



A Letter from the Pastor

Dearly Beloved,

It is wedding season! Couples who have postponed their celebrations for months are trying to fit them in now. Bridesmaids are practicing their readings of 1 Corinthians 13: Love is patient. Love is kind... and now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

Many a seasoned pastor has patiently reminded lovebirds that love is not a just noun, not only a warm fuzzy feeling in your heart. If it were, we could not honestly make the promises that we would feel love so long as we both shall live. Rather, love is an action verb. We can promise to love, in that we can choose to do those things which show love in the ways we care for one another, so long as we both shall live. Of course, this is not easy. It is very hard work, but this is what we are promising in all honesty and sincerity. We promise to do our best at love.

I have been thinking as we approach fall that for all of us who are not newlyweds, we might consider that the same is true of HOPE: perhaps not the greatest of these according to the Apostle Paul, but possibly the most helpful in these days.

We might not be feeling particularly hopeful, but we can choose to hope, and we can carefully, deliberately, stubbornly, even foolishly undertake those actions which enact hope in our living.

I will hope as I go out into the world. I will hope as I mask up again. I will hope as I make plans for us for this coming Fall. I will hope as I marry newly-weds. I will hope as I offer eulogies celebrating the lives of those who have gone before. I will hope as I send my children off to school. I will hope as I plant bulbs for next year. I will hope as I meet the new neighbors who have moved out from the city. I will hope. Will you hope with me?

Hope is stubborn, hope is brave, hope never fails.

Love,

Vanessa





From the Church Moderator

Hello Church Friends,

I hope you had a relaxing summer. September is an exciting time of year, and this will be very true at First Church:

- We welcome the start of Vanessa's and David's co-pastorate.
- We will have the All Church meeting on Tuesday, September 14, to vote on the sale of the Rowland Road parsonage, and the necessary work on the sanctuary so we can safely worship in there together again.
- The Personnel Board and Interim Pastor Search Committee will soon invite everyone to cottage meetings. This is where we all will have the opportunity to discern and share our visions on where we feel the Holy Spirit is calling us to be and to go as a church.

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

God's peace to you,
Jim Muschett
Moderator

Mid-Year Pledge Update

At the February Business Meeting, the congregation asked to receive quarterly updates on our pledge progress.

Year-to-date through June, current year pledges received are slightly behind the pledges budgeted (-5% or approximately \$11,000).

Thank you to all who have contributed!

If you are behind in meeting your pledge commitment, try to catch up in the next quarter.

If you haven't yet pledged or 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."

COVID Safety Update

Due to the spike in Covid infections, the following protocol will be followed for our worship services and church activities

- 3 Airmega 400 Air Purifiers which will run 24 hours before and after services in Wakeman Hall
- Air Purifiers will be used for other church activities that take place indoors
- 45 seats in variations for individuals and families have been placed 6 feet apart by group and 12 feet away from the worship/choir areas for worship.
(there is space on the stage and balcony for additional seating)
- masks must be worn at all times

Children & Youth Ministry

Beginning
September 12

During 10:15
Worship

DISCIPLE ROAD

Meeting in the
Library

Starts September 12

Middle Road

Meeting in the
Garden of Hope
10:30AM

**HIGH
ROAD**

SUNDAYS 6:00PM

GRADES 9-12

STARTS SEPTEMBER 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.

Music Ministry

Music Thursdays
Begin September 9th



Children's Choir (For children in Kindergarten–3rd Grade) Children learn about pitch, rhythm, diction, conducting, and understanding the lyrics of songs. Members of Children's Choir begin to discover how God's Word speaks through music by singing, dancing, playing Orff instruments, and music games.

Rehearsals: September –June; Thursdays 4:30pm-5:00pm



Youth Choir (For 4th-8th Grade) Small group singing and/or instrument playing focusing on music as an experience in worship through different genres and mediums. Joining with the Children and Chancel Choirs for special Sundays and other church events.

Rehearsals: September- June; Thursdays 5:15pm-5:45pm

Handbell Choir is the ultimate expression of music-making as a community of believers! Whether you read music or not there is a place for you in bell choir. 7th Grade to Adults are encouraged to join the fun and joy of ringing praise during worship selected Sundays and other events throughout the year.

Rehearsals: September-June; Thursdays 6:00pm-7:00pm

Directed by Cheri Evan

203.259.8396 x 100

cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org



The Chancel Choir will resume its ministry the week of Sept. 6, with **rehearsal Thursday, Sept. 9 at 7:30 PM** in Wakeman Hall, and will sing each Sunday beginning September 12th.

