



THE PARISHIONER

OCTOBER 2022

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST WOODBIDGE, CT



An Open, Welcoming and Affirming Church since 1738

Your Money Autobiography

October is Stewardship Month at First Church of Christ Woodbridge and I absolutely love our theme of “STEP”! We encourage you to step out in faith, step up to the challenge, step back and see how far we’ve come, step forward with your skills, step into the difficult decisions in front of us, and step into a season of generosity.

We’ve also been asked to reflect on “how” we step – step with enthusiasm; step with joy, thanks and hopefulness; with your heart; with commitment. Step prayerfully, thoughtfully, gratefully; step with the faith and love of Jesus. It is that condition of our hearts and spirits that I wish to write about in my October letter, about an experience that changed mine.

A number of years ago, I participated in a continuing education seminar for clergy on the subject of money. One of the most revealing assignments was to write, in three pages, our own “Money Autobiography”. We were asked to reflect on our relationship with money, from childhood through to today. The purpose of this assignment was to “know thyself” so that we might be better able to help our congregations reflect more deeply on their relationships with money and their stewardship.

Of the 25 questions posed for our essay, one was this: “What is your happiest memory with money?” Interesting question! I invite you to consider yours. The reflections from our group seemed to fall into three categories:

- experiences of windfall
- experiences of feeling financially safe
- experiences of radical generosity.

The stories were fascinating! Here are a few of my observations ...

Windfall: These windfall stories were fun! A childhood story of climbing a backyard tree and spotting a ten-dollar bill a few branches above, Decisions, decisions!: should he venture upward on his own to grab the bill or go get his father to help and risk its loss to the wind? One woman inherited a \$1,000 from an aunt she didn’t know she had – on the day of her ordination. A sign? While not one of us had a life-altering windfall, many had a perspective-altering one – the deep recognition that *all* that we have is a gift. That will be the central message of my stewardship sermon in mid-October. What is your windfall story?

Feeling safe: These stories were not about big paychecks and feeling financially secure; rather, they were about experiences of healing. People spoke about times of financial setback and hardship and how much fear they lived with. They spoke of coming to terms with a new financial reality and experiencing divine release from toxic fear. I’m don’t think anyone in the room felt “all set” financially, but many recalled an experience of feeling safe as they healed from their fear through deepening in their relationship in God. Do you have a healing story?

Radical generosity: These stories brought us all to deafening silence, reverence, and God. A couple putting all their money into starting a new church and keeping it going for five years until it could go on its own. A man who got on his knees one night, turned away from the life he was living focused on comfort and pleasure, and toward his church and Lord; from that day forward, he has tithed and been blessed abundantly by this faith commitment. He said that the words of the Christmas Carol “comfort and joy” are ones he now lives all year round. These were stories of redemption. What is your redemption story?

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Our long and complex relationship with money is worthy of reflection. A few personal notes on my autobiography: I found it easy to articulate my parents' values about money and how that shaped me; I found it easy to articulate my happiest and my worst memories with money; I found many other questions easy to answer. It got much harder as the questions moved into the present tense. With most of the other folks, I found it much more challenging and revealing to fully articulate my current thoughts, feelings, practices, attitudes, values and commitments regarding money. But fully engaging this *spiritual* exercise changed me – my heart, my spirit, and my relationship with money! Instead of half-dreading the Stewardship season, I welcome it each year. And I welcome challenging myself to grow in love of God and neighbor by giving more than the year before. Instead of hoping to find a way around a capital campaign, I embrace them as part of God acting boldly in our midst. Instead of keeping planned gifts private and quiet, I delight in giving testimony to others about why I have planned gifts, so as to inspire others to do the same!

In this Stewardship season, I invite you to reflect on your own money autobiography. You'll probably find it is not a short story; and it may bring on a change of heart! Jesus talked about money so often because he considered our relationship with money to be one of the most important stories of our lives and hearts.

I pray to each of you will all take a giant step, giving all that you can give to the ministries and missions of First Church of Christ, Woodbridge.

Blessings,

Rev. Susan



Welcome Forest!

First Church of Christ Woodbridge welcomes Forest Vandelor as our Project Leader for Children's Ministries – a new position created by our pastor, Susan Murtha. Forest is a junior at Amity High School and ACES Educational Center for the Arts.

Forest will envision, create, and lead events for children (both affiliated with our church and in the wider community). The events may be secular, or faith based or a combination of both. She will be responsible for creating church and community communications and for recruiting volunteers to assist in preparation and events. This position will be for up to 10 hours a week and Rev. Susan Murtha will be her supervisor.

