

THE PARISHIONER

September 2025

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST WOODBRIDGE, CT *since 1738*

A Message from Pastor Andrew

Dear First Church Members and Friends,

In the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes, the author, Qoheleth, says “*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.*”

There’s a certain truth to that axiom, and yet, as I begin my ministry here among you as the 51st Pastor of First Church, lots of things are feeling new to me. There are lots of new faces to meet, plus many new practices and systems to learn. You all have been tremendously gracious in welcoming me and bearing with me as I figure out the finer details of being your pastor here!

As more than 4 dozen pastors before me can testify, having a new face in the pulpit has been done and will be done again. We may figure out how to do some things in new ways, but deep down, what we are doing is the same faithful living and community building that generations of Christians have done before us.

So, what’s the same and what’s new this fall?

Kicking off this new program year with Rally Day on September 7, we will continue to worship at 10 am every Sunday like we have for a long time. I hope we see YOU there! You may notice some new things like a *Time with the Children* in worship before our kids head off to Kids Church.

Our Children and Family programming will continue to share the love of God with young people here in our church and out in the world. We will have some new ideas, but they will all be rooted in the same vision of bringing people together to learn, grow and serve.

Our Boards and Committees will continue to meet and do their important work to build up our congregation. As we enter the fall, I am excited about our newly reconstituted Board of Christian Service, Music Board, and Stewardship Board.

And of course, on a personal level, our family is marking the 1st birthday of our son Sawyer! It’s hard to believe that we will no longer have an infant, but rather a full-fledged toddler. Say a prayer for us! Say two of them!

So perhaps Qoheleth was right, things may feel new, but we can stand firm and centered knowing that our work continues traditions from long before us. We are the holders of these traditions for a time and we will make them our own. In doing so we will continue to be a living, breathing Christian community that seeks to share peace, compassion, mercy and justice here and into the world. That may not be new, but it sure is revolutionary!

May God Bless You!

Kindly,
Pastor Andrew





FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Your Church Council met for its August meeting to greet our new Pastor, Andrew Wicks, and to bid "adieu and thanks" to our departing Interim Pastor, Susan Murtha. The meeting format was different than usual, with some regular business discussion, but the majority of time was devoted to a "roundtable discussion" by those attending. Of note, the

one major item of formal business was the unanimous vote of thanks to Janice Touloukian for her dedication to serving as volunteer pastoral care Pastor during our recent years of transition. As Moderator, I will send a letter to Janice thanking her for her caring presence for members of the congregation during this period of time.

The "roundtable" discussion meeting format allowed each member present to describe the role of their respective Board/Committee, their participation therewith, and share, as they wished, some of their own personal background. Rev. Wicks participated in a like manner, supplementing some life experiences not previously noted in his resume, and his hopes and plans for his future with FCCW. Rev. Murtha also shared some personal background information and expressed her thanks to all of us at FCCW for support during her interim ministry. She was thanked by members of the Council for all her time and effort in successfully bringing us through the period of successful transition. The light conversation and storytelling were, indeed, a warm and pleasant experience shared by all present. The setting was more like a "coffee hour" than a formal meeting and most enjoyable.

Lastly, a warm welcome to Rev. Wicks for accepting the challenges and opportunities for leading FCCW in its new beginnings. And---to Rev. Susan Murtha: Your presence in leading us during these last few years of transition has been a Godsend to us at FCCW. Without you we would NOT be at this point of a new beginning, today. I know that you have been told, but for one last time, I, on behalf of all of us at FCCW, express a warm and sincere "Thank You" for all you have done for us. Godspeed as you move on to whatever your next challenge will be!

Respectfully,
Richard A. Prescott, Moderator

2026 Budget Process – Budget Request Due Date

I am writing to notify church boards and committees that budget requests for 2026 are due to the Trustees by November 1, 2025. I also want to remind boards and committees that any funds budgeted to your group in 2025 that have not been spent by the end of the year will not fold over to your 2026 budget. The 2026 budget will be created by Trustees in January after we have closed the 2025 books. Once created, the budgets will then be approved by Council and then by the Congregation at the January Congregational Meeting. Please submit your requests to Carl Lindskog or leave them in the church office by November 1st.

