



# The Church Caller

A monthly publication of the Ellington Congregational Church, UCC

February 2024

Sunday Worship 10:00 / Church School 10:00  
Intentional Interim Pastor Joanne Myer  
Director of Music Julie LaRocca  
Director of Faith Formation Lee Carman

Whoever you are and wherever you  
are on your faith journey,  
you are welcome here!

## Upcoming Events

Visit [www.eccucc.org](http://www.eccucc.org) for details



**Friendship Class**  
February 6, 2024  
1:00 pm - Rm 201



**Community Vow Renewal**  
February 10th, 2024  
11:00 am



**BSA Scout Sunday**  
February 11th, 2024  
10:00 am



**Ash Wednesday**  
February 14, 2024  
7:00 pm



**Sacred Stitches**  
February 15, 2024  
9:00 am - Social Room



**Prayer Shawl**  
February 22, 2024  
9:30 am - Social Room



**Bell Choir**  
February 25, 2024  
10:00 am



**T.E.L.O.S  
Lasagna Dinner**  
February 25, 2024  
11:15am - Social Room



### ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: Lent, 2024

What a wonderful way to do God's ministry here on earth; we can send God's message of love and hope to people around the world who are in crisis.

The theme for 2024 is **Share the Light** and is based on Matthew 5:14-15: "You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house."

Founded in 1946, OGHS is one of five special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. It is a Lenten offering that supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC within the UCC's Wider Church Ministries.

Several Christian denominations participate in OGHS: UCC, American Baptist Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, and Church World Service. OGHS changes lives by providing clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education, small business micro-credit advocacy, resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. For example, in Nicaragua, farmers are being taught how to raise stingless Melipona bees which produce medicinal honey. The farmers then sell the honey and pass their knowledge on to others in the area. They are taught how to raise chickens in order to sell the eggs and also to provide laying hens to other farmers. In Vietnam and Southeast Asia, many still use fields, bushes, and streams as bathrooms. Some children have no idea what a commode is. Providing latrines and improving water supply means clean water for drinking and sanitation.

(Cont pg 2)

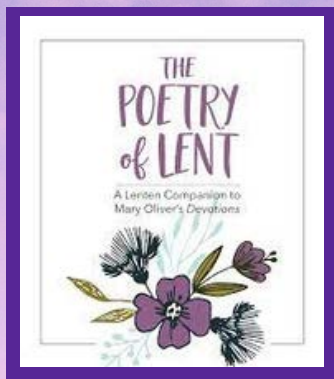
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During February, you will be receiving information about giving to support One Great Hour of Sharing. **Brochures and collection envelopes will be available on the chancel February 4th and 11th. Brochures and envelopes will then be placed in the pew racks with the collection taking place on March 3rd and 10th.** We ask that you place your OGHS envelopes in the collection plate. You can also send a check to the church office marked for OGHS or contribute online at our website.

Nearly sixty percent of UCC churches participate annually. Let's have Ellington Congregational Church be one of them. Thanks be to God.

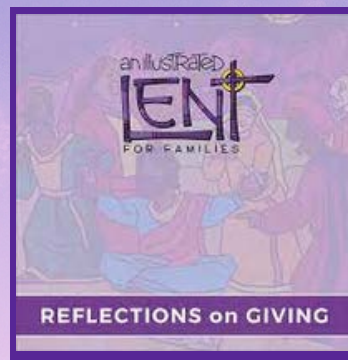


## The Board of Christian Education is offering two devotionals for the Lenten season for individual and families



The SALT project  
"The Poetry of Lent  
using the poetry of  
Mary Oliver

"Reflections on Giving"  
by Illustrated Ministry for  
families



Physical copies will be available in the Social Room and the Narthex on 2/10  
Contact Lee for a digital copy ([christianed@eccucc.org](mailto:christianed@eccucc.org))



## Lenten Book Study

Please join me for a Lenten Book Study of the **The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride** by Joe Siple. The book is about redemption, the power of the human connection, love, and forgiveness.

This study will take place by Zoom over a period of six weeks, at 7:00 pm:

- Monday February 19
- Monday February 26
- Monday March 4
- Monday March 11
- Monday March 18
- Monday March 25

The Zoom link will be provided at a later date.

It is not necessary that you join all six sessions. If you miss a meeting and wish a copy of the discussion questions, I can provide you with those.

The book can be purchased on Amazon. Please buy the actual book instead of an e-read, as I will be referring to pages and passages. If you would like me to purchase the book for you, please call me at 860-930-1232 or call Caroline at the church office, and we would be happy to do that for you. Please let Caroline or me know you will be joining by February 14 so I can plan accordingly.