You may also see Forest around town – she is a busy person! She has a part time job at Brookside Market working in the kitchen and at the cash register. And a few lucky parents also have her as a baby sitter!

Please welcome Forest into our Church Family!

SEPTEMBER COUNCIL REPORT

The FCCW Church Council met with a quorum on September 6, 2022. The meeting was held in the Sanctuary Chapel (Choir Room) due to other meetings in the Parish House.

Rev. Susan Murtha's report noted the creation of the position of Project Leader for Children's Ministry. Forest Vandelor an Amity High School student who has attended FCCW for many years has been selected for the position. This means that we will see the beginning of a children's ministry program which is one of the most exciting pieces of news we have had for a long time. The program will begin in the near future. If you know of children who might be interested, please contact the office. This project was voted on and approved by Council.

Treasurer's report indicated that a little over 60% of pledges has been received. Operating income for July exceeded expenses by over \$1000. We are in a positive financial mode as we move into Fall. Trustee's reported that the Sheiman Report for repurposing the Parish House has been received and reviewed with a report to be presented to the Congregational meeting later this month. The Preliminary Budget will also be presented to that meeting. The Bylaws ad hoc committee reported that the final revised report will be presented to the Congregational meeting, after a few informational meetings are held. Deacons reported that the Woodbridge Interfaith service will be held at FCCW on November 21, 6:00 PM with an after-service reception to be held in the Parish House and provided by FCCW. Volunteers needed!

There was a discussion regarding the development of a staff Covid policy, which we do not have. While we follow Federal and State guidelines, we need a written FCCW policy. This will be done in the immediate future. An ad hoc committee to address the Fall Stewardship program is functioning and will develop an appropriate program approach for Stewardship. Personnel is working with Rev. Murtha on a new job description for the high school student who will be working on the children's ministry program.

The ad hoc By Laws Committee, as noted earlier will be conducting informational sessions prior to presentation of the proposed by laws changes which, if approved by the Congregational meeting, will take effect immediately. The Technical Committee is exploring the purchase of security cameras for the Parish House. Trustees have approved \$500 for the project. The Men's Fellowship has donated a volleyball net to the Boy Scout Troop. The FCCW Town Liaison Committee continues to have written communication with the Town Hall regarding matters of mutual interest.

On October 1st FCCW will again conduct a Pie Ala Mode Event from 10 AM to 1 PM. Look for details elsewhere in this Parishioner. Volunteers needed! Please call the office. Trustees and The S&R committee will discuss the purchasing of Air Purifiers for the two staff offices in the Parish House.

Rev. Murtha noted that we should have representatives to the Tri-State conference because there are many benefits to be derived therefrom. Volunteers needed! Please contact Rev. Murtha directly.

The Council will be reviewing a date and time change for meetings with the returning to Standard Time in November. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



Some pictures from FCCW's Memorial Flower Garden

Our Season of Giving

October is Stewardship Month.

It's an all-church effort.

Much of 2022 we have talked about **steps** 1st **steps**, 2nd **steps**, next **steps**, more **steps**. Susan has led us skillfully up those **steps**, almost gotten us comfortable with our after-church sessions and great coffee hour snacks. But there's more!

Its fall and time for us to use "**step**" as a verb. It is a call to action.

It sounds like this: **Step** up, **Step** out, **Step** forward, **Step** back, **Step** in.

Used in a sentence, it calls us to...

Step out in faith

Step up to the challenge

Step back and look at how far we've come

Step forward with our ideas and skills

Step into the difficult decisions in front of us

It might even ask us to...

Step with enthusiasm

Step with joy, with thanks, with hopefulness

Step with your heart

Step with commitment

It certainly asks us to **step** up generously to the financial challenges of our church. That's an action **step**.

Step prayerfully, **step** thoughtfully, **step** gratefully, **step** with the faith and love of Jesus, and then.....

TAKE A GIANT **STEP** – GIVE ALL YOU CAN GIVE

Additional stewardship materials will be coming to you soon.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The First Church of Christ hosts:

“Remember the Ala Mode”

October 1, 10 am - 1 pm

on the “Church Green”

- Apple pie ala mode & cider*
- Free ice cream scoop for kids*
- Face painting*
- Live music with Shawn Taylor*



Garden Club of Woodbridge



Plant Sale!



First Church of Christ
Woodbridge, Ct

Face Paint

October 1st

9am - 12pm

9:00 - 10:00 FitzGerald Field

10:00 - 12:00 Church Green

Save the Date!

We Hope to See You There!

