



A Letter From the Pastor

“Dear Friend...”

For a long time this salutation left me cold. It sounds like a junk mail greeting in a campaign asking me to support a candidate or buy something that I don't really need.

I have gained a renewed appreciation for “Dear Friend,” however, in light of what Jesus said to his disciples in John 15: “I no longer call you servants, I call you friends.” Jesus was calling his followers to a higher self conception. They were valued and respected by Jesus, who was looking to them to continue his ministry, saying, “You will do greater things than I have done.”

“Dear Christian...”

This was a salutation that Barbara and Don Minton liked. Dedicated members of First Church, they viewed being a Christian to be the essential element of their identity. They did not just talk the talk, they walked the walk.

“Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ...”

This is how I begin many, if not most, of my letters to you. It expresses our shared identity as followers and disciples of Jesus. Biology does not us siblings. It is our adoption by God's love for us and Christ's call to serve the world that makes us siblings.

“Dear Children of God...”

The late Desmond Tutu, when he served as the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, used this salutation in his letters. I love the warmth of Tutu's greeting, especially as he was expressing affection and concern for all the people of Cape Town, not just members of the Anglican Church.

“Beloved...”

This is a new favorite of mine. It gives me the chance to remind you that you are the beloved of God, the object of God's desire. God wants nothing more than a loving relationship with you. That's the truth; everything else flows from there. Please remember that always, especially when times are tough.

Whatever the salutation, I have always wanted to express my deep feelings of affection, appreciation, respect, and love for you. You have done me the great honor of welcoming me into your lives for thirty-eight years. This has been my life's work and I have loved serving as one your pastors. I hold so many wonderful memories of all that we have done and been for each other. I have only gratitude for you.

Now, a new day begins. The Holy Spirit will continue to guide, inspire, and empower your ministry as the body of Christ. Be assured, you will go from strength to strength in the Lord. This is not so much an ending as it is a new beginning for you and for First Church. You have called a new Senior Pastor! That is very exciting news, especially since we know that the Reverend Vanessa Rose will lead you with vision, energy, deep faith, and great love. I see great things in your future!

So, dear friends and Christians, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ, children of God, and beloved, I bid you Godspeed in all things. Trusting in God, I will pray for you and ask you to pray for me, for Geri, and for our family. To God be the glory!

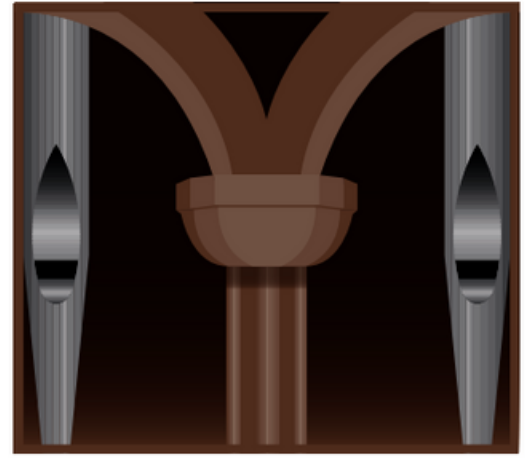


8:00 AM

MOTHER'S DAY WORSHIP

at The Fairfield Audubon
2325 Burr Street

Bring a chair, wear comfortable clothes and shoes conditions may be wet.

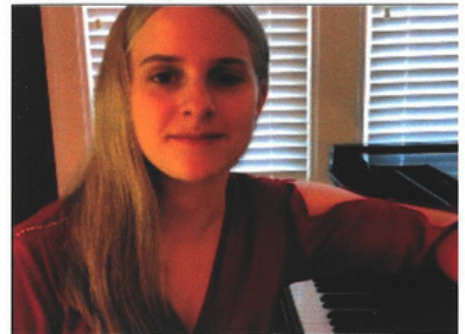


MUSIC

— *in the* —

MEETINGHOUSE

Katherine Jolliff, organ



**2021 M. Louise Miller - Paul E. Knox
Scholarship Winner**

Katherine (Kat) Jolliff, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, is a freshman at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, and a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy. She recently won the 2021 AGO/Quimby Great Lakes Regional Competition for Young Organists; first prize in the East Carolina University Young Artists Competition in organ performance as well as the Bach Interpretation Prize and the Hymn Playing Award.

Co-sponsored by the Greater Bridgeport Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

He is Risen!

Easter Season Devotional

For our Easter season, our adult devotional class will be "**Confirmation for Adults**," a curriculum from Rev. Kelsey Beebe designed to go back to the roots of our faith and talk about the foundations of our belief and relationship with God. We will return to the same questions that teenage confirmands discuss before joining the church, exploring what they mean for us in our adult life and faith. Over the course of seven weeks, we will cover topics including The Trinity, The Bible, Following Jesus, History of Christianity, United Church of Christ, Worship & the Sacraments, and Spiritual Practices. We are so excited to continue in discussion and devotion with you all as we spend time talking about what we believe and why! The class will take place over Zoom on **Monday evenings at 7:30**, beginning on **April 25th**.

Reach out to Heidi or Vanessa if you have any questions.
We hope to see you all there!

Download Workbook **HERE!**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83542399312?pwd=UkFnTTU5a0h0d3BoRmRQSWZlUzE4UT09>

Meeting ID: 835 4239 9312

Passcode: 573176



Women's Spirituality

On May 25th 6:30-8:00 p.m. we will gather together by Zoom and share our thoughts on our most recent readings.

