

# THE PARISHIONER

## May 2024

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



**Pentecost:**

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us*

After a rich Lenten season, Holy Week, and Easter in the month of March, April was another vibrant month for First Church Woodbridge, including ...

Divinity School student Stephen Stapleton preaching; (We're inviting him back for the fall!)

*New Steps 2024* with updates about significant FCCW project and all-church discussion

Service of Rededication of the Sanctuary & Reception

Bible Sunday and a Baptism!

What will the month of May bring? Flowers blooming, FCCW's Annual Meeting & *New Steps* discussion about your Ministerial Search Process (May 19), and Pentecost! I look forward to all of these and more, but most of all to Pentecost when we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Though Jesus had promised it, the disciples had no idea how it would change them and the world. ....

Before Pentecost, Jesus' followers were living out their faith in a very *orderly* kind of way. Chapter 1 of the *Book of Acts* tells us that the apostles and the women had gathered in Jerusalem, that Peter led them and a group of believers in discerning the appropriate replacement for Judas, and that they were devoting themselves to being a secluded community of prayer. And then the Holy Spirit strikes ...

- + Rushing sound overwhelms the space;
- + Tongues, like fire, reach out and seize people;
- + Their speech spills out into the room;
- + Soon the walls can't contain the people, or the sound, or the fiery Spirit that moves them;
- + They're thrust out onto the streets, proclaiming God's mighty acts in full public view.

With this strike, the image of an orderly faith life is over. Now we have a blazing, spiritual fire driven by a divine wind. It's almost harder to believe than the resurrection story! But despite our difficulty with this fiery account, we do still pray for this Spirit, just as those first followers did. Every Sunday, the church prays that we shall receive the Spirit and we do that because we know we need it, still. We need the Spirit to inspire us to be Christ's body in a broken and hurting world. We need the Spirit to place in our minds the questions God is asking Christ's church: What is the faithful way forward in our own time and place, and how we can be born into that no matter how chaotic it may feel? So, yes, we pray for the Spirit to pour out unto us. And that is an act of great courage – to dare let such a powerful, unpredictable, mysterious thing come upon us and not fight it. And it's also, and ultimately, an act of humility; it is our acknowledgment that only God can give us the will to do what is faithful. And so yes, we pray, "Come O Holy Spirit, come," for what are we without it?

*Pentecost blessings!*,

*Rev. Susan*

## FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

April, 2024

Your FCCW CHURCH Council met with a quorum present with a return to an in-person meeting, at the Parish House. Each Committee/Board representative reported on recent meeting and program activities. Trustees, which is by far the busiest of our Boards, is deeply involved in planning and meetings regarding the Parish House renovation for the Day Care Center and reviewing of options regarding cell tower leases. The Treasurer reported that income exceeded expenses for January and that the new bookkeeping administrative system was working well. Music Committee reported on the planned Concert (The Concert was a success, well attended with over half being non members) Personnel reported that the full time office administrator position has not yet been filled, due to circumstances beyond our control. A change in FCCW By Laws will be presented at the May Congregational Meeting which will eliminate the September Congregational Meeting from our schedule. The Giving (Stewardship) campaign for this year shows a seven percent increase in pledges. Nominating Committee nominees to fill out terms, were approved: Christian Corvinno and Lou DeLeone to Deacons; and Walter Crosby to Nominating. There was much discussion regarding FCCW's participation in Woodbridge's Earth Day celebration. It was decided that we will repair the Labyrinth and some of the Gardens, but not to open the Sanctuary for tours or Parish House for exhibits.

It was reported that the Easter Sunday worship service was very well attended with many, many non members in attendance, with a notable increase of children in attendance. This is a tribute, in large part to our Children/Family Ministries program and the door-to-door information hand-out distributions done by Richard Jeynes. This also pertains to Sunday morning worship with many new people joining an increase in member attendance. The next few months are very important in our future, In that we will see, I believe, the presentation of new growth opportunities and income to support them. Please make every effort to attend our future "steps" meetings, particularly in May, to learn about what is on the immediate horizon for FCCW. It may be a whole new ballgame!

Happy Spring, Everyone: Respectfully Submitted, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator

### **CALL TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**May 19, 2024, 11:15 AM**

The May, 2024, Congregational Meeting of the FCCW Congregation shall be held on Sunday, May 19, 2024, at 11:15 AM in the Parish House in order to :

1. Receive a report from the FCCW Nominating Committee for the purpose of conducting an election of FCCW's Moderator, Clerk, and members of Boards and Committees
2. Receive a report from the Bylaws Committee recommending a change in FCCW's Bylaws empowering the FCCW Church Council to pass the motion allowing for Church business to be transacted from January 1st of each year until that year's Annual budgets are passed. This change also results in removing the September Congregational meeting from the Church calendar.
3. To receive and act upon any other business appropriate to come before the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted, Susan Stoddard, Clerk

**Changes to the Annual Budget Process**

The following change eliminate the need for the Congregation to approve the motion allowing the church to do business each year from January 1 until passage of the annual budgets. The change is based on the consensus reached by the membership on this issue at the January 2024 Congregational Meeting.

