

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

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Email: officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org (office)

pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfld.org (pastor)

gross7jeanette1@gmail.com (Minister of Music)

Website: www.firstchurchwallingford.org



It's hard to know how to begin this month's column. I have just come off a whirlwind week of some invigorating worship services, a church Thanksgiving Potluck, serving at the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, watching the sanctuary transform from ordinary time to Advent, welcoming new members, meeting with 17 children to share Advent calendars and talk about the birth of Christ, experiencing the growing hubbub of activity for the Christmas fair, preparing three or more services each week... I am so blessed to have such a diverse interesting, and meaningful job. I have also spent a lot of time reflecting on the past year. We have been together in ministry for a year now – we have completed a full liturgical cycle. So much has happened. We have learned and grown together. We have taken risks and tried new things. We have baptized many babies and two adults. We are living into a new organizational structure. We continue to consider how to best be in mission together. We have contemplated the meaning of Open and Affirming for this church. We are in the early stages of selecting a committee to search for a new pastor. We have recommitted to weekly worship at Ashlar Village. We have broken bread together many times in many ways.

The world is already off and running and in the midst of Christmas and New Year preparations. We started seeing early "Black Friday" savings in the stores a few weeks before Halloween. It seems the commercialism starts earlier and earlier every year. I would like to invite you to side step the commercialism and share my current Star Gift. I invite you to spend the next six weeks FOCUSING on the spiritual gifts of the season. Focus on the meaning of the light of each of our Advent Candles – Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy. I invite you to focus on the mystery of a small child being God's response to a chaotic, violent, unjust, miserable world 2,000 years ago and the relevance of the gift of that child today. I invite you to focus on your gift giving that your gift giving may be focused on quality and meaning, not obligation or quantity. I invite you to focus on worship, individually and corporately. I invite you to read the stories, sing the carols, say the prayers, to prepare your heart for the coming of the baby. Focus. Focus. Focus. It's a wonderful time to connect with God, to church, and with your faith.

Come "home" for Christmas. Share with us in the indescribable hope, peace, joy, and love that can be found here. There's always a place for you. Come and see!

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Meredith



December 3 – First Sunday of Advent and Communion

Join us as we begin our preparation for the birth of Jesus. We will light the first Advent Candle of Hope and share in Holy Communion. We will begin to answer the question, “How does a weary world rejoice?”

December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent and Choral Sermon

We will light the second Advent Candle of Peace. The Chancel Choir will offer a Choral Sermon entitled, “I Hear the Prophet Calling” by Pepper Choplin.

December 14 – Blue Christmas Service (Thursday 7 PM)

It is not uncommon to experience loneliness, sadness, and loss during the holiday season. Know that you are not alone. Please join us for a simple worship service of song, readings, and reflections of God's hope for us and presence with us as we allow ourselves to feel whatever we are feeling this holiday season. All are welcome.

December 17 – Third Sunday of Advent

The Third Advent Candle is the Candle of Joy. We will continue to answer the question, “How does a weary world rejoice?”

December 21 – Lessons and Carol Service at Ashlar Village (Thursday 7 PM)

Join our friends at Ashlar Village for a beautiful Service of Lessons and Carols. The service is held in the Auditorium, accessible via the Bridge House

December 24 – Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve Sunday

10:00 AM – After lighting the fourth Advent Candle of Love, we will continue the tradition of our Christmas Pageant, presented by the children of the church. Come and enjoy “Christmas Snapshots” by Cathy Soldner-Skogan.

10:15 PM – Christmas Prelude – Prepare for Christmas Eve worship with an extended Christmas Music Prelude

11:00 PM – This special service of Carols, Candlelight, and Communion

December 31 – And a Partridge in a Pear Tree Sunday

We will sing our way through the Twelve Days of Christmas. Come and sing the carols you know and love while contemplating what difference it makes that Jesus was born!

Blue Christmas

*Honor your
loss
...embrace
God's hope*

For those of us experiencing loneliness, sadness and loss, the Christmas season can be difficult—we can feel singled out by the programmed happiness of “the most wonderful time of the year.” But we are not alone. Many people experience at least some sadness and loss in this season. All of us have experienced loss. Please join us in a simple worship of song, readings and a reflection of God’s hope for us and presence with us in feeling what we feel. All are welcome!

A worship service of remembrance and hope

Thursday, December 14, 2023

7PM



December will present two opportunities to learn more about the Bible.

