

THE PARISHIONER

JULY 2022

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST WOODBIDGE, CT

An Open, Welcoming and Affirming Church since 1738



A note about Rev. Susan's work at First Church + Summer Plans

As we move into the summer months, I felt that it may be helpful to share a note about my duties as your Interim Senior Minister as well as my summer plans. In advance, thank you for taking the time to read it!

As some (though perhaps not all) of you know, my position as your Interim Senior Minister is for 25 hours/week. In summary, the primary responsibilities are to:

Lead the congregation in a process to understand and discuss multiple paths/options/lanes for First Church Woodbridge and then to discern and decide upon the most faithful future direction;

Lead worship twice each month and on holy days;

Participate in meetings of the Church Council and the Board of Deacons, and others as needed.

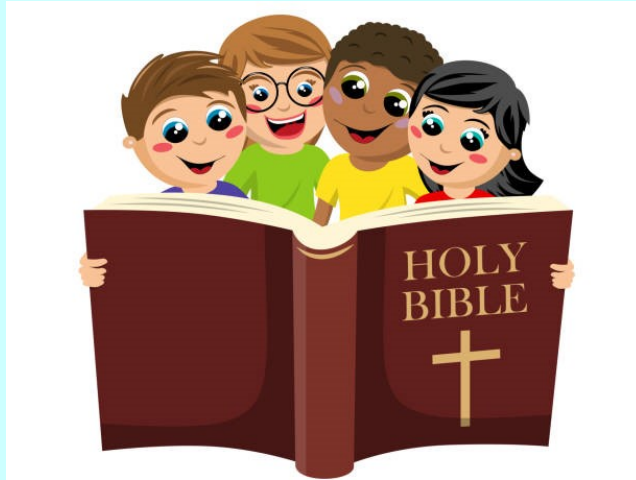
Five months into our ministry, I am awed by the work we have accomplished thus far! *And* I'm not at all surprised that my logged hours have far exceeded 25 per week. The first phase of interim ministry is time-intensive; I know this from my experience in my past churches. From February 1 through June 30, my work at First Church averaged 37 hours/week. But assured, I was happy to give that time so as to make our shared work fruitful in the first season!

With approval of Church Council, this summer I will take vacation time and "comp time" from July 3 to August 14. Summer is the best season to take time off as many people are away, all-church gatherings can't work, and boards/committees take a break. With the great help of Sue Stoddard, arrangements have been made for every Sunday worship service and for emergency pastoral care coverage during my time away.

I will miss you and hold you in prayer during these summer weeks. I will also remain in touch with the very important work of our consultant Robert Sheiman (see Trustees article in this month's Parishioner). When we re-gather, we will have a great deal of material to review and discuss together as part of First Church's discernment of its future path! I hope also to hear from enough folks to form our "Bible Sunday" team. Please see my invitation to join this team on the next page.

Summer sabbath blessings,

Rev. Susan



~ ~ **WANTED!** ~ ~

Children's Bible Sunday Team

Rev. Susan (team lead) + 3 volunteers = Team

This team will connect with parents of young children to create a ceremony to present children with age-appropriate bibles during a Sunday worship service.

Team members need to be proficient in technology (email attachments, links, Zoom meetings, cell txtsmsgs, etc.) as we will do much of our work electronically.

At least one team member needs to have some familiarity with the children affiliated with First Church.

Contact me: PastorSusan@uccw.org
or (203) 936-9356

COUNCIL REPORT JULY 2022

The FCCW Church Council met in June with a quorum present.

Rev. Susan Murtha reported on her various activities during the previous month with most of her report dealing with FCCW being considered as a site for a battery storage facility constructed by a company named *Onsite* which could be located in the rear of the church property. Questions and discussion indicated that Council was in favor of pursuing such an opportunity. A unanimous vote to have Trustees pursue this proposal with the project point person being the Rev. Murtha based on her prior experience and knowledge with other similar projects.

On another matter, Council voted to approve that Trustee's hire Robert Sheiman as a consultant to develop a plan for alternative use of the Parish House as a community center. This proposal and plan should be ready by September.

The Treasurer's report indicated that expenses and income were in line and that we were awaiting the receipt of grant monies from the State for work in the Sanctuary. (These funds have since been received) A vote to approve an additional revision in the Bylaws was passed and will be included in other revisions previously approved by Council. All suggested revisions will come before the September Congregational Meeting for approval. There will be an education/information session regarding these suggested revisions held for benefit of the membership in early September. The Technical Committee was asked to consider the possibility of employing the services of a trained technical consultant for coordinating FCCW's various ZOOM and streaming services and new technical equipment required.

