



THE PARISHIONER

October 2023

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, WOODBRIDGE, CT

since 1738

An Open, Welcoming, and Affirming Church

Growing an Adaptive Ministry Staff

Next Steps Part 7, Sunday October 15

After more than a dozen sessions of discovery, discussion, discernment, and consensus forming, last spring First Church Woodbridge completed its Local Church Profile, and then formed, trained, and launched its Search Committee. I so look forward to our service of commissioning on Sunday, October 1. All of you will be part of that, so be sure to save the date!

With the Search Committee launched, it's time to learn how to guide and govern the work of your next settled pastor, faithfully and fruitfully. As a settled pastor for 14 years and an interim pastor for 12 years, as a ministerial colleague to many and a consultant to churches, I know this is first order issue. Clergy and program directors represent the largest part of church budgets and are the greatest resource of congregations and yet systems for their governance often are non-existent, ineffective and/or imports from secular management models. As such, perennial problems plague nearly all churches, including power struggles, conflicts about direction, indirection, need for staff development but no means for doing that, and more. These issues are costly in a whole host of ways – financially, emotionally, organizationally, and spiritually – to congregations and to those who serve them.

At New Steps Part 7 (Sunday, October 15), I'll share an outline of a transformational team-model and 3-part process this is ...

- consistent with church governance
- centered on the congregation's needs (inward focus) and missions (outward focus)
- effective in establishing best priorities each year for each staff member (note: ministry staff, not admin staff)
- intentional in resourcing ministry staff members to achieve goals set
- effective in developing staff members to better serve their congregation through meaningful feedback about their impact on the whole church system

I'm so much looking to sharing all this and helping First Church Woodbridge with this crucial aspect of its future!

Blessings,

Rev. Susan Murtha



Church Council

FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

September 2023 Meeting

The FCCW Church Council met with a quorum present in September in the Parish House Board Room. After the opening prayer, Rev. Susan Murtha presented her report.

Rev. Murtha reported that the summer worship services held in the Parish Hall were well attended with very positive feedback on the services. Attendance was up over 53% when compared to the previous year. Activities for the Fall include the October 1st Commissioning of the Search Committee. The Children and Family Ministries program has many plans for the Fall and has been very active during this past summer. (Moderator's Note: The Children and Family Ministries Project, coordinated by Rev. Murtha with Forest Vandeflor as her assistant, has been highly successful. This experimental project has in fact become a full blown FCCW program with notable results being daytime special programs for families and Kid's Church. This program has brought more new people into our church than anything else we've done for many years! Both Rev. Murtha and Forest are to be congratulated.)

Trustees reported on plan progress for revitalizing the Parish House in preparation for a new tenant. Detailed reports to follow at a New Step's meeting. The report also noted that while the first payment of Taxes on the Parsonage has been made, such has been done with an appeal to the Town regarding the size of the land being taxed. It is hoped that a compromise regarding the amount being paid can be worked out. The Deacon's reported that the summer worship services in the Parish House were well attended. The Music Committee is proceeding on plans for a Fall concert. Christian Service reported on community organizations to which grants have been made. Scouts reported on their summer activities and plans for the Fall.

The Giving Committee is preparing for the 2024 Stewardship program. Details will be forthcoming. The Council discussed various Fall and Advent plans. There will not be a Stocking Project this year. The Trimming Bee and Carol Sing will be held this year and volunteers to plan and coordinate both will be sought.

Comments From The Moderator: Some thoughts regarding the coming year. To do so I make note of comments made by Rev. Murtha and others in attendance at the Home Coming Sunday pre worship gathering on September 17th. Rev. Murtha asked us "What Has Come To Be Since We Met A Year Ago At This Service?" Comments included: " Forest Vandeflor has been actively involved during this past year in the Children and Families Ministries Project." "There is a potential tenant for space in the Parish Hall", "Kids Church is active". " Attendance has increased at worship services", "There was church wide agreement on a Church Profile "" "forming and training of the Search Committee", "new faces at worship and coffee hours", "our outreach efforts in attracting new people to church sponsored activities has been successful" "we have a chance at a future for our church". A variety of comments about how much better off we are than we were a year ago and knowing how to pull our resources together in continuing to work for a brighter and better future. My wish for those reading these words is quite simple: If you have never attended a FCCW worship service or other activity, please visit us. If you haven't been attending church worship or programs and used to----- give us another chance and come back to worship or to a special program. Give us another look, you may be surprised by what you see! If you have been attending, please continue and get involved in more activities, as you are able. Continue to support your church in any way you can! We have a lot to thank God for and a very good chance for passing on the heritage passed on to us by those who preceded us. See you in church!

