

A Letter from the Pastor

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

November is a time for giving thanks. Of course every day is the time for giving thanks. If we will only pause for a moment and consider all the good in our lives – especially in a time of turmoil and trouble such as our own – how can we help but be thankful?

I have so many reasons to be grateful to and for my dear colleague and sister, The Reverend Vanessa Rose. Her deep faith, her wonderful gifts for ministry, courageous leadership, unfailing compassion, personal warmth, and bright vision for the future of the church of Jesus Christ have all touched, expanded, and elevated my life in so many ways.

One thing in particular Vanessa did was to introduce me to the book, *Original Blessing: Putting Sin in Its Rightful Place*, by Danielle Shroyer. The idea of “original sin” is so much a part of our experience that we are not even aware of its influence on our thinking, our view of humanity, and how it has shaped our culture in many unwelcome ways. This idea, first articulated by Augustine in the 5th century, is based on his interpretation of the Bible. It is not, however, in the Bible.

What is in the Bible is the repeated refrain that as God created the world, “God saw that it was good.” Shroyer writes,

Sin is not the primary thing that is true about us. Before anything else, we are made in God’s image, and we are made to reflect that image in the way we live. Before scripture tells us anything else about ourselves, it tells us that we are good. I think that’s because that’s the way God intended it . When we ground ourselves in the fact that God created us good, we are capable of confronting all the other things that are true about us, even the difficult things. Love is tremendously healing.

Let the words of the Bible sink deeply into your consciousness and help cleanse you of the idea of “original sin.” See yourself as a child of God, made in the divine image, living in a way that reflects God, and find your heart relieved, your spirit lifted, and your living empowered. And give thanks.

Your Brother in Christ,



From the Church Moderator

Hello Church Friends,

As I write this, we have just completed our two weeks of cottage meetings hosted by the Personnel Board and Interim Pastor Search Committee. With 18 meetings and another dedicated to the Pastoral Team, there was ample opportunity for all of us to participate. Nearly 150 people signed up for meetings and over 100 actually participated. We feel confident that those of us who wanted to have a voice in this early part of the discernment process have been heard.

All 18 meetings used a consistent program to ensure we all would have the same opportunity. The main objective of each meeting was to allow us to prioritize what we think are important qualities in our next Senior Pastor—and the direction of leadership for First Church. We evaluated 14 qualities and skills important in a Senior Pastor, and then each ranked our top three. Below are the collective findings from all of the meetings. It is apparent that the top three qualities are most important as we begin to explore calling a new Senior Pastor.

Qualities and Skills in Senior Pastor

- 36 Inspirational preacher
- 29 Accessible, approachable, available, trustworthy
- 26 Compassionate: Pastoral Care / Ministering to congregants
- 16 Demonstrated ability to achieve church growth and vitality
- 14 Leadership and vision for our Church
- 13 Faith-filled and able to nurture faith in others
- 13 Introduces new ideas (worship format, ministries, use of social media, education, music)
- 12 Community engagement / Leadership within the community
- 11 Empowering of lay leadership and staff
- 9 Embracing our church's ministries (outreach, faith formation, pastoral care) and strategic pathways (social justice, welcome the stranger, and love all, bless all)
- 8 Experience running a large, Open and Affirming church
- 6 Humility / Sense of humor
- 4 First Church is top focus
- 3 Steward of church finances and facilities

From here, our joint Personnel Board and Interim Pastor Search Committee will evaluate all of the feedback, and then make a recommendation to the congregation about how we move forward. I look forward to this continued discernment together. I am confident that we will determine where we feel the Holy Spirit is calling us to go as a church. We are thankful for such thoughtful and prayerful participation.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at jmuschett@optonline.net. Thank you.

