

# THE PARISHIONER

## May 2025

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

### ~ Good News about our Children & Family Ministry ~

Our Kids' Church is overflowing with good things: approximately 25 children, bible messages in stories & artwork, mission / service projects, birthday celebrations, and more! FCCW's outreach ministry to families in the wider community is also overflowing with good things: we are always meeting new people, growing relationships, and nurturing family life!

Amid these joys, what's been lacking is sufficient paid staff to lead and support these programs. **I write to share very good news ... we now have two staff members to lead and support our children & family ministry! ....**

**Nicole Giannetta**, who has been with us since October and brought wonderful mission / service projects to our Kids' Church, working an average of 6 hours/week;

**Rebecca (Becca) Costa** (mom of Cadence, Elliot & Daisy), who will serve as Coordinator of Children & Family Ministry, working an average of 12 hours/week.

Below is Becca's letter of introduction, sharing a bit about her journey and her enthusiasm for this new role. Enjoy!

*All blessings!*

*Rev. Susan*

**Dear parents of First Church Woodbridge,**

I write this introduction letter to share a bit about my journey and my excitement about serving as the Coordinator of Children & Family Ministry at First Church of Christ Woodbridge, working alongside Ms. Nicole. I look forward to learning about your journey and to supporting your family at our growing church!

Two years ago, when our family began attending Sunday services at First Church of Christ Woodbridge, I was seeking a church community much like the one I grew up with in California. My primary focus: my children. I wanted my children to know God's love and to grow in faith in a welcoming church community.

Kids Church has made our transition to church life a hugely positive experience for my children. I say "transition to church life" because Covid's shelter-in-place and our relocation to Connecticut means FCCW has been my children's first real church experience. I am so very grateful they look forward to church every Sunday because of our Kids Church.

For the past 12 years, since welcoming my oldest son, Cade, I have been a stay-at-home mom. Cade was born Adrenal Insufficient, making daycare not an option, and we have happily made it work to keep me at home with Cade, especially as our family grew with Elliot and Daisy. I have loved spending so much the past 9 years at their schools in every capacity from Teacher's Aid, Room Mom, Chaperone, Book Fair helper, ... you name it, I've done it! Serving is not new to me; before welcoming my children, I was involved in Women's Fellowship at my church in California, regularly hosting events, leading fundraisers, and teaching in summer Vacation Bible School.

In the past couple years, I've shared with my husband that I am ready to go back to work, and that it had to be a position where I could still be there for Cade's needs, as well as for our other children. Recently, through serving on the Board of Deacons, I learned of the need to expand Kids Church and immediately felt compelled to reach out to see how I might help. In meetings with Pastor Susan, we have talked about the needs of our families. I am eager to work together, with parent and staff input, to serve the needs of Kids Church families and to lead our outreach family events throughout the year. An opportunity like this one is exactly what I have been waiting for.

I am very grateful and humbled for this chance to serve this church in another capacity, and I especially look forward to serving some of our youngest people (and maybe giving the moms and dads a little bit of a break, too)!

*In faith, hope and love,*

*Becca Costa*

# FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

## May 2025

Church Council met with a quorum present on April 7, 2025, in the Parish House Board Room. After an opening prayer, the minutes of the March meeting were reviewed and accepted. Rev. Murtha shared highlights of her church work in the prior month and going forward. A two-part Lenten program is planned, along with special worship services. A new staff person to serve as Coordinator of Children & Family Ministries has been hired. She is Rebecca Costa and will work with Nicole in the program. Parents of our Kids Church program attend a special session with staff to solicit their respective thoughts and input on the program. Comment: This whole program continues to be the shining gem for our church's future! She reported that eight new members will be joining our church at the May 4th service.

The Treasurer's report, prepared by our bookkeeper, Kim, was reviewed and approved. Trustees reported that Robert Sheiman has been hired to seek a new, mission-aligned tenant for the Parish House, looking at broad possibilities. Also, it is reported that FCCW will be financially secure for 2025 because of expected investment income, but that an anchor tenant is needed for the Parish House beyond this year. The Board of Music reported that Nenad is presenting a concert on Friday, May 2nd, in the evening. The Music Committee and Deacons are working together to bring special music to Sunday services during Holy Week, and monthly thereafter.

