those of you who don't know me, my history with trauma and PTSD from my time in Iraq and Afghanistan made it difficult to interact with the joy of children. With the help of Alison, Dana Johnson, and Michael Hendricks, the youth group has filled me with a sense of grace, and I cannot thank Saugatuck enough for giving me the opportunity to learn from your children.

I have also been fortunate enough to attend and help lead two retreats at Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT. If you have not had the chance to take a few days away for a time a prayer and rest, I highly suggest signing up for the next retreat. Forming relationships with the families and members of our community has validated my call in the UCC and I am forever thankful for the constant love and support from all of you.

Learning to lead worship has been a formative experience as well. I appreciate Saugatuck for giving me the space to practice how to perform and guide you all in worship and celebration of Jesus Christ every Sunday. If you look closely I still look to Alison for validation every time I address the congregation. You all have allowed for me a strong set of training wheels, which will strengthen my ministry and allow me to better serve those I am called for the rest of my life.

Some of the most rewarding experiences have come when I've had the opportunity to give a sermon and preach the good news of our savior, Jesus Christ. My love for Jesus has allowed for me to reintegrate into society and find post-traumatic growth and my hope is I can share just a bit of that love with all of you. I have been so impressed with the community service, and faith that I have witnessed in my time at Saugatuck.

Since I got home to Connecticut from war, like Odysseus returning to Ithaca from the Trojan War, I have walked aimlessly without a home or a community. Finally in my third year of my Master's of Divinity program at Yale, I have found a home at Saugatuck. You have embraced me as a son, and that is a love that has filled me with strength to continue to forge justice in our world. I hope I can continue to show my gratitude for this support by working indefatigably for you, and to guide you towards the love of God. Which is so much bigger than you or me. But together, with our Saugatuck community we will do things that are so much bigger than ourselves. I am filled with joy at the opportunity we have.





BINGO				
15	28	37	51	73
6	17	32	45	61
9	15	★	60	70
12	26	44	52	66
7	22	34	48	72



***Delicious Food***  
***Lasagne***  
***Pasta Casseroles***  
***Chicken***  
***Baked Beans***  
***Salad, Rolls & Cookie***

Prizes for Winning at Bingo



## Faithbooking 2017 at Silver Lake Conference Center

It started three years ago with a conversation between Dana Dembski and Craig Patton in the pews after worship. What about holding an overnight retreat that wasn't a men's retreat or a women's retreat, but an all ages retreat? Something for singles, families of all configurations, retired couples...everyone! Maybe at Silver Lake Conference Center, where Dana had gone as a child and Craig has been going for almost 30 years. They approached Elizabeth Baldwin, whose family has enjoyed Silver Lake's programs for the past several years and a planning team was formed. They named it Faithbooking: An All Ages Retreat.

18 people participated in the first Faithbooking retreat on January 28 – 29. Participants ranged from middle school aged children to seniors. Saturday's program included small group games, Bible study, a hike around camp, small group discussion, and plenty of free time for reading, puzzles, and conversation. A double feature of movies, plus s'mores prepared using the Retreat Center fire-place and popcorn rounded out the day. On Sunday, the group enjoyed brunch and celebrated worship before returning home.

Feedback on the event has been 100% positive and a sequel is being planned for January, 2018. Watch for details in the early Fall!



## Easter Flowers from Pivot Ministries!



Were you aware that the men of Pivot Ministries grow the flowers that adorn our sanctuary each Easter?

Here's your chance to say "THANK YOU" to them for the rousing choral music they provide at our summer beach services and as a way for them to produce some income for their very important ministry. At the same time, you will be supporting

our own

Saugatuck Board of Missions.

Look for the order form in upcoming church bulletins.

