



## *The Spire*

**At the First Congregational Church, UCC of Wallingford, CT,  
we have discerned the following vision and mission  
for our faith lives together:**

### **Vision**

***Our faith – rooted in the compassion and teachings of Jesus Christ – is the foundation of our love for one another and service to the world around us.***

We offer a home for those seeking deeper meaning or purpose in their lives through the exploration of Jesus Christ's teachings. The love and compassion found in those teachings commit us to uplift each individual and celebrate our shared humanity.

### **Mission**

***We will foster spiritual growth, loving communication, and mutual care, thereby empowering us to confront issues that impact our community and the world, including poverty, isolation, and exclusion.***

We commit to developing a nurturing environment where all are loved, valued, and inspired to meaningful participation in the life of the church. Through our Christian faith, compassion, and service, we will dedicate ourselves to making a positive impact on the lives of people in our community and beyond.



**The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

**23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492**

**Church telephone:** (203) 265-1691

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

**Email:** officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org (office)

**Website:** [www.firstchurchwallingford.org](http://www.firstchurchwallingford.org)

## ***A Note from the Pastor's Desk***

### **Beloved! Let Us Love One Another!**

Many years ago, I directed children's choirs. One of the favorite songs of all the choirs was Let Us Love One Another! I John 4:7-8. Bum bum bum bum! It was a great spirited song. I loved that the kids learned right from the beginning that God is love and we are called to love one another. Some Sunday, maybe I'll teach it to you, but until then, I would like to talk about how that passage, I John 4:7-8, has been shaping the current and future ministry of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford.

For many years, this church has had a commitment to ministry at Ashlar Village. Services have been held, Bible Studies offered, flowers delivered, relationships built, all in the name of sharing the love of God. But like many things, Covid took its toll and our ministry to Ashlar had to be scaled back. Visits were curtailed, services reduced to twice a month, and Bible Studies were no more. But the people of First Church love the people of Ashlar and the people of Ashlar love First Church. Since at least December, residents of Ashlar have been asking for more - more Services, more Bible Study, more Visits, more Love. After careful listening and prayerful consideration, First Church will be responding to what we have heard by returning to four services a month starting in September. Bible Study will be starting at Ashlar on Wednesday mornings in October. We will be matching Ashlar residents with church people for one-on-one relationships and care. Beloved! Let us love one another!

Our ministry at Ashlar has inspired us to revitalize our ministry of care to mostly Senior members and friends living in the community as well. Community members will be connected to church members promoting one-on-one relationships and care. The goal is to extend the love of God and this community to those who have been an active part of this community in the past, but who, for various reasons, are unable to be with us in person. All told, more than 90 people, at Ashlar and in the community are on our list. Beloved, let us love one another!

Are you called to share the love of God with one or more of our Seniors? Can you make a phone call, pay a visit, deliver a plant, or send a note of encouragement? Charlene Bruce 203 503-8379 and Cliff Castellano 475-227-1110 are coordinating this revitalized ministry. Please be in touch with one of them or Pastor Meredith (914) 255-1690, to see how you can reach out to spread the love! Beloved, let us love one another!



## ***A Message from the Moderators***

Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? How many of us can remember being on long car trips and calling out this question from the back seat because we were so eager to get to our destination? Excitement about vacation, the amusement park, family visits, or a favorite sporting event made it hard to wait patiently to travel the miles ahead of us. A wish to get there faster made us fidgety, restless, and maybe even a little frustrated.

After several years of change, pandemic, and transitions, many of us may be having the same feelings about the journey on which this congregation currently finds itself. We are in the midst of our interim ministry, when we try to shift from the leadership of one settled minister and prepare for the leadership of a new settled minister. After all of the change that we have been through, many of us are craving the stability and sense of security that we anticipate a settled minister will bring. And, being only human, we may be wishing that the process of getting that settled minister was moving faster.

However, before we can initiate that search for potential ministerial candidates, we as a congregation must be in a state of readiness that we can clearly communicate to those potential candidates. There are many factors that determine our level of readiness, but we would like to highlight two of them. We must have a clear sense of the church's organizational structure and be able to demonstrate that it is functioning well so that a candidate can imagine entering the ministry with clarity about our congregation's vision, mission, and purpose. We also must be able to demonstrate financial stability and an ongoing ability to fund our programs, initiatives, and building needs for the years to come. Essentially, we must be able to show that we are a stable place for a potential new settled minister to land.

With two of the "criteria" for our state of readiness in mind, it should be clear that we are not quite there yet. But, we are making progress on our journey. We are rolling out our Ministry Teams organizational model, and the energy and enthusiasm that we have seen in the early stages of this adventure have been exciting. Our Vision Board and Ministry Teams are gelling. We are in a period of monitoring, evaluating and adjusting the work of the Ministries to ensure that valued programs and missions are not left behind. Beyond that, we are trying to design a structure that nurtures creativity and allows us to expand our Ministries in ways we have not yet considered. We have also moved into our new fiscal year with a clear understanding from our Financial Team (previously known as the Trustees) that we face significant challenges if we do not find ways to increase the income needed to fund our church.