Respectfully Submitted, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



BOY SCOUT TROOP #907

BSA Troop 907 Expands Membership Kicks Off New Year with Two Trips

Woodbridge based BSA Troop 907 added new members this year bringing their membership to 19 boys. The vibrant and active troop had a stunning summer camp week in August at Camp Sequassen in New Hartford, CT. The group earned a total of **40** merit badges as well as other awards and fun activities including Land and Sea games competing against other troops from both in state and out of state.

The Troop begins the new year electing their peer leaders and planning the first two camp outs including a weekend camp sponsored by Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, CT where they can earn a wide variety of merit badges such as Search & Rescue, Public Speaking and Aircraft. The group will also be enjoying the Fall weather at a local BSA camp. They will be conducting a few fundraisers to offset costs for the year, and they are hoping the community rallies to assist so keep your eyes out for future information.

Any boy entering the 5th grade and regardless of previous scout experience are welcome to visit anytime at their regular Thursday meetings hosted in First Christ of Church rear lower meeting room at 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT.

Yours in Scouting,

*Rich Forselius
Troop 907 Committee Chair*



First Church is Welcoming Girl Scout Troops 60163

We are Junior Troop 60163. We began our journey in Girl Scouts in 2019 as Daisy Scouts. Sadly, the year was cut short by COVID-19. We carried on the following year, meeting outside at the leader's house as 2nd year Daisies. That summer we bridged to Brownies. Over the next two years we completed three Journeys which earned us a Summit Pin, a very prestigious award in Girl Scouts. As part of the Journeys we were required to do a take action project. One of the Journey's we worked on was about storytelling. We believed a fitting project would be to place a Little Library up at Fitzgerald Park. We wrote a letter to the First Selectwoman requesting permission and was asked to present our request to the Board. Two Brownies presented the Troops presentation over Zoom to the Board and the Troop was granted permission to put up the library. Our Little Library is posted near the sign at the beginning of the walking trail.

As we begin our 1st Junior year our goal is to work towards earning our Bronze Award, which is the third highest award in Girl Scouts. We love a challenge!

We are looking forward to a year filled with cookies, camping, new skills, new friendships (all 4th grade girls are welcome to join us) and service to our community.

We would like to thank First Church for offering us a safe space to hold our meetings. Yours in Scouting-
Girl Scout Troop 60163.

Committee Notes

Investing on Purpose

(formerly known as pledging)

Last year we only asked you to give, to give all that you could.

And being the thoughtful people you are, you responded in kind.

Nearly everyone pledged and almost everyone increased their pledge.

Thank you again and again. It was heartwarming and motivating!

And with that stellar track record it will not surprise you to be asked a similar question this year. We are asking you to invest, not just give money but to invest – to invest on purpose. To invest with intentionality. To invest out of your commitment and belief, your gratitude and your hope. It's a bigger step than writing a check or struggling to remember the pin number on your digital bank account.

We hope this sounds as serious as we mean it to be. It's a gift to do things with a clear purpose. There is freedom in understanding the "why" of our choices. We have spent the past year moving step by step

as a church community, and as individuals, through the questions, through the doubts and the possibilities. Each of us is at a different place than we were a year ago. We can think afresh, we can see more precisely, we have reason to believe, and we are beginning to have purpose. We ask you to invest in that purpose with your pledge.

October is our giving month. Members and friends will be speaking from the pulpit on the gifts they have received through their association with the First Church of Christ Woodridge. You will receive letters and pledge cards. Please return them with your well researched and prayed about investment. The return promises to be excellent!