God's peace to you,
Jim Muschett
Moderator



THREE KINGS Bazaar

Friday, December 3

6:00 - 8:00 PM
on the Lawn

Please join us for an outside version of our Three Kings Bazaar. We will have hot dogs, hot chocolate, hot cider and a bake sale. Special activities for the kids will include writing a letter to Santa, ornament making and writing a wish to hang on our Christmas Tree.

Frank Martignetti, Director of Music and Organist will lead our choir in carols with instrumentalists and anyone who wishes to join them.

Please consider baking cookies, cookie bars, 3-5 cookies in baggies, depending on size of the cookie, brownies, cakes or pies. Please drop off in Wakeman Hall, right outside of the kitchen, starting on 12/2. "You bake it, we take it!" If anyone has any questions, please call: Cathy Kane 203-257-2276, or email. cathykane2525@gmail.com, or Wendy Muschett 203-521-7793. or email. wendymuschett@optonline.net.

Don't forget the Town Tree Lighting will be at 7PM across the street and Santa will arrive on the fire truck.

Get into the holiday spirit and join our festive bazaar.

If you would like to volunteer that evening, please call Joy Nazzaro, 203-572-4669.
Thank you so much.

Merry
Christmas

Children & Youth Ministry

Calling all kids!

- Bible Stories
- Arts & Crafts
- Games
- Playground Fun
- And More...

Meeting in the
Library

DISCIPLE ROAD

During 10:15
Worship

Contact Alex Ackley
for more information
aackley@firstchurchfairfield.org

Grades 6-8

Middle Road

Meeting in the
Garden of Hope
10:30AM

Contact Nikki Kenney for more information
treshukenney@gmail.com

HIGH ROAD

SUNDAYS 6:00PM
GRADES 9-12

CONTACT VANESSA FOR MORE INFORMATION
VROSE@FIRSTCHURCHFAIRFIELD.ORG



The Loft Community

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 for more information.

Miss singing? Come join the Festival Choir for Christmas Eve!

Miss singing? Come join the Festival Choir for Christmas Eve! Rehearsals will be 7:30-9 PM on the following Thursdays: Nov. 11, Dec. 2, 9, and 16. To see what we will be singing, visit firstchurchfairfield.org/music. and click on the link. If you'd like to learn more, please contact Frank at fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org or 203-259-8396 x 102.



Giving 2022

What comes to mind as you reflect on our 2022 Stewardship theme, "Rooted in Love," the experiences and relationships that have helped you feel rooted in love?

Thank God for First Church. It is here that we find love and true acceptance.

Our souls are nurtured, our hearts are encouraged, our minds expanded, and our living empowered.

Pray about what God is calling you to pledge, a gift that grows from the roots of love.

How can you best financially support your spiritual home, First Church?

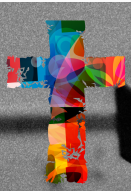
Please return your pledge card as soon as possible. Thank you!

Pledge Update for 2021

At the February Business Meeting, the congregation asked to receive quarterly updates on our pledge progress. Year-to-date through September, pledges received are running approximately 5% (~\$13,500) less than budgeted. The Finance Board budgeted ~10% (~\$34,900) less in pledges year-to-date through September compared to last year. When comparing current year pledges to last year-to-date through September, we have received ~15% (~\$48,400) less in pledges.

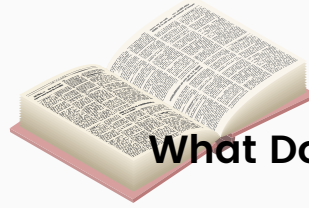
If you are behind in meeting your pledge commitment, try to catch up before the end of the calendar year. If you are having trouble meeting your pledge commitment, please contact our business manager, Maria Ferrante at mferrante@firstchurchfairfield.org.

As our former Treasurer, Howard Slagter, always said,
"With the help of God, we will achieve what we must with the gifts we are given."



Women's Spirituality

Newly interested in our Women's Spirituality Group?
please contact Amy-Alison for more information at
amyaliward@gmail.com (203) 913-8069



The Bible What Does It Mean Today?

