



THE HERALD February 2021

First Church Congregational, UCC



A Letter from the Pastor

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

You may know the old joke about the person praying, "Lord, give me patience. And hurry up. Amen"

We all need patience – with each other, with ourselves – in these deeply troubled days. I want to share with you the wise words of Rachel Hackenberg from the "UCC Still Speaking Devotional" on January 17:



"Paul stood up and began to speak: 'The God of this people Israel made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm God led them out of it. For forty years God put up with them in the wilderness.'" Acts 13:16-18, excerpts

I often wonder why God puts up with us.

We're terribly wasteful – with the planet, with one another, with life. We're dreadfully self-centered – in our pride, in our needs, and even in our shame. We're easily frightened – by what is new, by what is unknown, by what is evil, and (puzzlingly) by what is good.

What kind of deity has patience for such behavior, generation after generation?

"A loving God," is the right answer, of course. I still know my Sunday school lessons. But my lingering dissatisfaction with the right answer suggests that I'm asking the wrong question.

What kind of people continues such behavior, generation after generation?

People in pain. People in pain because of evil, and people causing pain out of evil. People carrying the unhealed pain of previous generations. People jealous of the healing others have found. People raging against everything and everyone except the pain itself.

When my kids were in elementary school, I learned to recognize that a sour attitude at home in the evening meant they had poured all their energy into keeping their composure during the school day, only melting down into a tantrum at home where it was safe to do so. For forty years in the wilderness, the ancient Israelites raged and wrestled against God, finally releasing generations of pain that they had kept tightly concealed while living under Pharaoh's oppression.

And God put up with them. Not because God is patient with pain. But because God is patient with healing.

I invite you, Dear Friends, to join me in Rachel's prayer, "Put up with me a little longer, God, in this wilderness of healing" that we may find healing for our individual pains and the pains of our nation and so have the patience to see us through these troubled days.

Your Brother in Christ,



EXCITING NEWS

Dear Friends and Members of First Church,

We are pleased to inform you of some exciting news.

After conversations with us, Vanessa, and the Personnel Board, and following much prayerful consideration by David and Geri, David has agreed to remain our Senior Pastor for an additional year—through August 31, 2022, instead of August, 2021.

This decision to stay an additional year comes after reflection on the heightened stresses of the pandemic and how it has impacted the worship and overall life of First Church.

We are sure that all would agree this is a very challenging time for our congregation as we face such significant change. David is happy to continue on for another year to help ease the transition to “life after the Coronavirus.”

While the decision and timing of his retirement is ultimately David’s decision, this change in plan has been affirmed by both the Personnel Board and the Council. We all feel this additional time is a gift to our church.

Thank you for holding First Church, all of its members, the Deacons and Leaders, and the Pastors and other members of the Pastoral Team in your prayers.

Faithfully yours,

Casey Mulqueen, Moderator
caseymulqueen@gmail.com
203-247-3991

Jim Muschett, Assistant Moderator and Chair of Personnel
jmuschett@optonline.net
203-521-3978

OUTREACH

Personal Care Items for CIRI

We asked CIRI what our refugee friends could use, and they mentioned that personal hygiene products like hairdryers, soap, shampoo, etc. are currently in need.

Patty and I have created this signup genius if you are interested in providing a hairdryer or any other products. We are collecting through Sunday, Feb 7.

Below is the link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0e4fa9ad2fa6ff2-refugee2> - items can be dropped off at church or at Patty's house (address included).



Thank you for your continued support!
Welcome the Stranger Team

Council of Churches Coat Drive

Now until February 15th the CCGB is collecting new or gently used coats sizes youth to adult . You may drop them off in Wakeman Hall or deliver them to 1718 Capitol Ave., Bridgeport on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 9:30 AM - 1:30 PM.

Please place them on the table labeled CCGB Coats in Wakeman Hall.



This Super Bowl Sunday you can help feed those without even a bowl of soup to eat.

Look for our YOUTH in front of the Sanctuary. they'll be the ones with the BIG soup pots!

Drive up with your donation of cash, check or food.

**WEAR YOUR FAVORITE TEAM'S GEAR,
DECORATE YOUR CAR AND JOIN OUR TEAM
AGAINST HUNGER!**

SOUSMPER BOWL OF CARING

HELP TACKLE HUNGER

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7
11:30AM - 12:00PM

FIRST CHURCH FAIRFIELD
148 BEACH ROAD
DROP OFF IN FRONT OF THE SANCTUARY

ALL DONATIONS WILL GO TO nOURish

Children & Youth Ministry



Contact Wendy at wendymuschett@optonline.net for more information

Hello Middle Roaders,
Melissa and I are keeping our fingers crossed that our Sunday good weather streak continues, and we can keep meeting in person on Sunday mornings at 10:30. Remember to dress warmly so you are comfortable. Blankets are fine, too.

We are going to try gathering in a NEW SPOT—please come to the Beach Road side of the church on the black top area by the mailbox.

If we should have to meet on Zoom, I will send out the link with all the information during the week.

We look forward to more faith building, Faces of Peace exploration, and fun!

