



## *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](mailto:officemanager@firstchurchwlfld.org) (office)**

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



## **Open and Affirming Covenant of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford**

We, the faith community of the First Congregational Church of Wallingford, United Church of Christ, aspire to live by the wisdom of Christ's teachings. At the heart of our vision and mission is a commitment to inclusivity and acceptance. We welcome everyone regardless of age; race; culture; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; family configuration; economic circumstance; mental, physical, developmental, and emotional ability; and religious tradition.

Jesus Christ, in speaking to his disciples said this: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (John 13: 34).

As current disciples of Jesus, we commit to maintain a nurturing environment where all are loved, valued, and inspired to meaningful involvement in the life of the church. Jesus' teachings of love and compassion call us to uplift each individual and celebrate our shared humanity, both within the sanctuary of this church and throughout the community in which we live and serve.

Diversity in our world is a gift from God which we celebrate. Guided by our Lord's wisdom, we offer an authentic and loving welcome to all who seek a relationship with God, and we proclaim ourselves an Open and Affirming church.

Adopted June 9, 2024



## ***Table of Contents***

350 <sup>th</sup> Voices of Devotion .....	16
Art Show Info .....	20
Book Club Info .....	18
Chocolate Easter Eggs Oder Form .....	15
Congregational Care .....	21
Easter Flower Order Form .....	14
Facebook Information .....	12
Flower Team News .....	18
Helping Hands .....	21
Footsteps in the Sand .....	19
Lenten Worship Schedule .....	5
Liturgical Colors .....	13
March Mission Drive .....	9
Message from the Moderators .....	6
Message from the Minister of Music .....	7
Message from the Interim Minister.....	4
Mission Money Update .....	23
ONA Statement .....	2
Prayer Shawl Ministry .....	22
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner .....	8
Silver Tea Party Info .....	10
Usher/Greeter Info .....	22
Vision & Mission Statement .....	1
Women’s Fellowship Breakfast .....	11
Youth Mission Trip .....	19

## *A Message From the Interim Minister*



I like to think of myself as reasonably intelligent and well informed. It is part of my job as pastor and preacher. But sometimes things happen that let me know I have more learning to do. I need to study harder, ask more questions, and perhaps listen to alternative points of view. That happened to me recently with all the headlines about DEI, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The headlines have been filled with challenges to DEI, DEI rollbacks, DEI firings, and suggestions to boycott companies that have rescinded on their commitments to DEI Policies and practices. There has been anxiety about how a rollback in DEI practices and policies may not just impact hiring practices and access to higher education, but also how it may effect special needs education, healthcare, accessibility to public spaces, and a myriad of other concerns.

I have seen those three letters floating around the headlines for years now, mostly in a positive light, but to be honest, I never knew what DEI was, at least in the headlines. I associated DEI with Dei. Dei is Latin for “of God.” I guess sometimes you don’t know what you don’t know. The optimist in me thought it was wonderful that our culture recognized that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion were “of God.” In my mind, I had taken it a step further to think of this way of thinking and being as “Imago Dei,” also Latin, for the “In the Image of God.” In my heart of hearts, I know Jesus is a proponent of DEI, because Jesus teaches us that each and every one of us is Dei, of God, and is created Imago Dei, in God’s image. There are no exceptions. Through God, each of us is loved, seen, and cherished. Through God, each of us has equal worth. Through God, each of us deserves justice and the opportunity to thrive with whatever gifts we have been given.

For me, DEI is not a political argument, it is a spiritual challenge and expectation. It is up to me in these tumultuous times to keep close to my heart the immutable truth that each of us is Dei and Imago Dei. It is up to me to make choices that live into that truth.