Thank you,

Robert Heinemann, Chair, Board of Trustees

Children's Ministry Message for the Parishioner

FCCW Families and Children, what a wonderful summer we have spent together –from the Strawberry Festival to our wildly successful Lemonade Stand mission project, and many celebrations in honor of new beginnings for the life of our church! Yet just like that, summer is coming to a close!

Please join us for lots of fall excitement this September! For Rally Day on September 7th, we have a fun Kids Church celebration planned, on September 14th, we will be hosting visitors (including furry friends) from our summer Mission Project partner, Animal Rescue. Plus join us for our Family Ministry event *Leaves, Crafts & Nature Paths* on Sept 13th from 1-2:30.

As we kick off a new season of Kids Church, Ms. Nicole will lead our 7-12 year olds, while our children six and under spend their Sundays with Ms. Becca. This month we will be learning about King David and King Solomon from the Old Testament.

Finally, for our children headed back to classrooms, a little prayer for the first day of school:

Dear Lord,

Open my eyes to see new friends

Open my ears to hear my teacher

Open my mind to learn new things

Open my hands to help others

Open my mouth to speak kind words

Open my heart to love like you!

Amen.



Thank you, Rev. Janice Touloukian

As we celebrate the arrival of our new settled pastor, Rev. Andrew Wicks, one final acknowledgement is in order: thank you to Rev. Janice Touloukian, who voluntarily provided pastoral care as a member of FCCW staff for many years. Janice counselled and visited people, led and co-led worship, offered communion, and prayed with and for us in difficult times. Janice has been a great source of comfort to many, and her willingness to volunteer her time and talent was a significant support during the interim ministry of Rev. Susan Murtha.

For those of you who do not know Janice she is a graduate of Skidmore College and Yale School of Divinity, with a special emphasis on clinical pastoral education. Among other postings she served as the Associate Pastor for Newtown Congregational Church for over twenty years. In 2012 Janice joined other Newtown clergy working on the front lines to comfort a bereft and shocked community following the horrific shooting at Sandy Hook School: parents, friends, children, and neighbors for whom God's grace and peace had vanished in an instant. That experience profoundly affected Janice, and after her retirement in 2015 she continued to offer care and support to grieving people. For her loving care and concern we are very grateful.

Although Janice is stepping down from the pastoral care staff, she will continue to offer prayers of guidance and consolation, to assist the Board of Deacons, and to be a valued and respected elder of First Church. Thank you, Rev. Janice Touloukian.

FCCW RALLY DAY VISITORS WELCOME



**JOIN US SEPTEMBER 7 @ 10 AM
FOR WORSHIP,
KIDS CHURCH & MORE**

**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST,
WOODBIDGE**

Leaves, Crafts, & Nature Paths

Sponsored by First Church of Christ,
Woodbridge

Saturday September 13

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Scavenger Hunt

**Make Your Own Binoculars
for Scavenger Hunt**

Fall Crafts



**5 Meetinghouse Lane
Parish House lawn
(Rain location: Parish House)**

Contact: 203-389-2119

Welcome the New Stewardship Committee

We are excited to report that there is now a new Stewardship Committee in place. Al Jarvis, Amy Nelson, Joan Rifkin, and Sue Stoddard will be working closely with Pastor Andrew to create an exciting stewardship campaign this Fall. We are entering a new chapter for our church with Pastor Andrew coming on as our Settled Pastor. To continue to grow and thrive, we need you too! In the months ahead you will be receiving a pledge kick-off letter from us, hearing pulpit personals, and learning more about the importance of giving to our church. Your pledge will support programs such as Kids Church for our children and youth as well as continued outreach to young families in our community. We will be able to help support people in crisis in our community and abroad. Your pledge will continue to fund our music program. We will be able to create church sponsored mission projects. Your funds will continue to support our ministry team and help maintain our buildings. We will be able to continue to host outside groups that are so important to our community such as the Boy Scouts, AA, and the Neighborhood Music School.