We have been called upon to increase our personal giving and find new and creative ways to raise the funds necessary to maintain our identity as the church at the corner of Center and Main that does so much for its community and offers a welcoming spiritual home to all. With the guidance of Pastor Meredith and her experience in helping congregations move through interim periods such as ours, we are steadily monitoring our readiness to put together a search committee and begin the process of finding and calling our next settled minister. We will also be tapping into the resources that the Southern New England UCC conference can provide in our journey.

To reach the state of readiness to search for candidates and eventually call a new settled minister into our church family, we need your help. In ways large and small, each one of us needs to be engaged in the Ministries and teamwork of our church. There is an open invitation to all to communicate with the Vision Board and Ministry Coordinators about your interests, energies and passions so that we can find a place for you. Similarly, each one of us needs to continue to reflect on what we can do to strengthen the finances of the church so that God's work in this place can be done. Offering your time, talents, and treasure is critical to our state of readiness.

So, are we there yet? No, not yet. But, we are moving steadily in the direction of our goal. Guided by the Holy Spirit, let us travel the road together with optimism, hope, and anticipation!

With grace and peace to all,  
Lori Folk-Barron and Greg Whitehouse  
Co-Moderators



## Introducing Your Vision Board and Ministry Coordinators

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on June 11, 2023, this Congregation approved a pilot implementation of a Ministry Team organizational structure at First Congregational Church. Over the next year, the organizational structure will consist of a Vision Board (in lieu of Church Council), and six Ministries that include: Worship, Faith Formation, Membership, Congregational Care, Mission and Outreach, and Administration. Each Ministry will include five elected coordinators, volunteer team leaders, and team members who will carry out the programs and ministries of the church according to our established core values, Vision and Mission. The Vision Board, which will serve to establish and clarify our Vision, Mission, and strategic issues, is comprised of the elected church officers (Co-Moderators, Treasurer and Clerk) and a coordinator from each of the six Ministries. Pastor Meredith Jeffers will serve as an ex-officio member of the Vision Board.

The following creative and dedicated Officers and Ministry Coordinators have been at work through July and August 2023 getting our new model and its functions off the ground.

- **Interim Senior Minister: The minister will be serving as guide, worship leader, and advisor to all Ministry Teams as we implement the Vision Board, Ministry Teams, and strategic plans.**

<b>Minister:</b> Rev. Dr. Meredith Jeffers	914-255-1690	pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfld.org
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- **Vision Board Officers: These officers will be guiding the overall organization, record keeping, facilitation of Ministries, and strategic planning.**

<b>Moderator:</b> Lori Folk-Barron	203-314-9885	lorifolkbarron@gmail.com
<b>Moderator:</b> Greg Whitehouse	203-909-1027	gkwhitehouse@snet.net
<b>Treasurer:</b> Brant Walker	203-641-5567	txsrngr@snet.net
<b>Clerk:</b> Kathy Filkins	203-641-7107	kathyfbooks@gmail.com

- **Worship Ministry Coordinators: These coordinators will be guiding teams related to everything worship-related, including serving communion, assisting with baptisms, providing music, greeting/ushering, serving Ashlar, managing flowers and sanctuary decoration, and live-streaming. Dr. Jeanette Gross, as Minister of Music, will be assisting/advising this team.**

Bob Westervelt	203-218-9537	bob-lorraine@optimum.net
Dawn Charron	401-309-8763	pewabba@yahoo.com
Ken Minkema	203-507-4896	ken.minkema@yale.edu
Marji Martin	203-530-3537	marjmart1214@gmail.com
Rose Zolnik	203-915-0594	rose@rosezolnik.com

- **Faith Formation Ministry Coordinators: These coordinators will be guiding teams related to church school, confirmation, youth group, mission trip, adult education, and Bible study. Ms. Kayla Perkowski, as church school and youth coordinator, will be assisting/advising this team.**

Amanda Nesto	203-415-2762	amanda_nesto@yahoo.com
Gina Phillips	203-605-8008	kit310810@att.net
Robin Davies	203-379-6735	dav111@snet.net
Kayla Perkowski	203-710-4431	kaylaperkowski@gmail.com

- **Membership Ministry Coordinators: These coordinators will be guiding teams related to all aspects of our membership needs including welcoming members and friends, fellowship events of all kinds – social and fundraising, book club, scholarship, communications, historian, and delegates to the UCC Association.**

Jodi Bouza	203-443-0789	mimix4andfred@outlook.com
Lorraine Westervelt	203-257-6964	bob-lorraine@optimum.net
Ron Graziani	203-265-6035	rongraz70@yahoo.com
Russ Hinckley	203-889-7789	rhinckley9@gmail.com

- **Congregational Care Ministry Coordinators:** These coordinators will guide and oversee plans and programs for the care and welfare of members including visitation, hospitality, coffee hour, Good Cheer, prayer shawl, Stephen Ministry, and Pastoral Relations.

