



THE HERALD

First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December



Dearest Friends,

Advent and Christmas are among the most sacred of seasons: the beginning of our liturgical year; an ancient celebration of the return of the light from the longer nights of autumn/winter; and most significantly, a time of reflection during which we prepare for the birth of the Christ Child over 2000 years ago, and wait in prayerful anticipation of the return of the Messiah.

The season of Advent is a sacred opportunity for the contemplation of God's love. We celebrate the aspects of our human and divine natures, both our imperfections and God's perfect spirit within us. Tradition holds that we light a candle for each of the four Sundays of Advent. Each candle focuses on an aspect of that divine nature, of what comes into the world through Christ's birth: Hope. Peace. Joy. Love.

These are expressions of our divinity that we are called to share with each other as outward gestures manifesting God's grace. This year, as we create more opportunities for gathering as a community at First Church in a post-pandemic world, I look forward to sharing in these activities with you and your children so that we can count down to Christmas together - not a countdown to presents, but a countdown to Jesus coming to us as the light of the world.

As you hear the stories of the prophets and the birth narratives of Jesus over the coming weeks, listen closely. We have heard them dozens of times over the course of our lives, so sometimes we may miss parts of what is being proclaimed:

"The story of Christmas begins under the rule of an oppressive Roman government; the incarnation of God happens through an unmarried teenager, in a small town, birthed in a barn, witnessed by shepherds (at the bottom of the social ladder), completely under the radar of political & religious authorities. This is the theme that will continue through Jesus' life. Jesus washes dirty feet, befriends women and tax collectors, embraces lepers. God does not work through the established channels to transform the world. It is the poor and the marginalized who bring the good news." (Peter Sawtell, Eco-Justice Ministries)

How are we each being called to be a light to the world? I am so grateful to be embarking on this 2022 Advent journey with you, particularly with our children leading the way to Christmas through their joy, their courage, their excitement, & their hope, as we prepare for Jesus!

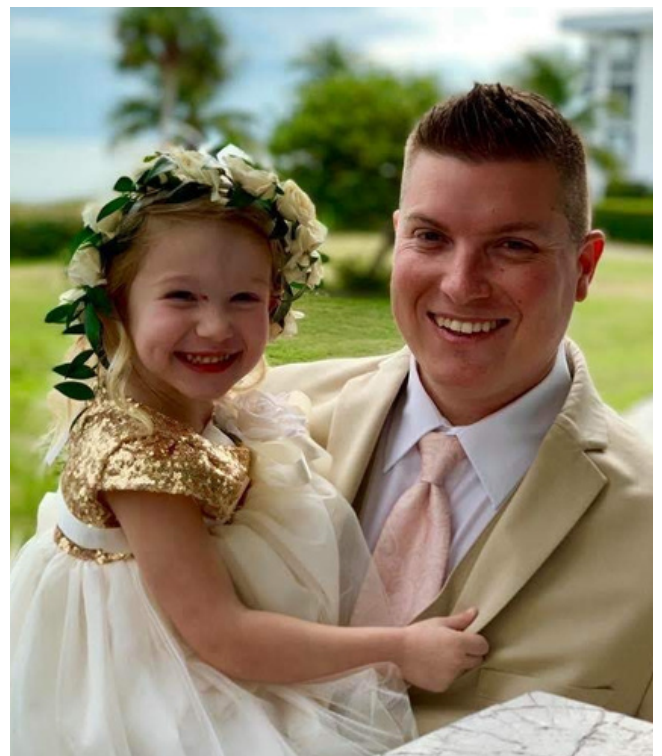
Brightest Blessings,
Kim--

WELCOME



We welcome Ariana Honess to the Pastoral Team as our Student Pastor! Ariana is in her first year at Yale Divinity School and is in the discernment process, hopefully seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ in the next few years. She is passionate about social justice, anti-racism, and creation care, as well as local church life. She is already working with our Confirmands and High Road youth and will be leading our Advent Devotional on Monday nights. Please welcome her to the community.

We welcome Albert Faustini to the Pastoral Team as our Property Manager! Albert is looking forward to working alongside the Facilities Board to help us be good stewards of our buildings and grounds. It takes dedication and skill to maintain the historic spaces in our care so that they can continue to be the Meetinghouse for the community and further our many ministries. We are grateful to him for his guidance. Please reach out to Albert to introduce yourself if you have gifts and skills to share in this work.



FAITH



MAYA
ANGELOU



AND THE
FREEDOM POETRY
OF ADVENT



Join us virtually for our
Advent Devotional series,
Mondays 7:30-9 pm.
Meeting ID: 997 3322 6397