Other Committee and Board's reported routine activity for the month. It was not until the report from the Search Committee that the meeting took on an air of excitement. The committee reported that they had a unanimous agreement on a candidate for the Pastor position with whom a contract agreement has been reached. The candidate's experience closely matched all of our profile needs with significant experience in new initiatives and ministry to families of all ages. The candidate's name and experience are in a brochure and letter from the search committee and will be mailed to members and friends of FCCW. Plans are now being made for a "Candidating weekend" for May 17th and 18th, with a "meet & greet" reception on the 17th with the candidate and family, and preaching at the Sunday, May 18th service. After that service there will be a Special Meeting of the Congregation in the Sanctuary to hear from the Search Committee regarding their work and decision, and then a vote by members of the Congregation on a Call to the candidate. In order to implement this plan, a motion was made to change the date of the Annual Meeting to June 8th and to conduct the Special Meeting on May 18th. After discussion the motion was passed. Of note is the fact that Board and Committee reports will not be due until mid-May, but should still be reported on the period, May 1, 2024 to April 31, 2025.

The last item of business presented was that the Woodbridge Earth Day Committee has asked if FCCW will be participating this year in Earth Day activities, and if the Parish House can be used for performances in case of rain. Council agreed to the use of the Parish House if required as long as the Committee was responsible for following through, considering that use would probably be a last-minute decision. Sanctuary tours can be conducted if we can find volunteers to coordinate them. Pastor Murtha noted there were two members who had expressed interest in coordinating some activities at this Woodbridge event. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned after a closing prayer. The next meeting of Council is scheduled for May 5, 2025, in the Parish House.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard A. Prescott, Moderator





# Friday Night Classical Concert

May 2, 2025 at 7:00 PM

First Church of Christ  
5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge

Pieces by Mozart and Franck



**Nenad Ivović**  
Piano



**Xiaoxuan Liu**  
Violin

For more information,  
call 203-389-2119  
Free will offering

## Good news!

New members are joining First Church  
of Christ, Woodbridge, UCC

~ Sunday, May 4, 2025 ~

Please save the date –

to meet our new members & join in our  
shared covenant to walk together in faith!



## Farm Petting Zoo for Mother's Day

Sunday, May 11  
1:00 - 2:30 p.m

- Baby goats, bunnies, llamas, donkeys, sheep & more
- Lawn games & sidewalk art

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

More information (203) 936-9356



## Special notes from the Pastor Search Committee

By now most readers of this issue of the *Parishioner* have heard the news that the Search Committee has unanimously recommended the **Rev. Andrew J. Wicks** of Glastonbury to become our 51<sup>st</sup> pastor. We hope you've read the letter and brochure, introducing Rev. Wicks, sent in early April. You are most welcome to call the church office if you'd like these sent to you by mail or email.

Our next step in the process is "**Candidating Weekend**" on May 17 – 18.

- **Saturday, May 17 (3:00 – 4:30 p.m.)** We welcome you to meet and greet Rev. Wicks and his family at an informal reception in the Parish Hall.
  
- **Sunday, May 18:**
  - **Worship Service:** Please share in our worship service, in-person or via Zoom, where Rev. Wicks will offer the sermon.
  
  - **Special Congregational Meeting:** Immediately after worship, we will convene a Special Congregational Meeting in the sanctuary where all members and friends of FCCW are welcome to ask questions about Rev. Wicks and the search process.
  
  - **Vote:** Following this discussion, members of FCCW will vote on Rev. Wicks' candidacy to become our pastor. Members who cannot be present in-person will be able to vote via Zoom.

Look for the "Call to Meeting" printed in this newsletter and in Sunday worship bulletins.

The Search Committee is so pleased to have found Rev. Wicks and excited to introduce him to you. We are grateful for the confidence the congregation has placed in the committee and in our thorough process.