Rev. Charlene Bruce	203-503-8379	charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net
Cheryl Naski	203-996-7467	cnaski@hotmail.com
Cliff Castellano	475-227-1110	cliffc45@yahoo.com
Joan Bushey	203-444-1900	joan37b@gmail.com
Ann Gygax	203-269-6493	annbobgygax@gmail.com

- **Mission and Outreach Ministry Coordinators:** These coordinators will guide teams related to education and involvement of the congregation in the needs and social concerns of local and worldwide communities, including Mission Funds Distribution, Community Action, Monthly Drives, Wellness Groups Liaisons, Open and Affirming, Community Garden, and Scouting Support.

Bunny Drummond	203-919-4146	bunny.drumbell@gmail.com
Erica Haddad	203-494-9768	ejhaddad5@gmail.com
Karen Janus	203-265-5882	kjanus01@snet.net
Mary Antonetti	203-887-7597	maryantonetti@gmail.com
Tina Caldwell	860-995-5744	tina.caldwell520@gmail.com

- **Administration Ministry Coordinators:** These coordinators will guide teams related to caring for and conserving the physical property, managing funds, and overseeing staff and employment issues, including Property, Finances, Personnel, Stewardship, Investments, Monday morning crew, Building Use, and Counting Team.

Kathy Wallace	203-745-9842	kathywacct@gmail.com
Leslie Spiars	203-600-8043	leslie36@snet.net
Matt Bushey	203-433-7327	m7bushey@gmail.com
Mike Savenelli	203-996-0338	mikesavsr@gmail.com
Steve Perkowski	203-710-5785	sperkowski@snet.net

Please use the contact information above to direct your questions and share your ideas. Still uncertain about who to contact? Contact the co-Moderators, and they will get you connected to the right team.

# A note from the Minister of Music



With the fall comes the start of music groups returning to their rehearsals and music leadership in worship. Below are listed the rehearsal groups which are beginning.

## 1. Adult Handbell Choir (ages: high school up)

- Starts Thursday, August 24, 2023 from 6:30-8:00pm and every Thursday thereafter.
- The group will play more or less every third Sunday of the month
- If you can count to four, you can do this group

## 2. The Chancel Choir (ages: high school up)

- Will begin rehearsals on Wednesday, September 14, 2023 from 7:00-8:30pm and every Wednesday thereafter.
- Normally the choir sings every Sunday at the 0:00am worship service.
- They usually sing two extended works as choral sermons-once in advent, the second in the spring.

## 3. Children's Choir (ages: grades 3-8)

- Starts rehearsing Sunday, September 17, 2023 from 11:15-12:00 noon.
- We will have our own private refreshments in the music room before we rehearse
- The plan is to sing in the church services the forth Sunday of the month. This could change depending on availability and presence of children at rehearsals.
- An "Epiphany musical will be back in 2024. We will start it in September. The presentation of this musical may have to be another time than the 10:00am worship service, but we will present it at Ashlar Village.

## 4. Cherub Choir (ages: kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)

- This choir will be activated for the Christmas season. Plan are pending.

### INTO THE FUTURE:

- Sunday, Dec 10, 2023 : A Choral Sermon
- Thursday, Dec 21, 2023, 7:00pm: Lessons and Carols at Ashlar.
- Friday, Dec 22, 2023, 5:00pm: A Christmas program at a local farm.
- Dec 24, 2023, 10:00am service: Family Service
- Dec 24, 2023, 10:15-11:00pm: "A Prelude of Songs and instruments" followed by a traditional Christmas Eve service.

**FYI:** Every fourth Sunday of the month this fall at Ashlar, I will be putting together a music program for worship. This may be a hymn sing with readings or something more involved. Everyone is welcome to come.

**FUTURE PLANS:** We need to get our Praise Band sounding again. This is a work in process!  
Questions, comments, suggestions: call or text Jeanette Gross at (860) 803-8745



## Interim Pastoral Relation Update

As a follow up on our message from earlier this year and as we get ready to move into the busy fall season, the Interim Pastoral Relations Committee (IPRC) would like to remind our congregation of how we can best serve you. We would like to share some ideas on how to best communicate with both this committee and Pastor Meredith.