~ Jane Scordato



**Ash Wednesday is  
February 14  
Season of Lent Begins**

Join us for *Giving of  
the Ashes*  
7:00 pm February 14  
in the Sanctuary

**ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14: AN ANCIENT CEREMONY FOR SOME,  
YET SOMEWHAT NEW FOR OTHERS**

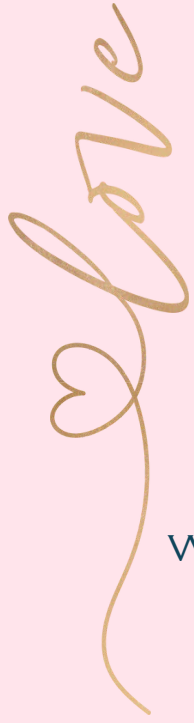
Ash Wednesday is important in that it makes us aware of the end of Epiphany-tide and the beginning of the Lenten season. As I have been pointing out during Sunday worship services, Epiphany-tide, or the Sundays after the Epiphany, is a time when we learn about the ways in which Christ Jesus became visible and known to the world. We learn that “God Is Still Speaking” and focus on faith development before entering the Lenten season’s time of deep penitence.

Transfiguration Sunday, February 11th, is the last Sunday of Epiphany-tide and the Sunday before Ash Wednesday when Lent begins. The story of Christ Jesus’ Transfiguration is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and is referenced in John. Christ Jesus underwent a dramatic change in appearance on the mountaintop in order that Jesus’ disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. They saw Jesus in the glory that was to come with resurrection. Although it was still shocking for them, this gave the disciples the reassurance they needed after Jesus told them about his coming death.

On Ash Wednesday, ashes in the form of a cross are placed on the forehead or on the hand. This symbolizes the act of confession and is a sign of human mortality and apology to God through Christ Jesus. The ashes are made by burning palms from the previous year’s Palm Sunday service. This is an ancient ceremony that originated in Gaul (modern day France, parts of Belgium, western Germany, and northern Italy) in the sixth century A.D. When the ashes are placed, these words from Genesis are said: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The imposition of ashes is relatively new in the United Church of Christ. However, the UCC has always done something similar by using confession, silence, and assurance, either during Holy Communion or Sunday services or both.

Lent is the forty-day period when we are asked to make time for an opportunity in each day to purposefully build a deeper relationship with God through Christ Jesus. We are able to reflect and prepare for the celebration of Easter. It gives us time to think about what Jesus went through on his ministry journeys and also on his journey to the cross when he sacrificed himself for us. During Lent we can sacrifice something that we like to do or eat (but not to the detriment of our health). However, we should set aside time to praise and worship God more often, to read Scripture more often, to pray more often, to share more often, and, most important, to listen for God. We are to think more about God’s Righteousness or “God’s Recipe for the Right Way for Living.” We can acknowledge that, in our human condition, we don’t always “get it right.” That’s okay because God cares that we are trying and that we continue to try. We know we will continue to try because we want to be close to God instead of feeling separated from God. God never leaves us; God’s unconditional love surrounds each one of us, whether we want it or not, and is always there for the taking. One last thought: Sundays are not considered part of Lent. That is why we say Sundays are “in Lent,” rather than saying “of Lent.” On Sundays in Lent, because they are sacred and holy days, you may stop your fasting for the day. Yes, on Sundays “in Lent” you may eat chocolate, potato chips, and ice cream.

Your Sister in Christ Jesus, ~ Pastor Joanne



# COMMUNITY MARRIAGE VOW RENEWAL

SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 10, 2024  
11:00 AM  
ELLINGTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Join us as we come together for this group marriage vow renewal ceremony.  
Still fit in your wedding gown?  
Was your style barefoot in a field with flowers in your hair?  
Special attire not necessary - come as you are.  
All are welcome.

Snow Date Feb 17, 2024

## BSA Scout Sunday February 11

Join us as we recognize the good work of  
Cub Scout Pack 96  
and Scouts Troop 96



### Bell Choir

Starting February, our wonderful Bell Choir will be performing during the worship service on the last Sunday of the month for the Spring Season.

Come and listen to their beautiful music February 25th.



### 2024 Music Programs Express Your Faith with Music

Hone your musical skills and learn new ones.  
Choirs are open to all, members and non-members.  
No auditions - come and join the fun!

#### Spring Junior Choir Now Forming

We are now forming the Junior choir for the upcoming season.  
Weekly practices, with a special performance during Palm Sunday.

**Starting ~ 02/04/24 Sun 11:20 am**

For more information on any music programs, contact our Music Director, Juliane LaRocca:  
[musicdirector@eccucc.org](mailto:musicdirector@eccucc.org)



Due to lack of interest in the Worship in New Directions services (held on the 4th Wed of each month) from the Faith Community and the community at large, we have decided to suspend these services.