Bible Study will be held in the Ashlar Village Theater Tuesday mornings at 10:30. The theater is accessible through the Bridge House entrance. Join our friends at Ashlar Village for a study of the Gospel of Luke led by Bob Westervelt. This will be an opportunity to get to know our extended church family, make some new friends, and learn more about the Bible. If you would like to join this study, contact the church office at 203 265-1691 or officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org.

December Bible Study will be held Tuesdays, December 5, 12, and 19 from 7-8:15 in the Guild Room. December’s studies will focus on preparing for the birth of Christ and finding hope and joy in the midst of a conflicted world. The class will be led by Pastor Meredith. Together we will explore Bible Study possibilities for the future. If you intend to attend, please contact Pastor Meredith at 914 255-1690 or pastormeredith@firstchurchwlfld.org



A Message from the Moderators

It doesn't seem possible that as we prepare this month's message the year is almost complete. Thanksgiving is on our doorstep, quickly followed by the joy, hope and love of the Christmas season. Much has been accomplished at our church during this year. As moderators, we are grateful for the support that each and every person brings to the church which allows us to put our Vision and Mission into action both within the church and in our community. In this year of interim ministry and transitioning to the Every Member in Ministry Team model, we are appreciative of all the hard work on the part of so many to keep us moving forward.

And speaking of transition, at the November Vision Board meeting, the process for forming and selecting a Settled Minister Search and Call Team was discussed and approved by a unanimous vote of the Vision Board members present. By this time, every member of the church should have received a letter by mail that explains details of each step of the approved process along with a nomination form.

We ask each of you to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider if you know of a church member whom you think has the skills and background to be part of this important team. If you do, please reach out to them to confirm that they would be willing to serve if selected and, if so, send in a nomination form as outlined in the letter. Our church is made up of a wide variety of people and to be truly successful, the Search and Call Team must be made up of a cross section of members that represents all of us as they work through the process of developing our church profile and selecting a new settled minister. Please feel free to reach out to either of us directly if you have any questions or concerns.

In the same way that it does not seem possible that the holidays are fast approaching, it is hard for us to believe that we are nearly halfway through our fiscal year. And, just as we have openly and transparently provided the membership with information about our Search and Call Team selection process, we need to openly and transparently share that we are facing significant challenges with regard to our budget. Most specifically, our actual pledge donations and other income are much lower than was budgeted. If our current trajectory continues, we will be facing significant reductions in our endowment and a need to curtail expenses in our next budget to a potentially alarming degree.

This news offers both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is quite clear from what we have relayed above. The opportunity lies in how we each reflect on what stewardship and giving mean in our relationship to God, to this church, and to the fulfillment of God's mission within our church. As the Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew reminded us during his guest sermon on November 12th, stewardship of time, talent, and treasure is an invitation for you to participate in God's mission of changing people's lives and to work towards God's vision for the world. As the holiday season approaches and as we face the financial challenges ahead of us, we ask each of you to spend time in prayerful reflection about how this church has changed lives with our ministries...whether that be in providing food to a needy family, an Angel Tree gift to a child who may think themselves less than worthy, a prayer shawl in a time of need,

a prayer service or fundraising dinner for beloved members facing health issues, flowers for a homebound member, sneakers to an immigrant family, home repairs for a neighbor, low cost household items to community members in need, meeting space for those seeking support in coping with addiction, mission dollars to communities around the world in crisis, a Blue Christmas service for those coping with grief during the holidays, numerous opportunities for fellowship and welcome that reduce isolation and exclusion...the list goes on and on.

As you consider your gifts to this church that help to fulfill God's mission and help us remain disciples of that mission here at the corner of Center & Main, think of those whose spirits have been transformed by their experience at First Congregational Church. How have you personally felt God's compassion in our midst and how has your life been touched and transformed by the work of God in this church family? Let these reflections guide your gifts and generosity to First Congregational Church in its current and future efforts to fulfill God's mission of compassionate change and transformation. The time is now. Help us to grow, to touch even more lives, both within our congregation and among neighbors in our community. The Spirit is at work within our church family. We invite you to invest in the Vision and Mission of this church and in our efforts to fulfill God's mission of positive change in people's lives.