Praying with you for justice and peace,

Pastor Meredith



**Communion and Transfiguration March 2 10:00**  
Luke 9:28-36 Glory!

**Ash Wednesday Service March 5 7 PM**  
A service of Music, Scripture, Prayer, and Anointing

**First Sunday of Lent March 9 10:00**  
Luke 10:25-37 Stranger and Neighbor

**Second Sunday of Lent March 16 10:00**  
Luke 10:38-42 Faith and Works

**Third Sunday of Lent March 23 10:00**  
Luke 13:6-9 Rest and Growth

**Fourth Sunday of Lent March 30 10:00**  
Luke 15:1-7 Lost and Found

**Fifth Sunday of Lent April 6 10:00**  
Luke 19:1-10 Righteousness and Mercy  
Communion

**Palm Sunday April 13 10:00**  
Luke 19:29-40 Shouting and Silence  
Singing of the Palms and Cross Processional

**Maundy Thursday April 17 7:00 pm**  
Service of Lights, Shadows, Scripture, Music, and Communion  
Congregational Hall

**Good Friday April 18 Noon**  
A Meditative Service of Scripture, Music, and Reflection

**Easter Vigil April 19 2 pm Ashlar Village Auditoriums A, B, C**  
A Service of Light, Baptism, Communion, and Celebration

**Easter Sunday April 20 10:00**  
Come and Celebrate the Resurrection!



## *A Message from the Moderators*

### A Special Giving Opportunity – the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gift Registry

**2 Corinthians 9:6-8 “The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”**

As we journey through our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we will be holding events that bring us together in community and fellowship to honor generations past, to uplift the work of the present, and to build hope for the future of Christ’s work in this place. Amidst the celebrations, we will be asking members and friends to reflect on the scripture passage above and to consider making special anniversary gifts to First Congregational Church to honor this milestone year in our church’s history. The 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team, in collaboration with the Administration Ministry, is in the process of developing an Anniversary “Gift Registry” of desired items/projects to enhance our facilities and our worship. We introduce this gift giving opportunity in the hopes that, by combining our efforts and bounty, we will be able to fund items on the Registry. Members and friends will be asked to review the Registry and consider making an anniversary gift, knowing that this gift would be in addition to one’s annual pledged giving. The Registry is expected to include the following items, though others may also be added:

- Chancel carpeting (\$6,700)
- Remodeling of the hallway between the Guild Room and Congregational Hall (\$3,200)
- Kitchen Floor (\$6,650)
- Sanctuary insulation (\$32,000-\$40,000)
- Pew Cushions (\$30,000 - \$35,000)
- Railing for the Chancel Stairs (\$800 - \$1,200)
- Sanctuary Hardwood Refinishing (\$21,000 - \$24,000)
- Video screens in sanctuary (TBD)
- Oven (TBD)
- Front Sign (TBD)
- Masonry Work (TBD)
- Steeple Light Repair (TBD)

We are excited to let you know that we have been approached by an Angel Donor who has offered Matching Funds to the Gift Registry effort! The Angel Donor has offered a 20% match for every gift made towards the Registry. So, for example, for every \$100 gift we receive, they will match with an additional \$20. The Matching Funds (in the prior example, the \$20) can be applied wherever it is needed on the gift registry list. The Angel Donor will offer this match up until a maximum donation on their part of \$60,000! This is truly an exciting opportunity for members and friends of the congregation to make a gift to this congregation that increases in value because of the Matching Funds of this Angel Donor!

Please keep this amazing Matching Funds opportunity in mind as you consider a 350th Anniversary gift to First Congregational Church. More information will be coming soon. Please do not hesitate to approach us with any questions before then.

**2 Corinthians 9:11-12 “You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce Thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.”**

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

# *Message from the Minister of Music*



## **MUSIC LENTEN STUDY: Learning to play the ukelele**

**WHAT:** Learning to play the ukelele, specifically “Were You There?”

**WHO:** Children 10 years or older through adults

**WHEN:** Tuesdays from 4:30-5:30 pm starting Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Continuing on March 11, 18, 25, April 1, 8, 15.

**WHERE:** Music Room

**WHY:** To learn a new skill and learn a poignant piece for Lent.

I have six ukeleles for people to use. You may want to buy your own. They do come in a larger size which may be easier for larger hands. **NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY**—just a sense of adventure and willingness to try. I would like for us to play at 12 noon on Good Friday, April 18; but this is not a requirement.



