

INSPIRE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GUILFORD'S SEMI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Dear First Church,

This past week we have rallied in numerous ways. We supported First Madison as they faced hate mail, hate calls, and hate on social media all because they hosted drag bingo to raise money for the summer service trip. Many attended the gathering in Guilford to learn more about how to fight anti-Jewish hate. Pilgrim Fellowship learned (as the congregation did in service two weeks ago) from the women at New Lifestyles about welcoming and walking with those recently released from prison and newly sober. We felt our collective heart break about Tyre Nichols and once again raised questions about seeking and acting for justice in our systems. Many generously gave funds, offered places to stay, and invited our lead intern Clara out for a meal after her apartment complex caught on fire! Yes, busy with caring our church community has been.

Finally, as scam perpetrators fraudulently used email addresses similar to mine, your generosity showed. You thought I might need you to purchase gift cards to help someone or that I needed you to help me personally with a confidential conversation. Sure, I was livid about these criminals targeting such good people, AND I was touched by your goodness, your willingness to help, and your care. So once again, evil is overcome by love. May we remember: love prevails. May we remember: love prevails. I am still working with my anger and the police, and yet I hold fast to the goodness I see in you.

Peace,
Ginger
(The real one)

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CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING



Sunday February 5, 2023

To the members of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc.:

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc., will be held on Sunday, February 5, 2023, at 11 a.m. in the sanctuary, directly following the 10 a.m. worship service, to:

1. Receive and act upon the reports and recommendations of the Boards, Committees, and Organizations of the Church;
2. Act upon the proposed 2023 Ministry Budget as submitted by Church Council;
3. Receive the report of the Nominating Committee and act upon their recommendations for Officers and Members of Boards and Committees of the Church and recommendations of the Ministers; and
4. Receive and act upon the reports and recommendations of the Ministers.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Catlin, Clerk

February Worship

February 5 - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Communion, Annual Meeting & Special Fellowship Hour

10 a.m. – One worship service today – sanctuary (no chapel service)

10 a.m. – Sunday school and nursery care

11 a.m. – Annual Meeting

A buffet lunch will be served in Fellowship Hall immediately following the February 5 annual meeting. All are welcome. There will be a buffet of ziti, salad, bread, punch, coffee, fruit & cake. Questions, please call Debbie Peluse at 203-430-5701.

February 12 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

8:30 a.m. – Worship – chapel

10 a.m. – Worship – sanctuary

10 a.m. – Sunday school and nursery care

February 19 - Transfiguration Sunday

8:30 a.m. – Worship – chapel

10 a.m. – Worship – sanctuary

10 a.m. – Sunday school and nursery care

February 22 - Ash Wednesday

7 p.m. service - sanctuary

February 26 - First Sunday in Lent

8:30 a.m. – Worship – chapel

10 a.m. – Worship – sanctuary

10 a.m. – Sunday school and nursery care

LAMENT

As we grieve and pray for justice and healing in the wake of police brutality in Memphis, Tennessee, we share this excerpt from the lament of the Elected Officers of the United Church of Christ on the death of Tyre Nichols.

Hear our Cry. Receive our lament.

Transform our anger into action.

Our fear into hope.

Our brokenness into healing.

This is our prayer. Amen.

CIVIL RIGHTS TRIP REMINDER

The last day to make your hotel reservation at the group rate with Fairfield Inn in Savannah is Saturday, February 4.

In the kinship of faith, we pray for:

all the people and communities shattered by guns and violence;
 the people of Ukraine,
 Bob H., on the death of his sister-in-law;
 Ray D.;
 Cindy M.;
 Susan B.;
 John V. and family;
 family and friends of Lynne;
 Alice, mother of Merideth H.;
 Annie F.'s sister;
 Peggy, mother of Mags;
 parents whose young adult children are traveling;
 those impacted by the storms and wildfires;
 those who are ill or suffer;
 those recovering from COVID and suffering from long covid;
 those who are grieving, struggling, awaiting diagnosis, or going
 through treatments;
 all healthcare workers;
 family and friends of those who have completed or are
 contemplating suicide;
 those living with chronic diseases, dementia, and cancer,
 and the families who care for them;
 those living with domestic violence;
 families dealing with addictions;
 for health and peace for all.

