



Niantic Community Church

Tidings

February 2024

Monthly news for members & friends
from Niantic Community Church

In this Issue:

- Message from Rev. Erica.....1
- Message from Rev. Kaleigh..2
- Working from Within.....3
- Soup & Soul Lenten Study ..4
- C+Y Faith Formation.....5
- Black History programs7
- 305 Anniversary NCC10
- Faith in Action11
- Governance 202412
- In Memoria15
- Contacts16

WELCOME TO NCC!

We are an Open, Affirming, Reconciling
Congregation.

A Federated Church of the United Church of
Christ and the United Methodist Church.

No matter who you are, and where you are on
your life's journey, you are welcome here.



February 2024

Freedom or connectivity? It often feels like we need to make choices between freedom and connection in our relationships, but is it an either/or, or a both/and? Pastor Kaleigh and I will be exploring this paradox of relationship as we focus on the theme of *Covenant* in worship during the season of Lent.

Covenants come in all varieties. We have covenants with one another, and God also holds covenants with people in history e.g., Noah, Abraham, Jesus, and in our lives today. There are also political covenants embodied in documents like the *Constitution of the United States* which promise freedoms, but it balances freedoms with responsibilities. The Niantic Community Church is in Covenant with our two member denominations: The United Methodist Church, and the United Church of Christ. We all live with explicit and implicit covenants in our lives – everything from the unions of our parents, to the working hours of our favorite businesses (what do they mean they are closed for the season? I rely on that place!)

This Lent, I invite you to think about your relationships with a view to the kinds of covenants you are keeping with those around you. Is the relationship leaning into connection or leaning into freedom? Is that in keeping with other Covenants that you have made, or are you moving in a new direction? Where is God leading you in covenantal relationships? And how does God continue to be faithful to God’s covenant with us?

Beginning on Ash Wednesday we will be reflecting on Covenants in worship. Offering regular worship is itself a covenantal act. We do it because we are part of a people who promised to long before we got here, and somewhere in between the action and the act, our covenant deepens, and we are blessed. Please join us, in person or online!

Lenten Blessings, Rev Erica



Pastoral Care Corner

At some point in life, everyone travels a difficult journey or situation. Whether it be grief, depression, loss, sickness, loneliness or more, people sometimes travel this path alone, not having anyone they feel they can turn to. That's where Pastoral Care comes in.



I've been doing a lot of reflecting on what Pastoral Care means in 2024. In a world where we face family and relationship turmoil, injustice, increased isolation and loneliness, a global pandemic, a lack of community, heightened political divisions, and increased violence, let's face it, **our world is suffering**. Enter in pastoral care: providing emotional, social, and spiritual support during a time of need.

I want to remind you that if **you are struggling** with anything, the pastors at NCC are here to provide you with spiritual care. I am available to meet with you here at the church, out for coffee, or even for a walk on the boardwalk. As a reminder, my hours are 10-2 Monday-Thursday and you can either email me, call the office, or make an appointment using the link in the Wednesday or Sunday Note.

If you have a desire to **help those** who might be struggling, the Parish Life Ministries Committee offers a variety of ways for you to help support our congregation in need. We are especially looking for folks who may be interested in card making and arranging flowers. If you might be interested in volunteering your time, talent, and treasure in these areas, please reach out to me directly and I'll connect you with opportunities that may help.

I'm reminded of that beautiful prayer by St. Francis:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen."



May we indeed become instruments of peace and find peace in our troubled world.

Love + Light,

Pastor Kaleigh

“Working from within” is a series in Tidings to highlight faithful church members who provide sustained contributions to the missions of the Church without fanfare.

Sandra Tarallo



This month, meet Sandy Tarallo, one of the newer additions to our NCC family. Sandy hails from Chicago and New York, and moved to Niantic just two years ago.

She has a Masters’ degree in Elementary Education, and taught school for about 40 years. In her short time with us, she has gotten involved with the DINE program (co-team leader), ringing in the Bell Choir, participating in Anything Goes, Blood Drives, Child Care, and supporting OAR.