1. **Direct Communication is Key!** We encourage anyone who has feedback in regards to church life to communicate directly with Pastor Meredith or church staff. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, please contact a member of the IPRC committee as we would be glad to sit down together to solve problems. We believe direct communication is key, this way we are able to meet with you to answer your questions.
2. **Communicate Often!** If you have ideas or needs that should be addressed, please try to bring them up promptly so they can be addressed in a timely manner – this will help from compounding issues over time.
3. **Be Respectful and Empathetic:** when communicating with others, please be mindful of how you are posing your ideas. If this feedback were coming to you, how would you receive it? Often difficult conversations should be relayed in person, as it is sometimes challenging to ascertain the meaning behind a text or an email.
4. **Provide Potential Solutions:** be open to helping to find a solution. You do not have to be the person executing the solution, though try to come to the table with some ideas. Often the best ideas and results come from a friendly collaborative space.

Currently, the IPRC committee consists of the following members: John Perkowski, Kathy Filkins, Heidi Bonassar, Jessie DePonte and Greg Whitehouse. We encourage you to reach out to us should you need help communicating any concerns that you have.

We understand that clear, direct and respectful communication is the cornerstone of our church. Without these principles, the climate of the church attitude can change quickly. As we move through this time of transition, we ask that we all work together to provide solutions for any challenges that may arise.





# Catch the Spirit Sunday

September 10, 2023

10 AM Worship Service

It's time! Let's gather to re-energize the Spirit in us all, re-ignite our time of fellowship, celebrate the beginning of our Church School and program year, and discover more about our new Ministry Teams!

Church School Students should meet their teachers in front of the church at 9:45 am.

The service will be followed by a picnic lunch on the parade grounds, fellowship, and our new

## MINISTRY COOKIE CONTEST!

All of the Ministries will have cookies at their tables for people to taste.

VOTE for the best Cookie!

While you are sampling the cookies, learn more about all of our Ministries: **Worship, Faith Formation, Congregational Care, Membership, Mission & Outreach, and Administration.**

Find a Team that inspires your spirit and join us in fulfilling our Vision & Mission.



**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!**

# 16<sup>th</sup> First Congregational Church Golf Tournament



**Saturday, September 30, 2023**

Tee off at 9:00 am at Miner Hills Family Golf  
80 Miner Hills Drive, Middletown, CT

**9 Hole Golf Tournament Scramble Format**  
Lots of fun for people of all ages and abilities  
Sign up as a team or join up and make new friends.

**Adult \$25; Juniors \$20**

**Includes: Green Fees, Prizes, Picnic, fun, friends, and a great cause!**

Profits to benefit the Breast Cancer Research Foundation & The Family Life Fund  
Electric or pull cart rentals are available but are an extra cost to the golfer.

**Prizes:** High and low gross team                      Closest to the Pin  
Closest to the Line                                      Longest Drive for Men and Women

**GOLFERS** Team Member 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Team Member 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Team Member 3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Member 4 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**HOLE SPONSOR (\$30.00):**

All proceeds from hole sponsorships will go to Support Breast Cancer Research

In Memory / Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be payable to First Congregational Church - Wallingford  
Or sign up, sponsor or donate through the church website  
Questions (203) 265-1691



Wallingford Community Dinners has been serving the community for over 40 years. They serve dinners on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter to those in need. This includes those who are financially in need as well as those who would like company for the holiday.

The dinners are dependent upon volunteers to help out both with the things that need to be done to put on the dinners as well as financially.

This year is a very special year as it is the first time since COVID that dinners will be served in house! This is exciting and a bit scary as a lot more volunteers are needed to serve in house than when dinners were all carry out and delivery.

You can help out by volunteering to help with dinner preparation, cooking, delivery (to those who cannot come to the church), serving the dinners, clearing tables, and of course clean up. To volunteer, receive a meal delivered to you, or donate funds for the Thanksgiving dinner or if you have any questions, you can contact

Kathy Wallace at [kathywacct@gmail.com](mailto:kathywacct@gmail.com) or 203-745-9842 or by calling 203-514-8883 (the phone for the dinners).

## ATTENTION SENIORS!



We just wanted to make sure that you know that you can bring your trash (2 – 60 gallon bags/week) and recycling (no limit) to the Wallingford Resident Disposal Center for \$5.00 per year. All you have to do is get the coupon book – sold at the disposal center. This would be a savings from having a service pick up weekly. If you aren't sure what to do with your new found money, think of the church! We would be happy to receive an additional donation.



**YES...IT'S TIME!!!**

**IT'S TIME TO OPEN UP YOUR CLOSETS  
IT'S TIME TO OPEN UP YOUR DRAWERS  
IT'S TIME TO OPEN UP YOUR HEARTS FOR OTHERS**



Our Fall Rummage Sale is back on the calendar for Thursday through Saturday, OCT 5 -7<sup>th</sup>! Hopefully you have had a chance to clean out some closets and basements. If you set things aside, now is the time to donate them for our sale. It is absolutely **CRUCIAL** that you **DO NOT START TO DROP OFF YOUR ITEMS UNTIL MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>**. Storage space is extremely limited!!!

