

Center Congregational Church
474 Broad Street
Meriden, CT 06450-5897



Keep joining Pastor Connor for Virtual Worship each week at www.connorfilkins.com/virtual-worship

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The Lighted Tower

Center Congregational Church, Meriden.
474 Broad Street – Meriden, CT 06450

September Vol. 6 No. 9

A Reopening Announcement

To the Center Church Family,

There is some excitement stirring within our community! On August 27, the Council approved the worship protocols developed over the summer by the Diaconate. In short – we are moving forward with a plan to return to in-person worship on October 11th. We have a lot to do in order to prepare for that date, and our leadership will be working tirelessly over the next month to get things in order so we can follow the Diaconate’s worship protocols, which will be released in September.

When that happens, I invite you to take a look at those protocols several times in order to familiarize yourself prior to worship in October. I say this, because worship will look a lot different than what we are used to, in order to implement every safety pre-caution that we possibly can. The list is exhaustive, because in-person worship continues to be a risky activity. While our plan is extensive, it still does not guarantee safety. I recently spoke with Dr. Jeffrey Finklestein, Hartford Healthcare’s Vice President of Medical Affairs for the Central Region, who expressed that he believes in person worship can be done, but with an abundance of caution and by taking the necessary steps to make it as safe as possible.

The protocols we have developed, do this as best as we possibly can. These protocols will also be in place until a vaccine is readily available and is proven effective. While they may seem over-the-top, we are called by Christ to be over-the-top in our love and care for our neighbor, and this is how we can best do this during the pandemic. Sacrificing the normalcy of what we know in order to facilitate an in-person worship service that is as safe as possible is difficult, but necessary.

The United Church of Christ continues to recommend online worship where possible as this is the only guaranteed safe method of worshipping. The Southern New England Conference continues to recommend that members that are 65 or older and members with underlying health conditions continue to worship remotely. As was expressed in our reopening questionnaire, everyone has different comfort levels regarding reopening, and I want to encourage you all to honor yourself and your personal comfort level. Your health, safety, and peace of mind are of tantamount importance, and you should be able to worship in a way where you feel safest.

For those of you that plan on attending, I am thrilled to be exploring what in-person worship will look like together! I’ve been preaching with you all since March 22nd, and to say I am excited to preach from a pulpit again is an understatement. It is an exciting moment to be able to begin planning for a return to our worship space. I appreciate your willingness to adapt and engage in Virtual Worship over the recent months. Without your participation, it would not have been nearly as successful as it has been, so thank you!

For those who won’t be joining us just yet, know you are with us in spirit. I commend you for making the choice to honor your personal health and comfort levels. There is a great deal of bravery in being able to put yourself and your basic health need first. Know that, though it will look different, there will still be an online

worship option for you that can be found in the same spot as it always has been! I encourage any feedback you have to the changes surrounding the virtual worship option. More details about what virtual worship will look like will come soon!

I look forward to seeing those of you who will be joining us for our 10am service on October 11th! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to either myself or any of the deacons with questions.

In other news, we will be beginning our discernment process this fall! Keep an eye out for an important mailing outlining the fall schedule. I am very excited to get under way with this process!

Peace and Blessings,



Pastor Connor Filkins

minister@centerchurchmeriden.org

203-626-1017-

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Hello Friends,

Hope you all are doing well. I am thoroughly enjoying chatting with you all! Please keep signing up for appointments to chat with me at this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040a4fafab2ea5f85-center>

As always, feel free to reach out to me at 203-626-1017, or at minister@centerchurchmeriden.org.

Center Church Meriden is inviting you to Zoom Coffee Hour!

To join on the zoom app:

enter this link in your computer browser

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82807119792?pwd=aDR6ZlVYQl1CYUNxZDhMRkhJbnhWQT09>

Or click “join meeting” on your Zoom app and enter the log in information.

This will be changing starting September 13, 2020

Meeting ID: 828 0711 9792

Password: 474coffee

To join via telephone:

Call: [+1 646 558 8656](tel:+16465588656)

Then enter:

Meeting ID: 828 0711 9792#

Password: 854761#

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Connor M.H. Filkins

Designated Term Minister

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Wonderful news!