With the peace of Christ,
Greg Whitehouse and Lori Folk-Barron



First Congregational Church

Nomination for the Settled Minister Search and Call Team

After prayerful consideration, I nominate _____ as a candidate to serve as a member of the Settled Minister Search and Call Team. I nominate this member because I believe that s/he possesses the following characteristics that will serve our congregation (please mark all that apply):

- A deep commitment to the well-being of the church and willingness to work on behalf of the whole congregation.
- An ability to set aside personal desires and put the focus on the future of the church and our congregation, guided by a clear understanding of the church's Vision and Mission Statement.
- An ability to be respectful to fellow team members who may be of different ages, backgrounds, lengths of membership, gender, and life stages.
- A willingness to devote significant time to the process, including, for example, an estimated 2-3 hours per week for the first six weeks of team activity and, thereafter, availability on an as needed basis to review incoming candidate profiles and conduct interviews both in person and via Zoom.
- Personal skills that include good organization, openness, flexibility, strong communication, and the ability to listen to varying opinions.
- A willingness to compromise and work toward consensus.
- A commitment to keep all Search and Call Team information confidential, understanding that sharing information with church members, one's family or one's friends will jeopardize the integrity of the process.
- An openness to consider any ministerial candidate God may send to us without preconceptions on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability status.

Additionally, I believe this member will be a positive and effective Search and Call Team member because:

- I understand that this nomination will be reviewed and voted upon by the Vision Board of First Congregational Church.
- I understand that my nomination of this individual does not guarantee that s/he will be elected to serve on the team.
- I make this nomination freely and with the good of our congregation and future church as central to my nomination.

(Printed Name)

(Date)

(Signature)

Please return this form in an envelope marked "Confidential" to the church office by December 10, 2023 to the attention of Lori Folk-Barron & Greg Whitehouse, Co-Moderators, First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492.

From the Minister of Music



CHORAL SERMON

December 10, 2023 10 a.m. worship service

Do you know what a hammered dulcimer is? A dulcimer? An Autoharp?
These were instruments played in the hills of Appalachia.

Pepper Choplin, the composer of our choral sermon I HEAR THE PROPHET CALLING, has used these instruments to highlight the folk character of this work. You also will hear the characteristic speech of the Appalachian people. Because the piece is too lengthy to perform in time allotted for the choral sermon, we will sing the pieces referring to the wisemen on Sunday, January 7 which is approximately when the wisemen arrived in Bethlehem to see the child.

We will again have a display of nativity scenes representing different cultures. If you have a nativity scene you would like to display on tables we will have set up in the front of the church, please bring them on the morning of Dec. 10.

ASHLAR VILLAGE LESSONS AND CAROLS-Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023 at 7 p.m.



This service will incorporate many of the favorite Christmas Carols as well as some favorite Christmas songs.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Dec. 24 10 a.m. worship. Technically, the morning is the fourth Sunday of Advent, but we will be doing our family Christmas service at that time as well. The children will be presenting the Christmas story in the context of a piece called CHRISTMAS SNAPSHOTS by Cathy Soldner-Skogan. You will be invited to sing Christmas Carols at that time.

The only other service on Christmas Eve is at 11 p.m. There will be an extended Christmas music prelude from 10:15 p.m. to 11 p.m. You will hear songs such as Mary, Did You Know? ,

Breathe of Heaven, Joseph's Lullaby, O Holy Night. We will sing carols that will not be in the service itself. A peaceful, reflective, meditative period with the soft light of the candles will pervade the sanctuary. Come, relax and reflect and enjoy the calm and peace of the evening.

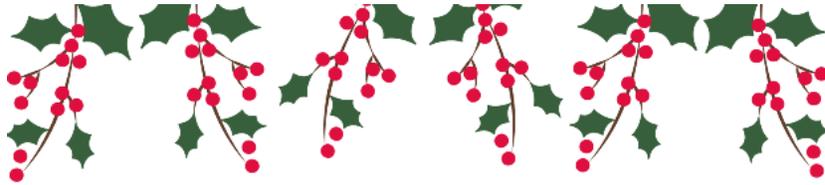
EPIPHANY SUNDAY THE WISEMEN COME January 7, 2024 10 a.m. worship



The choir will sing a beautiful piece about a star rising in the east which is part of the choral sermon piece I Hear the Prophet Calling. Other music will center around the star of Bethlehem.

CHILDRENS MUSICAL---Rehearsals will start for the Musical CALLED on January 7, 2024.

