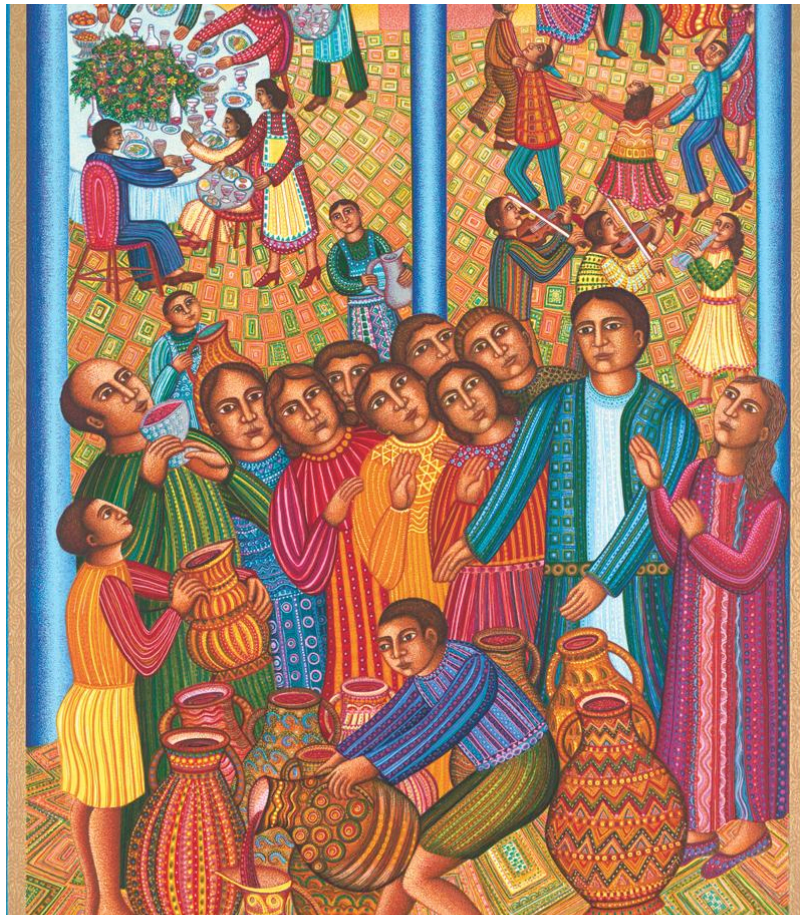




Est. 1639

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



*Wedding Feast*, John August Swanson

**10:15 a.m.**

**January 19, 2025**

**Second Sunday After the Epiphany**

## Welcome!

**Welcome to our guests!** Thank you for being here. It is such a joy to worship with you. Please speak to any member of the Pastoral Team if you would like to explore how our church may become your spiritual home. As an **Open and Affirming** congregation we seek to extend the extravagant welcome of God to all people, all the time. Regardless of your race, class, ancestry, gender identity, marital status, ability, age, immigration status, or sexual orientation, you are always welcome at First Church. We affirm your inherent dignity as a child of God. God created you just as you are and loves you just as you are. We do, too!

**Children's Ministries:** Children's Ministries: Babies are always welcome in the Sanctuary during worship. We also have a nursery (accessible through the "baby breezeway" in the back of the Sanctuary). First Church offers child care (for ages 3 months to 3 years) with professional nursery staff on Sundays @ 9:45am-11:45am. Sunday School classes are known as "Disciple Road" (age 4 through 5th grade) and "Middle Road" (6th grade and up). We also have a children's choir. Reach out to Kim Feeney ([kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org)) for more information about our children's ministries & faith formation programs.

We have a **hearing assist system** for those with Bluetooth enabled hearing aids available and also have receivers with earpieces available. Please speak to an usher for assistance.

### Leading Us in Worship

The Rev. Marilyn B. Hendrix, Guest Preacher

The Rev. Vanessa Rose, Pastor

The Rev. Kathy Williamson, Liturgist

Dr. Frank Martignetti, Director of Music & Organist

Kim Feeney, Minister of Children & Families

Chancel Choir

Deacon: Celeste McGeehan

Ushers: Rita Skog & Dave Welchman

Worship leaders speak the text in regular type.  
**All the People of God speak the text in boldface.**

*Italic Text provides explanation or instruction.*

\* Please stand if you are able.