We will revisit having an alternative worship service in the future. Please let Pastor Joanne know if you would like a contemporary service during a different season, during the daytime, or a different evening.

# FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Fellowship Hour generally follows the worship service.

Please join us after the service, downstairs in the Social Room.

It is a favorite Sunday ritual and gives visitors, friends and members of the congregation a chance to socialize over delicious foods, a nice cuppa, and some fun activities. Please remember to wear your name tags!

## February Fellowship Hour theme: a **LOVELY** month

Feb 4th - Celebrating Valentine's Day

Feb 11th - Boy Scout Sunday - enjoy some campfire delights

Feb 18th - It's National Ice Cream for Breakfast Day.

Feb 25th - T.E.L.O.S. Lasagna Dinner fundraiser

(See the T.E.L.O.S. notice for more information)



The Fellowship Hour Ministry offers a way for a broad number of people to serve, without needing to attend formal committee meetings. There is also a lot of flexibility in the scheduling. Please prayerfully consider if you could assist with this ministry at least a few times during the year. Tasks are simple - baking, setup, and cleanup.

It is a loving ministry and an excellent opportunity to get to know other members of the congregation on Sunday mornings. Join Cassie Miller and her team as they continue to create fun themes each Sunday.



Thank you, David Feindel,  
for being such a great role  
model to people of all ages,  
through scouting and your  
work at ECC.

[www.SilverLakeCT.org/SummerCamp](http://www.SilverLakeCT.org/SummerCamp)

 Southern New England Conference  
United Church of Christ  
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus



**SILVER LAKE**  
Camp & Retreat Center



This year's annual T.E.L.O.S mission trip is during the week of July 7th, 2024. They will be serving with TEAM effort on the Caroline Coast in Lumberton, NC. Please continue to support them through their fundraisers this year.



## Homemade Lasagna Dinner

with sauce made by Joann Scott  
Sunday, 2/25 @ 11:15 am

\$12/adults

\$8/kids

\$30 max/family

Dine In or Takeout

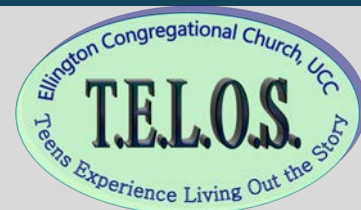


Snowdate: 3/3

**Help T.E.L.O.S. get to Lumberton, NC**

**NEW!**  
Starting  
in 2024!

The Board of Christian  
Education is awarding a  
\$500 T.E.L.O.S. Scholarship  
annually



Eligible youth must serve at least 2 years in TELOS one of which must be their senior year. Applications available March 1st  
For information contact Lee C. ([christianed@eccucc.org](mailto:christianed@eccucc.org))

## Shopping Cart Ministry February Most Needed Items

Crystal Lake Pantry is requesting:

- Corned Beef Hash
- Scalloped/Au gratin Potatoes
- Mayo
- Jarred Pasta Sauce
- Canned Pears



Cornerstone is requesting:

- Peanut butter
- Canned tuna
- Canned pasta
- Ramen noodles
- Rice-A-Roni or Knorr rice side dishes
- Canned fruit
- Pasta sauce in plastic jars or cans
- Pouches of instant potatoes



### MISSIONS is on a Mission

*As the Board of Missions, we exemplify a heart full of love,  
an ear ready to listen, and a hand willing to help.*

In looking back over 2023, Missions had 2 primary goals. One was supporting our local food banks with food and monetary assistance as needed. Second we assisted different communities who provided programs that met the needs of children.

This year it is our plan to do exactly the same. Food banks are in greater demand than ever before. Lee Hay, Cornerstone Food Cupboard Volunteer director sent this message to missions last week. "The families coming to the cupboard continues to grow. This stressful economy has led to our having 615 households registered for that assistance, and that is 140 more than just a year ago."

When the church annual budget is created, a percentage of your pledged amounts is allocated to the Board of Missions. They work diligently all year to make wise and important use of that money. From their annual report, these are the many organizations that were supported by your generosity. You can also make additional donations to them so that they can do more on your behalf.

#### LOCAL

- Ellington Human Services (Grandma's Pantry, Christmas Gift Cards)
- Ellington Human Services (Youth Mental Health)
- Vernon Human Services (Christmas Gift Cards)
- Cornerstone Foundation (Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, Shelter, Clothing Bank)
- Crystal Lake Food Pantry
- Hockanum Valley Community Council (Youth Mental Health, Food, Senior Christmas Dinner)
- Rockville Hospital (Maternity Clinic)
- Ellington Fire Department
- Hands on Hartford
- ECC TELOS (Mission Trip)
- Camp Newhoca in Vernon (3 Campers)
- Maple Street School in Vernon (backpacks, socks, underwear)

#### NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

- Samaritan's Purse (Turkey Earthquake, Maui Fires)
- Operation Smile
- Southwest Indian Reservation Aid (Nutritious Food and Winter Kits for Elderly)

If you find yourselves or loved ones hospitalized, either planned or unplanned, please reach out to Pastor Joanne, Laurie Hazleton or the Office.