# **NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025**

**FOLLOWING THE SUNDAY SERVICE**

The membership of the First Church of Christ, Woodbridge is hereby called to a special meeting in the Church Sanctuary on Sunday, May 18, 2025 immediately following the Sunday Service in order to:

**Receive and act upon the Search Committee's Recommendation to call the Rev. Andrew J. Wicks as FCCW's next Pastor.**

**No other business will be conducted at this meeting.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Susan Stoddard, Clerk**

**NOTE: The vote on this motion will be by paper ballot. The result being determined by the number of members in attendance who vote "yes" or "no".**

**Votes by members on ZOOM will be reported by the ZOOM host to the Tellers Committee, per Roberts Rules of Orders. Members attending on ZOOM via phone will verbally give their vote to the ZOOM host.**

## **Annual Reports Due**

Due to a Special Congregational Meeting on May 18th, the Church Council voted to change the FCCW Annual Meeting date from May 18 to June 8, 2025. With this change, your Annual Report will not be due until mid-May, allowing the Committee and Board chairs an extra few weeks to prepare their reports. However, the report period is still May 1, 2024 to April 31, 2025. Any questions should be directed to the Office Administrator, Jill.



# MEN'S FELLOWSHIP HOME-GOODS DRIVE



The Men's Fellowship, on hiatus for a while, is back and sponsoring a home-goods drive to support the Woodbridge Food Pantry. The pantry is in great need of cleaning and personal hygiene supplies to augment the food they provide to our needy Woodbridge neighbors. The need stems from the lack of donations of non-food items to the pantry. Items will be collected throughout May in a box located in the coat hanging area in the Parish House lobby. There will also be collection bags in the narthex on Sunday Mornings. The supplies will be taken to the Food Pantry periodically during the drive rather than waiting for one big delivery once the drive ends. Below is a list of supplies that are needed. Please be generous but please only donate the items the Food Pantry wants.

Thank you for your support!

**Cleaning Products:** Laundry Detergent and Pods, Dish Washing Soap and Pods, Antibacterial Wipes, Spray Cleaners, Lysol

**Personal Hygiene Products:** Shampoo and Conditioner, Unscented Soaps, Deodorants, Kleenex, Shaving Supplies

They could also use some **specific food items:** Cooking Oils, Salad Dressings, Mayo, Coffee & Tea (both caffeinated and decaffeinated).

**Make sure food items are not about to expire.**



SAVE THE DATE!!!!



**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL ON FRIDAY, JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup>**

The Strawberry Festival will be held on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the church green. Again, this year we are joining with Boy Scout Troop 907 who will be taking care of the grilling and meal service. So please bring your family and friends and join us! (Reminder: cash or checks only.) Michele Urban will again lead children and adults in singing and there will be activities for the children. As always, we need volunteers to help with biscuit baking Thursday morning, and on Friday morning we need help with berry hulling. On Friday afternoon into the evening, we need volunteers for set-up, shortcake serving, ticket taking, and we really need help with clean-up. There will be sign-up sheets in the Parish House the month prior to the event or you may email Sue Stoddard ([sstoddard@snet.net](mailto:ssoddard@snet.net)) or Nancy Dickgiesser ([nancy.dickgiesser@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nancy.dickgiesser@sbcglobal.net)). This festival is a wonderful community event! The volunteers have a fun time working together AND it is a great way to get to know your fellow parishioners. We really need your help!

Nancy Dickgiesser and Sue Stoddard, Co-Chairs





# Scout Troop 907

The Troop's Spring Fundraiser Plant and Fertilizer sale continues on Saturday, May 3. Please stop by the old firehouse and support the troop, and deepest thanks to those who supported the sale in April!

Unfortunately, the troop whitewater rafting trip did not work out the weekend of April 11-13 due to late winter weather conditions and became a wonderland "slumber snowstorm" and chance to hone their cooking skills. One scout said, "we had jambalaya, it was delicious, the best I've ever had." 17 scouts attended indoor go-carting on Thursday April 24 and had a blast.

The troop has a full schedule for the rest of the spring. Scouts will be canoeing and clamming in Rhode Island May 16-17. June will bring the year ending Court of Honor at Hammonasset on Saturday June 14, just after service hours at the church Strawberry Festival on Friday June 13. Scouts will also be camping at Camp Sequassen this summer.

