

THE PARISHIONER

March 2025

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

A Lenten Calendar for 2025

Whether we've had one recently or long ago, we know about Advent Calendars – a sweet and sacred way to prepare for the celebration of the birth of the Christ child. On March 5 (Ash Wednesday), we enter the season of Lent. Drawing from personal reflections and colleagues, I've created a **Lenten Calendar** of daily practices to help prepare for the celebration of Christ's resurrection. I hope you'll print it out to place it on your fridge or desk (see insert).

I pray these practices bless you,
and deepen you in faith, hope and love.

~ ~ *Lenten blessings,*
Rev. Susan



Daylight Savings begins @ 2:00 AM on
Sunday March 9, 2025.

Please remember to set your clocks
ahead 1 hour.

FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

March 2025

The FCCW Church Council did not meet during February, therefore no formal committee report this month. In thinking about what to submit as a report for this month I had a few ideas, but one word kept coming to mind regarding a topic. The word: "Thanks." We really, in our day-to-day lives, have people to whom we should be thankful who provide us with assistance, guidance, and direction in a variety of ways from morning til night. It is the exception which catches our attention when someone does something which distracts or bothers us. In our church lives we have the same experience. We come to a worship service, a social event, a meeting; participate therein and leave to return on another day. Church is just there. But how about the people whose work and time allow all this to occur, some who we don't see or are behind the scenes making things "tick." Regarding our experiences with our church lives, I began to think about all the people who are responsible for making our visit and attendance at a specific service or event possible and enjoyable. It is with this thought in mind that I comment today, with the understanding that someone, or group, may be missed, and apologize, therefore. Individuals and groups within our church, in no particular order, to whom we collectively owe "thanks" for what they do for us and the church.

Thanks To:

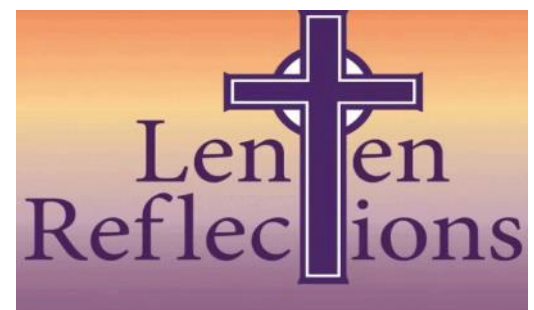
Rev. Susan for her leadership, time, and guidance for helping us take steps from our past to the future: Nenad and Faye for their musical direction and presentations; Janice for her pastoral care leadership; Bob for all his day-to-day work in ensuring that buildings are maintained and safe; Jill for bringing a professional expertise back to the office; Kim, for insuring that the financial records are accurate and up-to-date, and Nicole for her caring work with the children. Thanks to all these individuals whose work, time and effort provide us with an excellent church environment and organization.

And Thanks To:

- ## The Choir members who each Sunday provide an uplifting, spiritual, and well-presented song;
- ## The Sunday morning, "coffee bunch" who prepare and set out very tasty food and drink to end our Sunday mornings;
- ## All the Board and Committee members who assist and guide our church life and program by giving of their time and knowledge;
- ## The Chairs who lead and guide all these respective Boards and Committees;
- ## The Scouts and their leaders whose support and work for the church are most valuable;
- ## All who organize and support special programs and projects, e.g.: concerts, strawberry festival, etc.;
- ## All those individuals whose financial contributions and support through their annual pledges, special gifts and donations, allow the church to function and operate;
- ## New members who have joined the church whose new ideas, suggestions and participation will allow us to grow into the future;
- ## All the "old timers" who continue to participate in and support all the church activities and programs;
- ## Those friends of the church who do the same;
- ## All the children and youth and their leaders, who participate in Kids Church each Sunday;
- ## All those who support and participate in the Family and Children's Ministry programs;

And lastly, and most importantly: We thank God for inspiration, guidance and direction in presenting us with the many opportunities to continue maintaining our presence in this community and to serve any and all of those within the community who can use and benefit from the presence of the existence of the First Church of Christ, Woodbridge.

With Thanks To All,
Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



Award-Winning Storyteller Coming to Woodbridge

Valerie Tutson

Get Ready to be **INSPIRED!**



Stories & Songs of Blessings

For all ages -- from 2 to 102!

Sunday, March 16th

2:00-3:00 PM Spirited
Stories!