Year-end Statements for 2022 have been sent by email to those whose email addresses are in our database and by US mail to those whose email addresses we do not have.

LABYRINTH MEETING

The Labyrinth programming group will meet at Sunday, February 12, following the 10 a.m. service (approximately 11:30 a.m.) in Griswold Hall. We will be discussing our 2023 agenda and goals. For more information, please call Bill Weidmann at (203) 887-4847.

Deacon for February is Mark Mitchell (215-435-6192). Please call Mark if you have questions or reflections about the spiritual life of the church.

Parish Care Team Contact for February is Kathy Nelson (203-430-1799). Please call Kathy to notify her of a birth or adoption, or if someone is grieving or recovering and would welcome a card, meal, or prayer shawl.

**Gratitude from Clara**

First Church, thank you so much for the outpouring of support given and offered to me and my housemates in our displacement from the fire. I cannot even begin to wrap my head around your generosity, but my heart is full. We are taken, we are safe. I appreciate each and every one of you, and as we begin to better understand the kind of help we might need, I will not hesitate to reach out for support.

Grief Group Luncheon

The next Grief Group luncheon will be held Wednesday, February 15, at noon at Amarone's in Guilford. RSVP to Pam D'Amico at 860-338-4811.

WALKING A LENTEN LABYRINTH - FEBRUARY 19

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 22. Please join fellow congregants in Fellowship Hall after worship on Sunday, February 19, at 11:15 a.m. for this forum to learn more about how you can incorporate the centuries-old practice of labyrinth walking into your spiritual life this Lent.



Lenten Dinner & Discussion Series Begins February 8

This year for Lenten programming, the Adult Ed Committee invites you to an 8-week program on Wednesday evenings in Fellowship Hall. Together we will read one chapter each week of "Forgive Us: Confessions of a Compromised Faith." This book presents historical and theological reflections on the sins that Christians have committed against the vulnerable and marginalized.

Each Wednesday evening will begin with dinner at 6 p.m. Discussion of the chapter will start at 7. We will close with an action item to be done together or at home, wrapping up no later than 8:30.

There are more chapters in the book than there are weeks in Lent. We will have two weeks of study sessions beginning February 8, meet for Ash Wednesday worship (Feb. 22), and then meet for five more weeks of study (Feb. 8 – Mar. 29).

We have a limited supply of 26 copies of the book available while supplies last; however, there is no limit to how many people can attend this Lenten Series. The first 26 people to submit payment may purchase the book from First Church for a fee of \$20, \$4 of which will support the weekly 6 p.m. dinner.