Concerns were raised regarding various questions, comments and unsettling rumors being received by members from their non FCCW neighbors and friends regarding the use of FCCW property being used for affordable housing, was FCCW selling its property for such use, or if the Church was in fact closing in the near future. It was the consensus of those present that no such actions were being considered and if ever considered such decisions would have to be made by a membership vote at an FCCW congregational meeting. Furthermore, such a message should be conveyed to the Town government and made public.

In the course of discussion regarding this matter it was agreed that there may in fact be a misinterpreting of information on the part of Town officials because of different members of FCCW making contact with Town officials. With all the afore mentioned discussion the Council voted unanimously to create an Ad Hoc Liaison Town Committee for developing and implementing a plan for communicating with Town officials and members of the public. It was agreed that all official FCCW contact with Town officials regarding matters of mutual interest should be coordinated through this Ad Hoc Committee and that contact with Town officials only be made by a member of this committee. The committee membership will be Bill More, as point person, Richard Forselius, Richard Jeynes and Richard Prescott.

The last matter that was brought to our attention is our work ahead and the overall timeline for that work. By late fall the congregation should decide upon its future direction, create a profile for the minister to match that direction, and begin the search and call process. The full search and call process typically takes one year and thus the importance of deciding upon our future before the end of 2022. There will be no Council meeting in July.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Prescott, Moderator

If you are interested in viewing the Woodbridge Affordable Housing Plan document,
you can access it on the town website at woodbridgect.org.

There is also a copy in the church office.

Sanctuary Restoration Update, June 20, 2022

On June 10, the First Church of Christ received a \$100,000.00 State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grant from the State of Connecticut for the Phase One plaster repair and trompe l'oeil/grisaille decoration of the sanctuary ceiling and north wall that was completed by the John Canning Company of Cheshire, Connecticut. A mandatory 15-year historic easement on the sanctuary will be filed at the Town Hall.

During their inspection visit in January, SHPO encouraged us to complete the sanctuary and narthex restoration. They will allow us to use Canning for this Phase Two work without going out to bid, will allow Canning to subcontract others to do the non-decorative work (which will save us money), and will allow us to apply for up to \$200,000 in matching funds. Items for discussion/inclusion/exclusion and costs can be found below.

The estimated cost for completing the decorative work, painting the pews, repairing plaster and painting the narthex and three stairwells, sanding and refinishing the original fir wood flooring in the narthex is \$246,100. If we secure a SHPO matching grant (never guaranteed), \$123,050 would come from SHPO, perhaps another \$10- \$15K from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, there is \$15,100 already approved in the capital budget for Mr. Catalan, and currently \$12,400 in the Sanctuary Fund. The church would need to raise a further \$85,550 to complete the entire repair and repainting of the sanctuary and narthex.

[FYI. The Phase One costs were \$250K, of which \$110K was grant money and \$140K was raised by the Sanctuary Fund (\$70K was from the wider community and \$70K came from church members). No church operational or capital funds were used for the decorative trompe l'oeil painting.]

Four steps must be taken to complete Phase Two: 1) the congregation must determine the desired scope of work and approve the costs for the work, 2) a SHPO historic preservation grant application must be made, 3) once the grant is approved, a contract with Canning would be made, 4) a renewed campaign to raise the necessary funds would need to take place - even though memorial gifts and donations to the Sanctuary Fund can be made at any time.

We are hopeful that church members and persons in the wider community will contribute to and support the completion of this beautiful historic project. Comments and questions welcomed.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Joyce Simpson

Al Jarvis



Sanctuary quote of the month:

“It is an important and valuable space, and its preservation is an important responsibility and legacy. An oasis during life’s happy and sad moments.”

(Update continued on next page)

PRELIMINARY, PROPOSED SANCTUARY PHASE TWO SCOPE OF WORK AND ESTIMATED COSTS. DISCUSSED WITH DAVID RICCIO (CANNING) AT THE FCCW, 1 PM, FEBRUARY 25, 2022, TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE CONGREGATION.

JOB	CONTRACTOR/SUBCONTRACTOR	ESTIMATED COSTS	
1. PAINT APSE AND WALLS (DECORATIVE TROMPE L'OEIL)	CANNING	\$196,800	(2023)
2. PAINT PEWS	CANNING/CATALAN	\$25,000	(2022/23)
3. PAINT NARTHEX AND STAIRWELLS	CANNING/CATALAN	\$18,300	(2022/23)
4. REMOVE TILES AND REFINISH FIR WOOD FLOOR IN THE NARTHEX	CANNING/SULLIVAN	\$6,000	(2022/23)

SUBTOTAL: \$246,100

Removal of front and back pews to make more space and better meet ADA and Fire Department regulations might be undertaken with a future grant from Preservation CT. (\$9k)

FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Greetings, all.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I write to share updates about our church's interim ministry process, along with some context.