## **“WERE YOU THERE?”**

The ukeleles will play “Were you There?” with readings from “Faces at the Cross” by persons who were “there” at the crucifixion. Solos—the Via Dolorosa—hymns—O Sacred Head Now Wounded, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, instrumental music.



**FCCW SHROVE TUESDAY**

# *pancake*

**DINNER**

**6 PM**

**CONGREGATIONAL  
HALL**

*Join us for food, fun and festivities!*

**Pancakes**

**Relay Races**

**Fellowship**



**March 4, 2025 @6**

**First Congregational Church**

**23 S Main Street, Wallingford, CT**



# March Monthly Mission Drive

**First Congregational Church  
23 S. Main St., Wallingford**



## **Snack Drive**

The Monthly Drives Team of the Mission & Outreach Ministry is collecting snack items for Ulbrich Boy's and Girl's Club. Suggested items would include a variety of snacks, granola bars and fruit cups.

**\*\* Due to allergies NO NUT products \*\***

Prefer to make a monetary donation? Store gift cards and other monetary donations will also be happily accepted the day of the drive or at any point before the drive.

Snacks will be collected on:

**Date: Saturday, March 15, 2025**

**Time: 9:00 am to 11:00 am.**

This is a drive up, drop off event at the rear of the church. As always, your donations are greatly appreciated!

If you have questions, please contact Louise Zemina at 203-988-2517 or email her at [louisezem@aol.com](mailto:louisezem@aol.com)

# *Silver Tea Party*



**Please join us for the Silver Tea Party!**

As we continue our celebration for our 350th church anniversary, we are hosting a tea in Congregational Hall.

**Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025**

**Time: 11:30 AM following church services**

We will have a display of wedding dresses from church members from the last 100 years.

A member of the Wallingford Historical Society will give a brief talk on the silver industry in Wallingford, and wedding customs during the height of this industry.

We will be serving tea ,delectable sandwiches, scones, and desserts.

We still need wedding dresses to display, so if you have a wedding dress from the following decades and would be willing to allow us to display it for the tea, please let me know.

Here are the decades we need: 1930's, 2000's, 2010's, 2020's

Seats are limited, please RSVP to Heidi at (203) 314-9241.

Hope to see you there!



Save the Date for a

**Women's Fellowship Breakfast**

Saturday, March 22, 2025

9-11 AM

Location and presenter TBD. Watch for more details!



### **Facebook FYI**

As you may know, First Congregational Church has both a public Facebook page and a private Facebook page. It is exciting to see that the number of “followers” of both pages has been increasing! Given that, we thought it a good time to offer this information about the Church’s Facebook presence.

The public Facebook page, titled First Congregational Church of Wallingford, CT, (<https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchwallingford>) is the page where anyone who is on Facebook or the internet can go to get basic information about our church. It is also the page where the livestreaming videos of our services appear and where general event announcements can be viewed.

The private Facebook page, titled First Congregational Church UCC, Wallingford, CT, (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/73105377547/>) is for members and friends of First Congregational Church Wallingford. In addition to general event announcements, the content of this page can include announcements directly relevant to our church members and friends, such as the Spire, information about congregational meetings and agendas, photos from events, and obituaries of members and friends of the congregation, if we have the family’s permission. Only members of the private page can see its content, and because of its more private content, one must request to join the page and be approved. When anyone requests to join the page, there are membership questions that need to be answered so that it can be determined whether the requestor has a legitimate reason to access the page. This is important because we have been scammed by people presenting themselves as friends of the congregation when they are not! If you or someone you know is wanting to join the page, please know that answering those questions is essential. We won’t approve someone to join the page if we have no idea about their connection to the church.

On both pages, postings are limited to those which are directly related to our congregation and its activities. At times, there have been requests by members of the page to post general memes or content that is not directly related to church happenings. These requests are typically turned down because we do not want the Facebook pages to be diluted by non-church content, even if the memes are thoughtful or humorous.

