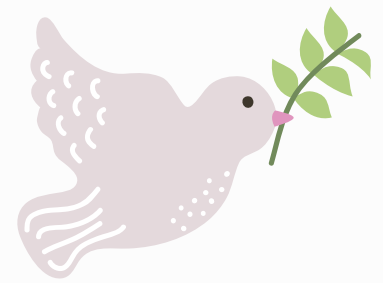


THE HERALD

January 2025



Est. 1639

- **Fostering A Warm Welcome**
- **The Rev. Marilyn Kendrix to lead MLK Day service**
- **Annual Pasta Dinner on Sunday, Jan. 26**
- **Music in the Meeting House begins on Feb. 2**
- **Thank You for Your Holiday Season Generosity**
- **Interfaith Book Club Meets at First Church on Jan.15**



Pastor's Letter

Dear Church Members,

New Year, New us? I have a New Year's resolution for First Church members.

Let's work on our welcome to visitors and newer members, shall we? Not because we aren't already pretty good at it! All our recent classes of new members have mentioned that they felt very welcome here! But there are others who are more reserved who visit and don't come back and I wonder if we could have done more make them feel at home. Sometimes people come and I worry that no one passes them the peace or invites them to fellowship hour. Can you remember your first visit to a new church? It can be overwhelming to venture into a new place. A smile and a friendly word from someone who is familiar with the church can make such a difference.

I imagine it could feel very lonely, or like you have accidentally wandered into someone else's family reunion for those people.

I have been told that the AA community has a mindset that the most important person in the room is the newest person. They need the community the most and their first experience could make or break their future there. I think we should have the same approach.

Please wear your nametag! If you need a new one, email us at the office and we will make you a new one.

And lastly, being invited to an event by a friend or family member is the number one reason people end up joining a new church. Please consider who among your circle might be longing for a community like ours and invite them to join you at a concert, play, dinner, service opportunity, or a worship service here at First Church. Churches that are thriving believe in what they have to share and are quick to share the good news. (Of course, in our tradition, we also respect those who already have a different house of worship and don't try to convert people who have their own sacred practices.)

Thank you for all being on the unofficial welcoming committee! Let's make being welcoming our New Year's Goal!

Peace, Vanessa

The Rev. Marilyn Kendrix visits First Church for Sunday worship honoring Martin Luther King Jr. Day



First Church is honored to welcome The Rev. Marilyn Kendrix to lead worship at our Sunday, Jan. 19 services. The reverend, who is the retired Bridge Conference Minister for the Southern New England Conference UCC, will lead a service dedicated to *Making God's Love and Justice Real* and current topics related to racial justice and equity in society. The reverend, who is the co-author of *Justice Imperative: How Hyper-Incarceration Has Hijacked the American Dream*, is an expert on mass incarceration and has spoken to more than 80 congregations on the topic. Her visit here coincides with the observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, Jan. 20. The Rev. Kendrix will join us for fellowship hour following our 10:15 a.m. service. We invite you to join us for this timely and meaningful worship service.

Save the Date:

Kimberly Wilson Performs at First Church March 22



Make plans to join us on Saturday, March 22 at 7 p.m. when performance artist Kimberly Wilson presents her one-woman show *A Journey* in Wakeman Hall. More details to come about this inspiring event.

Save the Date

2025 Music in the Meetinghouse Series

Violinist Andrew Sords

Sunday, Feb. 2 at 4 p.m.

First Church Sanctuary



First Church is honored to welcome acclaimed violinist Andrew Sords to its sanctuary for a Sunday afternoon concert featuring music by Brahms, Chopin & Sarasate. The accomplished Classical performer has received rave reviews for his dynamic playing style, impeccable tone and technique.

Sord's Feb. 2 concert kicks off the annual Music in the Meetinghouse Series, which brings a wide array of talented musicians to the historic church sanctuary for a series of public concerts.

Tickets for Sords' concert are \$30 for adults, \$20 for seniors and \$10 for students. Please email the church office for additional details.



Thank you from the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA Shelter Families for their 2024 Christmas Angel Gifts

For the 26th year our First Church congregation signed up to give “Angel Gifts” to 10 families (including 10 parents & 16 children) currently living in the YMCA’s Bridgeport shelter. Congregation member Debby Dwyer wants to once again thank everyone who brought Christmas joy, smiles, laughter and feelings of being remembered for those special families. They are so thankful for your generosity.

This is always the First Church mission.

Join
-US-



FIRST CHURCH OF FAIRFIELD



14TH ANNUAL
**PASTA
DINNER**

WAKEMAN HALL

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26TH

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE DEACONS' EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND WHICH PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY

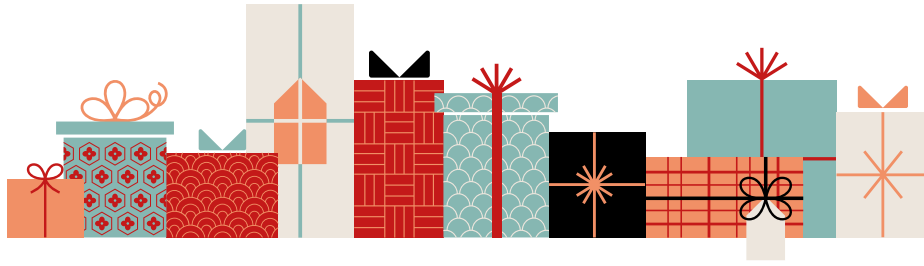


ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OUR FRIENDS AT CHIP'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

RESERVE ONLINE AT FIRSTCHURCHFAIRFIELD.ORG
QUESTIONS? EMAIL PASTADINNERFIRSTCHURCH@GMAIL.COM

SIGN-UP DEADLINE | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22ND

Covenant to Care Thank You



Dear First Church family,

Thank you for your generous support of the Covenant to Care Christmas drive. Twenty-five children received gifts this year from our congregation.

Blessings to all for a wonderful New Year!

Marilyn, Kim and Jessie

Lessons & Carols 2024



Thank you to our Music Director, Dr. Frank Martignetti and our Chancel Choir, for creating a beautiful Lessons & Carols service on Christmas Eve.



Faith Formation News

Our Disciple & Middle Road programs welcome the New Year with a robust schedule of lessons and programs dedicated to inspiring and meaningful faith formation. On Jan. 5 students will engage a Service Sunday project.

2025 Plans include:

Jan/Feb: Wintertime Animal Encounter & Movie Night

March: Mardi Gras Party

April: Springtime Bunny Party & Family Easter Egg Hunt

May: Memorial Day Celebration

June: Vacation Bible School

Classes for students ages 4-14 meet weekly after the 10:15 a.m. worship service. New students are welcome. Contact our Minister of Children and Families Kim Feeney at KFeeney@FirstChurchFairfield.org for more information



Interfaith Book Club

Beginning January 15

Members of Greenfield Hill Congregational Church, Congregation B'nai Israel of Bridgeport, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and First Church are invited to join an Interfaith Book Club that will launch early next year. The group plans to meet on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. beginning on January 15 at First Church. Future meeting locations will be discussed.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to attend the group's kickoff meeting, please contact the church office to be included on an invitation.



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SOCIAL MEDIA

 @FirstChurchFairfield

 First Church Congregational



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


 Est. 1639

Office Hours at
First Church
Monday - Friday
9:00am - 1:00pm