



THE HERALD

First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

February

Happy February, Friends! It is particularly important during this bleak month to have things to look forward to, don't you think?

I hope you will peruse this newsletter, full of offerings and opportunities and find more things to anticipate with joy. Consider this a love letter from your church friends and family with things that will delight your spirit. The Pasta Dinner is back in person! The youth are bringing back the Souper Bowl of Caring on February 12th. A new friend of the congregation, the Rev. Dean Lindsey is leading a faith formation series on Climate Care. We will sponsor a new refugee family with the Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Coalition and have new friends and neighbors. We will assist our friends at Fairfield Yabantu as they install their new washer and dryer in the Youth Center of Rhodes Hall to support their community building work. We will enter the season of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service and begin a new devotional inspired by the poetry of Wendell Berry.

And so much more!

As The Message translates, Proverbs 13:12, "Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around." What are those things for you that can feel like a sudden good break that might, if not completely turn your life around, at least bring some fulfillment? For me, happy events on the calendar can feel like an opportunity to keep myself oriented in a positive direction.

Please challenge yourself to try a new offering and to consider ways you might be called to offer things that others will look forward to with delight! To get us started, I will treat 4 people who tell me they have read this letter to lunch this month at Chef's Table! I would be delighted to share a meal with you! Just email me and say: "I'm in!" and we'll pick a day.

Your sister in Christ,
Vanessa

FAITH



Adult Faith Formation Series

Rev. Dean Lindsey, a retired Presbyterian minister who has just found a new spiritual home at First Church along with his wife Peggy, also a retired Chaplain, is offering a two-week class via zoom on **Monday February 6th and 13th 7:30-9**. This will lead us into our Lenten Devotional.

The series to be "Stirring the Waters: People of Faith

confront Climate Change." Using Biblical resources and theological reflections, we will consider how Christians may talk about and respond to the consequences of climate change and sea level rise. ZOOM Meeting ID: 893 1353 0287 Passcode: 882825

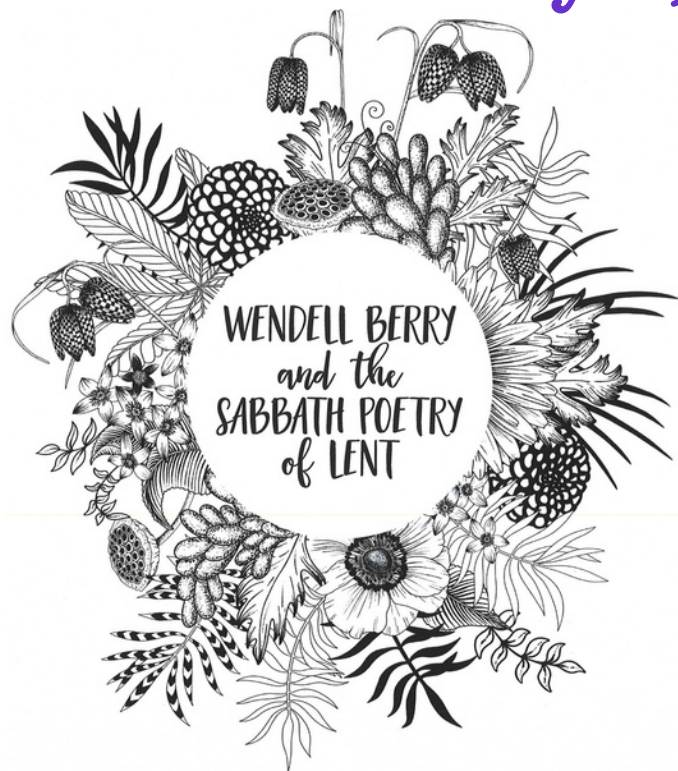
Reverend Jake Joseph will be back as our guest preacher on February 19



Rev. Jake Joseph is our preacher in residence. He is also the Associate Regional Director in ADL's Connecticut Regional Office. Having grown up in an interfaith household with a Christian mother and a Jewish father, he has a deep love of both Judaism and Christianity. Jake received his BA in French from Grinnell College in Iowa and his Masters of Divinity and Graduate Certificate in Human Rights from Emory University in Atlanta. He was the

Associate Minister at First Church in Guilford, CT and the Associate Minister for many years at Plymouth UCC in Fort Collins, Colorado. In Colorado, he was the LGBTQ representative to Colorado Governor Polis' Clergy Council. Jake is currently the founder and Chair of the National LGBTQ Subcommittee for the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) as a housing authority commissioner and former board chair. Jake has been deeply involved with the LGBTQ Task Force helping plan Atlanta, Houston, and the Denver Creating Change Conferences. He recently represented ADL at the LGBTQ Victory Institute in DC. He and his scientist husband, Gerhard, live in Milford, Connecticut.