With appreciation,

Your Giving Team

2024 Budget Process – Budget Request Due Date

I am writing to notify church boards and committees that budget requests for 2024 are due to Trustees by November 1, 2023. I also want to remind boards and committees that any funds budgeted for your group in 2023 that have not been spent by the end of this year will not fold over to your 2024 budget. The 2024 budgets will be created by Trustees in January after we have closed the 2023 books. Once created the budgets and will then be approved, first by Counsel and then by the Congregation at the January Congregational Meeting. Please submit your requests to Carl Lindskog or leave them in the church office by November 1st. Thank you.

Roger Calistro, Chair, Board of Trustees

Sanctuary Update. September 18, 2023

Progress in the historical restoration is now evident with the interior of the sanctuary and narthex intact, bright, and refreshed. The trompe l'oeil décor will be installed in the sanctuary sometime in October. The pews will be repaired and repainted shortly thereafter.

Donations to the Sanctuary Fund have been generous. The most recent \$10,000 'match' challenge was met. Thank you all. A further \$17K in contributions will bring us to our target goal. Please donate if you are able.

Sanctuary Committee

A John Canning Preliminary sketch



WE HAVE A LOT TO DO IN OCTOBER
MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE EVENTS BELOW



MONSTER BASH
OCTOBER 29TH, 3:00-4:30PM
PARISH HALL, 5 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
WOODBRIDGE CT

COME IN YOUR
COSTUME

FOR
FUN SPOOKY ACTIVITIES
TRICKS & TREATS
BAKE SALE

PROCEEDS GO TO
NEW HAVEN CHAPEL ON THE GREEN,
PROVIDING FOOD FOR PEOPLE IN
NEED

FOR MORE
INFORMATION:
203-936-9356



An All-Church Gathering
First Church Woodbridge

~ **NEW STEPS Part 7** ~

~ Now that the search process is underway,
it's time to learn about how to faithfully and fruitfully
guide the work of your next pastor.

~ Come learn about
"Growing an Adaptive Ministry Staff" – a team model
and 3-part process for guiding the work of clergy and
program directors.

Sunday, October 15, 2023
11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Parish Hall or via Zoom

[New Steps Part 7 Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 965 8397 2550/Passcode: 611796

To join by phone (646) 558-8656

Please save the date & join us
for this conversation + coffee & snacks!

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE

We're seeking to modernize how we send out *The Parishioner*. Historically, we have sent out both a paper copy and an email copy. As we're nearing the new church year. We're conducting a simple survey about how folks would like to receive *The Parishioner*. Our newsletter is not going away! We are, however, looking to: reduce our paper consumption as well as the number of color copies we make in the office.

Please email office@uccw.org to let us know if you'd like to "go paperless" and receive only the email copy. - Josh

LATER THIS YEAR WE WILL HAVE A VERY SPECIAL GUEST

Award-Winning Storyteller Coming to Woodbridge Valerie Tutson



Get Ready to be
INSPIRED!

**Thanks-living: Stories and
songs of thanks in a season
of Thanksgiving**

For all ages!-- from 2 to 102

Sunday, November 19th

Parish House @ 5
Meetinghouse Lane,
Woodbridge CT

1:30 Refreshments

2:00-3:00pm

Spirited Stories
by Valerie
Tutson

Valerie Tutson Biography:

Valerie Tutson graduated from Brown University with a self-designed major, *Storytelling As a Communication's Art*, and a Masters in Theatre. Valerie received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Rhode Island College. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the Pell Award for Artistic Excellence from Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence. Valerie has traveled the world teaching, gathering, and sharing stories and songs. Her repertoire includes folktales, personal and historical stories with an emphasis on black traditions, and first-person biblical stories. She works in schools, libraries, festivals, faith communities, conferences, businesses, and universities. In addition to telling stories, she creates spaces for people to learn storytelling skills and share their stories. Valerie believes in the power of stories, storytelling and story-listening to help us heal ourselves and our communities.