We appreciate everyone’s understanding if your meme or content is not published, and we hope this provides a clearer understanding of our Facebook presence. If you have any questions about Facebook or other social media issues, please direct them to Pastor Meredith or the Vision Board.

Thank you,  
*The Vision Board of FCC*



## Our Liturgical Colors

The church liturgical year is divided into seasons: Advent; Christmas; Epiphany; Lent; Easter; and Pentecost. Different colored paraments (the cloth decorations hanging from the altar, pulpit, and lectern; as well as the banners hung above the altar) are used to express the ideas and emotions of each season.

The forty days of Lent, which begin Ash Wednesday, correspond to the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. The **violet** paraments hung during Lent symbolize both the sovereignty of Christ as well as the repentance from sin.

During Holy Week, our tradition has been to change the paraments from violet to **white** on Maundy Thursday, symbolizing the church's rejoicing in the sacrament of the Last Supper. At the end of Maundy Thursday, the white paraments are removed and the altar is stripped bare, symbolizing the betrayal of Jesus and the empty tomb. **Black** paraments, the traditional color of mourning, are placed on the pulpit and lectern on Good Friday.

On Easter morning, the **white and gold** paraments celebrate the Risen Christ, and remain in place for fifty days, until Pentecost. On Pentecost Sunday, **red** paraments (with the descending dove) signify the Holy Spirit.

A future article will describe the Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and "Ordinary Time" seasons.

The Worship Ministry has a team that faithfully takes care of and changes the paraments with each new liturgical season. If you are interested in joining this Altar Team, please contact Debby Voelker.



## EASTER FLOWER MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES

This year, Easter is **April 20th**. During Lent, you will have the opportunity to purchase flowers that will honor and remember loved ones and decorate the Sanctuary for Easter. Please complete the form below and put it in the collection plate or return it to the church office by **April 13th**. You may also order flowers via the Online Giving tab on the church website: <https://www.firstchurchwallingford.org/>

Thank you for your continued support and generosity. - *The Flower Team*

---

### EASTER PLANT ORDERS

Number of Daffodils: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Tulips: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Hyacinth Plants: \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 each  
Subtotal: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Lily Plants: \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ \$12 each  
Subtotal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Total: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my plant(s) after the Easter services      \_\_\_\_\_ Please donate my plants.

*In Honor Of:* \_\_\_\_\_

*In Memory Of:* \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



# The First Congregational Church

## Chocolate Easter Egg Sale

Enjoy delicious CHOCOLATE EGGS  
with peanut butter or coconut filling

**Just \$12 per dozen!**

Orders must be pre-paid!



Orders must be  
received by March  
23<sup>rd</sup> and will be  
ready Palm Sunday  
weekend,

April 11, 12, and 13

**To order:**

**In-person:** At coffee hour after worship

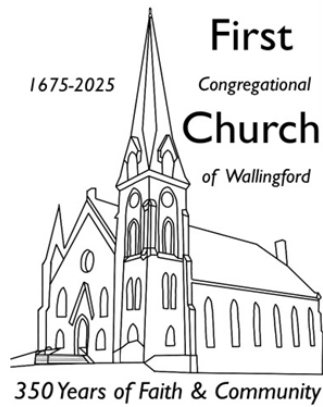
**Online:**

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z3ZD/campaign/C-14QFA>



The First Congregational Church of Wallingford

23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492



## Join the 350th “Voices of Devotion” Project!

By now, you have heard that one of the many ways we will be celebrating the 350th Anniversary of First Congregational Church in 2025 is with the “Voices of Devotion” Project. Modeled after the Upper Room devotionals that many of us use for our daily devotional time, we are seeking devotionals written by past, present and (hopefully) future members and friends of FCC. With the start of 2025, we have begun to share submitted devotions on a weekly basis via email, and we intend to publish all of the devotions in booklet form at the end of the anniversary year.