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

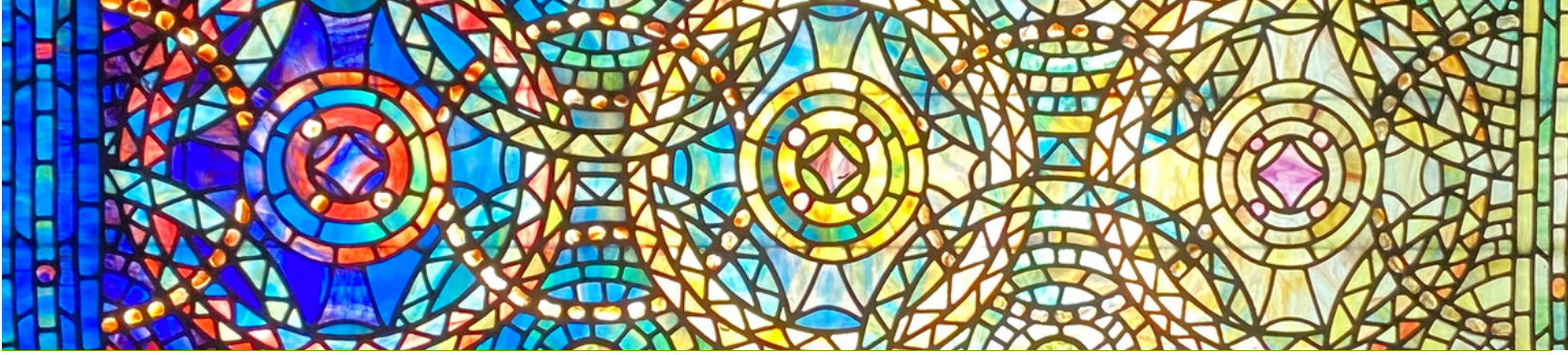
CHRISTMAS EVE

PAGEANT 4 PM

LESSONS AND CAROLS 10PM

CHRISTMAS DAY

SERVICE 11AM



Dearest Disciples and Friends of First Church,

Thank you all so very much for such a beautiful Installation Day! The worship service was deeply moving and the celebration following was delightful. What a gift to be able to enjoy that time with guests and visitors as well! I am so grateful to all the Musicians, Deacons, Council Members, and Members of the Pastoral Team for making it all possible! Thank you also for the beautiful gifts. I hope you will come visit my office and peruse the beautiful Pentateuch Volume of the Saint John's Bible! It is a treasure. And the lamp and stole from the children are so thoughtfully chosen and perfect mementos of that day.

Rev. Copenhaver told me that as a person who visits many churches, he is skilled at knowing when the Spirit is moving in a place and that it surely is alive and well here! I am proud (if that can be said) of you all, of the way we live out the mandate to BE THE CHURCH! Thank you for calling me as your Senior Pastor! I will continue to pray every day that I will prove worthy of you all and of the call.

Your Sister in Christ,

Vanessa



Please join us for Wednesday morning Bible Study at 10am, in person and online. We are reading Isaiah.



Are you interested in donating flowers for the front of the Church on Sunday morning? It's a lovely way to recognize a birthday, anniversary, or a loved one. Many dates are still available. Please contact Candice Meader: 203-368-6738.

DISCIPLE ROAD

MIDDLE ROAD

Middle Road students have been exploring the Love All, Bless All, and Welcome All pathway this fall. We have been baking for our family, hosting coffee hour, making Binky Patrol blankets, and cooking an Operation Hope meal. Middle Roaders are full of ideas for how to make First Church a more welcoming space - stay tuned!





Join us for our
Annual Three Kings Bazaar
at First Church Fairfield!
Saturday, December 3, 2022
10AM – 8PM

DATE/TIME CHANGES

The town of Fairfield Tree Lighting will be held on **Saturday, December 3 at 4:15** on the green across the street from the church. Our men's group will be serving hot dogs on our front lawn. Hot chocolate and hot cider will be served just inside. We will have a bake sale, book fair, raffle, silent auction and tag sale. Come enjoy the festivities, get some Christmas shopping done and grab a bite! We look forward to seeing you!

First Church 2022 Christmas Angel Gifts for the Central CT Coast YMCA Families in Transition Shelter in Bridgeport



This will be the 24th year First Church will deliver joyous Christmas gifts to the YMCA shelter. As you know these past 34 months have been extremely difficult for so many people, especially the multiple families in the YMCA apartments we want to help this year.

If you are able to make Christmas brighter for any of these family members please see Debby Dwyer in church in early December to pick up a gift tag for a child or parent or contact her at 203-255-8835. Please let Debby know by Sunday, December 12 if you can help. Gift tag information will include name, age, parent or child, male or female, sizes, etc. **Approximate limit of \$30 on gifts for children. Gift cards may be purchased for parents in the \$25-\$50 range (\$50 limit).** Once you have purchased your gift **please wrap in festive paper with name tag attached (please wrap gift cards as well).** Gifts may be dropped off to Debby at 2607 Congress Street, Fairfield or bring them to her at church **by Sunday, December 18.** Debby will also pick up if needed. Call Debby with any questions.

Update for Welcome the Stranger

First Church continues to set up apartments for incoming CIRI refugees with our partner churches.

We recently set up apartments in New Haven and Bridgeport for families and individuals from Afghanistan, Guatemala, and Ethiopia. If you would like to help our efforts, you can donate your time (cleaning and setting up apartments), supplies (we are especially in need of paper blinds), and furniture (bedside tables are our greatest need)! Contact Nikki at treschukenney@gmail.com for more information on how you can get involved.



Covenant to Care for Children
Helping Connecticut's Children in Need.

Dear Friends:

Happy Holidays and thank you to anyone who donated Thanksgiving gift cards.

On the first two Sundays in December (the 4th and 11th), we will hold sign ups for Christmas gifts for Covenant to Care after the 10:15 service in the connecting corridor. Please sign up to make Christmas happier for children in need.

Thank you and blessings to all.

Marilyn, Kim and Jessie

FIRST CHURCH FAIRFIELD
12TH ANNUAL

PASTA DINNER

Save-the-Date



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

WAKEMAN HALL

5PM TO 7PM

FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE
DEACONS' EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES
CHRISTMAS EVE
PAGEANT 4 PM
LESSONS AND CAROLS 10PM
CHRISTMAS DAY
SERVICE 11AM



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