



# THE PARISHIONER AUGUST 2021

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, WOODBRIDGE *since 1738*

An Open, Welcoming, and Affirming Church

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Telephone: (203) 389-2119

Fax: (203) 389-2110

Email: [office@uccw.org](mailto:office@uccw.org)

Website: [www.uccw.org](http://www.uccw.org)

CT Conference Website: [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge](http://www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge)

## A LETTER FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

One of the most frequently asked questions I have been asked since becoming Moderator is: "How can we get better attendance at Sunday morning services?" And I really do not have an answer. Yes, the Covid pandemic caused us to stop in person services and go to streaming and zoom and we seemed to become comfortable with that approach. We still only have an average of 20-25 "attendees" each Sunday. Before the pandemic we probably only averaged 30-40 persons in attendance on Sunday mornings. So, what is the answer, or better yet, what questions are we not asking? Recently, on the radio, I heard a minister

reference a survey question: "Why do people attend a church service for the first time?" The answer surprisingly showed that 15% had a variety of responses, 6% attended because of the church's minister, and 79% attended because they were personally invited by a member of the church! How accurate or valid is this information? I cannot vouch for the responses or even reference the survey. However, it got me to thinking-----"Why don't we do that?" "Why aren't we inviting people to church?"

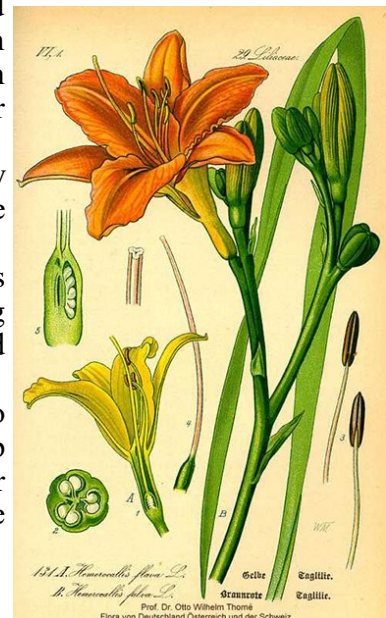
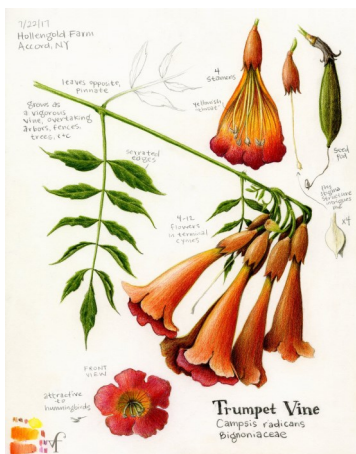
FCCW is now "OPEN". The office is open, meetings are open, Sunday services are open. Coffee hour is back. The choir will soon be back. We have had a good minister with a good message every Sunday. The Deacons and the Search and Renewal Committee(S&R) have arranged to have a minister in the pulpit every Sunday into the Fall. S&R has conducted Interim Minister interviews, reviewed many resumes, and has consulted with the Connecticut UCC. They are doing their job! It is now up to us, as individual members, to do our part---namely attend Sunday morning worship services in person!

There was, if my memory serves me, an old saying about "Voting and showing support for an issue by using your feet". In that vein, I am asking each and every one of the active members of our 150 members who are presently on the membership rolls to take three actions as we begin in September to start our new church year.

**First:** Attend at least two Sunday services every month, in person---walk in the front door of the church!

**Second:** Call a member of the church who has dropped out and not attended a service in a long time. Invite them to come with you or just "come and join us."

And **thirdly:** Invite a nonmember of the church to join you in attending a Sunday morning worship service. Use your feet to attend a service, use your feet to go to the phone and call someone and invite them to church. (cont.)



(cont.) Is this asking too much? Is it too simplistic? Can we do it? Do you have any other ideas? I will address this matter at the next meeting of Council on August 2nd.

Give me and other members of the Council your feedback. Call the office and share your ideas with Lisa, who can relay them to me. My friends, we must do something to get warm bodies into the pews on Sunday mornings! What good will a redecorated Sanctuary be if there is no one to see it? What do we say to a prospective minister when asked by them "How is your Sunday morning attendance?" I have an attendance goal in mind. When I see you in church, I will share it with you.