3:00 PM Refreshments

First Church of Christ
5 Meetinghouse Lane
Woodbridge, CT

Valerie Tutson graduated from Brown University with a self-designed major in 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



Scout Troop 907 Elects New Leadership



The scouts of First Church chartered Troop 907 elected new leadership at their Thursday evening meeting February 6th which was attended by all 22 scouts. Elijah Mooring was elected Senior Patrol Leader. This was followed by troop members vying for, and appointed to, additional leadership positions. Shown in the photo is Elijah with Scoutmaster Tom Luciani.

The troop also tapped maple trees earlier that day (February 6) at Scout Camp Wah-wah-taysee at Sleeping Giant in Hamden. Connecticut Yankee Council has accepted an offer from the North Haven Land Trust to purchase the property in cooperation with the neighboring community. See: <https://www.ctyankee.org/an-update-on-our-mission-wah-wah-taysee/>, This offer will preserve the land as open space in perpetuity. The North Haven Land Trust intends to allow scouts continued use of the property, including for camping, through a forthcoming liaison process.

In March the troop will be camping at Deer Lake Outdoor Center, in Killingworth, CT, a sundials and stargazing at night in the field weekend campout, March 21-23. Fortunately, Deer Lake was sold by CT Yankee Council to a conservation group, Pathfinders, Inc., that also is continuing to allow scouts to overnight camp. Scouting has benefitted recently by the non-profits that have come forward to continue to allow scout organization to continue to use their properties.

Adults and potential scouts are always welcomed to visit this active troop during their regular Thursday meetings in the Parish House downstairs at 7:00 PM. Many special events and campouts are planned for this late winter and spring, More at <http://troop907.org/index.htm>.

You will note the photo on the troop's closing circle ceremony at a recent chilly Thursday evening meeting.

Yours in Scouting,

Rich Forselius
Troop 907 Committee Chair, Chartered Organization Representative
forselius@snet.net



FCCW's 2025 Easter Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

Be the Light!

In our 2025 Easter Offering – “One Great Hour of Sharing” – First Church of Christ Woodbridge will be with joining thousands of UCC churches throughout the country to bring God’s light and hope to hurting people, domestically and around the world!

The primary mission of One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is to bring *immediate* relief aid when disaster strikes or when people are displaced due to violence or poverty. Our denomination can respond immediately, and in collaboration with local and international partners, because our many churches contribute in advance to this vital fund!

Beyond caring for urgent needs, our OGHS gifts will work to address root causes of vulnerability to ensure long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. This work includes comprehensive development programs in many areas, including healthcare, education, agriculture, local financing, and women’s empowerment.

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God.” – *Matthew 5:14, 16.*

Let us Be the Light this Easter!

For more information, contact:

Jinny Schneider, Board of Christian Service: vrngschneider@yahoo.com

Rev. Susan Murtha, Interim Minister: PastorSusan@uccw.org

Jill Fahrback, Office Administrator: office@uccw.org





Lenten Program 2025

a 2-part series
led by Rev. Dr. Mark Heim

Saved from Sacrifice: *Two Sides of the Cross*



The cross is the central symbol of Christianity. Some say Christianity would be better off without it. Others say the faith that Christ died for us *is* Christianity. This conflict reflects a paradox embedded in the gospel narratives themselves: Jesus' death saves the world, and it ought not to happen. There is a saving act of God in the cross, and there is a sinful human act. These two are so close together that it's easy for them to get mixed up in our understanding and practice. In these sessions, we will explore two sides of the cross, in hopes of deepening our Lenten journey.

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall

Lunch will be served

Childcare will be available

** **April 6: Paradox in the Cross**

What's Behind the Cross? Exploring the Biblical Context
Sacrifice: The Good Bad Thing

"These are obviously troubled texts, but what troubles them is the truth." – Gil Bailie

** **April 13: The Cross and New Community**

What Comes After the Cross? Looking for the Christian meaning
Substitutes for Sacrifice

"Like the light, it is at once the thing that we need to see,
and the thing that permits us to see it." – René Girard



Welcome our Lenten Program Leader: S. Mark Heim

Mark is the Samuel Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School. He has studied, taught, and written extensively on comparative theology, religious pluralism, atonement, ecumenical relations, and science and theology, receiving numerous awards. An ordained American Baptist minister, Mark has served on the World Council of Churches and on many ecumenical commissions.