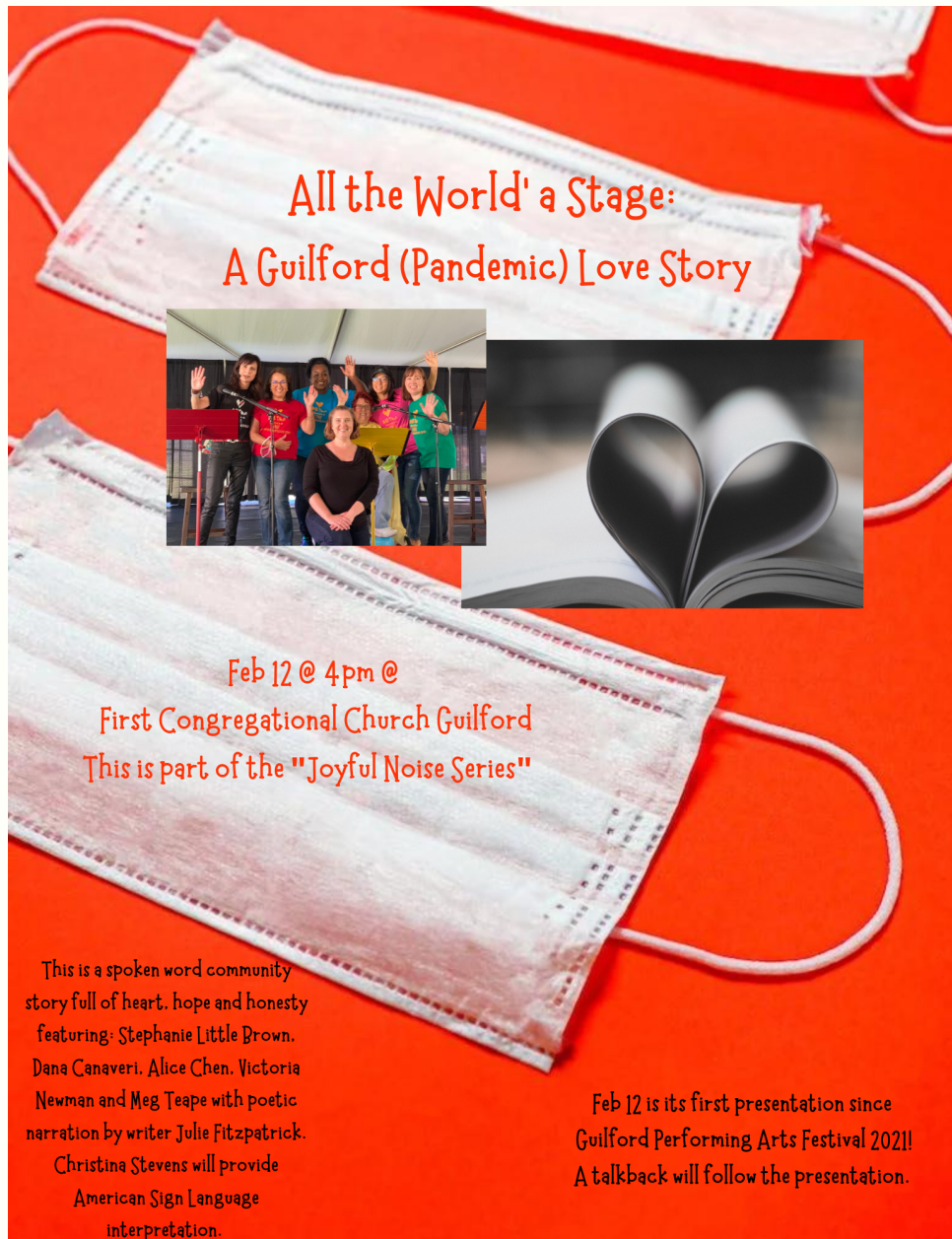
Books can be purchased or picked up (cash or check made out to First Church with "Lenten series" in the memo) either at the church office during business hours (M-F, 9-2-203-453-5249) or from Reilly after the 10 a.m. service on Sundays. Please read the first chapter prior to our first meeting on February 8.

If you need childcare or a ride to make it possible to attend, please let Reilly know. If you need a free book, Reilly will give you one, no questions asked. On behalf of the Adult Ed Committee, we look forward to learning with you!

To sign up/for more information, please contact Reilly at reilly@firstchurchguilford.org or call the office at 203-453-5249.

"All the World's a Stage: A Guilford (Pandemic) Love Story" Sunday, February 12, at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary at First Church

Join us February 12 at 4 p.m. for "All the World's a Stage: A Guilford (Pandemic) Love Story," an original production by Julie Fitzpatrick. You will see familiar faces in the cast with Julie Fitzpatrick, including church members, Victoria Font Newman and Stephanie Little Brown. Debuted at the 2021 Guilford Performing Arts Festival, Julie interviewed locals to hear their feelings and experiences during the pandemic, and compiled them into a spoken-word piece that explores love's many forms. All seven women are returning to reprise their roles here at First Church. Free-will donations benefit the Sandin Organ Fund. This program is part of First Church's Joyful! Noise series.



