



Est. 1639

The Herald

December 2025

- Call to All Church Meeting on Dec. 14
- Christmas Worship Schedule
- Winter Whimsy, Nov. 29
- Holiday Giving
- FPS Community Partnership Expands
- Mendelssohn Choir Concert, Dec. 14
- More Church News & Updates

*The deadline for Herald submissions for January is December 15.
The deadline for Weekly Word submissions is always Wednesdays at noon.*

A Message from the Pastor and Moderator



All-Church Meeting: On Solar Panel Project Sunday, Dec 14

Immediately Following the 10:15 a.m. service

After months of research and years of advance preparation, we are finally ready for a vote of the church on this project, and not a moment too soon, as incentives will expire on December 31st. Over the past three years we have replaced the two flat roofs over the Jones Wing that houses the Montessori School and the Connecting Corridor. Both are ideal places for solar panels, which will be both a wise financial investment expected to save the church money over the long term and, of course, is the sustainable choice for God's creation.

Bring your questions on Dec. 7 following worship. We will gather in the Music and Meeting Room for an 11:15 a.m. information session.. The proposal is brought to us by our Facilities Chair, Craig Way and our consultant Noel Lafeayette, who will both be there to share critical details and answer questions.

Let's continue to show love to the people of Jamaica! Please consider going to the giving tools section of the website and making a designated gift for Jamaica relief. Our Senior Deacon Wendy Williams Brown is supporting her community there with shipments of food to areas that have been completely devastated by the recent hurricane. Any gifts would be greatly appreciated and put immediately to good use.



Pastor and Moderator's Message (continued)

Thank you to everyone who turned in their pledge cards! So far we have 98 households who have committed to our *Because of You, our Church Changes Lives 2026* Pledge Campaign!

We are hoping to have all pledge cards received by the end of the year so we can plan for the year ahead. Please return your pledge card you received in the mail or take a new one from the welcome table.

Thank you for your faithful commitment to sustain the ministries of First Church! We are looking forward to a year ahead full of the joys of praising God and serving together in common.

In Peace,

Dr. Kim Stevens, Church Moderator and

The Rev. Vanessa Rose, Senior Pastor



Service and Worship News



Christmas Eve Worship

Interactive Children's Pageant

4 p.m. in the sanctuary

Featuring the children of Disciple Road

Lessons & Carols by Candlelight

10 p.m. in the sanctuary

Featuring the Chancel Choir and guests!

All are welcome!

Reminder: There will be no 8:15 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 28.

Notes for Sunday, Nov. 30: There will be no fellowship hour following the 10:15 a.m. service. We look forward to fellowship on Dec. 6.

Come Join Us!



Winter Whimsy

Saturday, November 29 from 4 to 8 p.m.

Join your First Church friends as we welcome the community during the Town's Winter Whimsy event (formerly known as the Town Tree Lighting.) We'll be doing things a little differently this year because the tree lighting falls right after Thanksgiving, which made it too challenging to hold our annual Three King's Fair.

While this is a pared down event, we still need hosts to help pass out hot chocolate, give sanctuary tours, and provide a warm welcome to anyone who comes to visit our beautiful church.

We are also hosting a special craft: a card making station for our partners at Operation Hope. There, we will personalize the gift cards which their clients receive in December. We look forward to seeing many of you on Saturday!

2025 Pledge Campaign News



It was such a joy to celebrate Giving Sunday on November 9th with all of you! Thank you to everyone who helped make the day a success, especially those who helped with communication and the reception – Madeline Lee, Sally Chandler, Michelle Walker, Jacque Paige, Amy Allison Ward, Todd Gregory, Kate Croarkin, Beth Fitzpatrick and The Rev. Vanessa Rose.

To date, 97 households have pledged more than \$290,000. Many have also pledged their time and prayers in support of our church community and our wider mission to serve. Thank you for your generosity!

If you haven't yet, please prayerfully consider making a financial pledge or a commitment to contribute to our community in other ways that are meaningful to you in 2026. You can do this by returning the card you received in the mail, visiting our website or calling the church office at 203-259-8396.

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With love and gratitude,
Patty Gregory
Steward of Annual Giving

Mendelssohn Choir

Annual Holiday Concert

Sunday, Dec. 14 at 4 p.m.