***Just a Friendly Reminder.....***

1. We accept gently used clothing, linens, shoes, coats, pocketbooks, and small household items. **PLEASE – NO FURNITURE CAN BE ACCEPTED.**
2. HOURS OF THE SALE: Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> and Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 7:00 pm; Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to noon
3. Help is needed as follows:
  - a. Setting up tables on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> in Congregational Hall at 11:30 a.m.
  - b. Sorting donated items from Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> through Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am. to noon and then 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
  - c. Working the sale floor whenever available those 3 days and hours.
  - d. Breaking down the sale on Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at noon.
  - e. **MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK** – great fellowship and camaraderie while working and helping others! Let's put a smile on all our faces!!

If interested in donating your time, please call Bernie Annunziata at either 203-265-2587 (h) or 203-415-9809 (c). **THANK YOU!!**

## *A Message from the Flower Team*



The **2023 Altar Flower** sign up calendar can be found in the Narthex.

Sponsors are still needed for the following dates in 2023:

**September 10**

**October 1**

**October 29**

**September 17**

**October 8**

If you are interested in sponsoring flowers for any of these dates and cannot make it into church to sign up, please call the church office or email Lori at [lorifolkbarron@gmail.com](mailto:lorifolkbarron@gmail.com). Direct donations to the Flower Fund are also appreciated to allow us to place flowers on the altar on those weeks when we do not have sponsors and for special occasions.

Thank you!



# Book Club



***Welcome back everybody!***

Our September book is **“Snowflower and the Secret Fan”** by Lisa See. Please join us at 6:30 PM in the Guild Room on Tuesday September 26.

Hope everyone had a great summer with lots of reading!



Do you have a loved one, a friend, an acquaintance with health, family, personal issues? The Prayer Shawl ministry creates beautiful comforting shawls, lap robes, and blankets for you to give to your loved ones in need. There is always a selection appropriate for men, women, children, parents, caregivers. We have a variety of colors and sizes for you to give. Please ask one of the Care Team (Charlene Bruce, Cheryl Naski, Cliff Castellano, Joan Bushey and Ann Gygax), Pastor Meredith or Kathy Janis for a shawl. All are created by loving hands, blessed in our group and just waiting to give to someone in need of that loving touch, that reminder that they are cared for and cared about through whatever is going on in their lives.

We also create all the Baptismal blankets that are given to each child baptized in our church. Please consider asking for a special blanket for a child in need. Again, we have many sizes, colors and patterns for any child. Perhaps a parent who needs a Prayer Shawl and a special blanket for their child?

Please call or text Kathy Janis 203-376-1173 or email [kathrynmjanis@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynmjanis@gmail.com) with any questions or requests.

## Ushers & Greeters



The ministry of ushering is a crucial part of worship because it is one of the most visible ministries in the church, nevertheless the usher performs a major role in ensuring that people see and experience that.

People feel invited to serve the church through a welcoming ministry. The church usher duties can be summed up in a few words – making people feel welcome at church, assisting the Pastor with people management, assisting with seating, collecting offering, and maintaining a safe environment. Currently, we have five rotating teams. Usher teams are only needed no more than once a month.

If you are interested in joining the ushering ministry, please contact Tony Annunziata at (203) 500-9542



## *Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice*

The First Congregational Church of Wallingford is sponsoring a 10-day trip to Iceland May 15-24, 2024. This exciting Collette adventure features tours of cities, villages, farms, museums, mountains, beaches, bays, glaciers, volcanic craters, lava fields, waterfalls, fjords, thermal pools and more! You will enjoy a nature cruise, a cruise along icebergs, time in the warm mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon, the local flora and fauna, and of course, the local cuisine!

This tour, "Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice," not only offers a fabulous travel opportunity, it also is a fund-raising event for our congregation. The First Congregational Church will receive a commission based on the number of travelers who participate.

There are a few seats still available for this tour.

For a complete itinerary, pricing and other information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1181976> or contact Debby Voelker at [debvoelker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:debvoelker@sbcglobal.net) or 203 710-1550. Brochures are available in the Church Office and in the Narthex.



***It's Time to Explore Iceland!***



# FOOD DRIVE

## Unity in Faith Food Drive

To benefit Master's Manna

**September 16, 2023, 9 AM – 11 AM**

Congregations and houses of worship across Wallingford are collaborating to hold a town wide food drive benefiting Master's Manna!

Donations of all types of non-perishable foods will be appreciated. All donations will be delivered to Master's Manna at the completion of the drive.

This will be a drive-thru, drop-off event at any of the following locations:

Church of the Resurrection, 131 Pond Hill Road  
Faith Bible Church, 28 Chapel Street  
First Baptist Church, 114 North Main Street  
First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street  
First United Methodist Church, 941 Old Rock Hill Road  
Grace & St John's Episcopal, 2927 Dixwell Ave, Hamden  
Most Holy Trinity Parish, 68 North Colony Street  
Our Lady of Fatima Campus, Most Holy Trinity Parish, 382 Hope Hill Road  
Wallingford SDA Spanish Church, 941 Old Rock Hill Road  
Zion Lutheran Church, 235 Pond Hill Road

\*Special thanks to the Islamic Center of Wallingford for monetary support of the drive.\*

Questions? Please contact Kathy Wallace (203-745-9842) or Lori Folk-Barron (203-314-9885), Drive Coordinators, First Congregational Church.





