

HILL CHURCH NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ASYLUM HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Helping people grow in faith and love as disciples of Jesus



Welcome Tracy Mehr-Muska!



On Sunday, February 9, the members of Asylum Hill Congregational Church voted to approve the recommendation of the Associate Minister Search Committee to call the Rev. Dr. Tracy Mehr-Muska to the position of Minister of Mid and Later Life at AHCC.

Prior to the meeting, Rev. Erica Thompson spoke to the congregation about dichotomy, saying, "Today signifies an end ... an end of a formal search process; but it also signifies the beginning of an exciting time at Asylum

Hill Congregational Church, one in which we have the opportunity, as a community, to move forward in all the beautifully diverse ways our God intends." Tracy will begin her ministry at AHCC on March 2.

Sundays in March at AHCC

9:00am – Contemplative worship | Chapel

A worship service of prayer, song, scripture, homily, and communion.

9:30am – Connections Café | Drew Hall

A time to connect with one another, as Drew Hall is transformed into a coffee house. A thought-provoking question will be available, encouraging discussion and deeper connections. (Coffee and donut holes)

10:15am – Worship | Sanctuary

A worship service with full liturgy, choir

March 1: Communion

March 8: Children's Musical

March 22: New Member Sunday

March 29: Confirmation Sunday



Sunday Forums:

March 1 – Ghandi's influence on MLK, Jr. with Dr. Ellison Findly of Trinity College

March 15 – Understanding the Clean Slate Bill. Sponsored by GHIAA.

March 29 – In-depth preview of music for Good Friday with Jack Pott

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Holy Week & Easter

April 5 – PALM SUNDAY

9:00 & 10:30am – Sanctuary
Identical services celebrating Palm Sunday, with communion

April 9 – MAUNDY THURSDAY

6:30pm – Drew Hall
A light meal of soup & salad
7:00pm – Sanctuary
An interactive worship service of four stations (hand-washing, confession/prayer, candle-lighting, anointing), ending with a brief service of communion.

April 10 – GOOD FRIDAY

12:00 - 3:00pm – Asylum Hill
Neighborhood Church Walk

We participate with neighboring churches for a brief time (15 mins) of worship at each location, with a procession from one church to the next. A schedule with the order of churches available soon.

(cont. on back page)

Member Engagement

Dine Around

Thu. Mar 19, gather at
5:30pm; eat at 6:15pm
Nutshell Restaurant
229 White St, Hartford

Come for a great meal, good fellowship and discussion and get to know others on a deeper level. The evening begins with sharing a little information about ourselves - sometimes there are surprises, sometimes we find that there is already a connection.

Separate checks. Handicapped accessible with advanced notice. Sign up at the Member Engagement table or text or call June Day at 860.874.6430. This is an open group - all are welcome.

ASYLUM HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

814 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105-2892
Ph: 860.525.5696 | Fax: 860.525.3457
www.ahcc.org | e-mail: info@ahcc.org

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Please submit items to
Rhonda Mitchell, Director of Communications,
at rmitchell@ahcc.org

Postmaster
Send address changes to Hill Church News
at the above address.

Worship Services 9:00 & 10:15am
Sunday morning, 10:15am services are ASL interpreted, livestreamed and sermon recordings are posted on our website, ahcc.org

Clergy
Rev. Erica A. Thompson, Senior Minister
Pastor Jordan Rebholz, Associate Minister
Rev. Dr. Tracy Mehr-Muska, Associate Minister

Lay Leaders
Linda Kelly, Moderator
David Figliuzzi, Vice Moderator

Thrift Shop News

The AHCC Thrift Shop is called "Unclaimed Treasures" for a good reason. The shop has all kinds of unique little treasures from vintage earrings to collectibles. Some of the larger treasures include a wooden duck chest, camping trunk, pictures, and a highchair.

