



FISHERS ISLAND UNION CHAPEL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

821 CRESCENT AVENUE, P.O. BOX 192

FISHERS ISLAND, NEW YORK 06390

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www.fiunionchapel.org

*"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here."*

CHAPEL HAPPENINGS

HOLIDAY ISSUE – 2017

Dear Friends – near and far!

Every year those of us who believe in "The Reason for the Season" lament that Christmas seems to have been overtaken by commerciality. Despite our best efforts, we too may fall into crazed moments of shopping, decorating, and cooking. The true joy and wonder of Christmas slips away amidst cookies and credit card bills. When do we get to stop and consider the great gift we have been given in the birth of Jesus Christ?

Obviously, church services, concerts with sacred music, some time spent in prayer and reflection will help us focus. But as one woman learned, Christmas takes on greater meaning when we allow it to take place in our inner life.

A number of years ago this woman -- a writer -- was going through some changes in her marriage and career. She sought solace in a monastery and one day, shortly before Christmas, she was walking through the courtyard when a monk passed by. He spoke this greeting to her: "May Christ be born in you." It was a profound moment for her, because she realized that perhaps the "good tidings of great joy" she needed were not 'out there' so much as something she needed to experience within.

One of the most significant aspects of the Christmas story to me is that God sent Jesus to us amidst rough circumstances. There was political turmoil with Rome's oppressive rule and Herod's harsh tactics. Mary and Joseph were living socially on the edge – unmarried. The baby came due far from the comforts of home; the only place available was a pile of straw in a chilly barn. To let Christ be born in us is to recognize that trying circumstances do not prevent Christ's birth in our spirits. In fact, Jesus -- our Savior -- is not daunted by that. We simply need to recognize that it is in the difficult and improbable places in our lives that Christ desires to appear with his forgiveness and healing. When we invite Christ within us, love, peace and joy are born.

I pray that our Thanksgivings are filled with genuine gratitude to God for the blessings of our lives, despite whatever we are going through – even the turbulent times we live in. I pray also that we experience the gift of Jesus this Christmas intimately and personally, so that the celebrations come alive for us with the profound hope that has come into the world with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas!
Candy

UNION CHAPEL CONTACTS

Church office phone #: (631) 788-7898

New email: fichapel1@gmail.com

www.fiunionchapel.org

Minister: Rev. Candace Whitman

candy@fiunionchapel.org

Moderator: Susan Renna

Trustee Chairperson: Louisa Evans

Deacon Chairperson: Laura Edwards

Administrative Assistant: Diane Dexter

www.fiunionchapel.org



CHURCH BUSINESS HOURS

Monday, Thursday, Friday

10:00am – 1 pm

Tuesday – 10:00am – noon

Closed all other days



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER ANGELS FOR FLOWERS AND SOCIAL HOUR SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2017

SOCIAL HOUR:

Diane Dexter

Sharon Patterson

Burnham Family

Susie Renna

Ellen Parker

Laura Edwards

FLOWERS:

Ellen Parker

Nirapa Horning

Laura Edwards



Friendly Reminder



Donate your old
eyeglasses in the basket in
the Fellowship Room.
Thank you!

THE FALL FAIR!

WHAT A SUCCESS!

Thank you to all who made this event on the Saturday of Columbus Day Weekend a “happening”. Proceeds from our raffles, bake table, luncheon and more totaled \$1,400.00.

The beautiful quilt made by Laura Edwards and the wonderful gift basket donated by Jan Cook drew lots of tickets, including all the sales before the fair at the Post Office!

Mary Pankiewicz added a new touch to lunch this fall and offered chili or chili dogs along with our usual luncheon fare. Thanks to the salad makers.

Members were busy baking for the food table which is always an attraction.

BUT most of all thank you to all who attended and made this such a success.



SOME MINDS ARE LIKE CONCRETE --
THOROUGHLY MIXED UP AND
PERMANENTLY SET.

(Rev. Denny Brake)

LIGHT THE STEEPLE MINISTRY

A soft light has been installed inside our “steeple” to be lit from sunset to midnight. The Trustees invite you to “Light the Steeple” in honor of or in memory of a loved one by donating \$25 to Union Chapel. Just submit the form below, and we will light the steeple on the appropriate week and print this remembrance in our newsletter.

LIGHT THE STEEPLE FORM

In Honor of or In Memory of (circle one)

Name _____

Given by _____

For the week of _____

Make check payable to and mail this form to: Fishers Island Union Chapel, P.O. Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390

THE STEEPLE WAS LIT FOR THE FOLLOWING:

October

In memory of Anne Teehan

Given by her daughter Mary Horn



“Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas.”

- Peg Bracken



Our regular monthly events include...

Communion Sunday - 10 am - first Sunday
Ladies' Potluck Luncheon – noon - first Monday
Bible Study – Wednesdays, 5 pm, Parsonage (note new day and time!)
Church School – 3 pm – Wednesdays/Thursdays
Deacons' meeting – noon - second Friday
Trustees' meeting – 1 pm - second Monday
Senior Lunch – noon – third Thursday
Open Book Group – several times throughout the year
Library Book Club – 7 pm – second Thursday (at the Library)

BESTSELLER BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION! December 10



Please join us in our current read: *Tribe*, by Sebastian Junger. Highlights of the book will be incorporated into worship on December 10 by Tim Patterson, followed by an open discussion after the service.