Lenten Devotionals to begin Monday, February 27, 7:30pm virtually



The word “Lent” comes from an old English word for “lengthen,” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. Anticipating Easter, the church prepares with forty days of fasting and reflection, the better to celebrate the great feast when it comes.

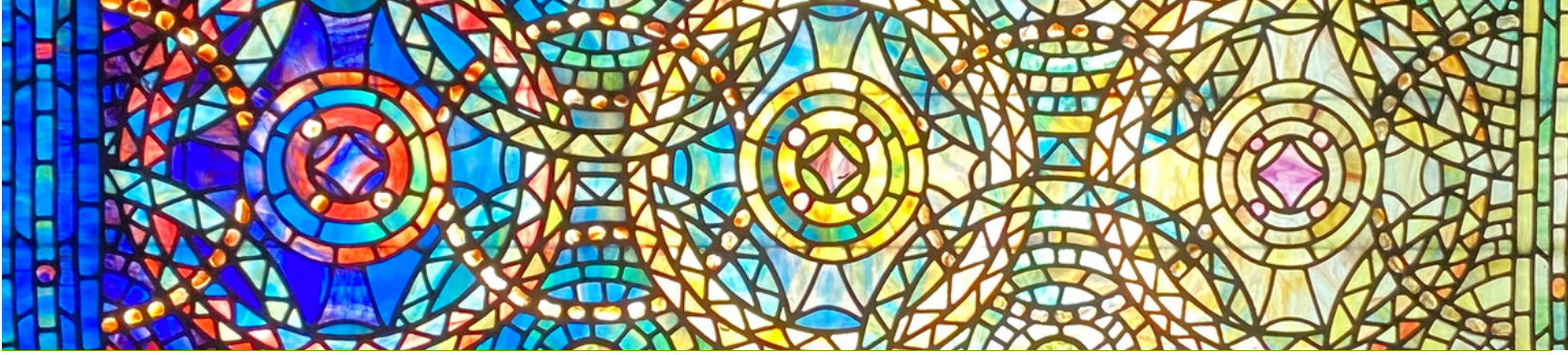
The word “sabbath” comes from an old Hebrew word for “to stop,” and refers to pausing secondary activities (like work) to clear space for the primary ones (like relationships, delight, study, freedom, beauty, restoration - and

resurrection). The poet Wendell Berry calls “the idea of sabbath...as rich and demanding an idea as any I know” – and over the decades, Berry has devoted many Sundays to writing “sabbath poems” that explore the depths of this rich, demanding idea. In this Lenten devotional, biblical texts walk hand-in-hand with Berry’s sabbath vision of the natural world, and together they suggest simple, accessible practices you can try yourself, with your family or friends, or with your congregation.

Meeting ID: 893 1353 0287 Passcode: 882825



**Ash Wednesday
is February 22
Service at 7:30**



MUSIC
in the
MEETINGHOUSE

Music in the Meetinghouse presents our Lenten Organ Recital series. These 30-minute lunchtime concerts offer the chance to hear our renowned pipe organ played by some of the region's best organists! Our 2023 series begins Wednesday, March 1 at 12:15 PM, recurring each Wednesday of Lent. Hope to see you there!

March 1: Robert Kwan (Trinity Church, Southport)

March 8: TBD

March 15: William Atwood (Director of Music, Diocese of Bridgeport)

March 22: Chris Muller (Stratford United Methodist Church)

March 29: Frank Martignetti (First Church, Fairfield)

Call to Annual Financial Meeting, 2023 Tuesday February 21, 2023

7:00PM Dessert and Coffee 7:30PM Meeting

The Annual Financial Meeting of First Church Congregational, UCC in Fairfield, CT will be held in Wakeman Hall to receive and accept the reports of:

Finance Board

Treasurer

Investment Committee

The Store

Giving Sunday Annual Giving

Auditor

Act on Proposed Budget for 2023

Transact any other business that may rightfully come before it



COMING SOON

FIRST CHURCH OF FAIRFIELD

12TH ANNUAL



PASTA DINNER

WAKEMAN HALL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with Live Music

FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE DEACONS' EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND WHICH PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OUR FRIENDS AT CHIP'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

RESERVE ONLINE AT FIRSTCHURCHFAIRFIELD.ORG OR



SAVE THE DATE!

