



Est. 1639

# *The Herald*

# *November 2025*

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*Deadline for Herald submissions for December is  
November 15.*

*The deadline for Weekly Word submissions is always Wednesdays  
at noon.*



# Pastor's Letter

When I go back “home” this month to share a Thanksgiving meal in the house I grew up in, surrounded by my family: my parents and children, siblings, nieces and nephews I will have so much for which to be grateful. When we gather around the table, I know that the grace my father will pray will include the line, as it always does, “keep us ever mindful of the needs of others.”

As we enter this season of thanks, I am grateful for the kindness and caring that radiates from our church family. One of the greatest joys in being the Pastor of First Church is seeing your faithful generosity to those in need and all the ways you are truly “ever mindful.”

As many of our friends and neighbors deal with increasing levels of anxiety around meeting their most basic needs, particularly those that relate to feeding themselves and their families as SNAP benefits are frozen, our pastoral team has heard from many of you expressing concern. Your generosity of spirit is inspiring.

First, if you are in need, never hesitate to reach out to me for support from the Deacon’s Emergency Assistance Fund. This will be given in confidence to sustain you in times of difficulty.

If you are able to support the wider community, here are some of the ways you can help that are already in place:

1) Please continue to help stock the blessing box on Beach Road that Eagle Scout Joseph Drew built for us. Just change your route home from the grocery store to share a few items each week! Shelf stable, nutritious food is most needed!



# Pastor's Letter (continued)

- 2) On Nov. 15, we've offered our parking lot to our friends at Operation HOPE as community leaders host a food drive. Details follow in this issue. We hope you'll consider heading over here with a full trunk of groceries to share! Let's stock the shelves!
- 3) Continue to bring your donations for Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport, which are collected in the breezeway and delivered every Friday. Diapers and formula are always appreciated.
- 4) Gather in the First Church Kitchen Thursdays at 3p.m. to join volunteers with our partners at nOURish Bridgeport and help prepare and serve the Feel the Warmth Meal! (more info inside) Since August we have prepared over 3,000 meals with this ministry!

Meanwhile, I hope that you will be present in worship on Giving Sunday, Nov. 9th so we can gather our pledges together and ask God's blessings on them! *Because of You*, we do so much good in the community through our many life-saving missions. Praise God for all the ways we put our faith into action!

My best wishes to you and yours for a peaceful and blessed Thanksgiving! When we sit down at our Thanksgiving tables, may we do so knowing, that "ever mindful of the needs of others," we have done our part to meet the needs of others first!

Peace,  
Vanessa

# Service News



## All Saints' Services Sunday, Nov. 2

Thank you to all who shared the names of those they would like remembered during our annual All Saints' services at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m. During these services, we will also invite anyone who would like to come forward to light candles in memory of loved ones to do so.



## Join Us for Giving Sunday November 9

We look forward to a morning of inspiration Nov. 9 as we celebrate our annual Giving Sunday services. Please bring the pledge cards you should have received in the mail, so we may place God's blessing upon them.

Join us after the 10:15 a.m. service for special fellowship.



# Hurricane Melissa Relief

Our Pastoral Team Member, The Rev. Kathy Williamson, has family and friends in Jamaica directly impacted by the devastation of this week's hurricane. She is collecting toiletries, towels and blankets to send to Jamaica. You may bring donations to any service this weekend where we know Rev. Williamson will be grateful to receive them.

In addition, First Church plans to make a generous donation from its Deacons' Emergency Fund to directly support the financial needs of those impacted by the hurricane. This Sunday's offering supports that fund.

Your generous donations to the fund are greatly appreciated.

*The Racial Justice Pathway Presents:*



# **DEI in the Bible: Blessing or Curse?**

**Sundays at 11:30 a.m.**

**November 2, 9, 16 & 23**

**Spollett Chapel**

**Led by the Rev. Dean Lindsay**

Retired Presbyterian Pastor and First Church member, The Rev. Dean Lindsey, will lead a Bible Study the first four Sundays of November at 11:30 a.m. in the Spollett Chapel. The subject is DEI in the Bible: Blessing or Curse?

Topics will include, "What's so great about Diversity?" "Why so many Christians got "race" all wrong" "Religious toleration: Is that the best we can do?" "Equity means bearing one another's burdens" Inclusion, yes. Exclusion, no. But it does get complicated.