Join David in this spiritual journey of revealing how
God's word is still speaking and relevant to us, even today.

Wednesday Study Group

"The Gospel of John"

10 am on ZOOM

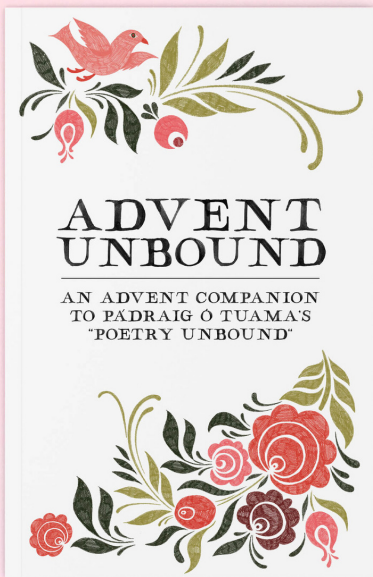
Sunday Study Group

"The Letter to the Ephesians"

9:15 am on ZOOM

Contact Cheri Evan for login information
cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org
or call the church office (203) 259-8396

Advent Devotional



More Details to Come....



Parish Notes

Baptism

October 3, 2021

Rowan Anne Salato

Weddings

CONNECT



Dear Friends,
Thank you for all your cards and notes. It's been a long time for me of "inside". I appreciate your concern.
Love,
Alice Krenke
(How I miss the Store and Amy)

Covenant to Care

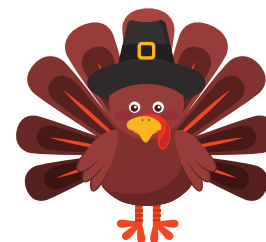


In lieu of Thanksgiving food baskets, Covenant to Care will collect Stop & Shop and Shop Rite gift cards for distribution by our Social Worker to her clients. The church sells the cards for both stores and receives a percentage for each card sold so buying them from church is a great way to benefit both organizations!

The Social Worker suggested cards in \$25 amounts so she can decide how many to give to each family. There will not be a sign up sheet, just leave the cards in the church office by November 18th so they can be given out before Thanksgiving.

Thank you in advance for your ongoing support of this ministry.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday.
Marilyn, Kim and Jessie.



PS. There will be a sign up for Christmas gifts. We will have a list by the first Sunday in December. Stay tuned!



Minute for Missions

Sunday, November 14

Operation Fuel is the country's oldest fuel fund, serving as a model across the United States. Our primary purpose is to provide year-round emergency energy assistance to every city and town in Connecticut, aided by our statewide network of local fuel banks. We are the primary source of energy and utilities assistance for low- to moderate-income households who are struggling financially and have exhausted other options.

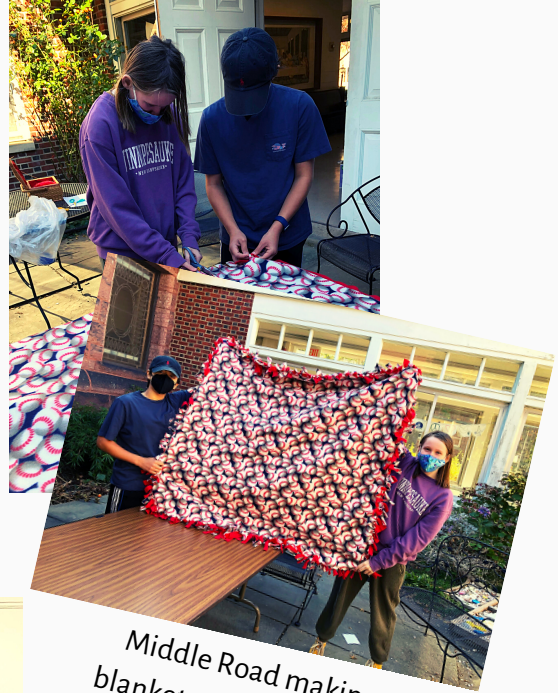
Operation Fuel fills the gap for our state's most vulnerable residents – children, senior citizens, working families, and people with chronic medical conditions. We help people keep their homes warm and their lights on, power cooking appliances and medical equipment, store food and medications at safe refrigerated temperatures, and have access running water for drinking, bathing, and laundry.
<https://operationfuel.org/>



Youth in Action!