You can never have too many positive thoughts and prayers.

# Women's Fellowship News

The Women's Fellowship of the Ellington Congregational Church is open to all members and friends of the church. We encourage you to participate in our organization.

*Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

Dear Women of ECC,

Our 2024 Budget includes an \$1,800 yearly donation to the church budget. We also include two scholarships, Safe Grad parties, our own ministries such as Prayer Shawl and more. Women's Fellowship has provided financial support to our church for many years.

For the past couple of months, our Executive Board has been discussing the idea of the change of Women's Fellowship to just Fellowship. We already have many men involved and supporting our major fundraiser, the Farmhouse Fair, including chairing booths.

This would mean important changes to our Bylaws and Constitution. We invite all of the women of our congregation to come to a general meeting on Friday, February 23, 2024. It will be held in the Social Room at 7:00 p.m. for a business meeting about this change, a short program on trails in the area, and some light refreshments.

Currently, this would not be a merging of Women's Fellowship and Men's Fellowship, but rather just a change from Women's Fellowship to Fellowship open to all adults. Our current definition of members of Women's Fellowship is: All women of the community who have the interest of this Church at heart and desire to cooperate in its work may be members of this organization.

This would be a very big change to our organization, and we want to have as much conversation and discourse as is necessary to make a solid decision with a strong consensus. Please come, listen and share your opinion. Changes to the Bylaws and Constitution require sufficient notification at a prior meeting for a vote, so there will not be a vote taken to accept the changes on February 23, 2024.

**Sacred Stitches meets on the third Thursday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and the next meeting is February 15, 2024.**

Blessings, Penny Gates and Sharon McLaughlin, Co-Presidents



**If you would like information about the following ministries,  
please call the church office 860-871-6606**

**Friendship Class**  
February 6, 2024  
1:00 pm - Rm 201



**Sacred Stitches**  
February 15, 2024  
9:00 am - Social Room



**Prayer Shawl**  
February 22, 2024  
9:30 am - Social Room







## **EASTER FOOD DRIVE**

*Helping Our Neighbors in this Season of Lent*

**With Much Appreciated Assistance from  
Cub Scout Pack 96 grades K-5!**

Ellington Food Bank, Crystal Lake Community Food Pantry,  
the Hockanum Valley Community Council Food Bank  
and The Cornerstone Food Cupboard

**SUNDAY MARCH 17, 2024**

9:30 - 12:00 Noon

Bring to Church parking lot. Helpers will unload directly from cars with safety precautions taken.

**Suggested Donation:** \$10 cash or grocery gift card towards Easter Dinner ham or turkey along with a grocery bag or box of:

- Canned ham, Spam, other canned meats, vegetables, soups
- Rice, noodle mixes, scalloped or mashed potatoes
- Muffin mix, corn bread, or roll mix
- Cake or brownie mixes

THE CHURCH CALLER  
Ellington Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
P.O. Box 216  
Ellington, CT 06029-0216

## ECC Contact Information

**860-871-6606** [www.eccucc.org](http://www.eccucc.org)

*Church Office Hours: Tues - Fri 9:00 am - 2:00 pm*

*Office email: [OfficeAdmin@eccucc.org](mailto:OfficeAdmin@eccucc.org)*

[officeadmin@eccucc.org](mailto:officeadmin@eccucc.org)

**Caroline Takach**, Office  
Administrator

**Location/Shipping Address**

72 Main Street

**Mailing Address**

P.O. Box 216,  
Ellington, CT 06029-0216

**Fax** 860-871-5932

**WIFI for Sanctuary and**

**Social Room: ECCwifil**  
pass: 2019churchECC!

**The 24/7 church answering  
machine provides  
instructions for urgent call  
service .**

**Pastoral Emergencies,**  
concerns or prayer requests,  
call Pastor Joanne at  
**860-872-9222.**

[pastor@eccucc.org](mailto:pastor@eccucc.org)

**Joanne Myer**, Intentional  
Interim Minister

[christianed@eccucc.org](mailto:christianed@eccucc.org)

**Lee Carman**, Youth &  
Children Faith Formation  
Director

[musicdirector@eccucc.org](mailto:musicdirector@eccucc.org)

**Juliane 'Julie' LaRocca**,  
Director of Music

[outreach@eccucc.org](mailto:outreach@eccucc.org)

**Jill McAllister**, Outreach &  
Media Coordinator/ Website