In the spring of 2024, Mark and his wife Melissa walked a portion of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, and in the fall, they spent 6 weeks in Rome where Mark taught at the Gregorian University in a program that brings together Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians to study each other's traditions. Mark also co-teaches a course on theology and medicine with Prof. Benjamin Doolittle from Yale School of Medicine; they are currently completing a book on the interface of faith and medicine. Mark and Melissa live in New Haven and especially delight in time with their two grown children and two grandchildren in Washington, DC and Philadelphia.

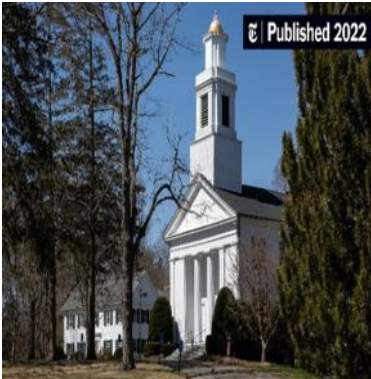


Looking Ahead...

It is almost that time to start thinking about beautifully decorating the sanctuary with Easter flowers. There will be Easter lilies, tulips and daffodils to choose from. Order forms will be available in the church office and in the sanctuary beginning mid-March, along with cost per plant and order due date. We will keep you posted.



BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS REPORT, MARCH 2025



As many of you may already know, after eight years overseeing buildings and grounds (B&G) at the FCCW, I am stepping down from day-to-day involvement. On request, I recently provided the board of trustees and the church council with a detailed exit report on the current condition status of the FCCW campus - which is either very good or excellent with no major structural problems and fully functioning mechanical, heating, electrical, and septic systems. The full B&G exit report and a list of FCCW-approved contractors are available in the church office.

Although Bob Turner, our FCCW custodian, is more than capable of maintaining the church buildings for the near future, it is desirable that someone new take on the B&G role or become involved with one of the future projects:- the purchase of AEDs for the Parish House and

Meetinghouse, evaluation and possible new floor in the choir/lecture room floor in the annex, evaluation of the Parish House roof and possible new roof installation, repair and painting of the bell tower exterior (recommended by Preservation CT) , replacement of the original wooden staircase in the bell tower with aluminum, and any other unanticipated needs. A trustee or a liaison with the board of trustees will be needed to obtain bids, board approvals, contracts, and to undertake grant-writing. If you are interested in taking on the B&G position or just one of these future projects, please speak with the board of trustees. If ever needed, I will be pleased to help anyone who steps up to manage a future B&G project.

Although the FCCW grounds are maintained year-round by Jim Rosson's company, Jim's Landscaping & Tree Removal, LLC, a small group of gardeners organized in 2024 to 'adopt a patch' of the church's flower gardens. They will continue their work weeding and planting in 2025 and would welcome additional volunteers. If you are interested, contact me at (203) 387-0764.

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as the B&G point person since 2017. I thank the board of trustees and the congregation for their support throughout my tenure and now encourage someone NEW to take on the challenge. It will never be boring.

In faith,

B. Joyce Simpson

FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome to join our Bible Study each
Wednesday at 11 AM in the Parish House.

PARISHIONER DEADLINE

Articles and photos for the April edition of
The Parishioner are due by
Tuesday, March 18 2025.
*Please submit materials by email
office@uccw.org

WORSHIP SERVICES

All are invited to gather in the
Meetinghouse for our 10 AM worship service.
For participation via Zoom,
see our website - uccw.org

MARKING LIFE'S PASSAGES

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

Printed copies of *The Parishioner* are always available
in the church office and on our church's website.

If you would like to go paperless and only receive an
emailed copy, contact the church office.



KIDS CHURCH

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



FCCW Staff:

Interim Minister: Rev. Susan Murtha (pastorsusan@uccw.org) (203) 936-9356

Volunteer Pastoral Care: Rev. Janice Touloukian (jantouloukian@gmail.com) (203) 915-1510

Coordinator for Children's Ministries: Nicole Giannetta (msnicole@uccw.org)

Office Administrator: Jill Fahrback (office@uccw.org) (203) 389-2119

Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>23</p> <p>10:00 am Worship 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>24</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>25</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>26</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>27</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>1</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>2</p> <p>10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 2:00 pm Council Meeting 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10:00 am Woodbridge Garden Club 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Woodbridge Park Assoc</p>	<p>6</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>9</p> <p>10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>13</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 4:00 pm Private Yoga Class</p>
<p>16</p> <p>10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 2:00 pm Valerie Tutson Family Event 3:00 pm Refreshments 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>20</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
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<p>30</p> <p>10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>31</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>					

Key

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