REHEARSALS ARE AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS 11:15 to 12 noon.

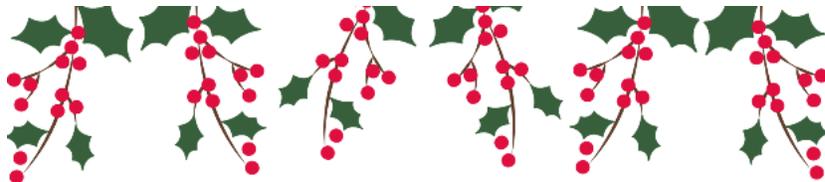


YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

**YOUTH GROUP
FALL/ WINTER
SCHEDULE**

Upcoming Dates:

December 3rd 4:00 - 5:30	December 3rd 5:30 - 7:00
December 17th Random Acts of Kindness 4:00 - 6:00	December 17th Random Acts of Kindness 4:00 - 6:00
January 7th 4:00 - 5:30 Chopped Night	January 7th 5:30 - 7:00 Chopped Night





The First Congregational Church
23 S. Main Street- Wallingford

Monthly Drives Team will be sponsoring the annual
Angel Tree for The Department of Children & Families.

Thank you to all who picked up an angel from our tree,
gifts could be dropped off at church anytime.

Our final collection time will be on

Saturday, December 16 from 9-11am

Please attach the card to your unwrapped gift. If you have any
questions, Please contact Karen Janus at 203-265-5882 or
kjanus01@snet.net

December 1, 2023

4:00 - 8:00 during Stroll

Outside Hot Dogs, Hot Cider & Hot Chocolate

Inside Most Fair Booths Open and Santa Photos

December 2, 2023

Booths open 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Breakfast served 9:00 to 10:00 am

Lunch served 11:30 am to 1:30 pm

Booths In Process

Baked Goods & Sweets

Books

Cookie Walk

Grandma's Kitchen

Handmade Delights

Holiday Decorations

Jewelry Shoppe

Pottery

Toys

Unique Boutique

Wreaths & Plants

Yesterday's Treasures





Christmas is just around the corner!

Your help is needed to feed 300 neighbors in need and the homebound.

Make a donation or volunteer

*Checks made payable to Wallingford Community Dinners, Inc.
can be mailed to PO Box 211, Wallingford, CT 06492*

Many hands make light work, so we need lots of help!

Students in need of service hours are welcome. Make it a family volunteer opportunity!

Volunteers can sign up to help in 1-3 hour shifts or the full day.

Prior to the event: *Food Prep, Cooking & Table set up*

Event day from 9am to 3pm: *Serving tables, Drivers to deliver to homebound, Clean up.*

Ready to volunteer?

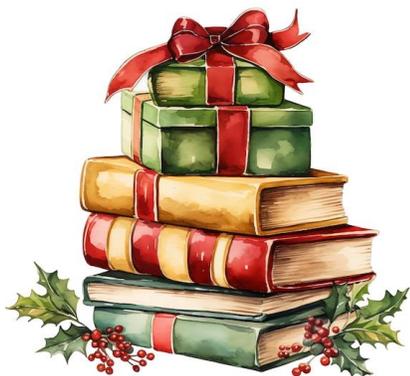
Have questions?

203-514-8883

WallingfordCommunityDinners@gmail.com

Christmas is Monday, December 25th
Dinners are served at the First Congregational Church
23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

BOOK CLUB NEWS



Our Christmas gathering is after church on Sunday December 10 in the Guild Room.

Please join us for cookies and eggnog for a discussion of “The Christmas Quilt” by Jennifer Chiaverini.

“A cozy wholesome story to put you in the holiday spirit.” Goodreads!

Message from the Flower Team

The **2024 Altar Flower** sign up calendar is now available in the Narthex. Please sign up for the dates that are special to you and your family. We thank our altar flower sponsors for adding to the beauty of our worship each week.

Our Christmas Poinsettia order form is located elsewhere in this Spire. Please submit your orders as soon as possible. The poinsettias will be placed in the sanctuary for our December 17th service.

Direct donations to the Flower Fund are always appreciated to allow us to place flowers on the altar on those weeks when we do not have sponsors, to help provide holiday flowers to our homebound members, to provide flowers to our baptismal families, and for special occasions. Thank you!



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 with any questions or requests.



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

WITH DEEPEST
sympathy

Sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have passed from this life to the next.