## What's Happening with the Faith Formation Ministry?

Summer Sunday School was a success! We had over a dozen students join us over the five weeks and they had a blast learning about different Bible stories, making crafts, and playing games with the characters of *Inside Out*. We connected different stories to the emotions they feel everyday and learned some ways to cope with big feelings.

*Here are some pictures of the room:*



*Here are some pictures from the last week's Joy activity:*



**Looking ahead to the new school year, we still need volunteers to help with our students!** If you have ever been interested in interacting with the children in the church, then we have opportunities! We are looking for the following help for the school year:

- Nursery Help
- PreK & K Teacher
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher
- Substitute Teachers
- Resource Adults for Youth Group

If you have any questions about any of the positions please contact Kayla Perkowski at [kaylaperkowski@gmail.com](mailto:kaylaperkowski@gmail.com) . We would love to have you join the team!



# Ladies' Breakfast

## **Ladies' Fellowship Breakfast**

Saturday, September 23, 2023

9-11 AM

At the home of Ellie Hazelwood,  
320 High Hill Road  
Wallingford

Please bring a dish to share and enjoy a meal, scripture discussion,  
and fellowship.

RSVP to Ellie Hazelwood ([hazelwoode1@gmail.com](mailto:hazelwoode1@gmail.com) or 203-815-6152)  
by Thursday, September 21st, and let her know what breakfast item  
you plan to bring. A breakfast casserole will be provided but other  
suggestions include juice, muffins, yogurt, fruit, banana bread,  
quiche, etc.

\*Special request: please refrain from perfume for those with a sensitivity.

Thank you!



## **Congregational Care**

Rev. Charlene Bruce 203-503-8379 [charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net](mailto:charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net)

Cheryl Naski 203-996-7467 [cnaski@hotmail.com](mailto:cnaski@hotmail.com)

Cliff Castellano 475-227-1110 [cliffc45@yahoo.com](mailto:cliffc45@yahoo.com)

Joan Bushey 203-444-1900 [joan37b@gmail.com](mailto:joan37b@gmail.com)

Ann Gygax 203-269-6493 [annbobgygax@gmail.com](mailto:annbobgygax@gmail.com)

See us at our table on Catch the Spirit Sunday, September 10  
for more information and cookies!

**INTENTION OF GIVING  
INVEST IN YOUR CHURCH! 2023-2024**

*Dt 16:17 "Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."*

Typically called a pledge form, this title invites all of us to support the total mission of our church with our time, talent, and treasure. Our new budget format incorporates our mission giving into the unified whole. Please include gifts meant for 'mission support' in your total. For example, Church Support of \$1200 and Mission Support of \$200 would now be a \$1400 contribution.

**For the fiscal year, July 1-June 30, I intend to support our ministries by giving:**

\$\_\_\_\_ weekly or \$\_\_\_\_ monthly or \$\_\_\_\_ annually for a total of \$\_\_\_\_ yr.

For example:	\$15/week = \$780/year	\$150/month = \$1,800/year
	\$30/week = \$1,560/year	\$250/month = \$3,000/year
	100/week = \$5,200/year	\$400/month = \$4,800/year

There are several methods of giving: Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), Online via the church website, weekly envelopes, bill pay option with your bank, regular checks, or an annual gift. In addition, there are ways to give that provide a tax benefit for those over 70 ½ years of age. Please see the enclosed card for more information.

My preferred method of giving is:

- Weekly envelopes, check here. \_\_\_\_
- Existing EFT reflecting your 2023-2024 intention, check here. \_\_\_\_
- New EFT account, check here. \_\_\_\_ (enrollment form on the reverse)
- Online via the church website, check here. \_\_\_\_
- Bill-pay from checking account, check here. \_\_\_\_
- Cash or checks, check here. \_\_\_\_
- Annual gift, check here. \_\_\_\_
- RMD or QCD check here. \_\_\_\_

***Please return this page to the church by May 21, 2023. Thank you!***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**First Congregational Church of Wallingford**  
fccwcollector@gmail.com

ONLY COMPLETE THIS FORM IF THERE IS NEW INFORMATION

## AUTHORIZATION FORM

<b>First Congregational Church</b>		<b>UCC82540</b>	
<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	<b>ENVELOPE/DONOR #</b>	<b>DATE</b>	
Type of Authorization Form:	New Authorization Change donation amount	Change banking information Discontinue electronic donation	
Last Name	First Name		
Address			
City	State	Zip	
Email Address			
Please debit my donation from my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account (attach a voided check below) <input type="checkbox"/> Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #)	Routing Number: _____ <i>Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3</i> Account Number: _____		
<b>DATE OF FIRST DONATION:</b>	<b>FREQUENCY OF DONATION:</b>	<b>FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AMOUNT:</b>	
July 1, 2023	Monthly on the 1st\	TOTAL	\$ _____
<b>AGREEMENT</b> I authorize the above church to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.			
Authorized Signature: _____		Date: _____	



You may scan this QR code and go directly to the First Church giving page.



