

New — Two Major Programs For Our Families and Our Neighbors

Through the national organizations **Mastering Motherhood** and **Trail Life USA**, we will continue to answer Jesus' call to love, and reach out to, those around us—much like the local emphasis we saw on Missions Weekend. At the same time, we will be serving the needs of many in our own congregation.

Trail Life USA is a Scouting-like, Christ-centered outdoor character development and adventure program open to boys.

Boys will love the fun and adventure, and parents will love the commitment to a Christian worldview. Learn about our May 22 **Open House** on the back page or at firstchurch.org/traillife.

Mastering Motherhood specifically meets the needs that arise at all stages of motherhood. Brunch, speakers, and book studies in small groups are featured every week, along with free childcare. See the back page and masteringmotherhood.com.



WHEN I WAS AT GORDON COLLEGE, there was a ministry called Barnabas that still exists today. Barnabas is an anonymous ministry that encourages students to take seriously the work of loving their neighbors. They actively seek to encourage others on campus in creative ways, like leaving care packages, notes or thank-you posters.

As a guy from New England I thought it was hokey—until I read the New Testament.

When we read the story of the early church, we see a culture highlighted by **encouragement** and **affirmation**:

- Jesus affirmed people's faiths and highlighted the giving of the poor widow.

- Paul instructs Timothy to devote the church and himself to three things: (1) **public reading of Scripture**, (2) **encouragement** (the Greek word *paraklesis* can be translated also as *help*, *exhort*, *comfort*, *urge*), and (3) **teaching** (1 Timothy 4:13).

- Jesus calls the Holy Spirit another Helper (or *Encourager*, from the Greek).

- When Barnabas came to the church in Antioch, he "saw the grace of God" and encouraged them (Acts 11:23).

Our culture today is so different from that New Testament culture. People (known as trolls) sow hatred on social media by
Continued on next page

Spire Subscription Renewal

In an effort to conserve resources, we are asking all on our mailing list to respond if they wish to continue receiving *The Spire* by mail. To guarantee your subscription, either complete the form below and mail it* (or drop it in the Offering plate), **or just send an email** to marilynd@firstchurch.org with the subject "Spire" and a message with your name, address and phone.

Also, be sure to let us know whether or not you would like to receive *The Spire* by email; and note that it is always available online at firstchurch.org/spire.

Many of those not responding at all by summer will be removed from that mailing list until they let us know otherwise.

*The Spire | First Church of Christ | 250 Main St. | Wethersfield, CT 06109

Simply return this form or send us an email (see above).

☐ Please make sure I/We stay on the *Spire* mailing list. Also, I am listing any corrections and any names at this address whose subscriptions can be removed:

☐ I would like to receive the *Spire* PDF by email in place of a printed copy.

ADD'L NAMES TO BE REMOVED:

MY NAME & PHONE:

ADDRESS:

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DISCOVER

Discerning God's Will In Your Life and Our Church

SUNDAY SERMONS

APRIL 29 | *What Do We See?*

Deryk Richenbourg

[John 5:19-20](#)

MAY 6 | *The Shepherd's Voice*

Todd Willard

[John 10:1-10](#)

MAY 13 | *Lessons From the Early Church*

Tessa Beauregard

[Acts 1:14](#) and additional passages from Acts

MAY 20 | *In Excruciating Circumstances, God Speaks*

Deryk Richenbourg

[2 Chronicles 20:1-30](#)

MAY 27 | *I Have Come to Do Your Will, O God*

Wayne Luman

[Hebrews 10:5](#)

In June, we will begin a series on the Gospel of John.

Report from the Executive Board — Member Update

Financial Issues

There has been a significant change in First Church's financial condition since January 1, and the Executive Board and Finance Subcommittee want you to have an opportunity to be involved in choosing our church's path forward. As you know, at year's end, total giving through the first six months of the current fiscal year was within \$13,000 of our budget— 98% of our expectation. Meanwhile, *expenses* in advance of the winter season were at 93.4% of the amount budgeted and a well-controlled \$60,000 less than planned.