We will meet on the following Sundays in February: 2/7, 2/21, and 2/28. We will NOT meet on 2/14 which is the school February break.

Take care,
Wendy and Melissa



HIGH ROAD

(9th-12th Grade Youth Group)

Meets Thursday Evening
6:30 PM

Outside on the lawn
(weather permitting)

Contact Vanessa for more information
vrose@firstchurchfairfield.org



A Safe space and loving community for LGBTQIA+ teens and friends. Fridays at 4:00 p.m. on ZOOM. Please contact the [Rev. Vanessa Rose](mailto:vrose@firstchurchfairfield.org) for more information.



“Come Home” to your House of Worship

It is so hard being away from each other! Yes, thank God for on-line worship and CDs, where would be without them?

It is tempting to “stay away” because we cannot assemble in person. I hope that Lent will be a time when we all re-commit ourselves to worship – through technology. Yes, it is not the same as in person. But it still keeps us connected with God, with each other, and with God’s vision, hope and strength for these days.

On **Ash Wednesday, February 17** we will worship on Zoom at 7:30 pm. Log on to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86103746453?pwd=ZjFmZm02Q2xaYnNic0RnYnVMRmY4Zz09> or call 1-929 -436 -2866 (Meeting ID: 861 0374 6453 Passcode: 189452).



Each Sunday find us on www.facebook.com/firstchurchffld or on our website Homepage www.firstchurchfairfiel.org at 10:15 am.

Let’s take this Lenten Journey together as best we can. The story of God’s unfolding love of God in Jesus Christ, to the Cross and the Empty Tomb will show us the way through our own trials. Our hope is founded on God’s abiding presence in all of life, in person and on-line.



Lenten Devotionals



As Lent draws nearer, so does the milestone marking a full year of quarantine - a year that has been filled with challenges and pain, and in which we have all endured major changes in how we go about our daily lives.

Lent is a time to contemplate, to return to God, and to consider with seriousness what really matters in our lives of faith.

This year, more than ever, Lent will be a difficult season, but also one that hopefully presents opportunities for reflection, personal growth, and an outpouring of community support.

Beginning on February 22nd, student pastor Heidi Butler will be leading a devotional class on Monday nights throughout Lent focusing on spirituality and closeness to God through prayer, discussion, and exploration of art and written word using "Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain," from the company "A Sanctified Art."

Gathering time will begin at 7:30pm, with the program beginning by 7:50pm and finishing by 9:00pm. Please contact Heidi (heidi.butler@yale.edu) for more information! --

Log on to <https://zoom.us/j/91357117765?pwd=OGZEV2V2N3VnSytMdUIVb1piR25qdz09>

(Meeting ID: 913 5711 7765_Passcode: Fairfield1)

or call 1-646 -558 -8656 (Meeting ID: 913 5711 7765 Passcode: 6261225580)



For February the Women's Spirituality Group will meet on February 24th from 6:30 to 8:00 via zoom. We will be discussing several meditations from the book "Meditations of the Heart" by Howard Thurman. Anyone who doesn't have the book can contact Rita Skog (ritaskog@hotmail.com) to receive copies of the February readings.



All Church Annual Finance Meeting on ZOOM

Tuesday, February 9
7:15 PM

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/6982593017?pwd=b0w0VS9VMWITb25XZXdSSUlxdkZUdz09>

Meeting ID: 698 259 3017

Passcode: Fairfield1

Call In

1- 646- 558 - 8656

Meeting ID: 698 259 3017

Passcode: 173929

Click [HERE](#) for Reports
Printed copies available in
Wakeman Hall



COME RING YOUR HEART OUT!

HAND BELL CHOIR



TUESDAYS 6:00-7:00PM
IN THE SANCTUARY

Contact Cheri Evan cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org for more details!



Tech Ministry Team

Are you tech savvy?

Would you like to be?



Our new ministry with online worship is looking for members! You don't have to have all the experience in world just some and a desire to learn as we grow. Basic knowledge on using a computer and I-Pad is helpful.

Our current team is Cheri Evan, Alan Fuehring, Andrew and David McKinnis. Each Sunday two of us work together to help live stream worship: controlling the camera, microphones, monitoring our social media platforms and noting prayer requests. We also assist with Zoom meetings and other worship services as needed.



Training will be provided for those interested. Please contact Cheri with questions and to schedule a demonstration if you are interested but not sure you have the skill set. cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org or 203-864-5969 (cell)

10th Annual Deacons'
Fund Pasta Dinner
Sunday, February 14th 2021
First Church Fairfield - 148 Beach Road

COVID-19 has impacted everyone and everything but, the First Church Deacons' Fund continues to help people through these uncertain times. We invite you to order food from the 10th Annual Pasta Dinner! Come drive up and pick up food for you and your family from 4-6pm. A free will donation will be collected to benefit the Deacons' Emergency Assistance Fund.

All Food Generously

Provided by



Reservations are a Must!

Email patadinnerfirstchurch@gmail.com to order food. We offer Gluten-Free and Vegetarian options. Please let us know if you need these when making reservations.



EMAIL patadinnerfirstchurch@gmail.com or CALL (203) 307-0456



First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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