She enjoys gardening, swimming, community service, and babysitting her cherished one-year old grandson. Sandy says she is still making connections in Niantic and at NCC, but is always ready to answer the “call” wherever needed, with a great sense of helping and humor. We are blessed that she has chosen NCC as her church home.



Submitted by Nancy Hunt



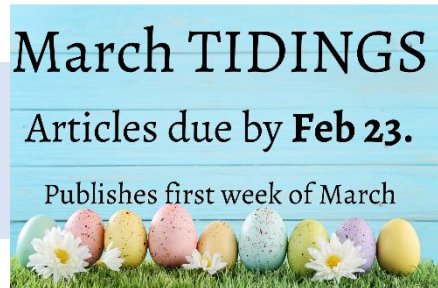
Holy Poinsettia!

I brought this Poinsettia home after Christmas 2019. Dick Robinson has watched it grow!

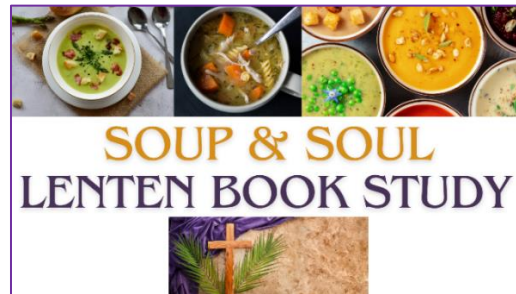
Submitted by Karen Thisell

Tidings Newsletter Schedule

March Issue	Articles due by February 23
April Issue	Articles due by March 20

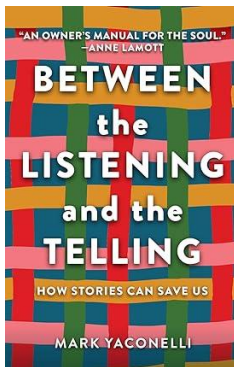


Parish Life Ministries



Soup & Soul Lenten book study will be held on five consecutive Wednesdays from February 21 to March 20. We will gather in the Dining Hall at 5:30pm to 7:00pm each week to share a simple meal of soup, then discuss the book, *Between the Listening and the Telling: How Stories Can Save Us* by Mark Yaconelli.

About *Between the Listening and the Telling: How Stories Can Save Us*.



Stories tether us to what matters most: our families, our friends, our hearts, our planet, the wondrous mystery of life itself. Yet the stories we've been telling ourselves as a civilization are killing us: Fear is wisdom. Vanity is virtuous. Violence is peace.

In the pages of *Between the Listening and the Telling*; storyteller, author, and activist Mark Yaconelli leads readers into an enchanting meditation on the power of storytelling in our individual and collective lives. We tell stories to remember who we are. We tell stories to savor the pleasure of living. Stories can be medicine, and they can transform entire communities.

"The vignettes are in turn heartbreaking, funny, and consistently well written. The result is a moving testament to the power of confession." ---Publishers Weekly

"This tender book invites us to create vulnerable and life-giving spaces in which to spill our own stories and to stumble onto each other's deepest and truest selves." ---Presbyterian Outlook

The book is available for purchase from the office (cost \$18.74) or from Amazon. All are welcome to attend. Come one week or all as you are able. Contact Jeannette Woodworth or Joanne Moore for more information.

Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day this year, join us for a service of reflection and preparation February 14 at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary and online.

Faith Formation for Children & Youth

The Youth team was led by Kim Saucier with Jennifer Munzner, Mary Childs, Jennifer Briggs and Marsha Swan. We made a record amount of cupcakes (about 1,000!). Thank you to our congregation for all the support.

Cupcake Fun-Raiser for Youth Mission Trip 2024



Faith Formation for Children & Youth

Our Faith Formation programs have been in full swing. Led by a dedicated group of church volunteers, we provide nursery care and Sunday school each week. Our kids of various ages have participated in worship services as Acolyte (candle lighting) and readers at special services. Planning and raising funds (Cupcakes!) has been underway for the Youth Mission Trip to Rhode Island this July. Club 26 for Grades 2-6 has met several times, and they will be working on several outreach projects for Dine/NL Homeless Hospitality Center Ministry, Care and Share of East Lyme and Waterford Youth Services. Confirmation classes meet regularly, led by Pastors Erica and Kaleigh.