**CELEBRATE WALLINGFORD**  
**Saturday, October 7, 2023 11 AM – 6 PM**  
**Sunday, October 8, 2023 11 AM – 5 PM**

Celebrate Wallingford is a 2-day festival featuring the Taste of Wallingford – where one can sample the food of local restaurants. There is live entertainment, arts & crafts, shows, children’s activities and more.

During Celebrate Wallingford, First Congregational Church will be giving away popcorn, some church “swag,” and information about our Ministries under our tent at the front entrance to the church.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

Any and all church members and friends are needed to help work at the tent that day. Your presence would be greatly appreciated! Help us share the great news of our church at this wonderful community event!

**Please use this SignUpGenius link to sign up for a shift or two:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F084EAEA82AA1FD0-fcctent>

or

Contact Lori Folk-Barron (203-314-9885)

or

Greg Whitehouse (203-909-1027) to sign up.



In August 2023, the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) gifted First Congregational Church with a large mobile projection screen and projector (DA-Lite Idea Interactive Cart) that they were no longer needing.

We are so grateful to SCOW for its generosity! Several church members are learning how to use the projector and screen with the intention of displaying announcements, slide shows, videos or other visual presentations during worship or church meetings.

Look for it in the Sanctuary or Congregational Hall.



## Housing Experiences Forum

**Thursday, September 28, 6:30 p.m.**

An informal working group, started by Wallingford's Planning and Zoning staff, and supported by consultants from the South Central Regional Council of Governments, would like to hear about your housing experiences in Wallingford. This group is comprised of various people that are connected to this issue in some way including Town Planner Kevin Pagini, Land Use Specialist Amy Torre, developer Liz Verna, Steve Knight and Bill Viola.

Join us in the Guild Room on **Thursday, September 28**, at **6:30 p.m.**, to share your housing experiences as a homeowner, tenant, or landlord. What was it like to buy or sell your home? What was your experience in finding a rental property? Are you looking to downsize and stay in town? All comments related to housing in Wallingford are welcome. Sharing your experiences will be very helpful to this group whose primary goal is to make it possible for everyone in Wallingford to have housing options that work for them.



So far, for the current fiscal year there are  
**109 pledges for a total of \$184,861.**

If you have not yet pledged, you may do so at the office or  
contacting Bob Westervelt at 203-218-9537 or [fccwcollector@gmail.com](mailto:fccwcollector@gmail.com)





# Baby Corner Wish List

Baby wipes

Lotion

Baby wash

Diaper rash cream

Baby blankets

Grooming kit

Pajamas (sleepers) Gender neutral

Diapers All sizes

Shampoo

Pacifiers

Infant Tylenol

Boogie suckers

Baby washcloths

Blankets

Items will be collected and delivered to  
DCF Meriden/Wallingford

**Thank you for supporting the Mission & Outreach Ministry!**



## **Introducing First Congregational Church's Community Garden**

Dear Members,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you today to introduce our community garden project. Our community garden is place where people can come together and grow fresh produce for our goodwill projects. It is a great way to get involved in the community and meet new people.

Our garden is located at 1029 – 1097 E Center St, Wallingford, CT. 06492 and is open to anyone who wants to participate. We currently have secured a plot with the possibility to expand in the future, and can provide tools and resources needed to get started.

We are reaching out to you today because we believe that our community garden would be a great fit for members and friends. We would love for you to get involved in our project and help us grow fresh produce for our community.

If you are interested in learning mor about our community garden project, please feel free to contact us at [Tina.caldwell520@gmail.com](mailto:Tina.caldwell520@gmail.com) or at the church office. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tina Caldwell



**Come From Away, a musical about the radical hospitality of the small village of Gander, Newfoundland who provided food, shelter, and care to 7,000 airline passengers who were forced to land there when airspace closed down September 11, 2001. It is an uplifting musical of how people from diverse backgrounds came together to help each other during a very scary time in our world's history. This musical will delight all ages. Come from Away will be at the Schubert Theater in New Haven November 8-11. First Church members and friends will be attending the matinee performance November 11 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$84. To reserve your spot, contact Pastor Meredith at (914) 255-1690 or [pastormeredith@firstchurchwfd.org](mailto:pastormeredith@firstchurchwfd.org)**

