

# THE PARISHIONER

## September 2024

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

### FALL TOGETHER SUNDAYS

#### September 8 + 15, 2024!

**September 8:** After a blessed series of summer worship services in the Parish Hall, we're excited to re-gather in the sanctuary beginning September 8! This Sunday will also mark the return of the choir and a soft re-start of Kids Church with a "Get to Know Me" theme.

Please join us in worship whenever you can, but be sure to plan on  
**HOMECOMING SUNDAY, September 15.**

Here is some of what's planned ...

**9:50 a.m. Outdoor Blessing.** We'll gather outside, in front of the sanctuary, to join hands and hearts in a prayer to bless our church year ahead! We're anticipating a year of significant transformation at FCCW, so please come early and join us in this blessing!

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Worship** will include a Children's Message by me (often a highlight for adults, too!) and the choir. My sermon, "Pressing On", will reflect on the apostle Paul's spiritual challenge to leave the past behind and press toward the goal of God's calling in front of us!

**10:10 Kids Church** – official first day! Our weekly Kids Church is based on beautiful artwork that engages children in the biblical stories; click this link for more info on our outstanding curriculum, "Picture the Bible": <https://picturethebible.org/> The gospel story for Homecoming Sunday is Jesus Blesses the Children.

**11:00 Homecoming coffee hour and fellowship!**

Invite your friends for this special day!

All blessings,

Rev. Susan Murtha



## FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

### September 2024

The FCCW Church Council did not meet in the month of August, therefore there is no meeting report. I would like to note some highlights of the last few months. The first is our June, annual Strawberry Festival which was highly successful and very well attended by a few hundred attendees, the majority being town residents. Many thanks to all the members of the planning committee, the volunteers who helped with food preparation and the Scout Troop leaders and members, who prepared food and helped with many tasks during the Festival. This Festival has become a keystone event in Woodbridge. The Children's Ministry Programs in July and August continue to provide special event programs for the benefit and enjoyment of the town's children. Our Project Program Leader, Forest Vandeflor, will be missed as she moves on upon graduation to pursue a college education. Good Luck and Thanks, Forest! Lastly of special note: For the first time in a long, long time we welcomed eight new members into our congregational church family. We trust that they are but the first of many more to come! Our church on the green really saw a good conclusion to our last program year and we look forward to continued growth in the new program year.

While not officially named, we do have a program year which begins in September and ends in June of the following year. This coming program year for 2024-25 is potentially the one we have been planning and striving for during the last few years as we worked for the continued successful future of our church. Remember back a few years when the Rev. Murtha began her Sunday morning "steps" programs and talked about our taking steps along different pathways, looking at what pathways would take us where, which ones we were taking in the wrong direction, and which one would potentially and eventually lead us, as a congregation, into a meaningful, constructive and beneficial future for our church and the communities we serve. We really looked at ourselves! It has not been easy. There have been many discussions, debates, internal reviews, and soul searching as we explored courses of action for our future. We have, over the last few years, Individually and through our respective boards and committees spent time, energy, thought, and taken action toward reworking and rebuilding our focus and future. This coming program year, I believe that all our time, work and effort, coupled with a bit of luck, a helping hand from fate and mainly God's support we will be presented with a chance for a better financial future, a chance to use our facilities for the benefit of a community children's program, will have a full time minister( and maybe more?) and will have continued growth of a meaningful community based and oriented family and children's ministry program. All we have to do is maintain the direction we have chosen and taken for the good of all and continue to give of our personal time and maintain our focus for the common good of our congregation and the community we serve. We are almost there, folks! Keep up the good work this coming year. We will, with God's help and blessing, be successful and a contributing factor and force to and with our community.

Respectfully,

Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



# **CALL TO SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

The September 2024, Special Congregational Meeting of the FCCW Congregation shall be held on **Sunday, September 29, 2024**, at 11:15 AM in the Parish House in order to:

1. Receive the Annual Reports of FCCW Boards and Committees for May 2024
2. No other business can come before this meeting.

Respectfully Submitted

Susan Stoddard, Clerk

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## **Buildings and Grounds, FCCW:**

Individuals and families are needed to weed bittersweet and mug wort that is growing on the walls and between the perennial flowers in sections of the church garden. Please contact Joyce Simpson (203 387 0764) if you and/or your family would like to “Adopt a Patch” and keep it weed-free this fall. The work can be done on your schedule.

Your assistance would be most appreciated.

Thank you.





## Welcome Anna Haep Coordinator of Children's Ministry

I am delighted to introduce Anna Haep, our new Coordinator of Children's Ministry! I first met Anna in March 2024 when she began volunteering with Forest Vandeflor. From the start, she was a natural with the children in our monthly family events and in Kids Church. Noting Anna's commitment to volunteering at FCCW and her growth in all aspects of our children's ministries, in May 2024, I inquired about her interest in taking on this role as Forest's successor. After a few meetings (including one with her mom) to discuss the specifics of this job, from the practical to the faith-based aspects, Anna joyfully accepted this position. She began in mid-August 2024.

Anna grew up in Germany with a German father and American mother. Because her mother always spoke to her in English, Anna is fluent in both languages. Following her mother's move back to the U.S., in September 2022, Anna moved to Woodbridge to live with her mother and uncle, and to complete her high school education. She graduated from Amity High School in June 2024 and is taking a gap year to explore her interests in children's special education and photography. Anna hopes to attend a community college, living locally with her mom, in the fall of 2025.