We were glad to welcome Calvin McCoy III and his family to join us in worship on February 4, which happened to be his birthday – we celebrated with cake of course, during coffee hour. Pastor Kaleigh and the children interviewed him during the Children’s Message time in the service.




We had the honor of meeting Calvin and other high school students at last year’s dinner and award ceremony for **the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Scholarship Trust Fund**. Thanks to our generous congregation and hard-working Faith in Action ministry (esp. Verna Swann), NCC was able to reach its goal to co-sponsor with the Mystic Congregational Church - a complete scholarship, of which Calvin McCoy is the recipient. The MLK Scholarship Trust Fund empowers students of color to pursue higher education and understand and advance the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

These local students have been selected for their community engagement, leadership, academic excellence, and financial need. Watch for opportunities to learn more about and to support this most worthy cause – at coffee hour in February.

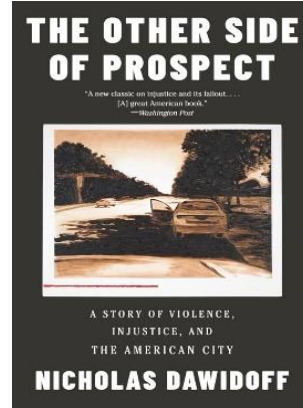
The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund

EMPOWERING students of color to pursue higher education and advance the legacy of Dr. King

A portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. looking thoughtful, with his hand resting on his chin.

Marsha Swan, Children & Youth Faith Formation Coordinator
Marsha@nianticcommunitychurch.org

**Book
Discussion
Group**



Rev Erica and Justine Lavoie would like to invite members and friends of the church to read Nicholas Dawidoff's 2022 book about the history of New Haven's Newhallville community and the intersection of people and systemic problems.

The Other Side of Prospect: A Story of Violence, Injustice, and the American City
By Nicholas Dawidoff

This book is a Finalist for the New York Public Library's Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism; and a Finalist for the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award for Media and the Arts. It has been described as a landmark work of intimate reporting on inequality, race, class, and violence, told through a murder and intersecting lives in an iconic American neighborhood.

If you would like to read this book with us, contact Rev Erica by email: erica.avena@nianticcommunitychurch.org. Those who are interested in reading the book will choose a mutually convenient time to gather for discussion.



Our Gospel Choir sang the prelude at a recent worship service. Gospel Choir is led by Leola Wilkerson and Nichelle Rollins.

Black History Month

The Katz Drug Store Sit-In, August 19-21, 1958, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Katz Drug Store sit-in was one of the first sit-ins during the civil rights movement, occurring between August 19 and August 21, 1958, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In protest of racial discrimination, black schoolchildren sat at a lunch counter with their teacher demanding food, refusing to leave until they were served. They sought to end the racial segregation of eating places in their city, sparking a sit-in movement in Oklahoma City that lasted for years.

In 1958, even though the "separate but equal" doctrine of Jim Crow Laws had been overturned, racial discrimination was still commonplace and restricted blacks from sharing many public spaces with whites. Black people had to drink from colored fountains, ride the back of buses, and were given their dinners in bags to eat outside of the restaurant. **Clara Luper**, a black high school teacher in Oklahoma City, was a civil rights activist and the advisor for the Youth Council of the Oklahoma City NAACP. Luper took a trip with her students to New York City to put on the play "Brother President," where they witnessed Black people living in a desegregated environment.