Fast forward to March 31, and our financial condition has deteriorated substantially. Giving for the year is only 92% of the amount budgeted, or \$74,000 less than planned. This reduced giving has diminished *total* income for the year to only 93.3% of the amount budgeted, or nearly \$95,000 less than projected. Meanwhile, seasonal expenses (heat, lighting for shorter days, snow removal, etc.) have increased our total costs to 96% of the budgeted amount, but still almost \$55,000 less than the amount planned.

This rapid reversal is having a significant adverse impact on our financial condition this year and could have an even more substantial impact as we begin to work on the budget for the year starting July 1.

How Should We Proceed?

Members of the Finance Subcommittee will share additional information and potential alternatives at the **Annual Meeting this Sunday, April 29**. No vote is scheduled.

We plan to provide you with a summary of the current and projected financial details at the Annual Meeting. At the same time, we will share a few potential options for your consideration.

We intend to allow you time to consider the information, so that you can share your preferences with us before or during the **June 10 Financial Meeting**, when the budget is usually adopted.

Our Church Makes a Difference

By supporting First Church, you help much more than just the people and facilities that constitute your church home—you also support the Church's outreach. Here are some recent examples:

- **Fifty First Church members** volunteered for **Serving Saturday**, which was organized by our Missions and Outreach Ministry in cooperation with Urban Alliance. The volunteers provided needed support at ABC Women's Center, Hartford City Mission's Vine Street and Glory Chapel locations, Sparrow Ministries, and World Vision.

Photo: Ken Kittredge

power washes the ABC Women's Center in Middletown.



- **On Missions Sunday**, lifelong First Church member **Sam Hollings** provided an interesting and challenging message related to his InterVarsity ministry at Southern Conn. State University.

Status Report

The Music Search Committee reports that they have received responses from a number of potential candidates. Expressions of interest by both domestic and international candidates indicate a desire to be considered for the First Church organist and choir director position.

From the Senior Pastor *Continued from Page 1*



posting inflammatory messages and pictures. We also read attention-getting headlines that criticize individuals and organizations, focusing more on the problems than the solutions.

Let's face it, as New Englanders who live in this society, we see this negative mindset creep into church. It is something we

struggle with at First Church, isn't it? But with God's help, we can be transformed.

Yes, we are to recognize when someone sins. We are to shine the light of Christ on the dark areas of our world. We are to speak the truth. But let's not forget that we are to do this with love. Let's also not forget these other New Testament values:

- Jesus told us to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39).
- When we correct others, we are to do so in a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1).
- Jesus warns us against noticing the speck in someone's eyes and being unaware of the plank in our own (Matthew 7:3).

We are to be a people who encourage and affirm one another. We are to see what God's grace is doing in others, and encourage them. This is not about creating a culture of positivity but one that is biblical.

If we want to be a people who see His Kingdom come and His will be done in our church and in the world around us, then we are to love one another and share the love of Jesus with those in our own church and communities—and beyond.

We can do it! First Church, I know we can do it!

—Pastor Deryk

ACTNOW Community Breakfast: Saturday, May 5, 9 to 11 a.m.

Join us in Keith Jones Hall for a chance to hear from leaders currently active in the fight against child trafficking. You will also learn how to get involved with our ACTNOW team. Come eat, learn, have fun, and maybe even win a fabulous gift basket! **Donation** is \$12 per person; \$25 max/family. **Register** at firstchurch.org/actnow.

If you are unable to attend but would still like to make a donation, you can do so by using the above link and indicating that you will not be attending.

Love146 is an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation through survivor care and prevention. **ACTNOW—Anti Child Trafficking Network Of Wethersfield**—is a volunteer team of passionate people committed to supporting the work of Love146. We are developing a Hotel/Motel Ministry to create awareness, education and action among area hotels and motels. We would love more volunteers to help! Please contact **Alice Goodrich** for info, at 860.515.1895.