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**You are cordially invited to a festive Spring Tea Party!**

**Bring your beloved Doll and favorite adult!!**

**SATURDAY APRIL 1**

**10:00 – 11:30 AM**

**Hoskins Hall (SCC)**

Charity Tea Party (\$12.50/person - Nominal crafts/activities fee)

*All proceeds benefit the HS Youth Group mission to Den-*



### Easter Basket Donations for Covenant to Care

We need

individually wrapped candy

travel size personal care items

small toys, puzzles, games, stuffed animals

We will collect items at Fellowship Hour through March 26th

[Dana@saugatuckchurch.org](mailto:Dana@saugatuckchurch.org)

*Thank You*

Dana Johnson, Director of Children's Ministries

## ***Guest Preacher on January 22nd***

### ***Sermon: Bearing Witness to the Future***

Rev. Cass Shaw, Executive Director,  
Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport



The **mission of the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport is to turn faith into action by helping people at risk meet their urgent needs.**

**The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (CCGB)** is a faith-based, non-sectarian social services agency dedicated to meeting the needs of people at risk and breaking the cycle of poverty and crisis in the Greater Bridgeport area.

We are committed to educating children, feeding the hungry, supporting youth in crisis, guiding former offenders and building bridges of understanding between all faiths.

Founded in 1945 as The Council for Inter-Church Cooperation, the Charter of The Council states that: “The Council shall do jointly what no single communion, congregation or denomination can do alone; namely, to express through fellowship, cooperation and service the essential unity of the Christian Church.” Working in partnership with donors, congregations, community partners and clients, our service area is concentrated on people from Bridgeport and its suburbs: Fairfield, Easton, Trumbull, Shelton, Monroe and Stratford, with additional partners in Westport, Milford and other portions of Fairfield and New Haven counties.

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### **Special Treat: Guest Musicians**

Lucy Belknap, Sabrina Didner and Caroline Russell performed during the 10am worship service on March 5th. They are students of Millette Alexander of Chamber Music Central in Westport.



# CT, MA and RI Boards commit to forming new Conference

By Tiffany Vail

UCC Associate Conference Minister for Communications

The Boards of Directors of the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences on Saturday voted unanimously to commit to forming a new Conference to minister and come together to make an impact as people of faith.

The three Boards came together for a meeting in Woodstock, Connecticut, and after worship and conversation together, went into separate meetings. Each Board then voted unanimously to adopt a resolution ([text below](#)) stating their intent to move forward in creating a new Conference. *The three Boards worshipping together*



They will ask the Annual Meetings of the three Conferences, being held together June 16 and 17, to endorse their intent to draft a proposal for a new Conference. The Boards would then bring that specific proposal to another joint Annual Meeting in 2018 for ratification.

Several Board and staff members spoke passionately about this new Conference as being much more than an adjustment in structure. They said they see it as a new entity able to both support the church of today and walk with new manifestations of "church" in the future.

"This truly is our time," Massachusetts Conference Board Chair Vard Johnson said. "We're called to do this. The wind is at our back and we are in God's hands."

In the resolution, the Board says their time of discernment has led them to believe the proposal for a new Conference would call for a single Board of Directors, and "may also recommend a transition to a unified budget and a new staffing structure."

Some Board members said they have heard reservations about committing to the formation of a new Conference before all the many details have been worked out. But others said the time for a commitment had come.

"When they decided to create the United Church of Christ, they were clear they were creating a new denomination," said The Rev. Paul Goodman, Interim Pastor of the Plantsville Congregational UCC in Connecticut. "How they would make that work was not hammered out. They prayed about it and they knew, moving with the Holy Spirit, that once the decision was made to come together, their commonalities were greater than their differences.

I think we are back in that same spot, standing on the shoulders of our forebears who created the denomination," he said.

The Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Connecticut, pointed out that Conference boundaries have not changed since the UCC was created in 1957, and that they are limiting.

"Here in Woodstock, if you travel a few miles north, you are in Southbridge, Massachusetts. I do not know the pastor in Southbridge because the state line is there," she said. "I do know the pastor in Westport, which is the opposite corner of the state."