ANNUAL APPEAL- THERE'S STILL TIME!

The trustees of Union Chapel wish to thank all our supporters from the community and beyond. In case it's needed, this is also a gentle reminder that the 2017 annual appeal still needs your help!

As we approach the holidays and the end of the year, please keep the chapel in mind as you consider your annual giving. Your gift will allow us to complete on our facility upgrades (our building is now 50 years old and is being used more than ever) - and allow Candy to continue leading Union Chapel's unique contribution to island life year round.

On behalf of all the Trustees, thank you!

David Burnham, Treasurer

THANK YOU, MARY PANKIEWICZ!

This update comes with news we report with mixed feelings: Mary Pankiewicz has retired from managing our Thrift Shop. We understand she needs a rest after years of tireless service and wish her well with new-found time on the Island next season! But she will be very missed and hard to replace!

Fortunately, Mary is NOT disappearing completely - she will still be around to help, as will Vi Meyer. We are looking for someone who would manage the shop – it is a volunteer position that keeps our outreach humming, and provides the benefits of lots of fun meeting and greeting and the rewards of seeing carefully selected items fly off the shelves!

What you didn't know

Mary and Dave Denison collected thousands of golf balls through the years. They cleaned them, polished them, sorted them, and placed them in egg cartons for sale.



Dave would bring fresh produce to the shop for sale once his gardens started producing fresh vegetables.

Mary would wash and 'de-spot' many items that were still usable but needed a little TLC and package them for sale. In

addition, Mary and Vi Meyer would shop the thrift shops in Florida and bring great items up north for our clientele.

She would make numerous trips to the dump to get rid of inappropriate items left in the bin outside and take things to the New London area that didn't sell on the Island. She and Vi also did all the usual things – sell, sort, price, hang up clothing, package, label and stock the shelves with the goodies people donated.



From the Trustees:

Here is a big shout out to Mary Pankiewicz who has just stepped down from her position of running the Union Chapel thrift shop. For years Mary has sorted through all the bags and boxes of donations determining what could be sold and for how much and what needed to be sent to the Salvation Army or dump. She did this thankless job with grace and charm and still had a smile on her face when she opened for customers. This year the thrift store raised over \$14,000 dollars for the church (over \$1200 in golf balls alone)! Thank you, Mary, for your tireless dedication. Union Chapel's Thrift Store will not be the same without you!-- - David Burnham



Donations are welcome over the winter!

Please use the weatherproof bin outside the shop for any donations you may have in the off season. (Thank you, Louisa Evans for monitoring the bin and bringing things inside.) Please continue to save egg cartons for golf ball sales, paper bags with handles, and empty metal coffee cans. Cleaning supplies -- Windex, comet, etc. -- are also useful. Thank you so much, Mary, for the years of dedication.

The joy of feeding the multitudes!

This fall's community dinners keep us connected

This fall, Union Chapel and Our Lady of Grace teamed up to provide two community dinners. On Friday, October 13, we sponsored a soup dinner to get the fall off and running. Then, on November 10, it was Taco Night. Both brought in lots of community members to sit at tables together, get caught up with folks, and meet some new ones, too!

Kudos and thanks to Amy Harris for her wonderful cooking. And thank you to all who have brought sides and dessert -- they help make these meals truly bountiful! You know the old saying which goes something like this, "eat dessert first – life is too short".

The October meal was followed by a fun evening of Bingo – especially for the children who drew numbers from the antique bingo machine. Amy Harris supplied silly gifts for the winners. The November meal was an occasion for the community to bring in gifts for needy children around the world for Operation Christmas Child.

Stay tuned for our next dinner in the new year!



**"A LOT OF CHURCH MEMBERS
WHO ARE SINGING, 'STANDING
ON THE PROMISES' ARE JUST
SITTING ON THE PREMISES."**

(Sr. Monique Rysavy)

"What part of worship services are the most meaningful for you?"

November's Church-in-the-round explores

the question

As some of you know, Union Chapel takes the opportunity to worship in a more intimate fashion on Communion Sundays over the winter. Instead of meeting in the sanctuary, we gather around the tables in our Fellowship Room to have an "interactive" sermon with participation from the congregation. This format helps us engage more deeply with the scripture for the day, and later, serve communion to one another in a more personal way around the table.



In November, our discussion topic was the worship service itself. The congregation answered the question, "What parts are the most meaningful to you?" Using an outline of the service, each of us had a few minutes to reflect on the parts of the service that helped us feel the most connected to God or to others -- confession, pardon, singing, prayers, sermon, etc. --and then each of us shared our responses at our table.