**Deadline for ticket orders is September 17.**

# BAPTISMS



**We baptize in the name of God the Father, who is our Creator; Jesus Christ, God's Son, who is our Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit, who is our Sustainer. In Baptism we are claimed as God's own and God's beloved.**

**Since May, we have celebrated nine Baptisms:**

- **Troy Eric Hollingsworth, son of Kirsten and Justin Hollingsworth, born 9/8/22, on May 14, 2023.**
- **Charlotte June Ryan, daughter of Dillon and Marisa Ryan, born August 10, 2022, on May 20, 2023.**
- **James Arthur Kunze, son of Jeff and Elizabeth Kunze, born August 20, 2022 on June 11, 2023**
- **Haylee McCarthy, daughter of Brett and Danielle McCarthy, born October 18, 2022, on June 11, 2023.**
- **Caden Joseph Tolokan, son of Jill and Michael Tolokan, born May 8, 2021, on June 11, 2023.**
- **Isabella Rose Cappas, daughter of Sergio and Layne Cappas, born October 26, 2022, on August 20, 2023.**
- **Noah John Oghenetega Kenney, son of Mudi and Brian Kenney, born August 19, 2022, on August 20, 2023.**
- **Rowan Stewart, son of Francis and Kelly Stewart, born on September 17, 2022, on August 20, 2023.**
- **Eric Arthur Setreus, husband of Laura, father of Laney and Denessa, grandfather of 3, on August 20, 2023.**



## **DIRECTORY TIME!**

As one more tool to help us get to know one another better, we will be producing a new directory. The directory will include names, addresses, phone numbers, and photos. In the next few months, you will be asked to review your information and to have your directory photo taken. We hope to have the new directory available before Christmas. Photos will be taken during September. Catch the Spirit Sunday will be our first official portrait day. Bring your family and your best smiles. If you are unable to be at church for a photo, have a friend take a photo for you, or take a good clear selfie, and email it to [pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfld.org](mailto:pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfld.org)



**To the Members of the Diaconate,**

I am writing to express my gratitude for the college scholarship I was awarded by the First Congregational Church. The money will be well spent as I continue my education at Wesleyan University in the fall. I sincerely appreciate the support I have received from the church this summer, and over the years.

In gratitude,

Ryan Villano



## **“What I Did on Your Summer Vacation”**

Growing up, I always dreaded, but looked forward to, the predictable “What I Did on My Summer Vacation” essay or presentation. It was a chance to take stock of adventures had, road trips rallied, people visited, books read, swimming pools swum, and barbecues devoured. Summertime used to be endless days of adventure and fun. I loved summer, and I also loved returning to school. School was a predictable routine with so many opportunities for learning and growth, time with friends, clubs to be part of, and new challenges to encounter.

This year, more than most, I have been conscious of the slower days of summer. There has been so much to do, but time to do it. I have used my summer to work on the many things the church needs to do to begin its search process for a new settled minister. Priorities this summer have included; supporting the new ministry teams as they explore a new way of working together; planning the worship schedule from September-June, allowing time for more comprehensive planning of Sunday worship experiences; exploring how to better our ministry to Ashlar Village while creatively using human resources; working collaboratively with Charlene Bruce and Cliff Castellano to develop a more comprehensive care giving ministry that is more comprehensive, timely, and relevant; and developing a program year schedule that maximizes fun, learning, and service. I also made time to visit with some church members I hadn’t yet met who are often unable to attend church, but have been an important part of the church’s history.

The summer has given me a chance to focus and refocus. A chance to consider what my priorities need to be to ready the church to begin its search process for a new settled minister. A chance to focus on the people who have been important in the church’s history who I might or might not see on Sunday mornings. A chance to begin to “right size” staffing needs by energizing church members and friends to take on tasks traditionally held by clergy and paid staff. A chance to laugh a little more, and question a little more, and dream some new dreams with all of you.

It’s been a good summer. What did you do on your summer vacation?

~Pastor Meredith



### **From the Worship Ministry Team**

In Isaiah 43, God declares, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

Greetings from our church's new Worship Ministry team, which is composed of Marji Martin, Ken Minkema, Dawn Charron, Bob Westervelt, and Rose Zolnik. In this time of transitioning into our new structure, we want to reach out to every member of the congregation to let them know about opportunities to help this congregation praise God and serve each other by being greeters and by distributing communion, whether at the 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. services here at First Church, or at services we provide at Ashlar Village.

One opportunity is for anyone who has been a deacon in the past and would like to serve communion when able. We are calling this group "sacramental ministers" and we will have a recommissioning service in the future.

Please let one of us know if you are interested!

First Congregational Church of  
Wallingford  
23 South Main St  
Wallingford, CT 06492

*The next Spire will be  
published in October 2023.  
Spire submission deadline is  
the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month for the  
following month's edition.*

*Email the church office at :*  
[officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org](mailto:officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org)