We look forward to the engagement of church members interested in this meaningful and timely discussion on DEI through the lens of faith.



OPERATION  
HOPE

# COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 2025**

**10am - 2pm | First Church Congregational**

**148 Beach Rd, Fairfield, CT 06824**

*With State Representatives*

**Jennifer Leeper, Sarah Keitt, Cristin McCarthy Vahey, and Anne Hughes**





# Food Insecurity Mission Updates



## Come Cook with Us

Congratulations to nOURish Bridgeport on nearing the end of its kitchen renovations! We loved hosting the Feel the Warmth meal preparation here since August! First Church Members, please take advantage of cooking a meal for 300 in our kitchen with this incredible team of volunteers before nOURish moves back home in December. We will continue to support nOURish in many ways in the future! SIGN UP to prepare a meal from now to December 11th on Thursdays at 3p.m. by emailing Nikki - [treschukenney@gmail.com](mailto:treschukenney@gmail.com) for a link to the sign-up genius. Once the Feel the Warmth meal prep returns home we will be inviting you to more opportunities to prepare food in our kitchen. Stay tuned for that invitation coming soon!

# Let's Keep Blessing the Blessing Box

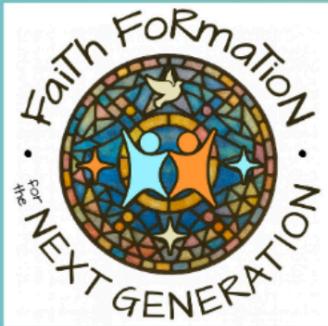


Many congregation members have called this week asking about donations for our blessing box in light of the suspension of SNAP benefits for family's experiencing food insecurity. We're grateful for your queries and interest. and wanted to offer a list of current priority items.

- Low sugar cereals such as Cheerios
- Protein sources like tuna, peanut butter, chickpeas, black and pinto beans
- Rice, pasta and macaroni and cheese
- Full loaves of bread

*As a reminder, please do no leave prepared meals, leftovers and any items that require refrigeration*

# Faith Formation News



## Guiding the Anxious Generation



*Presented by the First Church Board of Children & Families*

**Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 7 p.m.  
First Church Sanctuary**

**Learn tools for raising  
resilient kids in a worried world.**

Email Kim Feeney, Minister of Children & Families at  
[kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org) to RSVP and for  
more information.

# We're Also Making Christmas Plans!



## DISCIPLE ROAD



is seeking donations of gently used costumes, tunics, old graduation robes, props, etc. for the annual Christmas Eve pageant.



Email Kim at [kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org)



## First Night of Advent



## Cookie Decorating Workshop!

A festive, delicious workshop for Disciple Road & Middle Road families!



Learn simple but impressive decorating techniques; instruction provided by Jen of "Hinkle's Twinkles."



**Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30pm**



**The Webb Room**



**RSVP by Friday, Nov 28**  
[kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org)



# Christmas Eve Pageant 2025

Calling all aspiring angels, shepherds, lambs, & more!

**Lots of roles to fill!**

- singers
- readers
- narrators
- musicians
- background players
- ushers & greeters

There's a role for  
every child.

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All ages are  
welcome!

Please sign up by  
Monday, Nov 17

Email Kim at  
[kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:kfeeney@firstchurchfairfield.org)





# Covenant to Care

## Thanksgiving Gift Card Drive

Covenant to Care will be collecting Stop & Shop and/or Shoprite gift cards in \$25 increments for Thanksgiving for families in need. The cards can be left in the church office for pick up by the Social Workers on or before Wed, Nov. 19.

Thank you for helping to feed our neighbors in need.

Blessings to all for a very Happy Thanksgiving.  
Marilyn, Kim and Jessie



Christmas is in a few weeks and we will again hold signups for children's gifts. The first signup will be held on Sunday, Nov. 30th and the second on December 7th, both in the connecting corridor after the 10:15 a.m. services. This is a very rewarding drive for the children in our Social Worker's caseload who may not receive any other presents.

Thank you in advance for your continued compassion to the Covenant to Care ministry.