The Thrift Shop is having a Winter Bag Sale on Sunday, March 1, 10:15am - 12:30pm and Friday, March 6, 9:30am - 2:00pm; in April, spring and Easter will bloom in the shop.

When you donate to the Thrift Shop, please remember that items should be in good condition! If you are interested in joining the volunteer team, please contact Sue Powell at powellbasso@gmail.com

Easter Lily Order and Delivery

Easter is April 12. Don't forget to order your Easter lilies in honor or memory of a loved one, by filling in the form below and returning it to the church, or dropping it in the box at the Member Engagement table with your payment by the **March 30 deadline**.

I/We would like to donate an Easter Lily (or Lilies)

In honor/memory of _____
(please print)

Donated by _____

Please enclose a \$13.00 check per plant payable to AHCC-Lilies and return to the church office at 814 Asylum Ave., Hartford CT, 06105, attn: Mary Way by March 30.

You can also order and pay online at ahcc.org/lilies

Can you help deliver lilies after the 10:30am Easter Sunday service? Just fill out the info below and send to church (attn: Tracy Mehr-Muska) or put in the box at the Member Engagement table. You may also write "Deliver Lily" on the pew pad, or contact Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska at 860.216.9822 or tmehrmuska@ahcc.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

How many lilies can you deliver? _____

Forum: Clean Slate Act and Legislative Advocacy

Sun, Mar. 15, 11:45am
Twichell Room

“A criminal record should not be a life sentence to unemployment, underemployment and poverty.”

Several AHCC members participating in GHIAA (Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance) are holding a forum open to the community to review the Clean Slate Act and learn more about this important bill. We will offer a form of action for those supporting the bill (e.g. legislative calls, letter writing campaign, and e-mails). The current legislative session runs through May 6 and is called a “short session.” It requires intense and immediate action.

Clean Slate legislation would automatically expunge the criminal records of returning citizens who do not return to crime - 3 years after non-violent misdemeanors and 5 years after non-violent felonies. Clean Slate legislation will give returning citizens a much better chance of getting jobs and housing and be more successfully integrated back into the community.

Black residents are 9 times more likely to be imprisoned than white residents in CT and much less likely to find jobs and housing when they are released – something that SUSO has learned in its study on the legacy of racism.

Please plan to attend this one-hour meeting. Cori Mackey, Executive Director of the Center for Leadership and Justice, will join us. Light refreshments served.

New Member Sunday

Mar. 22, 10:15am

Those who feel called are invited to join the church! This is a time when you commit yourself to the life and mission of AHCC, and members have an opportunity to welcome you and commit themselves to you and your journey. Contact Jim Grigsby at grigsbyja@aol.com to find out more.

JustFaith Workshop

Tue, Mar. 10, 6:30pm

Learn more about how over 50,000 people and 1,500 churches and communities have answered the call to compassion and participated in the JustFaith experience.

These small group programs challenge participants to explore contemporary social issues while building lasting relationships through prayer, scripture, engaged reading, thought-provoking dialogue, and direct engagement.

JustFaith Ministries seeks to connect, equip and inspire diverse communities of faith in the common task of healing relationships and restoring creation. Bring a friend and join us for a dynamic and inspiring conversation to learn more with JustFaith Ministries founder Jack Jezreel, M.Div.

Free to attend; Registration required: justfaith.org/hartford-workshop. For more information, contact John Ryan at socialministry@manchestercatholic.org or 860.716.3914.

Men of AHCC - Let's Organize!

Sun, Mar. 15, 9:00am
Twichell

Come to a breakfast and a brainstorming discussion to talk about the current men's group that meets on the first Saturday each month for Bible study and breakfast, about forming other groups like this one, about an annual Men's Retreat, about some service ideas (we men like to “do things,” right?) and whatever else you would like to discuss. RSVP for the breakfast to Frank Virnelli at fvirnelli@comcast.net or to Mary Way in the church office at 860.216.9819 or mway@ahcc.org. Bring a friend!