As you may know, the Trustees have been in on-going deliberations regarding the stewardship and monetization of the Church's assets amid a sea of conversations and developments in Woodbridge, including but not limited to funding for the Town sidewalk; the \$2,000,000 State grant for the creation of a Community Center in Woodbridge; a Town plan for compliance with State Statutes regarding affordable housing; a long-term plan of development for the Town Center; a long-term plan for the Town's assets, recognizing the need for expanding the commercial tax base.

At our Congregational Meeting in May, the Membership approved an addition to the Church's 2022 Operating Budget in the amount of \$20,000 for Professional Services by a transfer from Net Free Operating Cash reserves. Part of the reasoning behind that action was the recognition that there are no reservoirs of professionally informed knowledge within the Membership or at the disposal of the Membership to enable the Church to understand the complexities of the issues surrounding us or to have discussions of these issues in an informed fashion, enabling us to protect and advocate for our interests, immediate and long-term.

I am happy to report that at its meeting on Thursday, June 16, the Trustees approved a proposal by Robert Sheiman, Executive Director of Whitneyville Cultural Commons, to undertake a study of potential uses of the Parish House, consistent with the mission of the Church. Robert and his work in Hamden and New Haven were introduced to us through our "Next Steps" all-church process. Through follow-up conversations, a proposal was requested. As a consultant for First Church Woodbridge, Robert's study will consist of four pieces: A Town Assessment; an Historical Assessment; a Site Assessment; and a Business Development Plan. We expect to have Robert Sheiman's findings available for review by the Trustees in September.

Please be reminded that no actions have been taken to date regarding the sale or encumbrance or dedication to alternative use of any Church property. Such actions, if deemed appropriate by the Trustees, can only be undertaken with the approval of the church Membership. We will keep you informed.

Carl W. Lindskog on behalf of the Board of Trustees

BOY SCOUT TROOP #907



Troop 907 held its year ending Court of Honor on Saturday, June 18th, and Moderator Richard Prescott represented First Church at the event. Scouts also had their annual family cookout the same day. They spent the weekend at First Church, starting with assisting at the Strawberry Festival then they camped two nights, Friday and Saturday, packing up on Sunday before the Sunday worship service.

The Court of Honor was led by Carter Orzel and William Hulse. Senior Patrol Leader Daniel Del Prete reviewed all of the many activities that the scouts engaged in with the past year recap, including campouts, special events and assistance to the community. Chaplains Aide Elijah Mooring gave both the opening and closing prayers. The following scouts received advancements:

- Cole Sibilio - Scout Rank
- Griffin Davies - Scout Rank
- Sebastian Konche - Second Class
- Carter Orzel - First Class
- Sebastian Konche - First Class

William Hulse - First Class

The troop recently was awarded a Certification of Appreciation from the town of Woodbridge "In Recognition of Exemplary Volunteer Service Benefiting Our Community."

Eagle Scout Ben Rickel's recently completed Eagle project for the town of Woodbridge was the construction of a flag retirement repository. This is located across from the outward-bound mailbox at the Woodbridge Town Hall, where the old community bulletin board once stood. Ben received a Flag Retention Award from the General David Humphreys Branch, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). Troop 907 has lots of flags to retire soon as they completed replacing all Veterans flags in the three Woodbridge cemeteries in advance of Memorial Day.

Many of our scouts will be attending Camp Sequassen this summer. Scouts and Scout Leaders have expressed sincere appreciation to First Church for sponsoring the troop and providing the meeting place in the Parish House basement.

Yours in Scouting,
Richard Forselius

Committee Chair
Chartered Organization
Representative



65th STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

On Friday, June 17th, we had a wonderfully successful Strawberry Festival on our Church Green. We sold over 360 strawberry shortcakes and 250 burgers and hot dogs. Many young families attended as well as the older generation, some church members, many not. It was great seeing the playground filled with kids playing while their parents socialized. It was a time to reconnect with old friends and welcome new acquaintances. Joyce Simpson gave tours of our newly renovated sanctuary, giving local people a first-time glimpse of our church, many saying they would love to come back. We had the musical group Eventide perform which was a lovely addition to the evening. Since we have not had this event since 2019 due to the pandemic, it was a much needed, well attended social gathering for the community. In the end we brought in close to \$4,450 after expenses were deducted (\$1,000 over the last Festival). UNICEF Ukraine will be receiving a large portion of this once all receipts are in for the event. Eventide graciously donated their tip jar to be included in our charity drive to UNICEF. The weather was perfect and it was a smashing success.