"See Ya In Church!" Respectfully yours, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



One thing I can tell you is  
you have to be free.  
Come together, right  
now, over me.

John Lennon

### PASTORAL COVERAGE

Interim pastoral coverage is currently being provided  
by the **Reverend Janice Touloukian**.

Rev. Touloukian is an experienced minister  
regarding personal matters and supporting those in need  
of pastoral advice.

She can be reached by telephone at: 203-387-4991.



Welcome  
Logan  
Alexander  
Cerny!

Debbie and Rich Forselius welcome  
the blessing of a new grandson  
to the family.

Logan Alexander Cerny  
Born 7/16/21 at 3:11pm  
8 lb 5.8 oz and 21.5 in long





## SANCTUARY UPDATE, JULY 2021

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, an agreement with decorative arts company, John Canning of Cheshire, CT, for Phase One of the sanctuary repair and repainting, was signed by the Chairman of Trustees, Roger Calistro. In addition, a fully executed agreement from the State Historic Preservation Office, to provide \$100K in support for the project, was received in June.

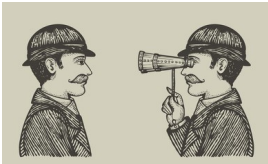
Scaffolding will be erected in the sanctuary the week of August 23. The Phase One work (ceiling, cornices, upper north wall, and re-installation of the plaster medallion above the chandelier) will begin in September and should be completed by early December. The sanctuary can remain open and in use during this period.

Fundraising is going well. Donations have been boosted by two very generous 50/50 ‘matching’ challenges that doubled \$35K in contributions to \$70K. Memorial gifts, for Audrey Grey, Clement and Clare Clarke, Richard L. Wanner, and Ginny Calistro, were significant and often came with heart-touching tributes to how much the FCCW had meant to those remembered.

Phase One costs are estimated at \$250K. The Sanctuary Fund currently stands at \$125K. SHPO funding is paid after the work is completed. A huge “thank you” to all at FCCW and in the wider community who have donated so generously. We encourage anyone else who would like to support the restoration of this beloved, historic, Woodbridge landmark, to donate to the FCCW “Sanctuary Fund”.

Thank You,  
Sanctuary Committee

**Quote of the month:** “The kind of beauty that allows one to think.” - B. Joyce Simpson

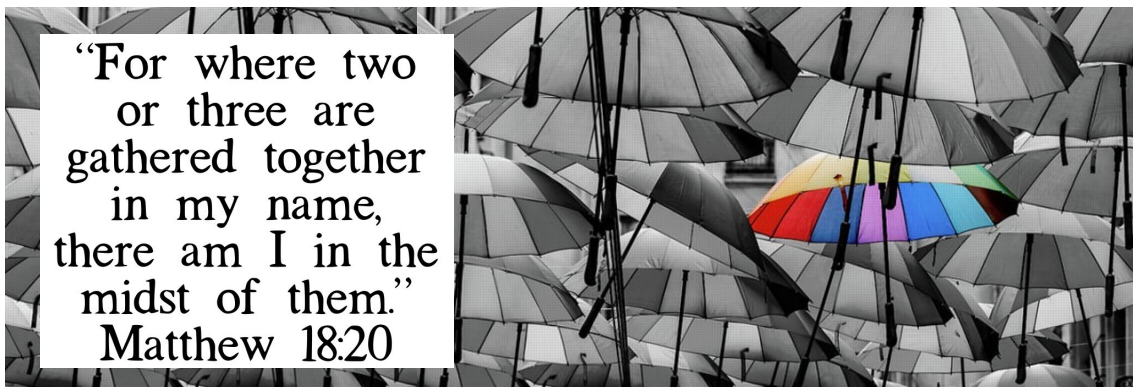


### UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH AND RENEWAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Our committee has met and are continuing to meet with candidates for the interim minister position. To date, we have had four candidates send us their resumes, and we have a lead for another possibility. We have been meeting nearly weekly, to review the candidates and meet with them in person. The process has taken a longer time than anticipated since the pool of applicants is not very large and there are many position openings in Connecticut. We have had good reviews for the guest preachers we have been fortunate enough to have preach in person in church on Sundays ever since Easter. We have coverage now through October and into November. Obviously, if we found a minister we were interested in hiring, we would change our schedule of guest ministers. Thank you all for being patient and we hope you have enjoyed the ministers we have had.