For more information call:
203-936-9356

FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday– Wednesday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Weekly Bible Study

All are welcome to visit our Weekly Bible Study every Wednesday morning at 11 a.m. in the Parish House.

Submission Due Date

Articles and photos for the **NOVEMBER** Edition of *The Parishioner* are due by **Monday, October 23rd**

*Please submit articles and photos by email.
office@uccw.org

ZOOM INVITATIONS

Everyone is encouraged to gather at the Meetinghouse for the 10:00 a.m. service. For participation via ZOOM, please look to your email or the church website—uccw.org

WORSHIP SERVICE
SUNDAY MORNING
10 AM

KIDS CHURCH

EVERY SUNDAY MORNING AT 10:10
IN THE CHURCH PARISH HOUSE!

Contact Information

The First Church of Christ
5 Meetinghouse Lane
Woodbridge, CT 06525
Telephone: (203) 389-2119
Email: office@uccw.org

Printed Copies of *The Parishioner* will be available in the office through October



Marking Life's Passages

Isabella E Dodds, a longtime member of the church passed away at the end of August

Interim Minister: Rev. Susan Murtha (pastorsusan@uccw.org) (203) 936-9356
Pastoral Care: Rev. Janice Touloukian (jantouloukian@gmail.com) (203) 915-1510
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Boyd M. Johnson, Jr.
Office Administrator: Joshua Sharp (office@uccw.org)
Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner
Project Leader for Children's Ministries: Forest Vandeflor

October 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 10:00 Am Worship 10:10Am Kids' Church 3:30 PM Girl Scouts</p>	<p>2 5:00 Pm Church Council 7:30 PM Lamppost Group- AA</p>	<p>3 11:45 AM Garden Club 6:30 PM Choir Practice 7:00Pm Alateen 7:30 PM AA 7:30 PM Al-Anon</p>	<p>4 9:30 AM Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 3:00 Pm NMS 7:00 Pm Search Committee</p>	<p>5 2:00Pm NMS 7:00Pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>6 10:00 Am Musical Folk 2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>7 9:30 Am Musical Folk</p>
<p>8 10:00 Am Worship 10:10Am Kids' Church</p>	<p>9 7:30 PM Lamppost Group- AA</p>	<p>10 6:30 PM Choir Practice 7:00Pm Alateen 7:30 PM AA 7:30 PM Al-Anon</p>	<p>11 9:30 AM Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 3:00 Pm NMS 7:00 Pm Search Committee</p>	<p>12 2:00Pm NMS 6:30 PM Deacons 7:00Pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>13 10:00 Am Musical Folk 2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>14 9:30 Am Musical Folk</p>
<p>15 10:00 Am Worship 10:10Am Kids' Church 12:30Pm New Steps Part 7 3:30 PM Girl Scouts</p>	<p>16 7:30 PM Lamppost Group- AA</p>	<p>17 6:30 PM Choir Practice 7:00Pm Alateen 7:30 PM AA 7:30 PM Al-Anon</p>	<p>18 9:30 AM Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 3:00 Pm NMS 7:00 Pm Search Committee</p>	<p>19 2:00Pm NMS 7:00Pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>20 10:00 Am Musical Folk 2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>21 9:30 Am Musical Folk</p>
<p>22 10:00 Am Worship 10:10Am Kids' Church</p>	<p>23 7:30 PM Lamppost Group- AA</p>	<p>24 6:30 PM Choir Practice 7:00Pm Alateen 7:30 PM AA 7:30 PM Al-Anon</p>	<p>25 9:30 AM Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 3:00 Pm NMS 7:00 Pm Search Committee</p>	<p>26 2:00Pm NMS 7:00Pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>27 10:00 Am Musical Folk 2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>28 9:30 Am Musical Folk</p>
<p>29 3:00 PM Monster Bash 3:30 PM Girl Scouts</p>	<p>30 7:30 PM Lamppost Group- AA</p>	<p>31 6:30 PM Choir Practice 7:00Pm Alateen 7:30 PM AA 7:30 PM Al-Anon</p>				