This summer, I worked with Forest and Anna to plan the fall season of Kids Church and our monthly family events. Through these sessions, Anna moved from volunteer helper to hands-on learning about our Kids Church curriculum, brain-storming collaborator about family events, and colleague. I look forward to all that is ahead!

When you see Anna, please introduce yourself and welcome her! Along the way, please offer words of encouragement and, best of all, lift up Anna and our family / children's ministries in your prayers!

Blessings,

Rev. Susan Murtha



## From The Coffee Hour Crew:

Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup> will be First Church's annual Homecoming Sunday and we are inviting anyone interested to bring something to snack on for the coffee hour/fellowship time following the homecoming service. If you are interested in making or buying something please call Bill More at 203-387-0090 by **Thursday September 12th** to let us know what you are bringing so that the crew can provide the rest. Thank you in advance.







## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

First Church of Christ Woodbridge welcomes our new Office Administrator, Jill Fahrbach. Jill assumed the job of Office Administrator on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, and will be working from 9:00-2:30, Monday through Friday. Jill and her husband live in Bethany, CT. and have four children, two who live on Long Island and two who live in Bethany - one who attends Southern Connecticut University and one who attends Bethany Community School. Jill has served as an Administrative Assistant and Account Manager for over 18 years in various positions on Long Island.

While we know that our church family will be anxious to meet Jill, please give Jill the time she will need to orient herself to our church office and her many duties. She will need to spend a considerable amount of time to familiarize herself with our church office and our many traditions. I would suggest that you make an appointment with her or email her for any extensive meeting or requests.

If you have any questions regarding her duties in the office, please ask the Personal Committee (Nancy Dickgiesser) or Susan Murtha.

I also want to thank Susan Murtha for her many hours assisting me in reading resumes and interviewing candidates.

Nancy Dickgiesser



**Leaves, Crafts, & Nature Paths**

**Saturday September 14**  
10:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Scavenger Hunt on Walking Trail  
Make your own binoculars for scavenger hunt  
Fall crafts  
Bounce House

5 Meetinghouse Lane  
Parish House lawn  
(Rain location: Parish House)

Contact: 203-936-9356



**An All-Church Gathering**  
**First Church Woodbridge**  
**~ NEW STEPS 2024 ~**

**Join us to hear updates**  
**about FCCW's big projects**  
**& discussion about next steps!**

**NOTE:** this session will follow a brief  
Congregational Meeting (see notice)

**Sunday Sept. 29, 2024**  
**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Parish Hall or via Zoom**

[New Steps September 2024 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!**

## Scouting at FCCW



Your First Church chartered Scout Troop 907 spent the week of August 4 - 10 at Camp Sequassen. Scouts had one of the best weeks of working together to keep camp in nice shape, attending events, canoe racing, mile swim, and having lots of fun, even in the rain. Amongst many honors and merit badges achieved, Troop 907 was voted "Super Troop" for the week.

On Sunday August 11, scouts highest rank, Eagle, was awarded to Stephen Pedenski in our Parish House Parish Hall. Over 70 attended this special event. According to one attendee: "Thank you all!!! Stephen had a sensational celebration, and all the scouts did an amazing job!" His Eagle project was an oversized orange Adirondack Chair for use during the Orange Country Fair; if you attend you will see it there. Congratulations to Stephen with his great Eagle project, his dedication to the scout program, his leadership in the troop, and to all who helped him along his Eagle journey. Adult leaders and merit badge councilors, his eagle project sponsors, and the scouts who assisted and now look up to Stephen. We have a proud heritage of our Troop 907 Scouts attaining Eagle status. The troop has several more scouts on the journey to Eagle so we hope this can be repeated in the next year.



The troop can always use more adult leadership, please consider registering as an Adult Member and attend our monthly Committee Meetings. The next will be Thursday, September 5 at 5:30 before the usual Thursday troop meeting and this is the best time for new scouts to join the troop. It is important for all to be aware and to have read the Troop 907 Guidebook. It provides some rules around the leadership of this troop that guide us with our adults and youth. We must receive the scout and parents' signatures on the last page that they have read and understand the Guidebook before we reconvene in the fall. Additionally, what is requisite is all of our Youth Protection Training and that there is no deviation from this. We expect mature, ethical and common-sense relations with all of our adults and youth.

Best wishes,

Rich Forselius

Troop 907 Committee Chair/Chartered Organization Representative

[forselius@snet.net](mailto:forselius@snet.net)



### FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 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 **October** edition of *The Parishioner* are due by

**Monday September 23rd**

\*Please submit materials by email.  
office@uccw.org

### 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



Printed copies of *The Parishioner* are always available in the office and on the UCCW web-site

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

Contact the Office to be put on the list



# 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:** Jill Fahrback ([office@uccw.org](mailto:office@uccw.org)) (203) 389-2119

**Sexton/Custodian:** Bob Turner

**Project Leader for Children's Ministries:** Anna Haep

# September 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 am Worship 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Play	2 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	3 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon	4 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee	5 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	6	7 9:30 am Musical Folk 12:30 pm Private Party
8 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church	9 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:00 pm Church Council 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	10 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon	11 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee	12 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	13	14 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Leaves, Crafts and Nature Paths
15 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	16 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	17 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon	18 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee	19 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	20	21 9:30 am Musical Folk
22 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church	23 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	24 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon	25 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee	26 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	27	28 9:30 am Musical Folk
29 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	30 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	1 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon	2 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee	3 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	4	5 9:30 am Musical Folk

## Key

Sanctuary, Board Room, Parish Hall, Kids' Church Room, Memorial Room, Music Room, Kitchen, Online