**PLEASE JOIN US LIVE AT CHURCH ON SUNDAYS!**

If you have any questions or concerns, you may email or call any members of our committee (Roger Calistro, Richard Forselius, Jesse Hubbard, Judith Reynolds, Penny Rogers, and Sue Stoddard).



“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”  
Matthew 18:20





## BOY SCOUT TROOP 907 AUGUST UPDATE

Troop 907 meetings start up Thursday nights after Labor Day in the Parish House at 7 PM. What a great time to join this active and cohesive group! We are always inviting prospective scouts and their families to join us on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM in the First Church of Christ Parish House.

For more information visit <http://www.troop907.org> or contact Scoutmaster Tom Luciani at [luciani33@sbcglobal.net](mailto:luciani33@sbcglobal.net) or Committee Chair Rich Forselius at [forselius@snet.net](mailto:forselius@snet.net).



20  
21





## In Memory of a Treasured Parishioner

On June 14, 2021, friends and family gathered at the First Church of Christ in Woodbridge to celebrate the life of a beloved longtime parishioner, Virginia Butler Calistro. This beautiful portrait of Ginny, courtesy of Kathleen Foster, accompanies her obituary below.



### Virginia Butler Calistro

(Published by The New Haven Register on Jun. 12, 2021)

Virginia Butler Calistro, 96, passed away peacefully at home in Woodbridge June 9, 2021, leaving behind a large and loving family and a legion of friends and admirers. Virginia was born January 8, 1925, in New Haven. She was the daughter of the late Jessie McDaniel and James Bruce Butler of West Haven, and, along with her sister, the late Jessie Butler Throm and her brother, the late James Butler, attended West Haven public schools, graduating as valedictorian of West Haven High School in 1943. Virginia attended the University of Connecticut, where she lettered in women's basketball and, more importantly, met her late husband, Joseph Roger Calistro, a dashing airman newly returned from England. Virginia graduated summa cum laude in 1947, and immediately threw herself into what was to become an exceptionally long and successful career in education.

Virginia and Joe were married in West Haven in 1949, and they spent most of their 65 years together as residents of Woodbridge, which they grew to love dearly. Along with "Papa Joe," Virginia raised and is survived by three children:

Virginia "Debbie" Culligan (Patrick) of Woodbridge, Roger Calistro (Kathleen Foster) of Meriden, and Cara Calistro (Ollen

Dupree) of Bowie, MD, as well as eight grandchildren: Rachel Acevedo (Victor), JP Culligan (Andi Crist), Daniel Culligan, Dominic Calistro (Emily), Virginia Calistro, Casey Culligan, Mya Dupree, and Elijah Dupree, four great grandchildren, and many beloved Butler and Calistro nieces and nephews. At the end of her life, Miss Ginny received special care and attention from Murley Barnaby and Nancy Sanca, both of whom became very dear to her and to the family.

Early in her teaching career Virginia became known as "Miss Ginny" to one and all. In the early sixties she ran a precursor to Head Start, a Neighborhood Improvement Project in Fair Haven. Recognizing her true calling as a preschool teacher Virginia then went on to establish Cabbage Hill Country School in 1963, a uniquely charming place that she operated for 46 years in the little red schoolhouse located behind her home. Cabbage Hill became the great passion of Miss Ginny's life, and through it she imbued generations of children with a love of learning.

"Miss Ginny" was a true extrovert, and in her inimitable and stylish way, was thoroughly involved in all of life around her. She was a devoted communicant of the First Church of Christ Woodbridge, where she served as a deacon, sang in the choir, and chaired many committees. She was active in the League of Women Voters for many years and supported her husband's distinguished career in local government. She was chair of the Woodbridge Library Commission and served on the Mental Health Board. Having successfully lost weight as an early adherent to the Weight Watchers program, Miss Ginny went on to become a popular Weight Watchers lecturer.