Some may find the idea of writing a public devotional to be intimidating, but we want to remind you that the purpose of this project is to celebrate the many voices that have worshipped God at First Congregational Church. We are looking for YOU, the heart, soul, and history of FCC, to lend your voice and offer a devotion that speaks from your heart. Write about an experience, large or small, that told you God is near. Write about an event, a memory, a trial, a person, a meaningful piece of scripture - anything that brought your heart closer to God or reminded you that the Holy Spirit was and is a force in your life.

To create your devotional: Choose a Bible scripture that speaks to you or connects to the story you have to tell. Describe your story and how you apply this story and its spiritual truth to your life. How do you hope others might apply it to theirs?

We pray you say YES to participating in this project. Please use the attached form to submit your devotion. The “Voices of Devotion” team members will confirm the receipt of your submission. If you have submitted your devotion and did not receive confirmation or received a “rejected email message,” please assume we have not received it, and contact us at [fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com](mailto:fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com) or at [lorifolkbarron@gmail.com](mailto:lorifolkbarron@gmail.com). You can also enter your devotional using the Google sheet at this link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi\\_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp_url)

We are accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Please feel free to submit more than one devotional if you have more than one story to tell!

With joyful voices,

Lori Folk-Barron, Bernie Annunziata, Marsha Mather, and Bob Westervelt

## “Voices of Devotion” Submission

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(as you wish it to appear in the devotional booklet)

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Quoted Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Quoted Scripture Citation: (e.g., Jeremiah 29:11-14) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Devotional Text: (up to 500 words) *Please **handwrite** or type below or attach separate page.*

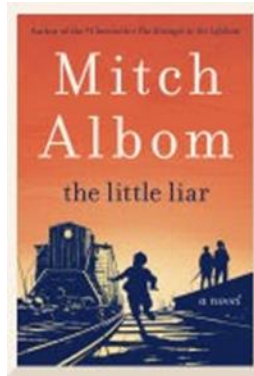
Prayer:

Please submit devotional by

- Email to [fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com](mailto:fcc350devotionproject@googlegroups.com)
- Use this Google sheet link to enter your devotion directly  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi\\_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfr6UXLI8h8weoxhhyoG23cKxWF0DXRDi_4z-2oGzq-b84lcQ/viewform?usp=pp_url)
- Mail to “Voices of Devotion” Project, First Congregational Church, 23 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT 06492.



Beloved bestselling author Mitch Albom is back with “The Little Liar.”  
Please join us on March 25 at 6:30 in the Guild Room.



### *A Message from the Flower Team*



We are in need of altar flower sponsors for these upcoming dates in 2025.  
Please sign up in the Narthex or email Lori (lorifolkbarron@gmail.com).

**April 6**

**June 1**

**June 15**

**June 22**

**June 29**

Direct donations to the Flower Fund are always appreciated to allow us to place flowers on the altar on those weeks when we may 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!



Youth Mission Trip  
Scranton, PA  
July 20-26, 2025

Youth (going into ninth grade next year through age 20) interested in going on this mission trip should speak with Maddie Torre or Lorraine Westervelt

*A Gift for You!*

**Christian Renewal Weekend**

**Men's May 16-18 or Women's May 30-June 2**



Does a spiritual boost sound good?

Enjoy a **Renewal Weekend** presented by **Footsteps in the Sand**.

Footsteps Weekends are conducted by a team of 21 volunteers including two pastors. Everyone from our church who has attended a weekend felt blessed by the experience and some are serving on the teams for the upcoming weekends.

If you would like to know more visit: [Footsteps-Sand.org](http://Footsteps-Sand.org) or contact  
Bob (203-218-9537) and Lorraine (203-257-6964) Westervelt

# Art Show

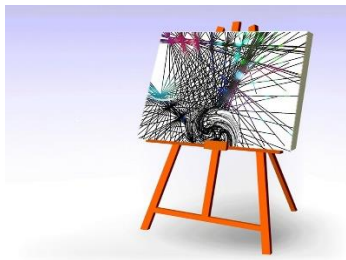
November 9, 2025

In Congregational Hall

**Exodus 35:31-32**

*And he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze.*

- **This is the time to gather some wonderful art work to display in the church art show! “Art” includes photography projects, craft projects, etc.**
- **This is a multi-generational display of our congregation’s art work for our 350<sup>th</sup> celebration year!! Please invite your family & friends are welcome to show their artwork too!**
- ***Drop off to a designated area of congregational hall on Sunday, Nov. 2 and the work will be on display on***
- **Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>**
- ***Pick up your art work on Monday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> between 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. or at coffee hour on Sunday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>***



I'm trying to give people time to create something or put things aside as artwork comes home with your children! Please label with family name & artist's name.