Now to thank those who helped. We could not have done it without our entire church team of volunteers and others making it work. The SF Committee of Nancy Dickgiesser, Sharon Finkenauer, Stefany Schulz and Sue Stoddard want to thank all those who volunteered their time. They include: Henry Gates, our bargain shopper who went between stores to always get the best deal for all our food supplies and spent many hours doing this for us. Thank you Henry for all the hours you put in doing this! Stefany Schulz and Barbara Baldwin were invaluable in organizing and leading in the making of the biscuits with the help of Carl and Anne Marie Lindskog, Bill More, Al Jarvis, Chris Hubbard, Julie Hultgren, Tim Cowles (Alice Cowles' son who came back from the West Coast specifically to be a part of this). And on the day of the festival Bill and Al organized and led us in hulling the strawberries. Thank you to Ethel and Walt Crosby, Joyce Simpson, Kris Hart, Carol Kinnach, Tim Cowles, Chris Hubbard, Stefany Schulz, Mary Jane Purcell, Nancy and Sue. There were 298 pounds of strawberries to be hulled! And in the kitchen behind the scenes working tirelessly were Sharon Finkenauer and Stefany Schulz who divided up the biscuit baking ingredients to make it easier for the biscuit bakers AND they spent Friday afternoon whipping all the cream for the event and worked doing kitchen clean up afterwards. On the afternoon of the event a thanks to Rich Forselius, Chris Hubbard, Carl and Anne Marie Lindskog, Eaton Chen, Roger Calistro, Al Jarvis, Jack Jones, Rich Jeynes, Tim Cowles, Henry Gates, Penny Rogers, Kit Engstrom, Richard Prescott, Sharon Finkenauer, and any others I apologetically may have forgotten, who helped with final preparation, serving of shortcakes, being runners, ticket taking, and clean up. Thanks to Stefany for the use of her truck for putting signs up around town and going to the dump. And of course thank you to Joyce for being the tour guide in our sanctuary. Thank you to Jeff Gee for donating Strawberry Festival tee shirts with all proceeds going to us. And thank you to Rev. Murtha for giving a warm welcome to those attending!!!



(continued on next page)

We could NOT have done this event without the help of Boy Scout Troop #907 and their parents, under the guidance of Eileen Rickel and Tom Luciani, who worked with us ahead of the event to help organize all that they were to do for the Festival. The Boy Scouts and their parents did all the grilling and serving of the hamburgers and hot dogs, helped with setting up and taking down all the tables and chairs on the Green, manned the drinks table, helped with clean up, and were strong bodies to do what we could not. The Woodbridge Fire Department lent us their grill, canopy for over the grilling station, and provided us with the ice. The Town of Woodbridge lent us their stage, setting it up and taking it down, and provided traffic cones.



The SF Committee could not have done it without our sexton Bob Turner. Bob worked tirelessly running errands, purchasing paper goods, getting our old Strawberry Festival signs out of storage and fixing them where needed (with Sharon Finkenauer spending many hours changing the dates). Bob put up tables and chairs, getting our supplies out for us from previous years, finding kitchen supplies, guiding the Boy Scouts, cleaning up in the end when everyone else had gone home, etc. He was always behind the scenes doing all of this. Thank you Bob! And Lisa was our graphic designer making up any signs, flyers and posters as we needed them. She was always there to answer any questions and give us assistance when we asked.



It was a wonderful event that only worked because of the help of all who volunteered. THANK YOU ALL!!!

Sue Stoddard & Nancy Dickgiesser
Co-Chairs, Strawberry Festival



FCCW OFFICE HOURS

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

Submission Due Date

Articles and photos for the August 2022
*Edition of *The Parishioner* are due by*
Wednesday, July 20.

***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.

SUNDAY
WORSHIP
SERVICE *SUNDAYS AT 10AM*

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

JULY 2022 First Church of Christ

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10:00 am	2	1	2 Musical Folk 9:30
3 10 am Church Worship Service	4 AA – Iarnppost group 7:30 pm	5 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 pm	6 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10:00 am	7	8	9 Musical Folk 9:30
10 10 am Church Worship Service	11 AA – Iarnppost group 7:30 pm	12 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 pm	13 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10:00 am	14	15	16 Musical Folk 9:30
17 10 am Church Worship Service	18 AA – Iarnppost group 7:30 pm	19 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 pm Willows – 10:30 am	20 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10:00 am	21	22	23 Musical Folk 9:30
24 10 am Church Worship Service	25 AA – Iarnppost group 7:30 pm	26 Alateen 7 pm Al-anon/AA 7:30 pm	27 Musical Folk 9:30 Bible Study 10:00 am Trustees – 6:30	28	29	30 Musical Folk 9:30
31 10 am Church Worship Service						