**All the World's a Stage:
A Guilford (Pandemic) Love Story**

**Feb 12 @ 4pm @
First Congregational Church Guilford
This is part of the "Joyful Noise Series"**

This is a spoken word community story full of heart, hope and honesty featuring: Stephanie Little Brown, Dana Canaveri, Alice Chen, Victoria Newman and Meg Teape with poetic narration by writer Julie Fitzpatrick. Christina Stevens will provide American Sign Language interpretation.

Feb 12 is its first presentation since Guilford Performing Arts Festival 2021! A talkback will follow the presentation.

Want to join our music mailing list? Stay informed of upcoming music programming at the church, such as Joyful Noise concerts, Music Sunday, and Project Music Heals Us. Email bill@firstchurchguilford.org to be added to the list.

ECO Echo A Changing Jet Stream



If you were to stand outside on a clear day and look straight up into the sky, about seven to eight miles up, you might see a jet stream, if only it were visible. But a jet stream is made up currents of moving air—some hot, some cool—and the different temperatures make the air move from west to east, just like the Earth moves. There are about four jet streams in space above us between the poles and the equator. These jet streams determine the weather.

The sun heats some of this air above us, the North and South Poles cool some, and the ribbon of air we call the jet stream tries to rebalance the temperature by radiating the warm air back into space. But now, today, there is something blocking it.

Since the dawn of the Industrial Age, the burning of fossil fuels has added combustion gasses to the atmosphere all around the Earth. These greenhouse gasses act like a thermal blanket, so the jet stream(s) cannot radiate the heat back into the atmosphere high above us. So the Earth cannot cool down, and the jet streams are heating up! This added heat, what scientists call the greenhouse effect, intensifies weather events, causing severe droughts in some areas and raging rain and floods in others. We know what the problem is. We know how to solve it! We just need the WILL to do it.

Sue Jones
Environmental Ministry Team

You're Invited to a Webinar: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy -- The Inflation Reduction Act and Religious Communities

Tuesday, February 7, at 7 p.m.: The Inflation Reduction Act is providing new opportunities to address climate change through numerous programs and funding opportunities. IREJN is pleased to welcome Daniel Bressette, the Executive Director for the Environmental and Energy Studies Institute, for a webinar and Q&A on exciting new funding available for houses of worship for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Join IREJN as we dive into how our religious community can benefit from the Inflation Reduction Act.



New Lifestyles for Women

Janice Murray with New Lifestyles for Women speakers joined us for Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday. They shared their moving stories and celebrated our relationship with them over the last five years. Due to COVID, this is the first time they have been able to share in person. New Lifestyles presented us with a beautiful gift of a table covering symbolizing the fellowship and coordination between New Lifestyles and First Church. The group also spoke during coffee hour about their vision and goals for a house for women in New Haven.

For more information about the importance for housing after prison, please go to: www.newhavenindependent.org/article/opinion_after_prison_there_must_be_housing



Women's Fellowship & Outreach's next meeting will be Tuesday, February 28, at 2 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. All church women are welcome to attend. The meeting will include some social time and also some hands-on activities related to outreach. If you have questions or need a ride, please call Debbie Peluse at 203-430-5701.

Parish Care for Dave Knapp

Dave Knapp, a longtime member of our congregation and a pioneer in First Church's Open and Affirming journey, recently moved to an assisted living facility in North Haven. He would greatly appreciate any visits, phone calls, or other communication from First Church folks. Dave's direct phone number is 203-507-2064. Please send cards and letters to David Knapp, The Landing, 201 Clintonville Rd. Apt. 221, North Haven, CT 06473.



