

## I. Upcoming Activities and Dates

|            |          |                                                                                              |
|------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sept 5 & 6 | 7p – 4p  | Seeding Hope SNEUCC Event Hartford                                                           |
| Sept 7     | 10a      | Homecoming Sunday (launch of redesigned website)                                             |
| Sept 20    | 10-12n   | Brainstorming for Gratitude Event                                                            |
| Sept 20    | All day  | Gratitude Testimony tapings                                                                  |
| Sept 21    | 10a      | Phil Dieke preaching and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Hour Houses of Hope                                 |
| Sept 21    | 11:30a   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> hour re: Houses of Hope                                                      |
| Sept 21    | 1:30p    | Scouts recruiting event on the common weather permitting or in the basement if there is rain |
| Sept 28    | 11:30ish | Pledge Campaign Package prep                                                                 |
| Oct 4      | 10am     | Animal Blessing                                                                              |
| Oct 5      |          | Pledge kickoff                                                                               |

## II. Ministry Update

### A. Faith Formation

#### 1. Weekly Prayer Meetings

Deacons have expressed concern that the move of the prayer meeting to Thursday is a challenge for some. I've encouraged the deacons to encourage the organizers and share their thoughts about better dates and times.

#### 2. Houses of Hope

Briefly, the team is organizing around various days and times to facilitate/co-lead the Houses of Hope Gratitude Pathway to the congregations. We have organized the content into a four and six session option. The plan is to offer groups that will meet weekly, bi-weekly, bi-monthly, or once a month. There will be three or four options for the congregation to choose from.

September 19 through 21, the director of Houses of Hope, Phil Dieke, and a documentarian, Autie Carlisle, will be in town and we, our congregation, will be the center of the Houses of Hope. I cannot not say this strongly enough, and it may be surprising to you, however we are the dream congregation for the Houses of Hope team. We've heard this from our coaches, and in a preparation conversation that Phil, Autie and I participated in Phil repeatedly shared how our team has embraced the program in ways they had only hoped a congregation might. And that may be surprising, however the Houses of Hope team shared from their hearts, showed up and were present with one another and to the Spirit. The ways we have taken the content and embedded it into worship to expose the congregation to the practices, theologies, and process.

The congregation may not realize just how amazing we are.

And so, for the weekend, here is what we are planning:

4:00pm Autie Arrives in Hartford, Kevin (and Toby?) will pick her up

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5:30pm Phil arrives in Boston, He has a car and will drive down  
6:30pm Dinner, an informal gathering with food really. HOH team and spouses and Governing Board Members?  
8:00pm Phil arrives in Woodstock  
Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night Autie stays with Kevin and Toby  
Friday and Saturday Phil will either stay at the Inn on Bald Hill or with a congregant

### Saturday

8:00am Autie interview RevKev  
10:00am – 12n Brainstorming the first annual? Gratitude even for Woodstock  
12n-1pm lunch  
1pm onwards Interviews: Houses of Hope Core Team and others from the congregation who have experienced a shift in the congregation because of the HOH

Saturday evening is open and flexible, possibly attending the Beck and Call concert in Pomfret? Or leaving Phil and Autie to process and decompress.

### Sunday

10:00am Worship Phil Preaching  
11:30am is 2<sup>nd</sup> hour with Phil

Lunch, afternoon, and dinner flexible, maybe more interviews at the church or elsewhere (if rain scouts will be in the basement).  
Phil may leave to head to Boston Sunday afternoon or evening.

Monday am interviews as needed, if any  
Monday late morning Autie to train station to get to New York. New London or Hartford.

### 3. Adult Bible Study

The Tuesday Conversations in Faith will resume Sept 16 with a conversation to explore what they want to explore in the fall.

Once we have the houses of hope small groups organized, we will look at how other Bible studies, etc. fit in.

### 4. Youth / Family Programming

It is time for us to revisit how we are supporting families and youth. the most likely path is to seek a coordinator for faith formation and/or to approach East Woodstock or Putnam to explore a creative collaboration.

## B. Faith In Action

## 1. Quiet Corner Interfaith Community Organizing Study Group

No further update. As reported last month, we are working toward an event Oct 23. In the meantime congregations will be asked if we can contribute to support financially the efforts of Amos, the organization that is providing the coordinator and training. As I have more information I will bring this to Faith In Action.

## C. Care Ministry and the Deacons

No update.

## D. Worship

**September 7 – October 19:** Pathways to Gratitude

Orders of Worship are completed through October 26, and Music selected for the first two Sundays.

This series will also look forward to and dovetail with the Stewardship campaign.

**November 2 – November 30: Dreaming God's Dream: No gift too small, not dream too big**

"Dreaming God's Dream: No Gift Too Small, No Dream Too Big" is based on the Stewardship theme for this year.

## III. Communications

### A. Communications Coordinator

Nichola Johnson is having a positive impact with the postings on FB and Instagram, and helping us think more intentionally about our branding and our story.

As we move into the activities of the fall, 1) remember that she is new to the congregation so take some time to share the why and ask her for ideas and alternatives. 2) she is working in a way that is different, if you need a meeting, call or schedule time to talk. \

### B. Website

Feedback seemed positive on the new web design. I need to work with Amber for when we will cut over to the new site.

### C. Stewardship

The Stewardship Team met on August 21, and Sept 2 to plan the fall campaign.

All components for the pledge packet have been completed, except the pictures page which Nichola is working on.

The updated schedule includes:

- Sept 15 send out letter to inactive people
- Sept 28 compile campaign packets

- Oct 5 Campaign Launch
- Oct 26 Pledge Sunday
- Nov 2 – 30 follow up with people who have not pledged

## IV. Other/Misc

### A. August 19 Workshop/Presentation

50 people from 18 churches, , 4 associations, and 2 states attended the August 19<sup>th</sup> conversation entitled "Renewal through Repurposing" with Rev. Patrick Duggan from the UCC Church Building and Loan Fund.

The presentation was inspiring and insightful. Of the congregations, FCCW was the second most represented congregation!

A few key points and themes.

- 1) The story of the church in Louisville was incredibly inspiring
- 2) Though the circumstances were unique, the lessons are important and translate:
  - a. Vision and a clear mission matters
  - b. Using our facilities to meet a need in the community matters
  - c. People matter the needs of the greater community, of leadership, and congregants who support the vision