We will be looking into ways of getting electronic pledging up and running within the next month or so. This will be a great upgrade, allowing people to pay their pledges online.

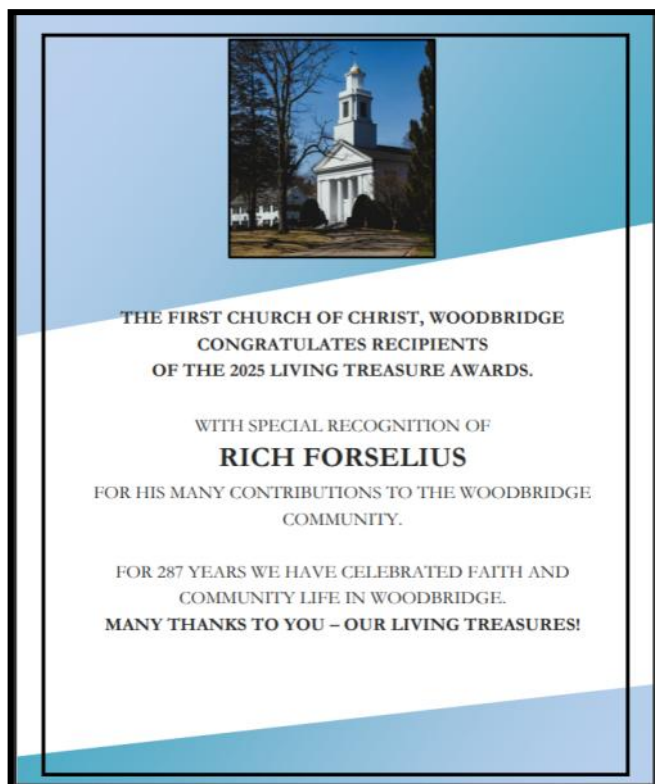
This is a very exciting time for our church. It's a new beginning! We hope you will help us as we work to provide all the programs you find so meaningful. Together with our time, talent and treasure, we will be able to continue to grow and thrive.

In the coming weeks, look for opportunities to share your stories, offer your ideas, and help shape the future of our congregation. Let us celebrate the spirit of stewardship, not just as a campaign, but as a living expression of our faith and values. With gratitude and anticipation, we look forward to what we will accomplish together in this season of new beginnings.

Woodbridge Living Treasure Award

Beginning with the inaugural Living Treasure Awards in 2018, Human Services honors deserving individuals who are nominated, and selected by committee, for their outstanding dedication and consistent community service. Any Woodbridge resident, age 60 or over, who has demonstrated positive actions to improve the quality of life for Woodbridge, has contributed and may continue to contribute their time to enhance our community as a whole, and has performed this work on a volunteer, unpaid basis, is eligible for nomination for the Living Treasure Award.

We are thrilled to announce that **Rich Forselius** is one of the winners of the 7th Annual Living Treasure Award of 2025. The awards ceremony will be on Thursday, September 25 at 6 pm with a dinner to follow at 6:30. For more information or to purchase tickets for the event please call (203) 389-3429



Dear members & friends of First Church Woodbridge,

A small note to say a huge thank you for all kindness and generosity you gave in my farewell weeks! It was an honor and a blessing to serve as your interim minister, and I am so excited for all that will come as you work together with the gifted leadership of Rev. Andrew Wicks!

All blessings!,

Rev. Susan Murtha





Scout Troop 907 News

Your Scouting BSA Troop 907, chartered by the First Church of Christ, had an awesome time at the Connecticut Yankee Council's Camp Sequassen <https://www.sequassen.org/> in New Hartford, CT the week of August 3-9. Scouts experienced great weather and Senior Patrol Leader Elijah Mooring was an excellent leader to the troop. The troop received ribbons for troop %

attendance and honor patrol. They participated in hikes, swimming, canoeing, wet sandwich relay team, craft challenges, friendship campfires, even encountered several bear visits, Scouts also earned merit badges and credit toward rank advancement which will be awarded at the troop's winter Court of Honor in December.

Scouts were first in volleyball, first in orienteering, third in conquistadors where scouts hand paddle canoes to the island while avoiding staff "sea monsters" that swamp boats, fourth in the climbing wall, first in ultimate frisbee and first in scout sonar vs. other troops camping.