**WE GATHER TO HEAR GOD'S WORD**

**Prelude**

*Partita on "Nettleton"*

John Eggert

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Friendship Register**

**Introit**

*Jesus, Come! For We Invite You*

Friedell and Idle

**\*Call to Worship**

One: God of the feast, God of abundance,

**All: you are always turning water into fine wine.**

One: Though the wine has run out,

**All: you work miracles among us.**

One: Though the work feels impossible,

**All: you accomplish wonders through us.**

One: Though many fail to perceive it,

**All: you reveal your glory among us.**

One: Help us to receive your good gifts this day,

**All: that we might learn to put our faith in you**

**that we might see Jesus in the faces of those we meet. Amen.**

**\*Hymn**

*Come, O Fount of Every Blessing*

*459 New Century Hymnal*

**\*Prayer of Invocation and the Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen**

**Children's Sermon**

**\*Passing the Peace**

One: May the peace of God be with you!

**All: And also with you!**

*We greet one another with a sign of peace.*

*Children are welcome to go to Disciple Road with their friends and teachers.*

**Candle of Witness**  
Ministry

David McKinnis, Men's

**GOD'S WORD IS PROCLAIMED**

**\*Hymn of Praise**

*Gloria Patri*

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One;  
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen, Amen.

**Scripture**

Isaiah 62:1-5, John 2:1-11

**Sermon**

*Toward the Kingdom of God*

The Rev. Marilyn B. Kendrix

\*Hymn

*In Cana at a Wedding Feast*  
*Sung to the familiar tune "Ellacombe" (I Sing the Mighty Power of God)*

Carolyn Gillette

In Cana at a wedding feast, Christ worked his first great sign.  
There Jesus' mother told her son, "They don't have any wine!"  
He called for six stone water jars; they filled them to the brim;  
Through water changed to wine that day, his friends believed in him.

Far from the town, the crowds pressed in on Jesus' prayer retreat.  
He healed their sick, then told his own, "You give them food to eat!"  
Five loaves of bread and two small fish were all they found to share,  
Yet thousands ate the meal he blessed, with baskets left to spare.

Out on the sea, the winds were strong; the stormy waves were high;  
There Jesus' friends were filled with fear when he came walking by.  
"Take heart, for it is I!" he said, and helping Peter stand,  
He calmed the storm and stirred their hearts; God's world was in his hand.

The blind, the poor, the outcast too, found Christ to be their friend.  
"Have mercy!" Bartimaeus said. "I want to see again."  
With great compassion and with grace, Christ gave him back his sight.  
Through deeds of power, deeds of love, he filled our world with light.

O Lord, we see your wondrous signs and know through faith-filled eyes:  
You are new wine that brings us joy, true bread that satisfies.  
You give clear vision to your church, you make the wounded whole.  
You give us hope, when seas are rough; for you are in control.

**WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

**Joys and Concerns**

Today's flowers were donated by Amy-Alison Ward in honor of Connie & Bill Sargent who over the decades have quietly contributed countless labors of love & faithfulness to our community & congregation. We love you.

## Prayers of the People

### Invitation to Offering

Our loose plate offering today will go to supporting the work of Westbridge, Inc.

### Offertory

*A Joyful Alleluia*

Gordon Young

### \*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God for all that love has done.  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

### \*Prayer of Dedication

### \*Hymn

*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

1 *New Century Hymnal*

### \*Benediction and Response

*God Be With You*



God be with you till we meet a-gain; by good coun-sel guide, up - hold you,



With a shep-herd's care en-fold you; God be with you till we meet a-gain. A - men.

### Postlude

*Partita on "Nettleton"*

John Egger



## Please Hold in Your Prayers

**Disciples at First Church:** We pray for Christian Bassett; Chris Bernd; Sandy Bromer; LaNeil Brown, Sr.; Dan Christianson; Betsy Dalling; Fernando Destruge; Gloria Evans; Charlotte Jefremow; Christy Jefremow; Nancy Jones and family; Cathy Kane, her brother Scott and great niece Amelia; Adelaide Kitchen; Jerry Krenke; Penny Stevens; Julie Traum; Doug Van Esselstyn and the family and friends of Joann Van Esselsteyn; Kathy Verdier; Andrea Wakeman; Elinor Wilber; and Edith Zambo. We hold in our prayers all those who face living with memory loss and Alzheimer's disease and we pray for their caregivers.

**Serving in the military:** James Classy, Sam Classy, Trevor Dawson, David Elmore, Andrew Holms, Charles Ikeda, Kelcy McKenzie, and Christopher Muschett.