They experienced integrated restaurants and other freedoms that Black people in Oklahoma City had not been accustomed to. After their return to Oklahoma, Luper's daughter Marilyn asked, "Why didn't I just go in and ask for a Coca-Cola and a hamburger?" in reference to the Katz Drug Store. This prompted Luper to stage a sit-in with thirteen of her Black students. Along with Clara Luper, the participants of the sit-in were Marilyn Luper, Calvin Luper, Portwood Williams, Jr., Donda West (future mother of Kanye West), Richard Brown, Barbara Posey, Alma Faye Washington, Areda Tollivar Spinks, Elmer Edwards, Lynzetta Jones Carter, Gwendolyn Fuller Mukes, Lana Pogue, Linda Pogue, and Betty Germany. Before the event, Luper gathered the students to teach them about the principles of civil disobedience and to train them on how to react to opposition.

(continued page 9)

Black History Month

The Katz Drug Store Sit-In, August 19-21, 1958, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma -2-

After their preparation, the first day of the sit-in began on August 19, 1958, when Clara Luper and the children sat down at the counter of the Katz Drug Store and ordered thirteen cokes. They were refused service, but they stayed at the counter for hours while whites kicked them, punched them, spat at them, and poured things on them. They returned for two more days; on the third day of their protest, one of the employees served them their food, ending segregation in the restaurant.

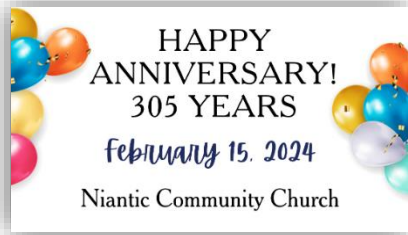
Katz Drug Stores would end their segregation policy as a result of the sit-in. The sit-in also sparked a series of sit-ins throughout Downtown Oklahoma City's restaurants. Similar protests occurred throughout the city until 1964, when Oklahoma City passed an ordinance forbidding restaurants from refusing service or facilities to anyone based on race, religion, color, sex, or national origin. Similar sit-in movements were held across the country, most notably the Greensboro sit-ins and Nashville sit-ins in 1960, which gained national attention. One month after Oklahoma City's ordinance was put into place, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, which illegalized discrimination across the country.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katz_Drug_Store_sit-in

Red Cross Blood Drive Friday, February 16, 1pm-6pm. Sign up online via the Wednesday Note to volunteer, or register online to donate blood on the Red Cross website. Red Cross is giving \$20 Amazon gift cards (by email) to donors in February. Together we can make a difference in saving lives!

Drum Circle is held in the Multi-purpose room on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each Month. Next session is February 16. Contact Karen Fox for more info.



Happy 305th Anniversary to Us!

Last June, we celebrated a special event in the life of our church – the 70th Anniversary of the merging of the East Lyme Congregational Church and the Niantic Methodist Episcopal Church to form Niantic Community Church. But we have another day to celebrate as well! Church records reveal that:

“on the 15th of February, 1719, the first society meeting was called and it was voted that Mr. George Griswold should be the minister for the society to preach ye gospel.”

So, February 15, 2024 marks the 305th anniversary of the founding of the Second or East Society of Lyme – which today is us – Niantic Community Church! If you’d like to learn more about our history, our 300th anniversary timeline poster will be on display in the narthex for the next few Sundays. You can also read more on our website and watch some videos about us and our history on our YouTube playlist. Enjoy! (scan QR code)



Submitted by Jen Datum, NCC Historian



Narthex Floor update - January 24, 2024

In the last two days I shortened the railings that were too tall and today with the help of my friend Bob Cikatz, we installed the two back railings. About a month ago I purchased the lumber for the rest of the hand rails and it is sitting in my shop acclimating. I plan to start building the railings in early February. Phase 3 will be in the February/March time frame and will be the installation of the upper hand rails and a new projector stand. We need a new projector stand so the projector is higher than the new railing.

Submitted by Rich Thomson.