"So we would be decreasing those artificial boundaries that divide us in unnecessary ways, and on the flip side increasing our shared prophetic voices. We are a lot stronger and a lot louder when we speak together," she said.

The meeting was originally scheduled for Jan. 7, but was postponed due to a snowstorm. Jan. 21 had been chosen as a snow date months ago, before the Women's March on Washington and its sister marches were planned. Connecticut Conference Minister The Rev. Kent Siladi acknowledged that many in the room wished they could be at a march instead of a meeting. He said sometimes our two worlds - the need to be well organized and aligned, and the need to be flexible and innovative - collide. He urged the gathering to think about becoming "bi-cultural" and likened to that the challenges facing the church of the future, challenges a new Conference may better be able to navigate.

The resolution may be found at <http://macucc.org/news> detail.

# Together, As One Prayer Calendar

This prayer calendar is produced in preparation for the joint Annual Meetings set for June 16-17, 2017 for the Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut Conferences, UCC. Many people stated through the hundreds of surveys we received that they would be willing to pray for our conferences during this time of discernment. We invite you to use this prayer calendar in any way that you would find meaningful, within either your congregation or your personal spiritual life. One option is to incorporate the prayer themes into your daily prayer routine, providing a silent time of reflection to allow the Spirit to respond. If you use this approach, try using the scripture verse and included prayer as a focus for your time at the start or end of your silent meditation. Repeating this process throughout the week focusing on the same themes, scripture, and included prayer may provide some interesting changes through the week. A new prayer selection will be offered each week from the first full week in March through the last week before we gather in Hartford.

All introductory quotes included are taken from the [United in Ministry and Mission Case Statement](#) approved by the Boards of Directors of all three conferences. All themes and meditations are presented by Rev. Dr. Dale Azevedo. The prayers are written and scripture passages selected by Rev. Cleo Graham.



## Week of March 5, 2017

### Bigger Isn't Always Better

*"We believe that God's Holy Spirit is inviting our congregations, our clergy and our denominational leaders to become active partners in the creation of forms of Christian community which are so new that, as yet, we can only glimpse them. We believe we are called to be midwives to a new spiritual movement which is already being born."*

"If all we are going to do is form a new conference that is the same but bigger, then let's not bother!" This has been a common refrain among those who have been exploring our new Southern New England Conference initiative. The idea behind this statement is that simply replicating our current conference structures and roles with a similar but larger format is a tremendous waste of time and energy. What we are hoping for, and trusting in, is that something new and creative will come out of this convergence. What final shape this initiative will eventually take is still in formation. In fact, it is likely something that will continue to grow and develop as time, and the Spirit, dictate. But ideally, this new initiative will lead to something that has greater support for our local churches and deeper impact on our broader communities.

**Prayers themes for this week:** What does my local church need from the conference to be more effective in its ministry? What does my community need from my church to feel the transforming grace of God? In what ways might God be calling our churches and leaders to collaborate on ministry and mission?

**Scripture:** *"For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building."* (1 Corinthians 3:9 NIV)

**Prayer:** Loving God we thank you for inviting us to be co-workers in your field. We renew our commitment as your servants. We are your farmers, planters, tillers, and builders. For we are your co-workers in God's service destined to help create new life. Help us to be loyal workers of righteousness and not iniquities. Help us to accept your seeds of wisdom. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Help us to recognize this season for planting new seed, and faith to trust you for a bountiful harvest. Lord as you call us to into your field, equip us with hearts, filled with loving care. Bless us with new seeds Give us an abundance of your light to follow your Way. Anoint us with oil of endurance and faith so we will not grow weary and fearful. Cleanse us with new water, fresh air and a vision that stretches beyond our finite imagination. God, revive us, renew us, reveal within us and remind us of your holy promise and plan. For truly you know the plans you have for us. You plan to make us prosper and give us a