The Church Council has approved a plan to reopen the church for in-person worship on October 11, 2020. There will be one service at 10am. Sunday School will resume on October 18, 2020.

The reopening plan includes numerous precautions that will be implemented to lower the risks associated with indoor worship. Masks will be required. Seating in the sanctuary will be spaced to allow for social distancing of 6 feet. There will be no singing, passing of the Peace, or Coffee/Fellowship time following the service. You will receive additional details about the plan in mid-September.

We know from our church survey that there will be people who are more comfortable worshipping from home. The worship service will be live-streamed from the sanctuary at 10am on Sundays. The Kindles will continue to be used for people without internet access.

The reopening of the church is for **worship only**; the church building will remain closed for meetings and other group gatherings.

Please continue to wash your hands, practice social distancing, wear your mask and pray that the numbers in CT remain low after the schools reopen so that we can move forward with this plan.

FROM THE DEACONS

Keeping our church family connected during a pandemic has been a challenge. There are people in our congregation who do not have internet which makes virtual worship impossible for them. Since March, they have been reading copies of Pastor Connor's sermons, but have been unable to hear the music, see the sanctuary, or share in Maureen's Children Messages. Some of them do not know what Pastor Connor looks like.

After lengthy investigation, we have found an affordable way to connect people without internet to our virtual worship service. Each week, Pastor Connor transfers the recorded worship service to a Kindle Fire which is then delivered to the individual. Once the service has been viewed, arrangements are made to pick up the Kindle to ready it for the next week's viewing. Written directions for accessing the video are included, and an initial personal tutorial from a Deacon makes it easy to access the worship service.

Thanks to the generosity of three members of our congregation, we have purchased 7 Kindles. Two of the Kindles are already in use. Please contact the church office (203-235-1389) if you would like to be added to our Kindle delivery routes. You can also contact Barbara Langner if you would like more information

PASTORAL CARE

Pastor Connor will be on vacation from **August 31 – September 7**. If you are in need of emergency pastoral care please call the church office (203) 235-1389 or, Deacon Barbara Langner or Deacon Steve Gorman.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

The truck will arrive on September 8th to pick all the boxes and buckets we have. Help is needed at 8:00 am on Sept. 8 to help unload the basement and bring items up to the parking lot. Help is also needed at 1:00 pm the same day to help load the CWS truck.

MISSION MOMENT



Thank you to everyone who contributed this year to the Backpack Project. We donated to this project. Although there couldn't be an Expo to distribute backpacks this year, the Firefighters Local has distributed some backpacks at three local events. They were able to use some backpacks and supplies left over from previous years.

For September, all donations to the Missions Committee will be sent to The American Red Cross which provides disaster relief to areas in need. In the past month, there was a derecho storm in Iowa that destroyed 14 million acres of farmland and grain bins, apartments, homes and businesses, and left tens of thousands without electric power. (A derecho is a widespread, long-lived straight-line wind storm that can cause hurricane-force winds, tornadoes, heavy rains and flash floods.)

In August there were also hundreds of wildfires in California, some sparked by lightning strikes. As of this writing, 1.2 million acres have burned and nearly 200,000 Californians have been displaced. People have lost their homes and their belongings.

Right now, weather forecasters are watching Hurricane Laura which is taking aim at Texas and Louisiana. With so many natural disasters, The Red Cross can use our donations to offer relief to those most affected and in need.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION PROJECTS!!!



OTHERS

As we move toward the equinox in September, and due to the fact that ride sharing is still not something we should be doing, Others needs to have 2 options for the next several months. OTHERS A group is anyone who does not feel safe driving alone at night. OTHERS B is anyone who works or still feels comfortable driving at night. OTHERS C is anyone who wants to show up for either or both events. Please still mail your birthday cards to the birthday girl of the month. Sue Trella and Cindy Loucks are the September birthdays.

OTHERS

WILL MEET TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 11:45 am at SANS SOUCI OUTSIDE OR IN THE BACK OF THE GARDEN ROOM WITH THE WINDOWS OPEN.