Adult Education

A Quiet Call for Justice: Standing Up for the Disability Community

Mon, Mar. 2, 6:00pm
Hartford Seminary,
77 Sherman Street

Members of the disability and faith communities will come together to remember disabled victims of crime, including filicide (those killed by family members or caregivers), police shootings (nearly half of those killed by police have a disability), and insurance rationing (caps on or withholding of life-sustaining medicine or equipment). Panelists will include AHCC member Candace Low and former AHCC Associate Minister Donna Manocchio.

The Warming Shelter: An Opportunity to Reach Out and Be Changed

by Karen Dibala
My husband Rick and I have had the privilege of volunteering at AHCC's Warming Shelter on several Wednesday evenings. Meeting the families and the volunteers has touched my heart and enriched my life. What gives me hope is the joy, creativity, intelligence, and beauty of the children we have encountered. The parents' tears, their stories, their desire to provide for their families and find stability is proof that we all need to do more for equal justice and opportunity for all. Sharing a delicious home-cooked meal with the families made by one of the volunteers is a way to share our humanity, and watching the loving work of fellow volunteers tells me I'm in the right place, doing what I need to be doing.

There are volunteer shifts available throughout March, as well as an opportunity to contribute a meal. We encourage any and all to add their talents and hearts to this worthy endeavor. Contact Rev. Mia Douglas at mdouglas@ahcc.org or 860.216.9834 for more information.

Center Church Community Meals

The Center Church Community Meal is hosted by AHCC members the fourth Sunday of the month. A typical community meal includes volunteers shopping, preparing, serving, and sharing in a meal with all who attend. The cost of the meal is underwritten by AHCC and volunteers are asked to bring a dessert to share. Here's the schedule:

- 2:45pm: Meal prep at Center Church kitchen
- 3:00pm: Doors open
- 5:00 - 6:00pm: Dinner is served
- 6:00 - 6:45pm: Clean up

The average attendance is between 50 and 70 guests. Sign-up lists are at the Faith in Action table in Drew Hall. For more information about volunteering, please contact Rev. Mia Douglas at mdouglas@ahcc.org or 860.216.9834. Upcoming dates: March 22, April 26.

Table to table Collection

AHCC's Table to table Collection focuses on collecting one specific non-perishable food item per month. As we feast at the Lord's Table, we provide for the tables of others. Please put your donations in the labeled bins at the front entrance to the sanctuary or in the hallway leading to Drew Hall on Communion Sunday. Donated items benefit the patrons of Loaves and Fishes Ministry, a tax exempt charitable organization that provides human services to the poor in Hartford. To learn more, visit loaves-fishesministries.org. March: Canned meats (SPAM, ham, etc.)

Middle School Youth Group

Sundays, 10:15 - 11:30am

Our theme: Three ways to live like Jesus – presence, words, actions

We will continue our focus on the words of Jesus as seen in the Gospels, and how they relate to his gentle, peaceful, caring presence.

Confirmation Class

Sundays, 4:00 - 6:00pm

Confirmation class is the launch pad for 8th grade students and their lifelong spiritual journey.

March 8 – extended class with a ropes course and work on students' statements of faith.

March 22 – Working through the statements of faith; final thoughts on confirmation, Christianity, and AHCC.

March 28 – Confirmation Dinner for parents and students

March 29 – Confirmation Service

High School Youth Group

Sundays, 7:00 - 8:30pm

Our theme: Now is the Time – Give Peace

We are creating opportunities for teens to discover ways to actively bring peace both within and outside their circles of influence.

March 13 & 14 – Boston Service Trip – Working with Common Cathedral in their CityReach program to introduce students to the world of those experiencing chronic homelessness. We will be collecting food and clothing materials prior to the trip.