First Church Sanctuary

MENDELSSOHN CHOIR OF CONNECTICUT

MUSIC FOR A JOYFUL SEASON



Vivaldi's *Gloria*

Bach's *Magnificat*

Sunday, December 14, 2025
4:00pm

We are pleased to welcome the Mendelssohn Choir of Connecticut for its holiday concert, Music for a Joyful Season, here in our sanctuary on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Along with the choir, the concert will feature five soloists accompanied by the Connecticut Philharmonic Orchestra, performing under the direction of Conductor James Hisey.

This is not a church produced event and tickets must be purchased directly from the Mendelssohn Choir.

Go to MendelssohnChoirOfCt.org for tickets.



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 - treschukenny@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!

More Love for the Blessing Box



We deeply appreciate the kindness of so many First Church members, friends and neighbors, who have pitched in to stock our busy free pantry, known as the Blessing Box, located on Beach Road.

Fairfield Center Stage theater recently asked audiences at its production of *Annie* to help us fill the box in appreciation of their three week run here. The thoughtful generosity of the FCS cast and audiences was amazing, allowing us to fill the pantry's shelves *again and again and again* before Thanksgiving.

We appreciate *all* Blessing Box donations, but especially love contributions of protein-rich, low sugar nonperishable items including: Canned tuna, hearty soups, boxed milk, peanut butter, loaves of bread, pasta, rice and macaroni and cheese. Feel free to put donations directly in the box or leave them with a pastoral team member in the church office.



Covenant to Care

Annual Holiday Toy Drive

Christmas is just a few weeks and we will again hold signups for children's gifts. Signups will take place on Sundays Dec. 6 and 13 in the connecting corridor outside the sanctuary after our 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.

Marilyn, Kim & Jesse



**First Church Congregational 2025 Christmas Angel Gifts
for the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA
Families in Transition Shelter Program in Bridgeport**

This will be the 27th year First Church will deliver joyous gifts to these YMCA shelter apartments. As you know these past 6 years have been extremely hard for so many people especially families in the multiple YMCA shelter apartments. We want to help 12 of these families this year totaling 29 people.

If you are able to make Christmas brighter for any of these families please see me, Debby Dwyer, in church on Nov. 30th, Dec. 7st or 14th and pick up a Name Tag for a child or parent. OR Call me at home at 203-255-8835 and I will give you the names and ages of family members you can choose from and send you the name tag. If I don't answer at the time you can just leave your name and number and I will call you right back. Let me know by Sunday, December 14th if you can help.

We put an approximate limit of \$35.00 on gifts for children OR if you chose a parent we ask that you get a Visa or Master Card GIFT CARD for \$50.00. The children's name tag will have their name on the front and on the back their age, male or female, sizes, and possible wish list items. Once you have bought your gift please wrap the box in festive paper with the name tag attached (also wrap gift cards in a box so they don't get lost and deliver it directly to me by Friday Dec. 18th either by dropping it off at my house (2607 Congress St. Fairfield) or giving it directly to me at church or I can pick it up from you if needed. Call me to make sure I will be at home or in church those Sundays. Thank you so much for helping these family members.

Debby Dwyer 203-255-8835 (home phone)

Interfaith Book Club News



Next Meeting:

Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m.

You are invited to join our friends from Congregation B'nai Israel and other area churches on Wednesday Dec. 3 when we meet at First Church to begin discussing *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine.

New members are always welcome to join this meaningful interfaith reading and discussion group. Meetings begin with an informal bring-your-own dinner session (we provide the side salad and dessert) at 6:30 p.m. The book discussion begins at 7 p.m.



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 at

(david@bethanddavid.org) or Eric Treschuk

**(eric.treschuk@gmail.com), for more
information.**

We hope you will join us!

Warm Welcomes!

There's always something happening at First Church. Whenever possible, we are proud to share space here at the town's first meetinghouse with the community. We have some new organizations and renters to welcome including:

- **Morgan Cleveland Yoga.** Morgan will bring her gentle yoga to the sanctuary on Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. beginning Jan. 8. Reach out to the office if you are interested in trying a class.
- **The Fairfield Public Schools Community partnership,** a program which offers real-life daily living skills to older special education students enrolled in the Fairfield public schools, has expanded classes here from once to twice a week. Students will now be on-site with their teachers midday on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Wakeman Hall kitchen, where they focus on learning practical food preparation skills.
- **The Fairfield Men's Association,** a new nonprofit providing fellowship, service and engagement opportunities to men ages 50 and up, continues to grow since it launched meetings here in October. The FMA meets in Wakeman Hall most Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. For more information visit FairfieldMensAssociation.com.