Questions? Please email Pam Perkowski at [pperkowski@myhts-wallingford.org](mailto:pperkowski@myhts-wallingford.org)

We are accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Please feel free to submit more than one devotional if you have more than one story to tell!

With joyful voices,

Lori Folk-Barron, Bernie Annunziata, Marsha Mather, and Bob Westervelt





### **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](mailto:charlenebruce@sbcglobal.net) or Cliff at [cliffc45@yahoo.com](mailto:cliffc45@yahoo.com)



As many of you may or may not know, we have been providing meals to some members of our church family, who through various circumstances, are receptive to having a meal delivered to them. If you know of someone in our church, who either on a short or long term basis, could benefit from a delicious dinner, please let us know. Also, if you wish to have your name added to our list of folks who have volunteered to make a meal, please let us know. We'd be happy to have you join us!

Helping Hands is just one of many "behind the scenes" groups within our congregation that provides comfort and support to our fellow brothers and sisters.

If there is a need or if you are willing to cook, please contact either Louise Zemina at 203-988-2517 or Bernie Annunziata at 203-415-9809.



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.**



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 six 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

## MISSION MONEY AT WORK

*As the scripture says: "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35*

Your mission team was at work this fall and winter using your mission money to support organizations and spread our values. We supported children in Kenya, families struck by wild fires and our community. We continue to *donate* internationally, nationally, locally and within our church community while keeping our mission and values in mind.

### *Supporting our world & church –*

**ChildFund**– These humpbacked helpers provide a plentiful source of rich milk to nourish growing children in Kenya – especially during extended droughts. Camel milk is a very valuable resource, prized by families for its high market value and nutrition. This initiative ties beautifully into the nativity story, where camels played a significant role in the journey of the Magi. Just as the Magi brought gifts to the newborn Jesus, we too can bring gifts of hope and sustenance to children in need. We donated \$560 to ChildFund for a camel.

### *Supporting our country –*

**United Church of Christ** - The California wildfires have caused widespread devastation, destroying homes, displacing families, and leaving communities in urgent need of support. We donated \$500 for disaster relief for the California wild fires.

### *Supporting our local community -*

**Daphne's Brave Heart**– With sadness in our hearts, we donated up to \$400 to Daphne's Brave Heart at Akron's Children's Hospital. The fund will help support families navigating childhood congenital heart disease diagnoses and open-heart surgery.

**Live nativity** – Our church was able to spread the joy of the birth of our Savior this December with the greater Wallingford community. Live animals bring the nativity story to life, creating a more immersive and engaging experience for all who came. The nativity raised awareness for our church and provided an opportunity to educate the community about the significance of the nativity and the humble beginnings of Jesus. Sponsoring the event spread the message of love, kindness, and generosity that lies at the heart of our church and the Christmas story. To support the live nativity, \$500 was donated.

**Master's Mana** – This organization is essential to meeting the needs of the homeless, near homeless, low to moderate income families and those facing food insecurity in the local Wallingford/Meriden community. While we have held many monthly drives to donate items, we felt it important to make a monetary donation of \$500.

If anyone would like to participate on our Mission Distribution Team, we typically meet the first Wednesday of the month at 5:30 by Zoom. Please contact Mary Antonetti, Kathy Wallace or Lori Folk-Baron for log in information.

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

*The next Spire will be  
published in April 2025. Spire  
submission deadline for the  
April Issue is March 15<sup>th</sup>.*

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