To be engaged in Faith in Action ministries, contact Peter Heaney at phheaney@gmail.com

Mercy Ministries:

- Hunger.....Anne Davis Meal Ministry (DINE) – Donna Hathaway
-Care and Share of East Lyme – Sharon & Alam Kittel
- Homeless..... New London Homeless Hospitality Center - Sandy Tarallo
- Mental Health.....The Martin House – Nancy Hunt
- Domestic Violence..... Safe Futures - TBD
- Prison Ministry.....A Sacred Place - Juanita Durham/Verna Swann/Bette Mahon
- American Red Cross.....Blood Donations – Judy Barnard/Rich Morrill
- Foster Care.....Department of Children & Families - Peter Heaney

Justice Ministries:

- Racial Justice.....MLK Jr. Scholarship Fund – Verna Swann/Justina Lavoie
- OAR.....Open & Affirming Coalition (UCC)/Reconciling Ministeries (UMC)
-Out CT - Margaret Holmberg
-Nehantic Native Nation – Margaret Holmberg
- Immigration/Refugee.....United Action of CT & Start Fresh – Ocean Pellett/Ellen Ashburn
-Immigration Advocacy & Support Center of NL – Luis Rodriguez
- Climate Justice.....Green Team – Joanne Moore
- Affordable Housing.....Habitat for Humanity of Eastern CT – Rich Basham/Roe Granger
- World Poverty.....Heifer International – Nancy Hunt
-Church World Services – Nancy Hunt

Our church’s constitution calls for Faith In Action to help all of our congregation members, no matter how energetic, no matter how wealthy, no matter who they are, to become missionaries to our community and to create a welcoming atmosphere to all in so doing. It will not matter who is sitting next to you in the pew in 2024 - all will feel that they can give in some way to support God’s mission for NCC. Faith In Action wants us all to work together to feel as though God is working through us to both tithe at the Stewardship Campaign and to donate blood, walk, learn, attend events, give when called and to feel welcome in doing so at NCC.

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

The Annual Meeting (to review 2023 and plan for 2024) was held on January 28 after worship. We bid farewell and expressed our gratitude to President Frank Chan and Vice President Peg Herzberg for their 2 years of service; and welcomed Carol Donovan and Nancy Hunt as President and Vice President. With gratitude to all who lend their time and talent to allow NCC to live its mission of helping others. The full slate of leaders and representatives for 2024 is listed here.

President: Carol Donovan
Vice President: Nancy Hunt
Treasurer: Liz Buhler
Clerk: Mary Childs



2024 Ministry Area Leaders and Lead Representatives

1. Administration

a. Leader – Judy DeVey, Associate Leader – Cheri Meier

b. Representatives:

- i. Safe Church – Kathy Leindecker
- ii. Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) – Phil Lombardo, Sue Thomson, Marion McKenzie.
- iii. Nominating – Vacant
- iv. Leadership Development – Frank Chan
- v. Personnel – Judy DeVey; Staff Support – Theresa Cleary, Robin Goldschlager.

2. Operations

a. Leader – Terri McTigue, Associate Leader – Linda Helvig

b. Representatives:

- i. Worship Team – Carolyn Lombardo;
- ii. Music and Worship Arts – Nan Rigdon; Staff Support – Lynne Floyd.
- iii. Children’s Center Liaison – Linda Helvig
- iv. Communications – Vacant; Staff Support – Theresa Cleary.

3. Justice, Education, and Fellowship

a. Leader – Jeannette Woodworth, Associate Leader – Juanita Durham

b. Representatives:

- i. Parish Life Ministry – Joanne Moore and Jeannette Woodworth
- ii. Outreach/Faith-In-Action – Peter Heaney
- iii. United Action – Ocean Pellett
- iv. Open, Affirming, & Reconciling – Margaret Holmberg
- v. Christian Education – Brooke Stutzman; Staff Support – Marsha Swan, Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen, Rev. Erica Avena.

2024 Ministry Area Leaders and Lead Representatives (cont.)

4. Property Management and Technology

- a. Leader – Craig Woody, Associate Leader – Vacant**
- b. Representatives:
 - i. Property & Maintenance – Craig Woody
 - ii. Accessibility – Joanne Moore
 - iii. Physical Security – Craig Woody
 - iv. Technology (A/V and IT) – Dick Robinson, Hal Robb.