All vaccinated adults and high school age youth who love to sing are enthusiastically welcomed! We have a stimulating variety of engaging and intriguing music planned, ranging from early American shape note music to Gospel music and from Irish folk tunes to classical masterworks. You can learn more about our fall repertoire here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rL_Fqk7uk2fkggrtOfxN4oiv5WjHXPfxECIYZLAQ3Z8/edit?usp=sharing.

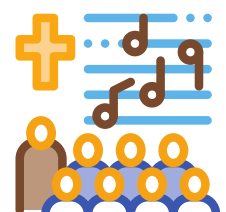
If you are interested and you need a ride, please let Frank know; if you are interested but need child care, please let Frank know so we can explore what might be feasible.

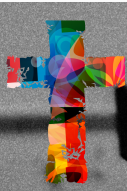
Singers whose schedule doesn't allow them to participate regularly in choir are invited to join the Festival Choir for Christmas Eve, Epiphany, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. Fall 2021 Festival Choir rehearsals begin Thursday, Nov. 11. Please reach out to Frank to learn more!

Directed by Dr. Frank Martignetti

203.259.8396 x 102

fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org





Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will start on Wednesday, September 22nd from 6:30 to 8:00. We will meet virtually again until it is safe to gather indoors together. Alison Ward will be the facilitator for the coming year and is asking some of the women to assist her on different months.

The readings will again be from Meditations of the Heart by Howard Thurman. For September the women chose, Section III, Life is Alive - the 1st through 10th readings (begins with There is Order in Life and ends with Two Areas of Need).

All women are welcome and there is no prior knowledge of the book of meditations required. We hope women looking for a spiritual outlet and want to deepen their faith, will join us as we explore our faith and how it impacts others.



Parish Notes

Baptisms

June 27, 2021

Jameson Claudio Whitlock

Georgina Grace Riely

Lane Reding

August 8, 2021

Clover Grauer Dawson

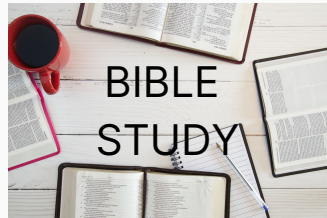
August 29, 2021

Gray Robert Murphy

Deaths

August 2, 2021

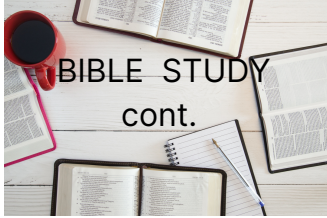
Mildred Yorke



The Bible – What Does It Mean Today?

The Bible stands at the center of our Reformed tradition, but to many it is an inscrutable document that yields as much, if not more, confusion than clarity. Other than a few passages – the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm – the Bible can feel foreign and irrelevant.

If we believe that the Bible is composed of the literal words of God, dictated to scribes who merely wrote down that which was dictated by the Almighty, then yes, I would agree that the Bible would seem be meaningless and irrelevant. Yet, we believe that the Bible is meaningful and relevant today. Why?



First of all, we must recognize, accept and celebrate the fact that the Bible is the record of generations as they grew in their understanding of the God of Israel. That is to say, the Bible is inspired by God's action in history. It is not a record of the actual words of God, but an expression of people's growing understanding and consciousness about God, in light of the all accumulated knowledge available to them in their time.

Secondly, the Bible is not a book in the normal sense of the word, but a collection of "books" including primeval fables of creation, the stories of our ancestors beginning with Abraham and Sarah, histories of the Exodus and of the people of Israel, poetry, prophecy, accounts of Jesus and his followers, their letters, and a vision of the end of time. Created by hundreds of authors and editors over more than a thousand years, the Bible reflects many world views ranging from the Bronze Age to the Greece of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Therefore, the Bible can make sense today when we engage it honestly, acknowledging the ancient, varied, and disparate books and writings in light of their historical context and apply our own worldview that is informed by science and reason to the study of the Scriptures. Because we take the Bible seriously it is essential that we do not take it literally, but apply all of our knowledge, questions, and insights to discern its meaning for today.

This is especially true when we read the Bible together. In doing so we allow the Spirit to move us as we share our stories, questions, and insights, so that the words on the page become the "Word of God" to guide, comfort, inspire, encourage and empower us as individuals and as a congregation.

I hope that you will join me this year in reading the Bible together. I believe that we will grow in faith and that Bible will become meaningful and relevant for you as we read the Bible seriously and listen for what God is revealing to us in our day. Remember, God is still speaking... especially in Bible Study!