Music & Arts

Chopin Competition

March 11 - 15 | AHCC

For the third year in a row, we are proud to be hosting the CT Chopin Foundation's Chopin International Piano Competition. Our beautiful Gothic sanctuary and 9' Steinway Concert Grand piano are a tremendous draw for the competition organizers. The competition is free and open to the public if you'd like to listen to the auditions during the four days of the competition. There are three categories: Junior, Young Artist, and Professional, and cash prizes range from \$80 - \$2000. The Winners Concert is a ticketed event on Sunday afternoon at 3:00pm at AHCC.

Children & Families

Spirit Hill Curriculum: Jesus and His Ministry

In February, students in grades K-5 waded into deeper waters with units on "Jesus Calming the Storm" and his relationships with "Mary & Martha."

Spirit Hill students in grades PK-5 will continue to explore Jesus' ministry in March with a unit on "The Wedding at Cana." At the end of the month, they will explore Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem through his resurrection. Special activities in this unit include Lenten prayer stations and "Holy Week in a Box."

Thank you Teachers & Volunteers

Mali Ayala, Patti Beckett, Dan Boucher, Julie Cipes, Suzanne & Gabrielle Essex, Nate Gibson, Lisa & Caroline Glowacki, Africka Hinds, Chloe Horton, Valerie Jasinski, Kim Lemkey, Martin Magnusson, Jacquelyn Quin, Emily Safino, Carrie & Mike Stockman, Allison Strum, Andrea Williams, Fatima Williams and our dedicated childcare staff. Volunteer teachers are essential to the success of our Spirit Hill program and we truly appreciate their time and experience. Please email Kyle Cannon, kcannon@ahcc.org, if you are interested in volunteering. (cont. on pg 6)

Music for Humanity Concert: Alchemy Chamber Ensemble's "Soirées Musicales"

Sat, Mar. 21, 8:00pm

AHCC is pleased to welcome Alchemy, the vocal chamber ensemble of the GMChorale, based in Middletown, CT. Their concert, "Soirées Musicales," showcases the versatility of this ensemble in performances of accompanied and a capella choral music, and recalls the elegance of parlor concerts and musical gatherings of the 19th century. The featured work on the program is the *Neue Liebeslieder Waltzes* by Johannes Brahms. These virtuosic settings of love poems for solo voices, chorus, and piano four-hands are always a crowd favorite. The GMChorale's long-time pianist, Allan Conway, will be joined at the keyboard by artistic director Joseph D'Eugenio. Rounding out the program will be choral music by Giacchino Rossini, Randall Thompson, Edward Elgar, and others.

AHCC CHILDREN'S MUSICAL
MARCH 8, 2020
THE OLD
TESTAMENT
FAST
FORWARD

Movie Night: SING!

*Fri, Mar. 27
6:00pm | Twitchell and
Reel to Real*

Join members of the Children & Family Ministries Committee for a night of music, food, fellowship and the showing of *Sing* (2016.) Enjoy dinner prior to the movie: pizza, sides, and dessert. Please sign-up at the Member Engagement table or email Marcie Jackson at mjackson@ahcc.org. A free-will offering is much appreciated. All ages are welcome!

Jesus Is Coming Home ...

In addition to their classroom lessons, children in grades K-2 will have the chance to spend a week with Jesus and record their adventures in their "Jesus Journal." This is an opportunity for children (and parents/guardians) to discover more about who Jesus was and is. Students in grades K-2 will continue this project through the end of the church school year.



April 10 – GOOD FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:15pm – Sanctuary
A contemplative service of music and Word. Sanctuary choir and soloists will present *A New England Requiem*, by Connecticut native Scott Perkins, and the hauntingly beautiful *Miserere mei deus*, by Gregorio Allegri.

April 12 – EASTER SUNDAY

6:15 - 7:00am – Elizabeth Park Overlook
A sunrise service of Word and music, hosted and led by AHCC and Immanuel Congregational Church clergy. (Rain or shine)

9:00 & 10:30am – Sanctuary
Identical, festive Easter worship services featuring choir and brass.