February 2023 First Congregational Church of Guilford			Abbreviation Key: Ch-Chapel CR-Choir Room FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Griswold Hall MEB-Moore Ed. Bldg	MG-Memorial Garden ML-Minear Library Narth--Narthex Out- Outside Sanct- Sanctuary SJCL--	In-person 12-step Groups: Sun 7:15a AA-GH Sun 2p NA-GH Mon 8a AIAnon - GH Tues 7p AA- Rm. 9	Wed 10a AIAnon-FH Wed 7p AA-GH Thurs NA 7:30p-GH Fri 7:30p AA- FH Sat. 7:30a AA- GH
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Feb InSpire published 9a Meditation – Zoom 7p Music Cmte. - CR 7p Trustees – Ch. 7p Confirmation – Sanct/FH	2 Feb Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct 6p Bible Study – GH 6:30p BSA – FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	3 Feb	4 Feb
5 Feb - Communion Annual Meeting One worship service today 10a Worship – Sanctuary 10a Sunday Sch & Nursery 11a Annual Meeting – Sanct. Light Buffet Lunch follows mtg. 3-6p Joyful! Rehears. – Sanct 6:30p PF Leaders - FH 7p PF Mtg - FH	6 Feb	7 Feb 10a Bible Study – FH 12:15p Staff – FH 7p Meditation – Zoom 7p Deacons – Narth.	8 Feb 9a Meditation – Zoom 6p Lenten Series - FH	9 Feb Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct 6p Bible Study – GH 6:30p BSA – FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	10 Feb	11 Feb
12 Feb 8:30a Worship – Ch. 10a Worship – Sanct 10a Sunday School 11:15a Ringers – Sanct. 11:30a Labyrinth Mtg – GH 1p JN Rehearsal - Sanct 4p Joyful! Noise – Sanct.	13 Feb InSpire deadline 7p PCT- FH 7p Bus. Cmte.-Narth.	14 Feb 10a Bible Study – FH 12:15p Staff – FH 4p PAJ - Rm. 9 7p Meditation – Zoom 7p Church Council – FH	15 Feb InSpire published 9a Meditation – Zoom 6p Lenten Series – FH 7p Confirmation – Sanct.	16 Feb Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct 6p Bible Study – GH 6:30p BSA – FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	17 Feb 11a Sanctuary Occupied	18 Feb 1-5p PAJ - FH
19 Feb 8:30a Worship – Ch. 10a Worship – Sanct 10a Sunday School 11:30 Labyrinth Forum- FH 11:15a Ringers – Sanct.	20 Feb Presidents' Day Church Offices Closed	21 Feb 10a Bible Study – FH 12:15p Staff – FH 7p Meditation – Zoom 7p HR FH	22 Feb Ash Wednesday 9a Meditation - Zoom 7p Ash Wednesday Service – Sanctuary	23 Feb Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct 6:30p BSA – FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	24 Feb	25 Feb
26 Feb 8:30a Worship – Ch. 10a Worship – Sanct 10a Sunday School 11:15a Ringers – Sanct. 11:30a Labyrinth Mtg - GH 7p PF Meeting	27 Feb InSpire deadline 7p Finance – FH 7p – PF Cmte. - GH	28 Feb 10a Bible study – FH 12:15p Staff – FH 7p Meditation – Zoom	1 March InSpire published 9a Mediation - Zoom 6p Lenten Series–FH 7p Trustees – Ch. 7 p Confirmation–Sanct. 7 p Music Cmte. - CR	2 March Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct 6:30p BSA – FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	3 March	4 March

InSpire Submissions

Next InSpire Deadlines: February 13 & 27
at Noon 2023

First Church Acronyms Decoder

BSA - Boy Scouts of America
 CE - Christian Education
 C&GJ - Community & Global Justice
 EMT - Environmental Ministry Team
 PAJ - Peace, Affirmation, and Justice
 PCT - Parish Care Team
 PF - Pilgrim Fellowship
 WFO - Women's Fellowship & Outreach

Stewardship Made Easy

We invite you to help First Church meet our 2023 Stewardship Goal. You can use this QR code to make your 2023 pledge online.



InSpire

February 2023

First Congregational Church Clergy and Staff

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