

THE PARISHIONER

AUGUST 2022

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST WOODBIDGE, CT

An Open, Welcoming and Affirming Church since 1738



Summer Reads

In the rhythm of church life, I call this season “summer sabbath.” In July and August, we step away from week-to-week, month-to-month service and renew our spirits in family visits, travel, gardens (did I say weeding?), picnics, sunsets by the water, and overall a time to exhale.

In this season, I trust you have plenty of good recommendations for summer book reads! If you’re looking for some biblical learning, spiritual nourishment, theological depth, and/or insight into what’s going on with the mainline Protestant church, here are some books I commend to you (*not in any particular order of importance*)

The Bible: If you want to learn more about the Bible, the first book is about the Old Testament/Hebrew scriptures and the second is about the New Testament:

The Return of the Chaos Monsters: and other backstories of the Bible, by Gregory Mobley (Yes, the author is the minister/professor who leads worship at First Church Woodbridge on the second Sunday of the month!)

Kingdom, Grace, Judgment: Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus (Though brilliant and searing, as well as very entertaining, this book is not light reading. Take it on only if you’re hungry for an entirely new look at the parables.)

Spiritual: If you want spiritual nourishment

The Gospel in Miniature: Mediations for when you have a minute, by Rev. Martin Copenhaver

Benedictus: a Book of Blessings, by John O’Donohue

Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in our Our Busy Lives, by Wayne Mueller

Theology: If you want more theological depth than you get from news commentators ...

Free of Charge. Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace, by Miroslav Volf

Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion, by S. Mark Heim

The Mainline Protestant Church: If our interim ministry process has got you thinking more broadly about what’s gone wrong in the mainline Protestant church and what current leaders believe is the way forward ...

Joining God in the Great Unraveling, by Alan Roxburgh

The Innovative Church, by Scott Cormode

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me if you want to know more before making a selection; I’d love to talk with you about your faith and a good book to feed it! Also note that all these books can be purchased on Amazon, including used copies which are less expensive.

Summer sabbath blessings,

Rev. Susan

COMMENTS FROM MODERATOR: "IMAGE"

A dictionary (remember them) definition of the word, image: "The general impressions that a person, organization or product presents to the public." Discussion at the June Council meeting indicated that neighbors and friends have questioned members of the church about: "Why is your church closing?" "Is your church selling its property?" "Are you tearing down buildings to build affordable housing?" etc. There would seem to be a view, "image", that we are closing up shop, folding our tents and going away. Some town officials, as evidenced by the recent town plans to construct a sidewalk adjacent to FCCW property on Newton Road, have proceeded to plan for a sidewalk without consulting with and/or notifying FCCW because there was nothing that said the town had to do so! Forgetting the fact that FCCW has been a good neighbor and shared property lines for 280 plus years.

I suppose one could point to a number of facts, from the recent past, as to why our image may have been impacted. The two years of the "pandemic" when many of our activities along with all other organizations were put on hold. The point, however, is not to dwell in the past, but to look at the present and into the future. Consider what picture was chosen by the "New York Times" in a recent article as a symbol representing the Town of Woodbridge. Our church sanctuary building! Consider the recent FCCW Strawberry Festival, which was attended by hundreds of people most of whom I had never seen before with many younger families and children. Two examples of positive images for our congregation!

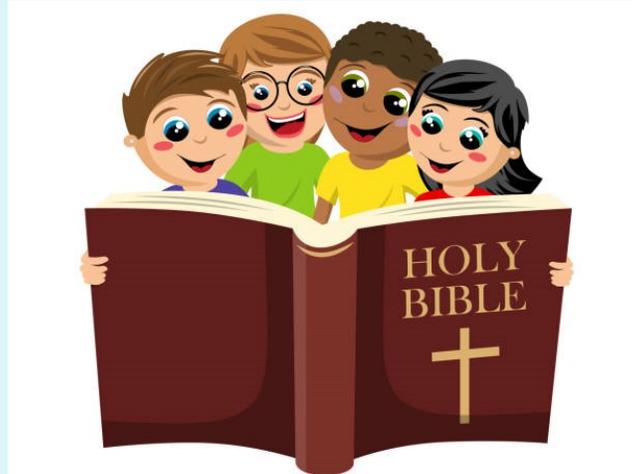
Both examples indicate that it is our responsibility to project a positive image for others to see. We must make known that we at FCCW are a place of worship, a social gathering place for the community, and a historical symbol representing the Town of Woodbridge. We are at a point of transition as we plan for meeting the spiritual needs of people representing a diverse, geographic population as an open and affirming house of worship and community welcoming location.