For more information on the Women's Spirituality Group or to join in on the conversation please contact: Amy-Alison at amyaliward@gmail.com



Interested in



Contact Madeline Lee at madelinelee@gmail.com (email) or (203) 767-6304 (phone or text).

This coming Wednesday morning at 10:00 Madeline Lee will be in the stage in Wakeman Hall to organize a quilting bee for First Church. If you are interested in quilting, or learning how, come join us!



CROP Hunger Walk No. 48

Sunday, May 1, 2022

at 1:30 – 4:00 pm for 2+ mile walk (Rain or Shine)

at United Congregational Church
2200 North Avenue, Bridgeport, CT

Contact Debby Dwyer (203) 255-8835 for more information or make a donation at:
<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022>



WORKING
FOR
RACIAL
JUSTICE

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Racial Justice group will be meeting on May 2nd at 7:30pm via Zoom.
Please contact Marilyn Lord for more details:

mlord1@charter.net



WELCOME!

I'm excited to report to you that along with the Personnel Board, I have defined our staffing needs for the new Church year starting in September. We are actively recruiting for three of those positions right now, all to replace the work that Cheri does.

We have hired a Congregational Life Coordinator, Teri Preto-Rodas, who starts on May 9 but whom you may see a day or two next week as she trains with Cheri. Teri will be the first person to great callers on the phone, in person and via email. She will keep the Church calendar and coordinate with volunteers events and regular meetings.

Please join me in welcoming Teri to the Pastoral Team!

We are actively interviewing candidates for a Social Media Specialist role who will manage the website and our social media as well as a tech specialist for our live streaming needs.

We are working to be fully staffed by September 1.

Peace,
Vanessa



HONORING MEMORIAL DAY & FUNDRAISER

Please join us as we celebrate veterans and family at First Church Congregational on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2022 from 8-12 Noon.

RE/MAX Heritage is sponsoring this event with their hot air balloon in our parking lot for tethered rides from 8AM – 10AM ONLY, weather permitting. You must reserve a ride by going to the app: Eventbrite – Donation for ride is \$20/per person which is non-refundable. The donation will go to many of our outreach programs. Rides are on a first come, first serve basis. Come at 7AM to get in line and watch the balloon being set up.

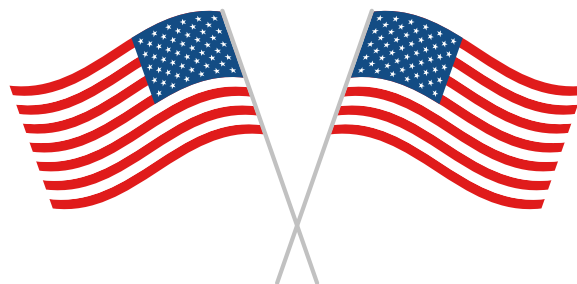
Our men's group will be selling Egg Sandwiches on the front lawn. Our fantastic bake sale will also be on the front lawn. The book fair and the basket raffle will take place inside in the Webb Room.

Please bring in your used books, hard cover or soft cover, children, young adult and adult, in good condition the week of May 23rd to the Webb Room. Please no business or text books.

You bake it, we take it! Please bake cookies, brownies, cakes, pies, bars, fruit breads and bring in on Sunday May 29th to the Wakeman Hall kitchen. Please no item that needs refrigeration and please label ingredients.

Bring your family for a fun morning. There is something for everyone.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Joy Nazzaro, jnazzaro@optonline.net or by calling 203-572-4669.





In celebration of David's 38 years of spiritual leadership and friendship at First Church, we would like to do something special for David's retirement.

One thing we are doing is creating a Tribute Book and we would love your help! We are working with a company called Newlywords that allows anyone who wants to participate to write a short message, a long story/essay, upload photos, make funny memes, and more using a link. Once everyone contributes, the company will create a beautiful hard copy book to be presented as a keepsake.

Rev. David Spollett's Retirement Tribute Book website:
<https://www.newlywords.com/rev-david-spollett-s-retirement-book>

If you would like to participate, we ask that submissions be made by Monday, May 9th. In your submission, please include your first and last name so we can sort all the submissions by group or theme. After we have received all the submissions, we will edit and organize the book and send it off for publication. The book will be presented to David on Sunday, June 5th at the Retirement Celebration Party.

If you have any issues with the Newlywords site and cannot submit your note, please contact Carrie Curtin (cbstarr9@gmail.com) for assistance.

If you would prefer to mail a handwritten note, we will scan it into the book for you. Please mail all handwritten notes to either:

Marilyn Lord
62 Driftwood Lane
Trumbull, CT 06611

Carrie Curtin
40 Oakwood Drive
Fairfield, CT 06824

There will also be a slideshow so please send photos to Andrew McKinnis andrewmckinnis@outlook.com
subject line: "David Spollett's Retirement Photos"

Thank you,
The Retirement Celebration Committee

You're Invited

TO CELEBRATE
REVEREND DAVID SPOLLETT'S
RETIREMENT

SUNDAY JUNE 5, 2022

Worship at 10:15
Potluck Gathering to follow!
A-F Salads /Appetizers G-Q Main Dish
R-Z Desserts



First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
148 Beach Road • Fairfield CT • 06824