# Winter Whimsey

## November 29

Join with First Church Friends as we welcome in the community during the Town's Winter Whimsey event (formerly known as the Town Tree Lighting.) This year, since the town moved the event to November 29th, (Thanksgiving weekend!) we are not putting on the full Three Kings Bazaar. but still want to share the joy of the season with the town.

Hosts are needed to help make and pass out hot chocolate, give sanctuary tours, and provide a welcoming environment to those who pop in!

We are also hosting a special craft: a card making station for our partners at Operation Hope to personalize the gift cards which their clients receive in December.  
This activity is fun for all ages!

If you are willing to help host or have ideas about how to make this event simple yet delightful, please email Vanessa:  
[vrose@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:vrose@firstchurchfairfield.org)



# *Presenting Justin Bischoff*

## **Sunday, Nov. 16 at 4 p.m.**

## **First Church Sanctuary**



The musical celebration of the 15th anniversary of our renowned Klais organ continues with this concert featuring the talents of Justin Bischoff. Please join us for an afternoon of extraordinary music in our beautiful sanctuary.

Seating is general admission. Tickets are available at the door: \$30 adults/\$20 seniors/\$10 students and children 18 and under free.

For more information contact [office@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:office@firstchurchfairfield.org).



# Sing with Us Christmas Eve

If you are interested in joining the Chancel Choir for our 10 p.m. Christmas Eve candlelight Lessons and Carols service, please contact Music Director Dr. Frank Martignetti at [fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org](mailto:fmartignetti@firstchurchfairfield.org)

Rehearsals begin Nov. 13.

Teens, young adults, and adults you are interested in helping lead music at our 4 p.m. Pageant service, can also contact Frank. At this service, we host a large congregation and strive to make it special with lovely, but simple music. College age and adult children visiting for Christmas are invited to join!



## Interfaith Book Club News

You are invited to join our friends from Congregation B'nai Israel and other churches on Wednesday, Nov. 5th to continue our discussion of *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We will meet at B'nai Israel at 6:30 for those who want to bring dinner. The meeting starts at 7pm. On Dec. 3 in December we will meet at First Church and begin discussing *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine.

# Come Volunteer!



The church store is looking for some new volunteers. Help First Church support its missions, make new friends and have FUN! You will love our community of volunteers and shoppers!

*Interested? Contact Amy Watson at 516-641-3264.*



**Join the Men's Group for Breakfast**

**Next Meeting: Dec. 6 @ 8 a.m.**

**Southport Diner**

**Come as you are!**

**New members always welcome.**

**Contact David McKinnis David McKinnis  
([david@bethanddavid.org](mailto:david@bethanddavid.org)) or Eric Treschuk  
([eric.treschuk@gmail.com](mailto:eric.treschuk@gmail.com)), for more  
information.**

**We hope you will join us!**



# **Called to Be Friends**

## **2025 UCC Men's Retreat**

**Nov. 14 to Nov. 16**

### **Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center**

### **Sharon, Conn.**

**Men from Fairfield County UCC churches are invited to gather from 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 14 until noon Sunday, Nov. 16 at the beautiful Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center for an annual retreat.**

**The Rev. Todd Shipley, Pastor of Unity Hill United Church of Christ, will once again lead what promises to be a time to learn more about ourselves and grow closer to God. This year's theme is Called to Be Friends.**

**The retreat costs \$160/person, but those interested are welcome to attend regardless of how much they can afford to pay.**

**For more information contact David McKinnis at [davidmckinnis@optonline.net](mailto:davidmckinnis@optonline.net) or 203-246-8138.**

# Annie

November  
14-30

[fairfieldcenterstage.org](http://fairfieldcenterstage.org)

***Annie* Opens This Month  
Come see some First Church stars!!!!**



Fairfield Center Stage's production of the classic musical *Annie* opens in Wakeman Hall Nov. 14 with weekend performances continuing through Nov. 30. We're excited to share that congregation member Michael Traum as well Tango, the adorable pet of a congregation member Nancy Lothrup are cast members. (Tango is pictured here with Iris, who stars in the title role of *Annie*.)

Tickets at [fairfieldcenterstage.org](http://fairfieldcenterstage.org). Congregation members can use the code fccfriend for a \$10 discount on all performance tickets.