

# THE PARISHIONER

## April 2024

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, WOODBRIDGE, CT *since 1738*  
*An Open, Welcoming, and Affirming Church*

**Passing on the Gospel to the Next Generation:**



~ ~ *Bible Sunday at First Church Woodbridge: April 28* ~ ~

In this photo, I'm smiling upon a young girl as I give her a Bible – one with her name inscribed inside the jacket. In the background, a young boy holds his new Bible by his side, and another reads a passage in his. On the table there are two stacks of Bibles. A woman from the congregation has prepared each one for a child, and stands ready to pass them to me, one by one, until all the children have their own Bible.

Scripture tells us that every generation is called to pass on the biblical stories and message to the next generation ... *Take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children – Deuteronomy 4:9.* And in our Protestant tradition, at every baptism, the congregation vows to actively participate, along with parents, in the growth of the child's faith. Together, these bring us to a particularly blessed occasion – that of giving children their own Bible! We do this ceremony in a worship service because it is a communal act; while the minister presides, it is *the congregation* that passes on the Gospel to the children in its flock, with their parents as witnesses.

In worship on April 28th, FCCW will live out its biblical calling and its congregational commitment to children's faith formation as we give Bibles to the children in our flock. Our hope is that as the children read these stories, they will become part of the story of people who sought to know God and follow in God's ways. After the children receive their Bibles (with personalized nameplates!), I hope to share a story for all-ages about the life of John Newton who wrote the famous and beloved hymn "Amazing Grace!" That is, after all, the Gospel message! After worship, we'll all join in the Parish Hall for fellowship and a Bible cake! Please save this date to be part of this sacred day for First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, UCC!

*All blessings,*

*Rev. Susan Murtha*

## FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The FCCW Church Council met by ZOOM on March 4, 2023 with a quorum present. The meeting and reports therein, reflect a continuing harmonious and positive progress of FCCW's activities and planning for future endeavors. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

- Income for January has exceeded expenses
- A Concert is planned for mid March( Update: The Concert was reported as highly successful and well attended)
- The employment of a full time, permanent office administrator is still in process.
- The following recommendations of the Nominating Committee were approved by Council: Christian Corvino and Lou DeLeone as members of Deacons; Walter Crosby as a member of Nominating Committee
- Trustees continue to plan and gather information regarding the refurbishing of the Parish House
- By laws changes regarding elimination of the September Congregational Meeting will be presented for approval at the May, 2024 Congregational Meeting
- The final Stewardship results for the 2024 year show a 7% increase in pledges
- There was discussion regarding the need for revitalizing the Labyrinth, Gardens, and sprinkler system on the side and front of the Meeting House. This will be reviewed and reported back to the Council.

All-in-all, FCCW is enjoying a period of planning and introspection for and of its' present and future programs, activities and outreach as it begins to grow into its' future. Our Council meetings reflect these facts by positive reports and discussion as we review these present and planned programs. It forebodes, your Moderator thinks, of the best of times to come.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator





## Scouting at FCCW

Our church-supported Scout Troop 907 spent a chilly wet weekend in Philadelphia March 22-24. They camped out and toured the Philadelphia historic sites. These included the Liberty Bell, memorials and the Olympia steel warship. By all accounts, it was a great memorable trip.

Scouts will have their annual spring garden and flower sale on Saturdays April 6th, 13th, and 20th at the Old Firehouse on Center Road. Also, on Sunday April 21st at First Church. The sale will include organic and natural fertilizers, mulch, grass seed, potting soil, lime, spring bulbs and early spring flowers including pansies, violas, alyssum, snapdragons, dianthus, hanging baskets and early vegetables. Scouts will deliver and come to your home to accept orders. Please support the troop, the fundraising is needed more than ever as replacement of the troop trailer will be necessary this spring.