5. Financial Resources

- a. Leader – Gail SanJuan, Associate Leader – Kathy Kern**
- b. Representatives:
 - i. Finance – Sharon Kittel, Sue Smith, Pam Stevens, Liz Buhler (Treasurer)
 - ii. Capital Campaigns – Frank Chan
 - iii. Stewardship – Pam Stevens, Georgie Granger
 - iv. Financial Secretary (staff) – Ted Montgomery
 - v. Bookkeeper (staff) – Robin Goldschlager

6. Church Legacy

- a. Leader – Hal Robb, Associate Leader – Vacant**
- b. Representatives:
 - i. Memorial Fund – Stephanie Chan
 - ii. Memorial Garden – Sue Smith
 - iii. Endowment – Edna Gilstad, Hal Robb
 - iv. Old Stone Burial Ground – Ellen Ashburn
 - v. Historian – Jen Datum

Our first Governance Meeting of 2024 will be held on **Monday, February 26 at 7:00pm** in the Fellowship room. This is due to President's day on Feb 19. We will continue to meet on the 3rd Monday of each month, going forward.

Submitted by Carol Donovan

In Loving Memory



Barbara Anne MacFadyen, 85, of Bozrah, passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 7th, 2024, at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. Barbara was born in Detroit, Michigan on November 27th, 1938, to Nelson Archer and Leona (Murgul) Archer. She spent her childhood in Michigan and later moved to Florida. Barbara met her husband, Bruce MacFadyen, in Florida and the two were married in “The Pink Church” in Pompano Beach in 1967. Bruce’s career as a submariner in the US Navy took them to Iceland, Connecticut, and Virginia before finally settling in Niantic, Connecticut, in the mid-70s, where they raised their daughters. Barbara graduated from Northville High School in Northville, Michigan and earned a degree in education from the University of Florida. She held various jobs over the years, including teacher, social worker, and Registrar of Voters for the town of Bozrah. Barbara will be remembered as a devoted wife and a caring mother. She was also a loving sister who regularly flew all the way to Thailand to visit her brother John. Barbara was a member of Niantic Community Church for many years, where she rang with the bell choir and volunteered for American Red Cross blood drives. She was a fan of the UConn Huskies women’s basketball team. She also loved to crochet, and her family will remember her love for them every day thanks to the many scarves, cozies, and animals she made for them over the years. Barbara is survived by her daughter Anne MacFadyen, daughter and son in-law Jennifer and Michael Datum, half-brother James (Jay) Archer, and granddaughters Rose (Datum) Sweeney and Chloe Datum. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband Bruce MacFadyen, brother John Archer, and half-brother Peter Archer. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Red Cross.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you all for your cards and kind words of sympathy and caring on the recent passing of my mother, Barbara MacFadyen. It has been a very tough time and knowing that so many were praying for us was a real comfort. A HUGE thank you also to the Parish Life team and everyone who contributed to the reception after the memorial service. It was lovely. Niantic Community Church is truly a special place, and we are blessed to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

Jen, Mike & Chloe Datum

Rose & Christian Sweeney

NCC Pastors and Staff

Interim Minister - Rev. Erica Avena erica.avena@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Associate Pastor, Congregational Care – Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen
kaleigh@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Music Minister– Lynne Floyd lynne@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Men’s Choir & Bell Choir Director– Nan Rigdon nan@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Seminarian/Student Minister – Jeff Birch jeff.birch@lextheo.edu

Children & Youth Faith Formation Coordinator – Marsha Swan
marsha@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Communications/Office Manager – Theresa Cleary theresa@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Financial Secretary – Ted Montgomery ted@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Bookkeeper – Robin Goldschlager robin@nianticcommunitychurch.org



Niantic Community Church

A federated congregation of the United Methodist Church
and the United Church of Christ.

170 Pennsylvania Avenue
Niantic, CT 06357. 860-739-6208



www.NianticCommunityChurch.org
info@nianticcommunitychurch.org



“Whoever you are,
wherever you are on your life’s journey—
you are welcome here.”

We are an Open, Affirming and Reconciling congregation of
the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church