Square Dance

Saturday Evening - March 4



Women's Spirituality

First Church's Women's Spirituality group meets the 4th Wednesday of each month to discuss readings which we have chosen to explore life, spirituality and faith. We meet in the Eunoia room from 6:30-8:00 p.m. and simultaneously via Zoom.

Watch the weekly word for updates. Newcomers are welcome! If you would like to join us for the first time, or wish more information, please contact Amy-Alison at: amyaliward@gmail.com

The Men's Retreat is back!

We will gather for a one-day retreat with our brothers from First Baptist on **March 11th from 10 am – 4 pm** at the Blackhawk Country Club (formerly Oronoque) in Stratford. Cost is \$60.

Please contact David McKinnis – david@bethandddavid.org, 203-246-8138 – for more information.



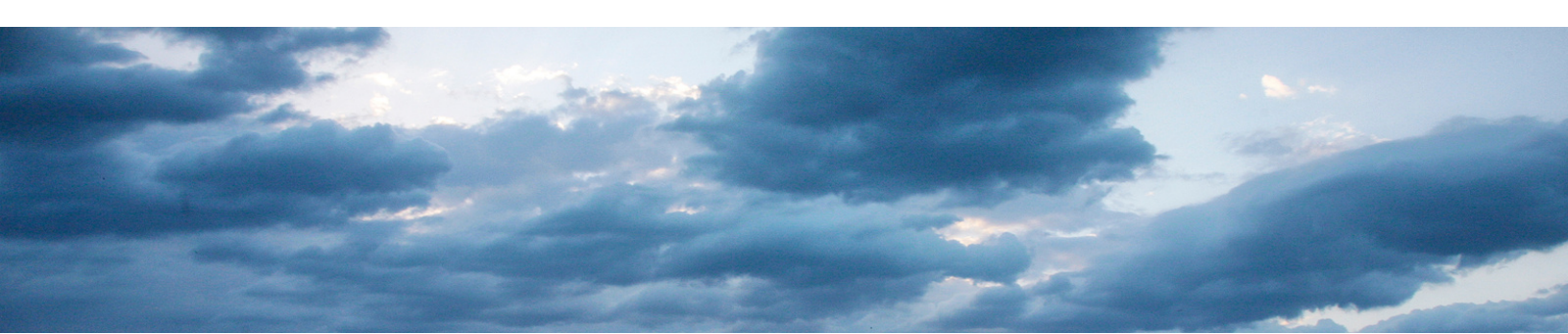
**Connecticut Institute for
Refugees and Immigrants**
Strengthening Communities Since 1918

CIRI APARTMENT SET UP

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 treschukenny@gmail.com for more information on how you can get involved.



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



Bereavement Group Finding Comfort in Our Time of Loss

Any and All are Welcome!

Coping with the loss of a loved one has no set time frame. There are moments when we seem to be managing just fine and then there are moments when we continue to struggle.

Holidays, life-cycle events and everyday living can at times feel overwhelming. Memories can fill us with joy and are bittersweet as well. Please come join us as we support one another in a shared loss, yet knowing that our grief experiences are unique to us. Laughter and tears are equally welcome.

Celeste McGeehan, is a medical social worker and a deacon at the First Church of Fairfield, along with Joanna Moody, LCSW who will co-facilitate this important group. There is no charge but pre-registration is required. Please email Celeste at mcgeehanceleste@gmail.com or call (203)362-8969.

All you need to bring is yourself...that is the courageous first step. You are warmly invited to attend.

February 8, 2023- March 29, 2023 (Wednesdays), 1pm-2:30pm

First Church of Fairfield, 148 Beach Road, Fairfield, CT 06824

Black Rock Sunrise Group

Closed Meetings Daily at 7am

Please call Matt D. for more information 203-394-2229

Daily Reprieve AA Group

Tuesday 8pm - Closed Big Book Meeting

Thursday 7pm - Open Step Meeting

Friday 8pm - Open Speaker Meeting

Sunday 8pm - Online Beginners Topic Meeting


Please call Len with any questions or for more information 203-333-4771



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 148 Beach Road • Fairfield CT • 06824



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 12TH ANNUAL
PASTA DINNER



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 VIA EMAIL AT PASTADINNERFIRSTCHURCH@GMAIL.COM

SIGN-UP DEADLINE JANUARY 29TH

FIRST CHURCH FAIRFIELD - 148 BEACH ROAD - FAIRFIELD