Eagle Scout candidate Steven Pedenski recently completed his Eagle Project - and oversized chair for the Orange Country fair. He will be going for his Eagle Board of Review in April, and we look forward to an Eagle Court of Honor. Scouts and adult leaders will assist at the Strawberry festival June 7th, campout at the church and have their spring Court of Honor on June 8th, all are invited. The troop also accepted a request from the Woodbridge Conservation Commission to adopt and become stewards of the Woodbridge Fitzgerald Track Trails, mostly behind the Woodbridge firehouse. This includes hiking the trails, performing simple maintenance and advising the Woodbridge Trail Master of any issues. For this activity, scouts will receive Community Service hours.

The troop meets on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Parish House. Several new scouts recently joined the troop, any potential scouts and adults are always welcomed. More at [troop907.org](http://troop907.org).

*Rich Forselius*

*Troop 907 Committee Chair/Chartered Organization Representative*



Mark your calendars for these upcoming events



**An All-Church Gathering  
First Church Woodbridge**

**~ *NEW STEPS* in 2024 ~**

**Join us to hear updates about  
key projects for FCCW  
& to share your input!**

**Sunday, April 14, 2024  
11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Parish Hall or via Zoom**

**[New Steps Part 8 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!**



**FAMILY  
MOVIE AFTERNOON**

THE EMPEROR'S  
**NEW GROOVE**



4:00 - 5:30 pm

Saturday, April 6th

Parish Hall  
5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge



**FREE  
POPCORN!**



Please bring your own drink

**SANCTUARY UPDATE. MARCH 20, 2024**

The rededication of the sanctuary will take place at the 10 am Sunday morning worship service on April 21, 2024. The many donors to the Sanctuary Fund, Connecticut officials who supported our grant applications, granting agencies, and contractors who worked on the structural and decorative preservation of the meetinghouse will be recognized and thanked. A celebratory reception in the Parish Hall will follow the service. You are invited. Please plan to attend! John Canning and Company dedicated their entire Liturgical Arts March newsletter to the FCCW restoration project. Amy Zucca has written an evocative and scholarly article that can be found in the Sanctuary Restoration section of the church website.

We are extremely grateful to those who supported this challenging seven-year restoration. Donations to the Sanctuary Fund continue to be accepted and will be used for ongoing expenses and future improvements.

May the sanctuary at the FCCW provide everyone who enters a spiritual home of beauty and peace and a place from which goodwill will forever extend to the wider community.

*Sanctuary Committee*



© Robert Benson photography

**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL – Mark Your Calendars**

Looking ahead, we are having our 67<sup>th</sup> Strawberry Festival on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. With the help of Scout Troop 907 we will be serving hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, veggie burgers, and of course our homemade strawberry shortcakes. Volunteers are needed to help out in all areas to make this another successful event. Eventide will again be our musical entertainment. There will be special children’s activities and a family sing along with Michele Urban. If you helped last year, please volunteer to help again this year. If you have never helped out, we would love your participation. It is a fun day of preparing and enjoying a real community event! Please call Nancy Dickgiesser (203-389-2433) or Sue Stoddard (203-453-1255) to sign up. More in May’s Parishioner.

**A Successful Concert!**

On Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> we had a very successful and well attended concert given by our own Music Director Nenad Ivočić on piano and Ethan Brown on cello performing pieces by Rachmaninoff and Gershwin. There were close to eighty people attending, more than half new people to our church. There was a reception afterwards in which Nenad and Ethan made a quick appearance. They had to rush off to NYC since Ethan had to perform at the opera that night! Thank you to all who helped with contributing delicious finger foods. It was a lovely way to spend an afternoon. The Music Committee will work on having another concert hopefully next Fall. Thank you to all the Music Committee for all their hard work in getting the advertising out, program done, etc. etc. Thank you to Jonathan Gorham and Constance Ecklund for putting together the program. A thank you to all those that gave to the free will offering as well.

