



THE HERALD

First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I am so happy for a fresh start in 2023, and I am looking forward to what it will bring! We have so much to be thankful for here at First Church. We are back in the sanctuary! The Pastoral Team has welcomed 7 new members in the past year! Our music ministry and ministries to young children are thriving! Our outreach to our neighbors has been stalwart through hard times and is being reinvigorated with new leadership. We will welcome new members to the church this month. We are making plans for our teens to return to service work. There is so much to celebrate!

We can also settle into “ordinary times”. This Season on the church calendar following Advent, Christmas and Epiphany on January 6th is called Ordinary Time, which really means that the Sundays are counted: “First After Epiphany, Second after Epiphany,” and so on until we enter the Season of Lent. Although, it does really feel like Ordinary Time in the sense of regular, commonplace, and normal. And in many ways, to me anyway, it feels like the first time we have had any Ordinary Time in a very very long time. And I am grateful for that in so many ways. I think we are all learning what a gift the ordinary is.

My wish for you as you enter the New Year is that you bring the best of what we have learned from the past and loved about the Holiday Season into this new year. I like to re-read Jan Richardson’s poem Blessing of the Magi at this point in the year, when we feel like we are leaving behind the glow that comes with the Christmas Season and turning away from the gift of welcoming the Christ Child and returning to the “ordinary” and somewhat bleak days of January. I invite you to read it in full. It tells of those Wise Ones who seek a new road home, having left something precious behind. And it closes:

"But we tell you, you will wonder at how the light you thought you had left behind goes with you, spilling from your empty hands, shimmering beneath your homeward feet, illuminating the road with every step you take."

May that blessing of the Magi be yours: that you will find that the warmth, love, and light from the best part of what has passed, go with you in surprising ways into the future.

In Peace,
Vanessa

Happy New Year! 2023

Meet the Staff of First Church



Reverend Vanessa Rose
Pastor



Dr. Frank Martignetti
Director of Music &
Organist



Teri Preto-Rodas
Congregational Life
Coordinator



Trinity Brravo
Lead Tech & Social Media
Coordinator



Kimberly Feeney
Director of Disciple Road



Bethany Dupuis
Children's Music Leader



Tré Kayumba
Leader for Youth &
Social Action



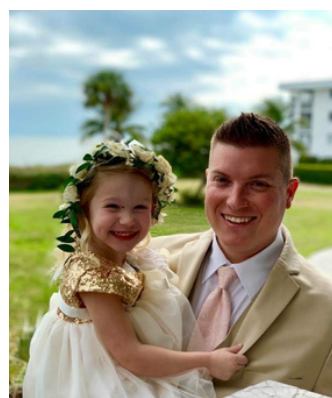
LaNeil Brown
Church Sexton



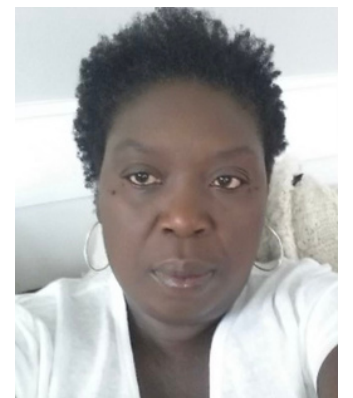
Ariana Hones
Student Pastor



Reverend Jake Josephe
Preaching Associate



Albert Faustini
Facilities Manager



Wendy Williams-Brown
Deacon

FAITH

Guest Preachers and Special talks to Come!



January 8 - Please join us after 10:15 Worship during fellowship hour for a Round Table Discussion on Anti Racism led by Tré Kayumba, Leader for Youth & Social Action.



Fairfield Neighbors: Building Better Bridges **A program for B'Nai Israel and First Church**

January 22, Rev. Jake Joseph will be preaching here, having preached at the Shabbat Service for our friends on the 20th.



January 29 - Kelly Leather Antonson, student at Yale Divinity School, will guest preach as part of her Raymond Fellowship Program.

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. January's book has not yet been selected. 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



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



Music in the Meetinghouse proudly presents African-American bass-baritone John Dominick in recital on Sunday, January 29th, at 4 PM. Music of Finzi, Ibert, Burleigh. John Dominick has sung multiple engagements at Carnegie Hall, been a soloist for New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, St. Petersburg Opera, the Greater Bridgeport Symphony, and many others. John will be accompanied by MITM artistic director Frank Martignetti.



Tickets available at the door or via reservation to fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org. Suggested admission: \$15, students \$5.

The Bell Choir is seeking 2 to 4 additional members for 2023. This friendly and accessible opportunity for music ministry rehearses twice a month during the program year. No prior experience is required. Anyone ages 12 to 100 is most welcome. Our first rehearsal is Thursday, January 12 at 5:45 PM. Please contact Frank at Fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org.



Ask. Seek. Knock.

“Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks.” Matthew 7:8

Dear Friends,

Thank you to all who have made a pledge for 2023. It is greatly appreciated. Offering envelopes should be available the first week of January. If you haven't completed your 2022 pledge, you still can. Please know that all online giving should be through Giving Tools on our website. Vanco is no longer available. Thank you for all you do for First Church!

Best Regards, Joy Nazzaro, Resource Development

COMING SOON



The Thomas Merton Center
A PROGRAM OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Soup Kitchen Saints Starts in January!

Come meet new friends and share an evening of fellowship while providing a meal for those in need.

Good news! The Thomas Merton Center of Bridgeport will be happy to have us back as providers of one meal a month. We need a volunteer to plan the meal and buy the ingredients and volunteers to come to church to cook the meal (the 4th Wednesday of each month). Also, someone to transfer the cooked food to the Center. Please email Rita Skog at ritaskog@hotmail.com to volunteer or to learn more about this ministry.



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

Thanks once again to our wonderful congregation for donating gifts to the Covenant to Care ministry. We were able to give joy to 28 deserving children this Christmas!

Blessings to all, Marilyn, Kim and Jessie

Thank you to all the many volunteers that made the Three Kings Bazaar happen. In spite of the change of date, the rainy weather, and the postponement of the tree lighting by the town, we held rounds 1 and 2 of the bazaar and had a wonderful turnout. It was very festive and it was good to see so many people.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Joy Nazzaro, Resource Development

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

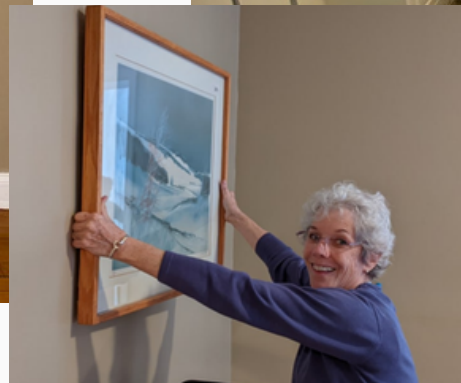




**Connecticut Institute for
Refugees and Immigrants**
Strengthening Communities Since 1918

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

January 29 - Kelly Leather Antonson, student at Yale Divinity School, will guest preach as part of her Raymond Fellowship Program.

January 22, Rev. Jake Joseph will be preaching here, having preached at the Shabbat Service for our friends on the 20th.

Fairfield Neighbors: Building Better Bridges A program for B'Nai Israel and First Church

January 8 - Please join us after 10:15 Worship during fellowship hour for a Round Table Discussion on Anti Racism led by Tré Kayumba, Leader for Youth & Social Action.

Guest Preachers and Special talks to Come!



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