Wednesday Study Group

"The Gospel of John"

Beginning on September 15 at 10 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82270957206?pwd=UIZMZDBHbDF2dDFOC0pPMTBBSII3QT09.>

Meeting ID: 822 7095 7206 Passcode: 123917

Or phone 1-929-436-2866 Meeting ID: 822 7095 7206 Passcode: 123917

Sunday Study Group

"The Letter to the Ephesians"

Beginning on September 19 at 9:15 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89105594924?pwd=eGk4SGgyaVhPcUM3Mnd0ZFVFUWxzQT09.>

Meeting ID: 891 0559 4924 Passcode: 973427

Or Dial 1-929-436-2866 Meeting ID: 891 0559 4924 Passcode: 973427

CONNECT



Interfaith Public Observance of the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

Sunday, September 12th
4:00PM

at the Fairfield History Museum (on the Green)

Co-Hosted by the Fairfield Clergy Association and
the Fairfield History Museum



Please give thoughtful and prayerful consideration on the following items for discussion and vote:

- First, we will receive the Facilities Board's recommendation for a mechanical air circulation (HVAC) system for the Sanctuary, with the hope that this will be ready for Congregational approval by the 15th.
- Secondly, the Finance Board recommended to Council that we sell the parsonage at 127 Rowland. Council unanimously approved this to be put forth for Congregational vote. Our most important priority is to be able to worship together, and the sale will free up a church asset we do not need. We considered the trend of full-time pastors moving away from parsonage living and to owning their own home. The sale of this parsonage will allow the church to do much needed work throughout the building including the new mechanical air circulation (HVAC) system for the Sanctuary, Webb Room, and Eunoia Room. We plan to list it for \$1.035 million.
- Third, vote on recommended changes to the Bylaws.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7250635457?pwd=bHByL0Z3ODFIZGZQbDYrRWNzTVYyZz09>

Meeting ID: 725 063 5457

Passcode: 113372

CALL IN:

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 725 063 5457

Passcode: 113372

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbRis7aYj5>



MEMBERS

CORNER

#UCCSynod: Ubuntu

7/15/2021 - by: Andrew McKinnis - General Synod



Ubuntu; I am because you are. This word is part of the Zulu phrase, “Umunti ngumuntu ngabantu”, which means that a person is a person through other people. I was first introduced to this concept at Silver Lake. It was the theme that we were focusing on. We looked at the bible passage 1 Corinthians 12:14-26.

This passage is my favorite and the word, ubuntu, has stuck with me ever since. During General Synod, I heard the word in our first worship service and then again when we had the privilege to listen to Valarie Kaur.

Valarie talked to us about Revolutionary Love and how we can choose to show up for others because they show up for us or we can choose to show up for others because we choose to love them.

Valarie describes Revolutionary Love as the choice to labor for others, for our opponents, and for ourselves in order to transform the world around us. I believe that we as delegates have made this choice to transform the world around us. We have all answered the call to vote and make decisions about resolutions that are before us.

We all have different roles in this community. Some of us are storytellers who craft and engage one another in their experiences and culture through art, media, and movement. Others of us are visionaries who imagine and generate the boldest possibilities, hopes and dreams, and remind us of our direction. And a handful of us are disruptors who take uncomfortable and risky actions to shake up the status quo, to raise awareness, and to build power.

Many of us don't just play one role, but I urge all of us to be builders. To develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, people, and resources in service of a collective vision. The vision of the United Church of Christ; United in Christ's love, a just world for all.



LEFT OVER YARN NEEDED

MARIA FERRANTE IS MAKING BLANKETS FOR DOG ADOPTIONS

Put your yarn left overs to good use and in Maria's hands. Blankets are given to dogs waiting for adoption and taken with them to their new homes!



Yarn can be dropped off to Maria in the office.

Welcome Back Sunday

8:15 Worship in Wakeman Hall
10:15 Worship in Wakeman Hall

Welcome Back Luncheon at 11:30AM
after 10:15 worship

Please bring a salad to share if your last name starts
with A-M and dessert if it begins with N-Z

There will be a food truck for sandwiches!

Watch for more info in upcoming Sunday Bulletins

SEPTEMBER 12

You're Invited!!!

Food Truck- Tasty Yolk

Entertainment

FUN & GAMES

BRING YOUR PICNIC BLANKET
AND A SIDE TO SHARE

Please RSVP

by Sept. 9

office @firstchurchfairfield.org

or call

(203) 259-8396 x 100



First Church Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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