

The Clerical Caller

A monthly publication of Covenant Congregational Church of West Hartford

FEBRUARY 2019

“Trusting God”

Walter Wangerin, in his book, Mourning into Dancing, tells about an event that occurred when he was a young boy. He had a hiding place in the cherry tree in his backyard. One branch formed a horizontal fork, which was perfect for him to lie on facedown and read, think, or just be alone. His parents had no idea that this was his hiding place.

Then came the thunderstorm. I'll let him tell the rest of the story:

One day suddenly, a wind tore through the backyard and struck my cherry tree with such force that it ripped the fork from my hands and nearly threw me from the limb. I locked my arms around the forking branches and hung on. My head hung down between them. I tried to wind my legs around the limb, but the whole tree was wallowing in the wind...

“Daddeeeeeeeeeee!”

There he was...The branches swept up and down, like huge waves on an ocean—and Daddy saw me, and right away he came out into the wind and the weather, and I felt so relieved because I just took it for granted that he would climb right up the tree to get me.

But that wasn't his plan at all.

He came to a spot right below me and lifted his arms and shouted, “Jump.”

Jump? I had a crazy man for a father. He was standing six or seven miles beneath me, holding up two skinny arms [Walter had bragged many times about how strong his daddy was] and telling me to jump. If I jumped, he'd miss. I'd hit the ground and die...

But the wind and the rain slapped that cherry tree, bent it back and cracked my limb at the trunk. I dropped a foot. My eyes flew open. Then the wood whined and splintered and sank, and so did I, in bloody terror.

No, I did not jump. I let go. I surrendered.

I fell.

In a fast, eternal moment I despaired and plummeted. This, I thought, is what it's like to die—

But my father caught me...

Now in such a storm the tree which was our sta-

ble world is shaken, and instinct makes us grab it tighter: by our own strength we grip the habits that have helped us in the past, repeating them, believing them. We'd rather trust what is than what might be: that is, our power, our reason and feeling and endurance...We spend a long time screaming No!

But always, God is present. God has always been present. And it is God who says, “Jump.”

It's not an easy thing to trust God, but it is the very essence of the Christian faith. We are called by God, to trust not in ourselves or our own understanding, but to trust in the Lord with all our heart. How do we do that?

I believe prayer is the key to trusting God. When we pray, we are saying to God: “I need your help! I can't do this on my own! Please, Lord, help me!”

Some people think that we shouldn't be bringing our needs and problems to God—it's too selfish and God already knows what we need. But when Jesus taught us to pray, He said, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Jesus wants us to bring our daily needs and concerns to our Heavenly Father.

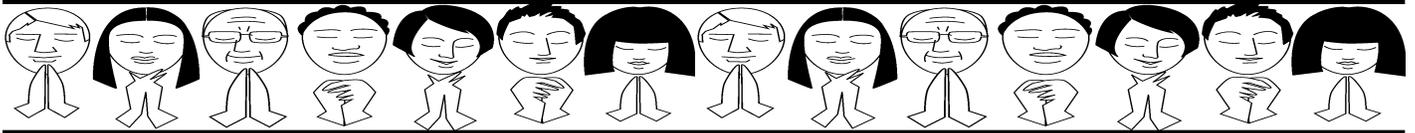
This is prayer at its most simple and basic. We come as children to our loving Father and share with Him our needs and concerns, trusting that He listens, cares, and will help us. God asks us to jump into His arms, and when we pray, we are letting go of everything we think will help and simply trusting in the strong arms of our God to catch us.

So let's pray in this new year! Pray, pray, pray! This is the way we trust in the Lord.

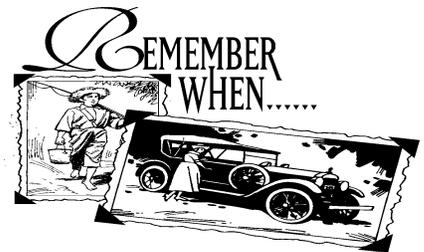
Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tom

**Annual Meeting of Our Congregation
Sunday, February 10th**

All members are encouraged to attend this important meeting. We will meet after our worship service, and the meeting will consist of two parts: First, we will review the annual report looking back at 2018. Next we will begin to look ahead to this year and beyond by talking about future options our church could take. The snow date for the meeting is February 17th. Please make this a priority!