FAMILY MINISTRY NEWS starts with: YARD GOATS GAME Faith and Family Day

Please join us on **Saturday, May 5**, for an exciting **Hartford Yard Goats** baseball game! We have a block of tickets so that we can sit together. Game starts at **6:05**; gates open at **4:35 p.m.**

Come early to experience the Travelers Kids Fun Zone and visit the famous Goat Petting Zoo! Before the first pitch, there will be a forum on faith lead by Yard Goats players. After the game, a representative from each church/group will get to go onto the

field and be recognized, followed by a fabulous fireworks display.

Tickets are \$7; children under 3 are free if they can sit on a parent's lap during the game. To sign up, or for more details, please contact **Di Krause** at 860.529.1575 x303, or by email at dianek@firstchurch.org. We'll meet at the game to allow everyone to choose when to come and go. If you think you will need a ride, let us know when you sign up. Also see firstchurch.org/yardgoats.

WORKCAMP MISSION TEAM

This year, our **Workcamp team** of 17 students and 4 adults will be traveling to Camillus, NY, June 24 to 30. There are a number of ways you can support our team—and you will be blessed as well!

RENT-A-CREWS — If your yard needs some work, hire a crew of 3-5 high school students, with optional adult leader, to help. We can also help with light painting jobs, moving, etc.

PLANT SALE — This ever-popular sale is during **Mother's Day Weekend—Saturday and Sunday, May 12 and 13**, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Our tables will be set up on the front lawn—stop by and support the team!

For more information on either of these opportunities, contact **Di Krause** at 860.529.1575 x303 or dianek@firstchurch.org.

30 HOUR FAMINE: Our 20th Year

30 Hour Famine is an international event started by **World Vision** to educate students and communities about the issue of extreme poverty. Students who participate in the Famine fast for 30 hours and raise funds to support the work of World Vision. This year is the 20th anniversary of First Church doing the 30 Hour Famine, and we can't wait to see how much money we can raise!

Friday evening, May 18, and Saturday, May 19, all students in grades 7 through 12 are invited to join together at the church to learn, pray, serve, play, and experience the power of community.

The **Friday night session** will run from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and **Saturday's session** will run from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Register now at firstchurch.org/famine.

Family Ministry SUMMER Save-the-Dates:

WORKCAMP MISSION TRIP | June 24-30 | firstchurch.org/workcamp

VBC | July 16-20 | firstchurch.org/vbc ● YOUTH SUMMER CAMP | July 29 – August 4 | berea.org/summer

Church Work Day

This year's **Annual Church Work Day** will be held on **Saturday, May 12**, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. A variety of projects will be available for you to choose from, including mulching, window washing, installation of foundation plantings, and more. Our efforts will be followed by a cookout picnic.

Please sign up in the Wells Fellowship Area or call **Bob Keleher** at 860.529.1575 x299.

Love the New Coffee Corner?

We need your help! We're looking for individuals, families and groups willing to help serve coffee and refreshments for both first and second services. Interested? Please contact **Jill McNally** at jillradio@sbcglobal.net or **Erin Cushing** at elmcushing@gmail.com, or sign up in the Wells Area.

Alzheimer's Association's Esther Corcoran to Return

Esther Corcoran is returning on **Tuesday, May 22**, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. to speak to the Forever Young Class and any others from our congregation who would like to attend: **Know the Ten Signs—Early Detection Matters**. If you or someone you know is experiencing memory loss or behavioral

changes, it's time to learn the facts. Early detection of Alzheimer's disease gives you a chance to begin drug therapy, enroll in clinical studies and plan for the future. This interactive workshop features video clips.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP: **Diane Galloway**, 860.529.1575 x210.