The troop meets Thursdays in the Parish House scout room at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. [troop907.org](http://troop907.org)

Yours in Scouting  
**Rich Forselius**  
*Committee Chair/Chartered Organization Representative*  
[forselius@snet.net](mailto:forselius@snet.net)



**Support your local  
Boy Scouts and their  
Spring Garden Sale!**

**Sat's from 10am-3pm**  
**4/19, 4/26, & 5/3**  
At Old Firehouse on Center Road

Also at Church Service April 26<sup>th</sup> at OLOA  
and  
April 27 @ FCC & ALOA

You can also call the number below  
and one of the scouts will deliver  
your order to your home!!!

**TROOP 907 ANNUAL GARDEN SALE**





Free and Immediate Delivery !!!

- **FERTILIZER, MULCH, GRASS, SEED, POTTING, SOIL, COW MANURE, LIME**
- **FLOWERS FOR WINDOW BOXES AND WALKWAYS**

**FREE DELIVERY**

Troop 907 wants to help get you ready for Spring !!!



Get a jump on spring gardening and support the Boys Scouts of Woodbridge Troop 907.  
Call Tom Luciani at (203) 387-5909 for additional information.



### 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 June edition of  
*The Parishioner* are due by  
Tuesday May 14, 2025.  
\*Please submit materials by email  
office@uccw.org

### WORSHIP SERVICES

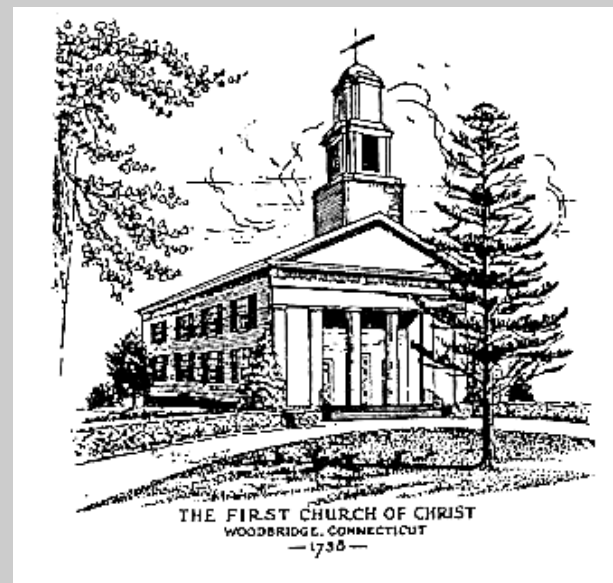
All are invited to gather in the  
Meetinghouse for our 10 AM worship service.  
For participation via Zoom,  
see our website - uccw.org

### 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.



### FCCW Staff:

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

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

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

**Office Administrator:** Jill Fahrbach ([office@uccw.org](mailto:office@uccw.org)) (203) 389-2119

**Sexton/Custodian:** Bob Turner



# May 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>27</p> <p>9:30 am Troop 907 Plant Sale 10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am Kids Church Parent Gathering 1:30 pm Private Party</p>	<p>28</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>29</p> <p>6:30 pm <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>2</p> <p>7:00 pm <b>Classical Music Concert</b></p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 12:00 pm Private Party</p>
<p>4</p> <p>10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:00 pm Church Council 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 pm <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Woodbridge Park Assoc 7:30 pm MA Group</p>	<p>8</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>11</p> <p>10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 10:30 am Neighborhood Music School 1:00 pm Petting Zoo Family Event</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6:30 pm <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group</p>	<p>15</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 3:00 pm Meet &amp; Greet with Rev. Andrew Wicks &amp; Family</p>
<p>18</p> <p>10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am Special Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees (TBD) 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:30 pm <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group</p>	<p>22</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>25</p> <p>10:00 am <b>Worship</b> 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>26</p> <p><b>** Memorial Day**</b></p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:30 pm <b>Choir Practice</b> 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group</p>	<p>29</p> <p>3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>9:30 am Musical Folk</p>

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

\*\* The church office will be closed on May 26, 2025