TIME CAPSULE



By the time this issue of the Clerical Caller is out an historic change in our church governance will have already taken place. Instead of three or four boards, as has been the case for many, many years, we now have just one—The Executive Board. This Time Capsule wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the former boards of Deacons, Trustees, and Christian Education that have worked in harmony for the spiritual care of the members, care of church property and finances, and care of the education and programs for the youth of the church.

The first church board was elected in 1889 and had three deacons and three trustees along with other officers. And, at that time, all of the women were appointed as deaconesses. Each year deacons, deaconesses, and trustees were elected by the church. It seemed that board status for deacons and trustees was not made until the early 1940s. At that time the deacons and trustees were men. Deaconesses were not members of the Board of Deacons. The women visited the sick and needy and assisted the deacons in their work. Eventually, the deacons and deaconesses combined into the Diaconate, or Deacon Board.

Even though we have had a Sunday School since 1890, there wasn't a board for Christian Education until the mid to late 1940s. It began as the Board of Religious Education, later changing to the Board of Christian Education. This group supervised the educational and youth programs for the church, appointed teachers, and chose the curriculum for the classes.

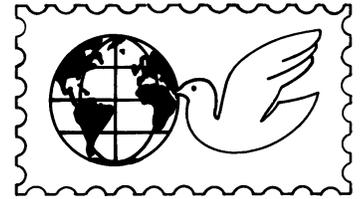
This installment of the Time Capsule wishes to express thanks to God for those faithful members who served on our church boards carrying on the work of the church first in Hartford and then in West Hartford.



**Executive Board Meeting
Sunday, February 17th,
after church.**



Dear friends at Covenant Congregational Church,



Thank you so much for your generous support of the DR Mission Team—specifically \$2,500 to support our teacher, Ananea, at the Joe Hartman School on Kilometer Six. This substantial gift will help Ananea to continue teaching at Joe Hartman, and, in turn, she will be helping to educate an extremely poor community of children and their families.

We are honored and humbled that you are interested in having an impact on this community and helping Ananea and her students escape from a life of poverty.

We will be gearing up for our summer trip in January, and would love to have you join us on the mission field. It is life changing for everyone.

Love and Blessings,
Suzanne (DRMT Development Director)



Bring the **WHOLE** family!

**Sunday Brunch
February 24th**

Please bring a dish to share and join us after church on the 24th for great food and fellowship!

Everyone enjoys a good meal, so please use this opportunity to invite someone to come.



February

- 1 Christopher Adams
- 4 Dawn Sundman
- 13 Pedro Alverino
- 22 Mary VanDerMeid

**Breakfast and Fellowship
Saturday, Feb. 9th, 8 am.**

Come and join us for good food and good fellowship. Pastor Tom will cook and share a devotion. As always, you are invited to ask a friend to join us.



Items can be placed in the wicker basket near the back entrance or on the table in the narthex. The following are suggested for February though any donations are appreciated.

- ♥ Sun Feb 3 Cereal
- ♥ Sun Feb 10 Fruit Juice
- ♥ Sun Feb 17 Canned Fruit
- ♥ Sun Feb 24 Tea and Coffee



February 2019



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

You have more to offer the world than a shadow of yourself.

2



3

Sunday School
9:30
Worship 10:30

4

5

Bible Study
7:00 PM

6

7

8

9

Breakfast &
Fellowship
8 AM

10

Sunday School
9:30
Worship 10:30
Annual Mtg.

11

12

Bible Study
7:00 PM

13

14



15

16

17

Sunday School
9:30
Worship 10:30
Executive Mtg.

18

19

Bible Study
7:00 PM

20

21

22

23

24

Sunday School
9:30
Worship 10:30
Brunch!

25

26

Bible Study
7:00 PM

27

28