**On Page 10 in Article X. A:**

**4. The Church Council shall:**

b. ~~pass a motion each year at the October Council meeting empowering the Officers, Boards and Special Committees of the Church to conduct the business of the Church from January 1, of the following year until adoption of that year's Annual Budgets;~~

**Rationale:** Having this motion passed by Council rather than the Membership allows us to remove the September Congregational Meeting from the church calendar. If there is business that needs to be conducted between the May Annual Congregational Meeting and the following year's January Congregational Meeting, a special meeting can be called to take care of that business.

This Bylaws change does not change the approval process for each year's annual budgets which still requires the approval of the Membership.

**The above change necessitates the following additional changes to the Bylaws:**

**2. On page 17: in Article X. Board of Trustees**

**c. Finances - The Trustees Shall:**

i.i.i. ~~publish in the September and/or October Church newsletter the due date for budget requests from Boards and Special Committees for the following year's Annual Operating and Capital Budgets;~~

**Rationale:** As was the case in 2023, having the due date for annual budget requests published in the *Parishioner* reminds Boards and Special Committees that their budget requests are due to Trustees in a timely manner.

\* \* \*

**3. On Page 25: in Article XI - Meetings of the Church** **Membership:**

A. Each year the Clerk, upon vote of the Church Council, shall issue the call for ~~two~~ [delete three] regular meetings of the Church membership to adopt and amend policy, to hear and approve plans, to hear annual reports, to approve and adopt budgets, and to conduct elections.

**Rationale:** (for this and the following proposed change), as noted above, there will no longer be a need for a regular third (September) Congregational Meeting

\* \* \*

**4. On Page 27: in Article XI - Meetings of the Church** **Membership, item D:**

**DELETE THE FOLLOWING:**

3. The third regular meeting shall be called in September to preview the process for creating the Annual Budgets for the following year, to hear and approve plans for the following year, and to empower the Officers and Boards of the Church to conduct the business of the Church from January 1 until adoption of the Final Annual Budgets.



## Scouting at FCCW



### **Troop 907 Spring Activities**

The scouts of Troop 907 wish to thank those who recently purchased plants or fertilizer from the scouts. They were set up just after the special Sanctuary Rededication Service April 21, between the meetinghouse and the Parish House. Funds go directly to supporting troop activities and gear, assisting scout families that may need a little support, and are accruing toward the purchase of a new scout trailer. As you know, the troop does not receive direct funding from the church but is forever grateful for the meeting room space. The annual spring fundraiser sale also took place outside the old Woodbridge firehouse several weekends in April.

Before the spring thaw, scouts went skiing at Mt. Southington, and go-karting in North Haven. Scouts are working toward their Family Life, Communications and First Aid Merit badges and preparing for upcoming campouts while welcoming several new scouts who recently "crossed over" from the Webelos. One campout is shelter building, another will be canoeing, and they have been getting qualified for this on Knolds Pond in Woodbridge with a canoe skill test. This in addition to increasing their cooking knowledge, a "rank requirements blitz" and "made from scratch" fires. Our troop will be the only troop participating in the annual town of Woodbridge Memorial Day Ceremony May 27 at 11:00 AM on the town green, please attend.

Planning ahead, the troop Spring Court of Honor will be held June 8, the day after the Strawberry festival. All are invited to attend. Prospective scouts and parents are always welcome to come by any Thursday at 7:00 PM to meet the youth and adult leaders of the troop. More at [troop907.org](http://troop907.org).

Best wishes,

***Rich Forselius***

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

### **Sanctuary update. April 22, 2024**

I am pleased to announce that on April 9 the First Church of Christ, Woodbridge received the grant money from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Phase II work is completed, and expenses have been paid in full. It is notable that no church operational or capital funds were ever used for the sanctuary restoration.

On April 21, a rededication of the sanctuary service was held at the church to celebrate the completion of the seven-year project that stabilized the structure and consolidated the plaster ceiling after attic beams failed in 2016. The restoration and preservation of the 1886 trompe l'oeil/grisaille decor followed and was completed in 2023. The Rev. Janice Touloukian officiated a beautiful service of thanksgiving in which she honored our courageous Parish of Amity ancestors who built on Chestnut Hill in 1738 and for the completion of this project and its meaning for the future life of the church and the outreach to the wider community. Al Jarvis and Joyce Simpson provided a brief history of the church and thanked those who wrote letters of support for grant applications, provided grant monies, those who did the work, and all the donors who gave so generously to the Sanctuary Fund. Mr. John Canning, the decorative arts expert, spoke about "Illusionistic Painting." Nenad Ivovic, Faye Chen, and the FCCW choir provided exceptional music. Sharon Finkenauer and Cathy Suttle decorated the church and the Parish Hall with fresh flowers. Please view the memorial book in the narthex for the names of everyone who contributed to the sanctuary restoration.

The service was followed by a wonderful reception in the Parish Hall. Thank you to those who made every detail of this event so special.