Preschool Art Gallery Opens for Viewing

Everyone is invited to stroll through a gallery of our preschoolers' amazing art, open **this Wednesday, April 25**, through **Sunday, April 29**. Go to Room M201, the first room on the right as you enter the Marsh Building from the Connector. The children were inspired by famous artists they had studied in their classrooms. In addition, each of our families created a small canvas for the exhibit, resulting in a delightful variety of styles, media and content. *Kevin the Turkey* (at right) is one example.



BOOK OF LIFE

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Howard Lyman Page, March 21, 2018

John Mitchell Herold, April 1, 2018

Welles Vorce Adams, April 22, 2018

Our Church unites in an expression of heartfelt sympathy to their families.

BORN

William Russell Berloe, son of Matthew and Patti (Morin) Berloe, March 28, 2018

Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:8a (ESV)



Photo by Sam Hollings, taken Sunday morning, April 22, from our parking lot.

First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD
CONGREGATIONAL

860.529.1575 | Fax: 860.721.7861

250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109

firstchurch.org

Email: info@firstchurch.org

The Spire online: firstchurch.org/spire

Worship Times:

Traditional Services: 8:30 and 10:00 a.m.

Contemporary "Wind" Service: 10:00 a.m.

facebook.com/FirstChurchPage

GIVING — For info about e-giving—contributing via a monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account—call the Finance Office, 860.529.1575 x221. You can also [give online](http://firstchurch.org), at firstchurch.org (the ONLINE GIVING tab).

Vickie Anderson Director of Preschool
Tessa Beauregard Associate Minister
Jey Deifell Minister Emeritus
David Luce Church Administrator
Wayne Luman Associate Minister
Deryk Richenburg Senior Minister
Todd Willard Associate Minister

OUR MISSION

We are a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples.

SPIRE DEADLINE

Material for the next issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on June 13, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Friday, June 1, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860.529.1575 x225.

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Trail Life USA Comes to First Church!

Info & Sign-Up Open House is Set for May 22

TRAIL LIFE USA is a faith-based Scouting organization, founded in 2014, that provides youth mentorship and character development to more than 35,000 boys in this country.

Mark Charette

and many others have been working to bring this valuable program to First Church.

TLUSA's K-12 program centers on outdoor experiences that build a young man's skills and allow him to grow on a personal level and as a role model and leader for his peers.

Living the Trail Life is a journey established



on timeless values derived from the Bible.

All families are cordially invited to a Trail Life **Open House** in Keith Jones Hall on **Tuesday, May 22**, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., when boys can be

signed up for our own Trail Life Troop 1635, newly chartered under our Family Ministry. All the fun and adventure will start in September. Watch for details!

Questions about our troop? See **Mark** or contact him at mcharette@gosolidus.com. Also see firstchurch.org/traillife.

Mastering Motherhood Is Coming!

Thursday Mornings, 9:00 to 11:30 | Sept. 13 Kick-Off Brunch!

Mastering Motherhood is a ministry designed to meet the needs of mamas at all stages of motherhood and offers a reprieve from the hectic and demanding world of motherhood through faith, fun and friendship.

Every week there is free childcare, an incredible brunch, professional speakers, and parenting- and women-related small group book studies in a judgement free environment. Currently, there are two other Connecticut locations—Madison and Middletown.

At First Church, we are excited about this opportunity to minister to mamas in our local community as well as our church family. Both new and seasoned mothers are welcome. We



hope this becomes a highlight of your week as we do life together. **Elissa Rader** and **Ashley Price** are serving as co-directors, under the auspice of Family Ministry

and **Pastor Todd**, in partnership with **Tessa Beauregard** and **Vickie Anderson**. They would love to talk with you about this ministry.

Please consider fellowshiping with us this fall and inviting a friend or neighbor who would benefit from a Christian community of mothers. It could be an easy way to share the love of Christ with a fellow mama, regardless of her religious background or the age of her children.

For more information, and to register now for the fall session, please visit www.masteringmotherhood.com.