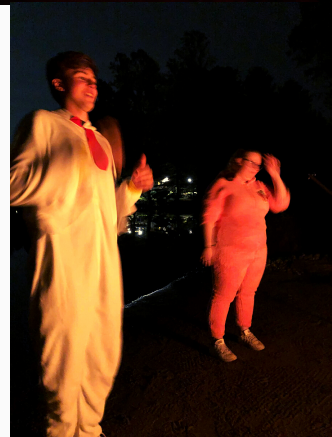
The Children's Choir Clapping a Happy Psalm



Middle Road making blankets for Binky Patrol



High Road ready to Trick or Treat for Operation Hope and a gathering around the fire pit to end the evening.



FAIRFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE
with FIRST CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL PRESENT

Fall Are Welcome!

An Inclusive gathering celebrating diversity in Fairfield

*Free, family-friendly activities
& refreshments provided*

When: Saturday, 11/6/21 - 10am - 1pm

Where: First Church Fairfield

148 Fairfield Beach Rd, Fairfield, CT 06824



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



Contacting Pastoral Team Members

The members of Pastoral Team – David, Vanessa, Frank, Cheri, Maria, Alex, LaNeil, and Heidi – who help lead and serve our congregation and community want you to know how to be in touch with them. Bear in mind that the Co-Pastors, David and Vanessa, are the only full time members of the Team. Everyone else works part time.

The Church Office, 148 Beach Road has a Team Member on hand Tuesday – Friday, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm.

Maria Ferrante works Monday – Thursday, as well as several evenings per month for Board Meetings.

She works from home on Monday where you can reach her on her cell 203-394-8738. Tuesday through Thursday, Maria works from home or at the Church Office on a rotating basis with Cheri Evan. Monday – Thursday, 8:30 – 2:30 you can reach Maria her on her cell or the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext.106, or email mferrante@firstchurchfairfield.org.

Cheri Evan works Sunday mornings and Tuesday – Friday 8:30 am – 2:30 pm as well as Thursday evenings directing the Children's Choir and Bell Choir. Tuesday through Friday, Cheri works from home or at the Church Office on a rotating basis with Maria Ferrante. You can reach Cheri on those days at the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext.100, her cell 203-864-5969 or email cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org.

Frank Martignetti works on Sunday mornings and Thursdays, 12 noon – 9:00 pm. You can reach Frank at the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext.102, or email fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org.

Alex Ackley works Sunday mornings, Mondays and Wednesdays at home where can reach her on her cell 203-382-3339, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 noon – 3:00 pm at the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext. 105, or email aackley@firstchurchfairfield.org.

LaNeil Brown, Sr. works Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings. Please contact Maria Ferrante with requests for LaNeil.

Heidi Butler works Sunday mornings and afternoons and other times as scheduled. You can reach Heidi by email heidi.butler@yale.edu.

David Spollett and Vanessa Rose work on irregular and highly varied schedules depending on the changing circumstances of the church and people's needs. Vanessa keeps Monday as her day of Sabbath rest and David keeps Friday as his day of Sabbath rest. Each is, of course, available to you at any time and they want very much to provide care, comfort and support to you and yours as needed.

You can reach David at the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext.101, his cell 203-414-0496, or email dspollett@firstchurchfairfield.org. You can reach Vanessa at the Church Office 203-259-8396 ext.104, her cell 617-921-8648, or email vrose@firstchurchfairfield.org.

We are here for you! Please be in touch!