Jesse Hubbard recorded the service: [https://youtube.com/live/j8DkEai\\_tQI?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/j8DkEai_tQI?feature=share)

Joyce Simpson and the Sanctuary Committee

Quote of the month: "A humble room that exalts"

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events

# Farm Petting Zoo for Mother's Day

Sunday, May 12

1:00 - 2:30 p.m

- Baby goats, bunnies, llamas, donkeys, sheep & more
- Mother's Day & animal crafts by Forest

5 Meetinghouse Lane  
Woodbridge  
(on the lawn by  
the Parish House)

More information (203) 936-9356



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An All-Church Gathering  
First Church Woodbridge

~ ***NEW STEPS 2024***  
***Part 2 ~***

**Join us to hear updates  
about the search process  
& discussion about next steps!**

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

**Sunday May 19, 2024  
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Parish Hall or via Zoom**

[New Steps 2024 Part 2 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!**

2024 Strawberry Festival – Mark Your Calendars

The 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Festival on the First Church Green is scheduled for **Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30 pm** rain or shine! With the help of Scout Troop 907, the grills will be going for dinner selections (hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and veggie burgers) and our strawberry shortcakes will be homemade and delicious! Eventide will again provide the musical entertainment. Special children's activities include face painting, sidewalk chalk art, lawn games & a family sing-along with Michele Urban. Come join us for an evening of good food, music, and fellowship.

We cannot have a successful festival without your help!!!! For those who helped last year, please consider helping again this year. And if you are new to the church, please consider joining in. It is a fun way of getting to know others. **Volunteers are needed** for the following: biscuit making the day before, strawberry hulling the morning of the event, and in the afternoon setting up, helping with serving, being runners, and clean up. There will be sign-up sheets in the front hallway of the Parish House for the various tasks that need doing closer to the time of the event. You can also let Bill More know of your availability to help with food prep, or Nancy Dickgiesser or Sue Stoddard for set-up/clean-up and working the festival. Thank you!



## Welcome Rev. Shannon R. Wall, M.Div., MFA



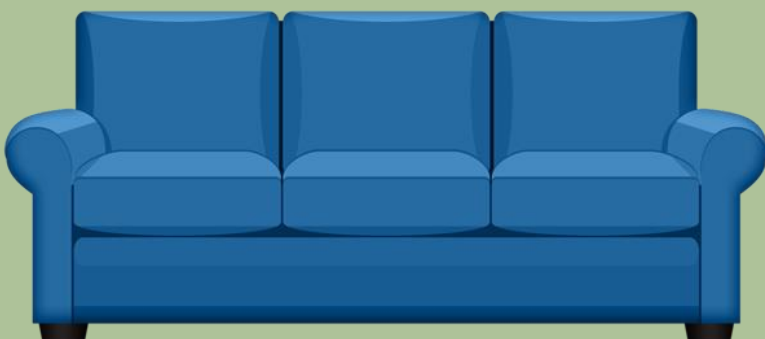
On Sunday May 28, we will welcome a very gifted pastor to our pulpit: Rev. Shannon Wall. Shannon is an ordained minister, worship leader, coach, and consultant. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, she won awards for preaching and taught students and chapel ministers there. She has served as a senior pastor, solo pastor, interim minister, and associate minister in the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Shannon's recent projects include performing *The Gospel of Mark* from memory, spearheading significant revisions to the bylaws of a large congregational church, reviving a dormant fundraising effort and helping a team raise \$300,000 for roof repair on an historic building, and coaching a person being promoted to a new academic position who wanted to gain confidence and build skills needed for the new role.

*Please join us in welcoming Shannon on May 28*  
– the first of three Sundays in 2024 when she will lead us in worship!

## 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.



**iris** INTEGRATED REFUGEE  
& IMMIGRANT SERVICES



**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 **June** edition of *The Parishioner* are due by

**Wednesday May 22nd**

\*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 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!



THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST  
WOODBRIDGE, CONNECTICUT  
— 1738 —

**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

# May 2024

5 10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:10 am Kid's Church	6 6:30 Pm church Council 7:30pm Lamppost Group AA	7 6:30 <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon	8 Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS	9 2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts	10 2:00pm NMS	11 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work
12 10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:10 am Kid's Church 11:30am Mother's Day Petting Zoo 3:30 Girl Scouts	13 7:30pm Lamppost Group AA	14 6:30 <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon	15 Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS	16 2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts	17 2:00pm NMS	18 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work
19 10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:10 am Kid's Church Congregational Meeting 11:15 Am New Steps 2024 Part 2 11:30 AMI	20 7:30pm Lamppost Group AA	21 6:30 <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon	22 Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS	23 2:00pm NMS 6:30 Pm Deacons 7:00pm Trustees 7:00pm Boy Scouts	24 2:00pm NMS	25 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00Am AA Step-Work
26 10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:10 am Kid's Church	27 7:30pm Lamppost Group AA	28 6:30 <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:00pm Alateen 7:30Pm AA/Al-Anon	29 Musical Folk 9:30 Am 11:00am Bible Study 3:00pm NMS	30 2:00pm NMS 7:00pm Boy Scouts	31 2:00pm NMS	

Key  
Sanctuary   Board Room   Parish Hall  
Memorial Room   Music Room   Kitchen   Online

Kids' Church Room