OTHERS

WILL ALSO MEET SEPTEMBER 10, 6 PM AT SANS SOUCI IN THE GARDEN ROOM WITH THE WINDOWS OPEN.

KOINONIA

WILL JOIN OTHERS SEPTEMBER 8, 11:45 AM AT SANS SOUCI.

CENTERITES

WILL MEET AT 6:30 PM SEPTEMBER 10 AT A&A.

CHRISTIAN ED

Sunday School, LOL, & Confirmation



Virtual Sunday School begins September 13th !

Grades K-6 will meet at 10:30 am.

Grades 7-12 will meet at Noon.

Packets and/or booklets will arrive in the mail shortly if they have not already arrived. LOL will continue to be meeting with Chelsea, one Sunday a month beginning on Sunday, September 13th. Links to these Google meets sessions will be emailed to each person, so look out for them.

Confirmation class will reconvene on October 4th, at 1PM. If you are in grades 7-12, and would like to be included in the confirmation class please contact Maureen: Christian.ed@centrchurchmeriden.org.

Racial Justice Workshop #2



Arkayla Tenney-Howard will lead participants in a second seminar on racial justice on Sunday, September 20th, at 1PM. All are welcome to attend this session even if you were not able to make the first one. Those who attended the first session found it to be enlightening. The video of Racial Justice Session #1 is posted on the virtual worship website. <https://www.connorfilkins.com/virtual-worship> in case you would like to watch it.

CCC Youth Group



CCC Youth Group will meet for the rescheduled Chopped Quarantine Edition, on September 27th at Noon. Email Maureen Christian.ed@centerchurchmeriden.org if you want to participate in the cooking challenge. She will drop off a “basket” of mandatory ingredients that you will transform into delectable dishes both you and your family members can taste and judge. Please note: There will be no grades 7-12 Sunday school on this particular Sunday.

A NOTE FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

If you have moved please send the church office a note with you new address or call the office. This is how we keep our files up to date. Thank you for your help. Also, if you are going in the hospital please let the office or the minister know. This is only way we will know, it is not possible to visit at this time, we can always give you a call.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Please watch for emails or letters to let you know when the church will be open.

Watch church on Sunday morning at 10 by logging into www.connorfilkins.com/virtual-worship

Aug. 31-Sept. 7		Pastor Connor will be on vacation
Sept. 6	10:00 am	Virtual-worship
Sept. 6	11:00 am	Coffee hour Via Zoom
Sept. 8		CWS Pick-up Help needed at 8:00 am and 1:00 pm
Sept. 10	4:00 pm	Others
Sept. 10	6:30 pm	Centerites
Sept. 13	10:00 am	Virtual – worship
Sept. 13	11:00 am	Zoom coffee hour
Sept. 15	6:30 pm	Zoom – Trustees
Sept. 20	10:00 am	Virtual worship
Sept. 20	11:00 am	coffee hour
Sept. 20	1:00 pm	Racial Justice Workshop #2 – via zoom
Sept. 24	6:45 pm	Zoom – Church Council
Sept. 27	10:00 am	Virtual worship
Sept. 27	11:00 am	coffee hour





SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Tammy Clancy
- 4 Nancy Todd Zalenski
Susan Trella
- 6 Ava Dunleavy
- 8 Stephen Kenney
- 11 Charlie Cusachs
- 12 Steve Gorman
- 13 Brian Comstock
- 14 Dean Loucks
- 15 Betty Wilson
- 16 Jamie Harnois
- 18 Monica Rogers
- 20 Elizabeth Mahoney
Leah Hayes
- 21 Alice Foss
Cindy Loucks
Amanda Rochette
- 22 Muriel Soroka-Pizzi
Evan Clancy
- 24 Reagan Kenney
- 25 Herbert Greenbacker

Alice Foss will be 97 on Sept. 21, 2020

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS



Mary Volker
Betty Weiland
Jonathan Miller
Randy Stack
Betty Leidy on the passing of her niece, Lori
Lou Foss on the passing of her brother, Albert
Ed and Judy (Volker) Sullivan on the passing of Ed's brother and mother.
All shut-ins

Emergency workers, mail carriers, health care workers
Grocery people, truck drivers.