Photos show scouts arriving at camp, opening campfire at the lake, "time travel" uniforms, honor guard in Viking uniforms, canoe race, evening campfire with honorable flag retirement ceremony, the troop observing land and sea games, and typical meal in the dining room.

Troop 907 is an active, robust, youth-led, cohesive and historic troop, serving Woodbridge and regional youth at First Church for 55 years. Many troop events are being planned for the fall and winter. Scouting is fun and educational, and troop 907 is exceptional with Scoutmaster Tom Luciani and three outstanding Assistant Scoutmasters. As always you and your potential scout are welcome to attend the Thursday evening meetings in the scout room in the Parish House, rear entrance. Regular weekly meetings in the scout room will start up again on September 11. This will be preceded by a Thursday fun night bowling on September 4.

Adults are also welcome to become registered and part of the troop committee, your volunteer help is always needed. We will be rechartering soon for 2026 and would like to include you!

More on the troop at troop907.org or feel free to contact me.

Best wishes,

Rich Forselius

Committee Chair

Chartered Organization Representative

forselius@snet.net



FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome to join each Wednesday at
11:00 a.m. in the Parish House

PARISHIONER DEADLINE

Articles and photos for the October edition of
The Parishioner are due by
Tuesday September 18, 2025.
*Please submit materials by email
office@uccw.org

WORSHIP SERVICES

All are invited to gather in the
Meetinghouse for our 10:00 a.m. worship
service. For participation via Zoom,
see our website - uccw.org

MARKING LIFE'S PASSAGES

We mourn the loss of Joanna (Jo) Page who died on
July 26. A memorial service in Jo's honor will be held
at her long-time residential community of Ashlar
Village in Wallingford, on September 6.

We mourn the August 17th death of Ollen "Du"
Dupree Jr., brother-in-law of Roger Calistro and
Kathleen Foster, and husband to Cara Calistro who
grew up in First Church. Information about a
memorial service will be shared when it is available.

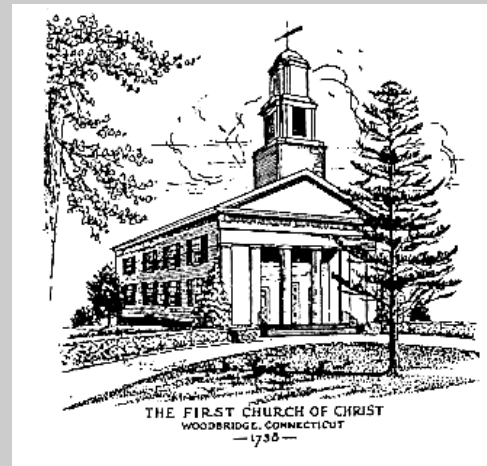
CALL FOR PICTURES

We want to publish your photos!

Please send in any pictures that you may have
taken at church or a church event by email at
office@uccw.org

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.



Contact Info for FCCW Staff:

Minister: Rev. Andrew Wicks (PastorAndrew@uccw.org) (860) 798-2575

Coordinator for Children's Ministries: Becca Costa (msbecca@uccw.org) &
Nicole Giannetta (msnicole@uccw.org)

Office Administrator: Jill Fahrback (office@uccw.org) (203) 389-2119

Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 10:00 am Worship 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	1 **Labor Day**	2 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon	3 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group	4 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	5	6
7 10:00 am Rally Sunday 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church	8 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:00 pm Church Council 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	9 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon	10 9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group	11 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	12	13 9:30 am Musical Folk 1:00 pm Leaves, Crafts & Nature Paths Family Event
14 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	15 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	16 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon	17 9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group	18 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	19	20 9:30 am Musical Folk
21 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church	22 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	23 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon	24 9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm MA Group	25 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	26	27 9:30 am Musical Folk
28 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts	29 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA	30 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon	1 9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Woodbridge Park Association Meeting 7:30 pm MA Group	2 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	3	4 9:30 am Musical Folk

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

**** The church office will be closed on Sept 1, 2025**