Robert Holmberg – Robert Holmberg passed away August 10, 2023 having reached the ripe old age of 100. A service celebrating Bob’s life will be held at Ashlar Village Saturday, December 2, at 1:00 PM.

Hayden Steinhilper – Hayden has been on our prayer list as he proudly served his country in the United States Navy. Hayden passed away October 16, 2023 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident. His funeral was held October 30 in Middletown. Hayden is a son of Melissa and Paul Masi.

Claire Fowler – Claire passed away peacefully November 12, 2023. A service celebrating Claire’s life was held November 17. Claire’s many gifts were celebrated and her faithful service to this congregation remembered. Claire raised five children at FCCW. Her daughter, Sherry Perkowski, continues that legacy.





2023 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA FORM

The Flower Team is offering poinsettias for \$10 per six-inch pot. Plants may be purchased in memory or in honor of loved ones. The poinsettias will be dedicated on Sunday, December 17th. You may purchase the plants to take home with you following the Christmas Eve services or to be donated to the Christmas Community Dinner attendees.

Please complete this form and return it with payment to the church office (23 S. Main Street, Wallingford 06492) or put it in the offering plate. Orders are due by ***December 5th.*** Questions? Contact Lori Folk-Barron at lorifolkbarron@gmail.com or 203-314-9885.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

The Flower Team



Number of poinsettias ordered: _____

Amount enclosed (@ \$10 each): _____

(Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church with "Poinsettias" in the memo line.)

I will pick up my plant(s) after the Christmas Eve Services _____

Please give my plants(s) to attendees of the Community Dinner _____

The wording in the bulletin should read:

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Your Name _____

Phone number _____





Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice

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

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. Our Church will receive a commission based on the number of travelers who participate.

There are a few seats still available for this tour. **The special reduced price expires November 16!**

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



Holiday Gift Wrapping Events



Saturday, December 16, 2023, 10AM – 12 PM

Sunday, December 17, 2023, 11 AM – 1 PM

First Congregational Church Hall

23 South Main Street Wallingford



Bring Your Gifts and We Will Wrap Them For You

Enjoy Drinks & Snacks While You Wait

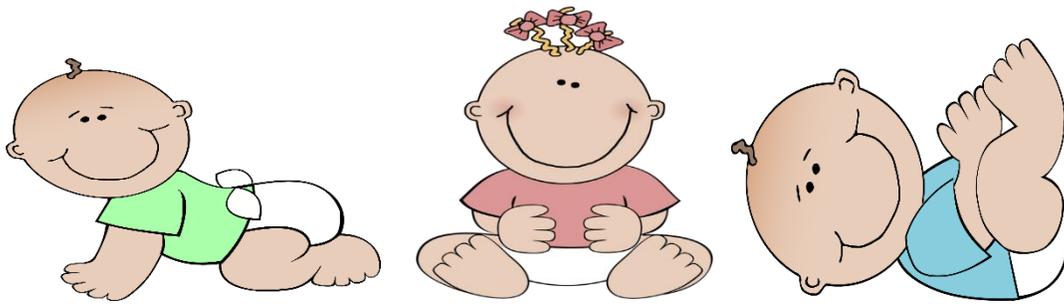
Free Will Donations Accepted



Proceeds benefit the Ministries Budget of First Congregational Church.

For more information, to volunteer, or to donate supplies (such as wrapping paper, tissue paper, gift bags, gift boxes, gift card boxes, ribbon, bows, and gift tags), please contact Maureen at the church office (203-265-1691).





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

ONLINE GIVING INFORMATION



The cost to offset processing fees when paying online by credit card is increasing December 1, 2023 from 2.75% to 3.37%.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Wallace at 203-745-9842 or kathywacct@gmail.com.



We Would Like to Be There When You Need Us!

We would like to be there when you need us. Sometimes, things happen in life leading to someone needing special care – the loss of a loved one, a hospitalization, a nursing home stay, a prolonged illness, an unsettling life transition, becoming homebound... If you are in need of care or would like to be added to the Prayer List, please call Pastor Meredith at 914 255-1690 or the church office at 203 265-1691. They will share your request with the Visitation Team Coordinators Charlene Bruce and Cliff Castellano. If you would like to be a visitor and join the Visitation Team, contact Charlene at charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net or Cliff at cliffc45@yahoo.com



Thank You to Our Angels!