One of her great joys was marrying couples as "Judge Ginny", a Justice of the Peace. At the age of 85, she began participating in a Yale gerontological research program. In conjunction with Joe's career in international engineering project management, the couple travelled extensively, particularly in Africa. Of course, the effervescent Miss Ginny was a sports fan, cheering for the Yankees and the UConn Huskies, and never missed a party or an event. In 2019 the Town of Woodbridge named Miss Ginny one of its Living Treasures. Right up until the outbreak of Covid, Miss Ginny was an engaged participant in activities at the Woodbridge Senior Center and the Clelian Center in Hamden.



## Make a Donation to First Church of Christ in Woodbridge— *online!*

\*\*\*

It couldn't be easier to donate online. **Here's HOW:**

1. Log on to our website: **www.uccw.org**
2. Click on the word "Mission" at the top center of the home page.
3. Click on the words "Opportunity to Donate" in the blue box below.
4. Click on the option "Online", and follow payment instructions.

\*We accept PayPal and all major credit cards\*

[www.uccw.org](http://www.uccw.org)



### “What’s all the excitement about?!”

The FCCW website is a virtual font of resources, links, notifications, and activities! With the help of our **Facebook profile**, more visitors and parishioners have begun to rely on our site for up-to-date information and added access to various media archives. People visit uccw.org to read and enjoy the latest Parishioner, peruse past editions, and explore many new ministry-supplied additions to our blossoming nexus of online provisions and community resources.

There is *always* something new! **What can you contribute?** What would you like to see?

#### *You May Not Know.....*

**Our Sanctuary Restoration Page is up, running, and accepting online donations!** Peruse our new Sanctuary Restoration page and have access to all recorded information, documents, photos and updates.

- **Biographies** of our guest preachers and musicians are available to read on our “Honored Guests” page.
- The ever-growing **Prayer Page** offers a selection of prayers that we are hoping to build upon. What would you like to see there? Let us know!
- Links to Worship Service Archives and **musical recordings** are clearly posted for your convenience.
- Our blog is a great place to **post memorials**. Offer comments of condolence and blessings.
- **This is your website!** Send photos, announcements, anything that you would like posted for all to see. Make use of the website; make it your own!

\*Please email all submissions (articles, announcements, photos, prayers, and more) to  
JoAnna at [growfirstchurch@gmail.com](mailto:growfirstchurch@gmail.com)



Our **FACEBOOK PAGE** is another resource for up-to-date information, announcements, and links to articles, videos and more!

Next time you find yourself scrolling through funny cat videos and pictures of fancy dinners, take a minute or two to check out the First Church of Christ Woodbridge page! Comment on posts, ask questions, give us a thumbs up!

[www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge/](http://www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge/)

## Weekly Bible Study



All are welcome to visit our Weekly Bible Study that takes place every Wednesday morning at 10:30 a.m. Meetings are currently being held inside the Parish Hall or outside in good weather. All safety regulations must be followed when on the church grounds.

Copies of our safety regulations are available in the Parish Hall foyer. Please visit the Bible Study page on our website for more information and a list of weekly readings.

## FCCW Technical Committee News

The Technical Committee would like to thank Maddie Rogers (granddaughter of Penny Rogers) for her several months of assisting Jesse Hubbard with our weekly Zoom and Live Streaming of our Sunday worship services. She has left our state for a new life in Florida. Her assistance was invaluable.

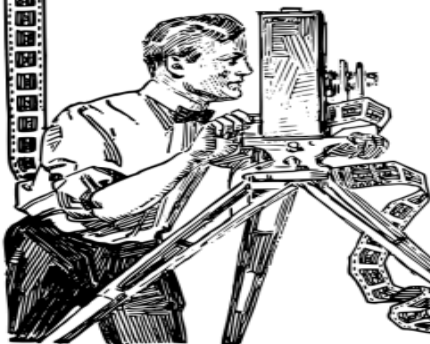
Jack Jones and Nancy Dickgiesser established a new job description for this position "Video and Audio Specialist". We have spent a few weeks looking for a new candidate for this position.

After a short search and interest from one of our members (Carl and Anne Marie Lindskog's granddaughters), we are happy to announce that we have hired Emma and Charlotte Lindskog for this position.

Amity High School offers, to its students, a program which involves the student volunteering 100 hours (over a 4-year period) to local non-profit organizations. If they complete the requisite 100 hours, the students are recognized at their graduation ceremony and of course can promote it on their college or work resume. Charlotte and Emma Lindskog were hired within this program.