We also discussed how in the Protestant tradition – a suitable topic for the occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation – our worship service is always centered upon God's Word. For example, we *gather* around the Word during the Call to Worship; we *prepare* to hear it with confession and pardon; we *hear* the word and its proclamation (the sermon) and then we *respond* to God's Word with the offering and our prayers. The closing hymn is generally one meant to inspire us with our role as we act upon God's grace as Christ's witnesses in the world.

Your pastor loves sitting in on the conversations during Church-in-the-Round and learning the feelings and opinions of those gathered. Thank you, all, for engaging fully with this newer format, and being open to listening and sharing your journey of faith with one another!

Union Chapel mourns the loss of our beloved, long time member Dick Baker. He was a pillar of the community and true friend to so many of us. We pray God's comfort with the Baker Family and Dick's close friends in the coming months.



In loving memory
Richard Stearns Baker
(February 8, 1926 – October 21, 2017)

Changes afoot for our UCC Conference

The UCC Connecticut Conference has been in discernment since 2015 with neighboring Conferences of Rhode Island and Massachusetts about the possible benefits of joining together to form one, united conference for Southern New England. In a Resolution passed in January, the three conferences believe that having one board and common vision would benefit congregations and our missions efforts through shared knowledge and resources, as well as economies of scale.

The Resolution states that "God is calling us to do a new thing." In changing times for our churches, the UCC seeks to be responsive, flexible, and ever eager to "give birth to a church for future generations." Stay tuned for future developments!



**"Christmas is a day of joy and charity.
May God make you rich in both."**

This statement was made by the American Episcopal Priest Phillips Brooks, best known as the writer of the words to "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Rev. Brooks lived in Massachusetts in the 1800s.

Many thanks from The Islanders for Islanders Fund

On behalf of the Islanders for Islanders Committee that represents all Island churches, I want to thank everyone for their generous financial support as well as food items during our drive this summer and fall. Our "food resource room" is now amply stocked, and we are able to further our mission to help make year-round life on Fishers Island more sustainable.

Thanks also to Nick Klimczak and other volunteers who have been sorting through non-perishable goods and organizing our shelves for "shoppers" so beautifully!

⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ ⌘ Upgrades to Union Chapel!

As you may know our church is receiving some shiny new windows that will be easier to open and close in the good weather, and help hold in the heat as well on chilly winter days. We are also expecting some upgrades to our heating system that will keep heat more consistent throughout the building. Thank you to the Trustees for overseeing these projects. Our 50-year-old building appreciates it!



*New Windows being installed by Skyline in November
between the rain drops and gusty winds!*

Teaching the Faith

Current lessons about God and love in our two church school classes!

Every Wednesday afternoon the church halls fill with laughter and singing. Children are excited to be here and eager to learn about God.



We have begun the church school year by studying the parables of Jesus. All the parables teach us, encourage us, and motivate us. They are useful and practical even for little children! We are learning essential truths about God such as God cares and loves us deeply, and He is pleased with us when we show kindness to others. Dramatization, role-playing, puppet shows, and parable parades help the children to gain a richer understanding of God's Word while making class more fun.



As we come into Thanksgiving, we are reflecting on all the things we are grateful for, and once again we thank God for these little children and the joy they bring to our church.

- Yaritza Gello

Pictured Above:

The K-1 class learned the parable of The Good Samaritan and made "Get Well Cups" filled with tissues, tea bags, lozenges and a prayer to take to someone when they are sick.

The older children – grades 4-6 – are engaging in hands-on service projects that reflect love for God and love for our neighbors, even those we have never met! In October, we helped make shoes for children in Uganda so that they would have protection from jiggers when they run and play. The program called "Sole Hope" sent us a kit, and explained how to cut the parts from plastic and denim. We will ship them to Africa where they will be made into shoes.



Making shoes for children in Uganda

In November, we helped pack shoe boxes full of gift items for boys and girls around the world in need. We are grateful to the community for generously providing presents for us to pack – we filled 18 shoe boxes!



Each class begins with lighting the Christ Candle to remind us Jesus is with us. We also have a lesson from scripture and an open prayer time to lift up our requests and praises to God. Heartfelt thanks to Amy Harris who helps in every way to make this year enjoyable for the Into practice

-Candy Whitman

Looking ahead to December

Special Events to Celebrate Christmas at Union Chapel!



Sunday, Dec. 3: 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Outdoor Christmas tree lighting with carols

Followed by the Library/Chapel Christmas Story Time for children

Friday, Dec. 15: Time TBD

Piano Recital by students of Kapri Thomas

Supper to follow

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve

10:00 am – A brief prayer service in the Fellowship Room with coffee and muffins

Our Community Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will take place in the late afternoon, exact time to be announced



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

It is that time of year again!

At this time of year our thoughts turn to beauty of the Christmas season. In December, Union Chapel will be decorated with poinsettias. To contribute toward these flowers, please complete the form below

(legibly!) and send it in along with your donation. Checks may be made payable to Fishers Island Union Chapel. Our address is F.I. Union Chapel, P.O. Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390.

GIVEN BY: _____

IN MEMORY, HONOR OR CELEBRATION OF: (circle one)

AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION: _____

Thank you!