**Family and Friends:** Connie Accomando (Jim's mom); Tracy Bloom (sister of Michael Traum); Chris Coogan, (friend of Paul Cahill) Diane Studwell Crawley; Brandon Deedon (Pertrinea Cash's son); Paul Douglas (Rita Skog's cousin); Lynelle Dupuis (sister of Bethany); Carter Faustini; Kimberly Fetteri (friend of the Gindek family); Anthony Gentile, Nate Gifford (Connie Sargent's cousin); Greenawalt and Darnall Families (Gindek family); Bill Fry (Penny Stevens' brother-in-law), Catherine Grover; Walter Haenn (brother of Madeline Lee); Yochai Harel, Melanie Rainbow-Harel and family (friends of Michelle Walker); Peter Hey (brother of Lin Clayton); Christina Holms (Connie and Bill Sargent's niece); Nancy King (Friend of Paul Cahill); Susan Labas (friend of Patty Bilotto); Peter Maloney; Verne Marble (Charlotte Dyslin's mother); Lila (friend of Beth McKinnis); Heather McNicholl (friend of Charlotte Dyslin), Dorothy Michalowski (friend of Connie and Bill Sargent); Andre Mirkine; Barbara Peterson (friend of Ted and Judy Andre); Artie Quinn; Helen Ranholm (cousin of Connie Sargent), Dick Reese (father in law of Melissa Stanhewicz); Patty Roberts (cousin of Connie and Bill Sargent); Rosalie Rutkauskas (Jessie's Grandmother); Darlene and Bobby Scaia (Pat Bilotto's cousins); David Skog (son of Rita Skog); John Anderson (David Mckinnis' uncle); Mark, Crystal and baby Selene (friends of Beth McKinnis.); Dr. Abraham Yale.

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**About our guest Social Justice Preacher:  
The Rev. Marilyn B. Kendrix**



**The Rev. Marilyn B. Kendrix** is a retired Bridge Conference Minister of the Southern New England Conference UCC. Prior to ordination, Marilyn worked for over 15 years as an Organizational Development Consultant principally at AT&T and also in other profit and not-for-profit settings. She served on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference and participated with the Southern New England Conference Planning Team. She also served as the last Conference Minister of the Rhode Island Conference UCC and one of the first Bridge Conference Ministers of the new Southern New England Conference of UCC.

Marilyn earned her Bachelor's degree from Spelman College, an HBCU school in Atlanta, Georgia, her Executive MBA and an MA in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, both from the University of New Haven. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and a certificate from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

Since 2012, her personal ministry has included preaching at over 100 churches to raise awareness about mass incarceration in America. In her ministry to seek criminal justice reform, Marilyn co-wrote *The Justice Imperative: How Hyper-Incarceration Has Hijacked the American Dream* (Significance Press, 2014). Her current social justice preaching ministry addresses systemic racism and the controversy over critical race theory. So far, she has preached at an additional 90 churches on these subjects.

Marilyn retired from the Southern New England Conference in January, 2021 and is married to her best friend, Alan. Together they have 3 children and 6 grandchildren



Rev. Kendrix's suggested readings based on today's service and sermon include:

*Slavery by Another Name: The re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Douglas A. Blackmon

*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee

*The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson

*Capitol Men: The Epic Story of Reconstruction Through the Lives of the First Black Congressmen* by Philip Dray

*Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019* by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain

*Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi

*The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* By *The New York Times Magazine*; Created by Nikole Hannah-Jones

*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander

*The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* by Richard Rothstein

*Critical Race Theory: Why It Matters & Why You Should Care* by Victor Ray

*Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation* by Linda Villarosa

*Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo

*Creating a Culture of Repair: taking action on the road to reparations* by Robert Turner

**Environmental Justice Committee Meeting  
Sunday, January 19**



**Immediately following the 10:15 a.m. service.**

*Please join us to discuss our plans and initiatives for  
nurturing and protecting the environment.*

**Annual Pasta Dinner,  
Sunday Jan. 26 from 5 to 7 p.m.**



**Make your reservations today for the first meal  
prepared in our newly renovated Wakeman Hall  
kitchen! See the *Weekly Word* or email the church  
office for details on this fundraiser that supports  
church missions through our Deacon's Fund.**

# Men's Breakfast Group



**Saturday, January 25 at 8 a.m.**

**Circle Diner, Fairfield**

The men of First Church are invited to join our Men's Breakfast Group, which meets monthly at the diner. For more information, contact David McKinnis at 203-246-8138.

**Q & A Session, Sunday, Jan. 26**  
**Immediately following the 10:15 a.m. service**



Est. 1639

*The congregation is invited to join  
The Rev. Vanessa Rose and Patty Bilotto for a  
Question and Answer Session on budgetary  
expenditures related to the recent Wakeman  
Hall renovations.*

**All church members are welcome and  
encouraged to attend.**



# Violinist Andrew Sords



**With pianist Elizabeth DeMio  
and Special Guest Laura Nie, mezza-soprano**

**Sunday, February 2 at 4 p.m.**

**First Church of Fairfield**

**148 Beach Road**

**Come hear this acclaimed classical violinist and these talented musicians perform a repertoire that includes pieces by Dvorak, Schubert, Strauss and Brahms.**

**Tickets: \$30, \$20 for seniors, \$10 for students at the door.**