We must individually and as a congregation present a positive image in what we say and project privately and publicly, about what FCCW is planning and doing, and why. Yes, we are in a positive transition mode and should just explain that we are. There are plans for new and innovative ways to serve our congregation and our community. Just tell the public what we are doing and why, not defend what appears to them what they imagine we are doing. This means that we present the facts in more vigorous, public ways that FCCW is not selling property, or tearing down buildings, or planning to close, but that we are developing religious and community-based projects and programs as we prepare for our future role in meeting the spiritual and social needs of our membership, town's people and the Town. We, and only we, are responsible for projecting and presenting a positive "image" to the communities we serve! Please be sure to tell everyone you know and meet that we are here to stay, and to serve!

Please be sure to tell everyone you know and meet.

With God's help we will do it!

Respectfully, Richard A. Prescott, Moderator



~ ~ **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

BOY SCOUT TROOP #907 AUGUST UPDATE



Troop 907 is camping at Camp Sequassen, New Hartford, CT July 31 - August 6, see [Camp Sequassen – Connecticut Yankee Council, BSA \(ctyankee.org\)](http://www.ctyankee.org). Weekly meetings will return in the fall on Thursday, September 8. What a great time to join this active and cohesive group! We are always inviting prospective scouts and their families to join us. For more information visit <http://www.troop907.org> or contact Scoutmaster Tom Luciani at luciani3@sbcglobal.net or Committee Chair Rich Forselius at foreslius@snet.net.



The picture captures Charlotte and Emma Lindskog celebrating their graduation from Amity High School last month. They will both be furthering their educations at the University of Florida in the Fall.

Charlotte will be majoring in Architecture and Emma, Biology. We are thankful for their time and assistance with the technical needs at First Church. Many blessings to both of you as you take the “next steps” in your journey!

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.



SANCTUARY RESTORATION UPDATE. July 20, 2022

In the past few weeks, the Church Council and the Board of Trustees approved an application be made to the State Historical Preservation office (SHPO) for a matching grant for the completion of trompe l'oeil décor in the apse and walls of the sanctuary. See last month's Parishioner for details of the full scope of work in the sanctuary and narthex.

SHPO emailed the link to the application process on July 13. It is due by September 2. It may take 2-3 months more to hear back if we have (or have not) been granted the match. The contract with Canning must be made within 120 days of approval.

Representatives from the John Canning Company, who will complete the decorative work and oversee the subcontractors, met with Al Jarvis, Bob Turner, and me at the church to discuss details of the Phase Two work: They will be providing us the detailed budget for the SHPO application.

A formal fund-raising campaign for the sanctuary restoration will not take place until after the SHPO matching grant is secured and only when the Church Council gives approval to do so. I am pleased to announce that a Woodbridge couple, who are not church members, have offered to match, \$1 for \$1, the next \$10,000.00 in donations to the Fund. Many thanks to them for their support. Donations to the Sanctuary Fund can be made at any time. The Fund currently stands at approximately \$13, 000.00.

Best wishes for a blessed summer.

B. Joyce Simpson, Sanctuary Committee



Quote of the month: "I remember the guest minister who delayed going to coffee hour so that he could take some photographs of the sanctuary. He said he had never seen anything so beautiful."

(It was Rev. Hiram Brett)

FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

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

Submission Due Date

Articles and photos for the **September 2022** Edition of *The Parishioner* are due by **Wednesday, August 24.**

*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

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Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Telephone: (203) 389-2119

Email: office@uccw.org

Website: www.uccw.org —

FB: www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge

August 2022 First Church of Christ

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