Jesse Hubbard and Jack Jones have been training them the past two weeks. They soon will be able to Zoom and Live Stream independently. We welcome them and are very happy to welcome them to our church.

Nancy Dickgiesser, Director of Personnel  
Jack Jones, Treasurer





## Calendar of Guest Ministers

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Aug. 1st              | Rev. Walter Pitman     |
| Aug. 8th              | Rev. Walter Pitman     |
| Aug. 15th             | Rev. Karl Duetzmann    |
| Aug. 22nd             | Rev. Raquel Irizarry   |
| Aug. 29 <sup>th</sup> | Rev. Walter Pitman     |
| Sept. 5th             | Rev. Walter Pitman     |
| Sept 12th             | TBA                    |
| Sept. 19th            | Rev. Janice Touloukian |
| Sept. 26th            | Rev. Karl Duetzmann    |



## ZOOM Invitations and Live Streaming

### How Do I View Sunday Service?

**If you are unable to gather with us in the Meetinghouse, not to worry!  
If the clock reads 11 a.m. and you've missed Sunday Service, not to worry!**

*All Worship Services* are live streamed on our website and on our YouTube channel. Video recordings are available for viewing on our **website**, our **YouTube** channel, and on **Facebook**.

([www.facebook.comuccwoodbridge](http://www.facebook.comuccwoodbridge))

**Please look to your email for invitations and links to these resources.  
We will continue to use Zoom for all of our Worship Services.**



### **Submission Due Date (Don't Forget!)**

Submissions to be published in the **September** issue of "The Parishioner" are **DUE BY Wednesday, August 11th!**

**\*Please submit all articles and photos to JoAnna Rubino via email. If you would like assistance regarding Zoom, live stream, or website accessibility, please contact JoAnna.  
[growfirstchurch@gmail.com](mailto:growfirstchurch@gmail.com)**

### FCCW OFFICE HOURS

The office is currently open Monday thru Friday,  
**9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

### Marking Life's Passages

#### Births

Logan Alexander Cerna  
Born on July 16, 2021 to  
Thomas and Erica Forselius Cerny.

#### Deaths

Edwin L. Doernberger  
Passed on May 21, 2021

#### **The Parishioner**

Published monthly by  
The First Church of Christ,  
Woodbridge, Connecticut

**Temp. On Call Pastor:** Rev. Janice Touloukian  
**Email:** [jantouloukian@gmail.com](mailto:jantouloukian@gmail.com)  
**Pastor Emeritus:** Rev. Boyd M. Johnson, Jr.  
**Office Manager:** Lisa Tartaglino  
**Digital and Media Coordinator:** JoAnna Rubino

***NEXT PARISHIONER DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, August 11, 2021 (a firm date).***

E-mail articles and photos to: [growfirstchurch@gmail.com](mailto:growfirstchurch@gmail.com)



## August 2021

| Sunday                                  | Monday                                | Tuesday   | Wednesday                    | Thursday              | Friday | Saturday                           |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1<br>10:00am Church<br>Worship Service  | 2<br>6:00pm Church<br>Council Meeting | 3<br>7:00pm Alateen<br>7:30pm Al-anon<br>7:30pm AA  | 4<br>10:30am Bible<br>Study  | 5                     | 6      | 7                                  |
| 8<br>10:00am Church<br>Worship Service  | 9                                     | 10<br>7:00pm Alateen<br>7:30pm AA<br>7:30pm Al-anon | 11<br>10:30am Bible<br>Study | 12                    | 13     | 14                                 |
| 15<br>10:00am Church<br>Worship Service | 16                                    | 17<br>7:00pm Alateen<br>7:30pm AA<br>7:30pm Al-anon | 18<br>10:30am Bible<br>Study | 19                    | 20     | 21<br>4:00pm Wedding -<br>Hultgren |
| 22<br>10:00am Church<br>Worship Service | 23                                    | 24<br>7:00pm Alateen<br>7:30pm Al-anon<br>7:30pm AA | 25<br>10:30am Bible<br>Study | 26<br>6:30pm Trustees | 27     | 28                                 |
| 29<br>10:00am Church<br>Worship Service | 30                                    | 31<br>7:00pm Alateen<br>7:30pm Al-anon<br>7:30pm AA |                              |                       |        |                                    |