Sue Stoddard

**We are grateful to everyone who contributed Easter Flowers to decorate the church.**

**Given by:**

Kathleen Foster and Roger Calistro

Richard and Carole Prescott

Lin Li and Family

Walt and Ethel Crosby

Richard and Elizabeth Fearon

Richard and Debra Forselius

Carole Kinnach, Our children and our grandchildren

Robin Glowa and Robert Guerra

Jeanne Russ

The Chicos Family

Stefany Schulz

Constance Cryer Ecklund

Lou DeLeone

Joan and Dave Rifkin

Julie Doolan Hultgren

Joyce Simpson

Tim Cowles

Kate, Betsy, Rob and Pat Madden

Kinnach and Hains Families

Katherine Haversat

The Compton Taylor Family

Ted, Sharon and Jonathan Finkenhauer

Bobbi and Charles Griffith

Al Jarvis and Bill More

Penny Rogers

**In Loving Memory or in Honor of:**

Daffodils in honor of Kids Church

In honor of our parents

My beloved mother who passed away

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kovacs Mr and Mrs. Walter Crosby

Jolan Kovacs, Judith Mather and friends

In memory of our parents

In memory of our Son, Brothers and Parents

In memory of Wilson H. Kinnach

In memory of Lucia, Carmen Sr., Michael, Carmen Jr. and Chris Guerra. Elfreda Cerniglia

In memory of Louise Kolligian

In honor of my family

In memory of Doris+ Edward Fellows

In memory of our parent

In memory of Curtis Doolan and Edith Eigner

My parents

In memory of Ray & Alice Cowles

In memory of Debbie Whitlock Madden

In memory of Millie Gibson, the Kinnach and Hains Families

Mary Louise Bailey

Frederick Finkenhauer

In Honor of The Meetinghouse

In memory of Karen Jarvis Kwesell

In memory of Peggie and Jerry Langelier





FCCW is taking a next step in its desire to bring young voices to our pulpit, speaking to the heart of today's generation! On April 7<sup>th</sup>, we will welcome Stephen Stapleton, a first-year student at Yale Divinity School.

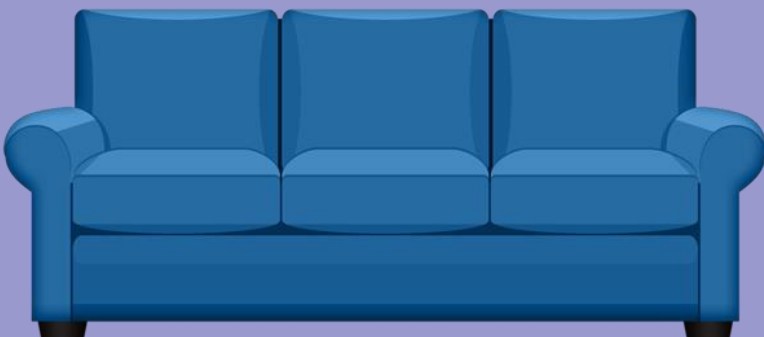
Growing up in Detroit Michigan, Stephen spent much of his time serving in the North American Baptist Church and local community organizations before doing his undergraduate studies in Political Science at Wheaton College in Illinois. After completing his Master of Divinity degree, Stephen hopes to be ordained into full-time parish ministry. He is passionate about preaching the Gospel, pastoral care,

and community-building within the church and all around it. Eventually Stephen hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Theology. In his spare time, he enjoys playing basketball, hanging out with friends, and reading.

May we all – young and old – discover much blessing in Stephen's presence and preaching in our midst!

## Home Furnishings and Home Furniture Collection

IRIS, in New Haven needs home furniture and furnishings. We at FCCW can help in this effort. Please call the church office and arrange to either drop items off at the Parish House, for IRIS to come and collect; or call us for making arrangements to drop items off at the IRIS office in New Haven. By going through our office, FCCW will be given acknowledgement for coordinating any and all contributions of items. This will be an ongoing project for FCCW and not just seasonal or one time in nature. If you have any questions, please call the FCCW office or Penny Rogers.



**Donate your Furniture**  
Help us furnish refugee homes!

Let's downsize with a purpose!  
IRIS will find the apartments (40 of them)  
and  
We will help furnish them  
Please Donate

Tall Dressers  
Dining Room Tables + Chairs  
End Tables - Small Sofas - Rugs  
Pots - Pans - Full Dish Sets - Glasses

Items will be picked up at your house by volunteers.  
No lugging and hauling on your part.