Thanks to the generosity of many church members and friends, we are thrilled to announce the arrival of our brand spanking new Refrigerator! It arrived in time to hold our Thanksgiving Potluck goodies and to serve our friends and neighbors for the Thanksgiving Community Dinner. It is also ready for all of the festivities at the Joy of Christmas Fair. Stop by during coffee hour and check out our new addition. (No fingerprints, please! 😊)

Thank you again to our wonderful donors! Your support makes all things possible!

Looking for other giving opportunities? Please be sure to check out our Online Giving link at <http://www.firstchurchwallingford.org/>



MISSION MONEY AT WORK

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

This fall your Mission Funds Distribution Team has been hard at work supporting people in need internationally, nationally, locally and within our church community.

Supporting our world –

Conflict in Israel/Gaza – Feeling strongly that all people need our humanitarian support, equal donations were made to International Fellowship of Christians and Jews and Save the Children’s Relief Fund for Gaza.

Supporting our country -

Maui Strong at the Hawaii Community Foundation – Provides financial resources to support the immediate and long-term recovery needs for the people and places affected by the devastating Maui wild fires.

Supporting our local community -

Trevor Project – Supporting our ONA community, we are matching donations collected **in memory of Emma May** up to \$500.

Billy Beaumont – To show our support for a member of our Wallingford community in need, we contributed \$250 to his fundraiser. We also send many prayers for his speedy recovery.

Supporting our church –

Mission Trip Team – We are proud to provide financial support to our Mission Trip Team.

Youth Group – We are proud to provide financial support to our Youth Group for their Scavenger Hunt.

O Come Let Us Adore Him!



Nativity Creche Scene is on loan from Alan & Susan Eddy, church members since 1990.

The original set of Nativity figures was hand-carved in Austria about 1920 and purchased at that time by Alan's grandparents Bill and Mary Eddy during a visit to Austria.

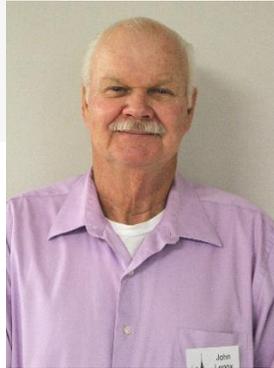
Over the years, other carved figures were added, including the small sets of angels and the three olive-wood camels from Palestine.

Angel Gabriel, with removable wings, is usually suspended above the other figures. The shepherds have wooden staffs that are stored in an envelope during the off-season.

This beautiful display will be on display in the Guild Room beginning December 3.



Welcome, New Members



It is a joy to welcome two new members to FCCW, John Lenox and Nancy Tipping. They join by Transfer of Membership.

John Lenox grew up in New York and became involved in the church at a young age. He was an altar boy and involved in the Sunday School. He enjoyed studying the Bible and learning about God from a young age. John has had ups and downs in his life. Both of those types of events have led him closer to God. John became involved in the Northford Congregational Church in 1992. His involvement at the Northford Church included everything from church maintenance to serving on the Deacons and Trustees to teaching Sunday School. While at Northford, John was asked to perform a wedding and obtained online ordination to allow him to do that. Since then, John has performed other ministerial functions using his online ordination. John has been attending FCCW for about a year and has enjoyed exploring new ministry opportunities here. John is a member of the Bible Study, is an Usher, Sacramental Minister, and part of the Ashlar Ministry Team. Like at his former church, John helps out where needed. John is a proud husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Nancy Tipping grew up in Congregational Churches. She was a member of her last UCC Church for 26 years, where she served in a number of roles. Nancy started coming to FCCW about a year ago, and quickly became an active participant in several church ministry teams including the Chancel Choir, Monthly Mission Drive Throughs, Bible Study, Rummage Sale, and Crafting. She earned three nursing degrees and worked as a nurse for 20 years. She then began teaching a nurse assistant courses at East Haven High School for the next 20 years. East Haven High selected Nancy to be Teacher of the Year. She retired from teaching in 2017 and has been happy to focus on her long-time passion, the environment. She started 2 pollinator gardens in North Branford, and is in the process of becoming an Ambassador with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. In February, Nancy will be able to do presentations and table at events to educate the public about how to support bees, fireflies, butterflies and other invertebrates.

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*The next Spire will be
published in January 2024.
Spire submission deadline is
the 15th of every month for the
following month's edition.*

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Merry Christmas