For More Information Call:
(203) 936-9356



LOOKING AHEAD

The First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, will host this year's annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Monday, November 21, 2022 at 7:00 PM. It is a wonderful tradition that welcomes the greater community, and everyone is encouraged to attend. There will be a reception immediately following the service in the church parish hall. Join us in starting Thanksgiving week in the spirit of gratefulness.





BOY SCOUT TROOP #907 UPDATE

Activity in scouting is year-round, for troop 907 that is no exception. During our annual week of summer camp, the troop again formed a joint contingent with Troop 600 from Hamden and provisional scouts attending camp without their home troop. Youth leadership worked together to form patrols, participate in camp-wide activities from archery to nature jeopardy to canoe races, ultimately gaining the highest accolade of the week, super troop. They also worked on skill badges, boating, fishing and enjoying fellowship at campfires. The high point of week was the opportunity to welcome Ben Rickel, into the highest honor in scouting, our newest Eagle Scout.

On the weekend of September 16-19, the troop enjoyed great weather for the Bicycle Campout on Block Island. The troop laid out two loops on the island, one 7.5 miles and the other 8.5 miles. These included the Abrams Animal Farm, the Southeast Lighthouse, Mohegan Bluffs, Painted Rock, Rodman's Hollow, Dead Eye Dick's, the town beach, Great Salt Pond and the North Lighthouse. All scouts exhibited camaraderie and support for each other.

The troop will be supporting the October 1 "Remember the a la mode" in front of the Parish House. The troop is also very appreciative of the church Men's Fellowship recently donating a volleyball net to the troop, thanks! Also, thanks to church parishioners who recently helped with purchasing chrysanthemums, the troop fall fund raiser.

Scouting is an ongoing adventure that you cannot predict what you will experience just around the corner or down the next trail. Troop 907 is an active outdoor unit that is planning more adventures this fall and winter including canoeing on the Connecticut River.

If you are interested in joining the ride, the troop meets Thursday evenings at First Church of Christ Parish House, rear entrance, 7:00-8:30 pm or 'contact us' on our website <http://www.troop907.org>.

Submitted by Troop Committee Chair and Chartered Organization Representative, Rich Forselius



FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

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

Submission Due Date

Articles and photos for the **October 2022**
Edition of *The Parishioner* are due by
Wednesday, October 26

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

If you would like assistance
regarding Zoom, live stream, or website
accessibility, please contact Lisa.

office@uccw.org

Weekly Bible Study



All are welcome to visit our
Weekly Bible Study every
Wednesday morning at 10
a.m. in the Parish House.
Please visit the Bible Study
page on our website for more
information and a list of weekly
readings.

<https://www.uccw.org/bible-study>



ZOOM INVITATIONS

Everyone is encouraged to gather
at the Meetinghouse for the 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Service!

An archive of past recordings are
available on our website, our YouTube
channel,
and on Facebook.

(www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge)
Please look to your email for invitations
and links to these resources.
We will continue to use Zoom for all of
our Worship Services.

Sunday Morning
Worship
10 AM

Marking Life's Passages

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

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: Lisa Tartaglino (office@uccw.org)

Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner

The Parishioner

Published monthly by
The First Church of Christ
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Telephone: (203) 389-2119

Email: office@uccw.org

Website: www.uccw.org —

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

October 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Musical Folk 9:30 Pie Event 10-1 Face Painting 9-12
2 10 am Church Worship Service	3 AA – 7:30 pm Council Mtg. 6 pm	4 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 Choir Prac. 6:30	5 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10 am NMS – 3 to 6:30 pm	6 NMS 2-7:45 Boy Scouts 7 pm	7 NMS 2-7	8 Musical Folk 9:30
9 10 am Church Worship Service	10 AA – 7:30 pm	11 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 Choir Prac. 6:30	12 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10 am NMS – 3 to 6:30 pm	13 NMS 2-7:45 Boy Scouts 7 pm	14 NMS 2-7	15 Musical Folk 9:30
16 10 am Church Worship Service Next Steps 10 (after service)	17 AA – 7:30 pm	18 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 Choir Prac. 6:30 Willows – 10:30	19 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10 am NMS – 3 to 6:30 pm	20 NMS 2-7:45 Boy Scouts 7 pm	21 NMS 2-7	22 Musical Folk 9:30
23 10 am Church Worship Service	24 AA – 7:30 pm	25 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 Choir Prac. 6:30	26 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10 am NMS – 3 to 6:30 pm	27 NMS 2-7:45 Boy Scouts 7 pm	28 NMS 2-7	29 Musical Folk 9:30
30 10 am Church Worship Service Next Steps 11 (after service)	31 AA – 7:30 pm					