Contact Penny Rogers  
203-530-2486



### FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Wednesday - Friday

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

### Weekly Bible Study

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

### Parishioner DEADLINE

Articles and photos for the *April* edition of *The Parishioner* are due by **Monday April 22nd** \*Please submit materials by email. [office@uccw.org](mailto:office@uccw.org)  
The earlier due date is for Holy Week

### Worship Service

Everyone is invited to gather at the Meetinghouse for the 10:00 a.m. service. For participation via ZOOM, Check the church website—[uccw.org](http://uccw.org)

Printed copies of *The Parishioner* are always available in the office and on the UCCW website

If you would like to go paperless and only receive an emailed copy.

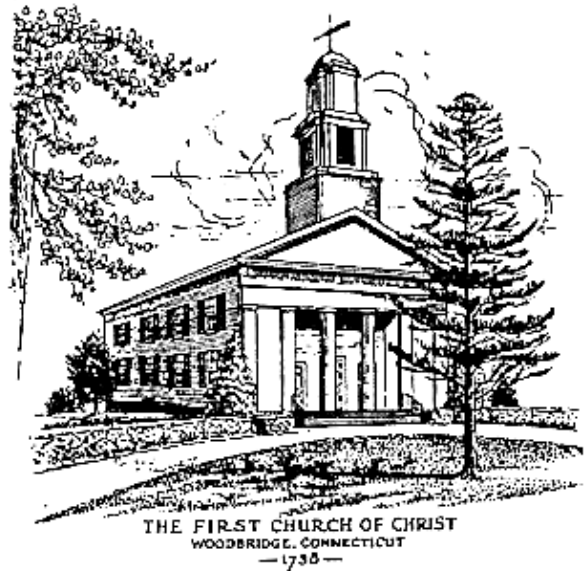
Contact Josh in the Office to be put on the list

### Marking Life's Passages

Please contact the office with any birth or death notices, baptisms or memorial service dates.

**KIDS CHURCH**

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



**Interim Minister:** Rev. Susan Murtha ([pastorsusan@uccw.org](mailto:pastorsusan@uccw.org)) (203) 936-9356  
**Pastoral Care:** Rev. Janice Touloukian ([jantouloukian@gmail.com](mailto:jantouloukian@gmail.com)) (203) 915-1510  
**Pastor Emeritus:** Rev. Boyd M. Johnson, Jr.  
**Office Administrator:** ([office@uccw.org](mailto:office@uccw.org)) (203) 389-2119  
**Sexton/Custodian:** Bob Turner  
**Project Leader for Children's Ministries:** Forest Vandeflor

# April 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7</p> <p>10:10 Kid's Church 10:00am Worship 10:00 am AA</p>	<p>1</p> <p>6:30 Pm church Council 7:30pm Lamppost Group AA</p>	<p>2</p> <p>6:30 Choir Practice 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS 7:00pm Search Committee</p>	<p>4</p> <p>2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>5</p> <p>2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work Family Movie Afternoon 4:00-5:30 PM</p>
<p>14</p> <p>10:10 Kid's Church 10:00am Worship 10:00 am AA 3:30 Girl Scouts New Steps 11:15 am</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:30pm Lamppost Group AA</p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:30 Choir Practice 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS 7:00pm Search Committee</p>	<p>18</p> <p>2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts 6:30pm Trustees</p>	<p>19</p> <p>2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work</p>
<p>21</p> <p>10:10 Kid's Church 10:00am Sanctuary Rededication 10:00 am AA</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:30pm Lamppost Group AA</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30 Choir Practice 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS 7:00pm Search Committee</p>	<p>25</p> <p>2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>26</p> <p>2:00pm NMS</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:10 Kid's Church 10:00am Worship 10:00 am AA 3:30 Girl Scouts</p>	<p>29</p> <p>7:30pm Lamppost Group AA</p>	<p>30</p> <p>6:30 Choir Practice 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon</p>				

**Key**

Sanctuary Board Room Parish Hall  
Memorial Room Music Room Kitchen Online

Kids' Church Room