

## Men's Retreat — Nov. 9-11 Community Thanksgiving Dinner — Nov. 22 Christmas Concert — Dec. 9



I'M EXCITED about a lot of things.

At the end of this month I will head out to Sierra Leone to be with **Shodankeh Johnson**. I get to see all of the things God has been doing there in recent years. God's work in Sierra Leone and in other places prompted **Jerry Trousdale** to write *Miraculous Movements* as well as the follow-up book coauthored with **Glenn Sunshine**, *The Kingdom Unleashed*.

I'm excited to see how God is using ordinary people like you and me to bring about a Kingdom movement. I can't wait to hear the stories.

The truth is, I have already begun to hear stories of our own people stepping up to live boldly for Jesus in today's culture.

Who could forget Steve Anderson's testimony this past Au-

gust? God asked him to step up. He struggled with that ("Me?—I'm just a Dad."). Steve then stepped forward with courage. God met him and began His extraordinary work through him.

I've seen the same pattern in others here at First Church. Ordinary people stepping forward when God asked—and seeing Him do extraordinary things.

I'm excited for our next series! Together we will look at people in Scripture who did step forward. God showed up and did extraordinary things through them. People like Mary and Joseph—and Anna the Prophetess (Luke 2:36-38)—were everyday, ordinary people very much like you and me. God did extraordinary things through them.

I'm excited to look at the lives of these ordinary people and see how God met them. My hope is that each of us will be encouraged to be more than "just a Dad" (we need great Dads) and do greater things for Jesus.

—**Pastor Deryk**

## Men's Retreat Nears!

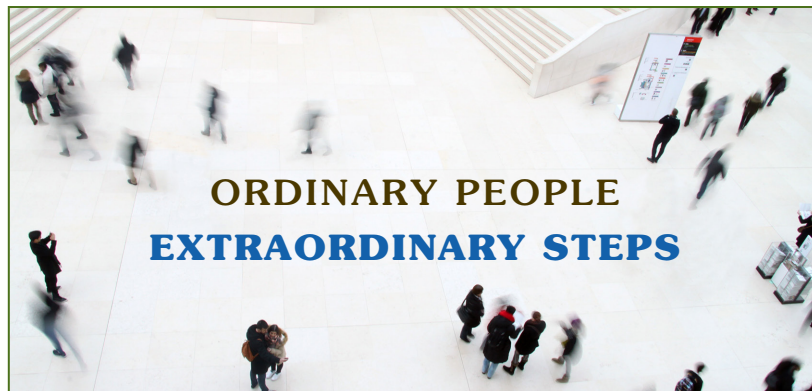
### Attention Mighty Men of God!

Please join us for the Men's Retreat at the **Monadnock Bible Conference Center**, with **Rich Griffith** as our speaker.

Activities include climbing Mount Monadnock, football, pickle ball, lawn games, archery, skeet shooting and a grill-off. You can sign up online at [firstchurch.org/mcm](http://firstchurch.org/mcm). Specify you are with First Church when you register so you can be housed with us. The dates are **Friday to Sunday, November 9-11**. See us in the Wells Area!



PHOTO BY DON AYER



*God has always asked ordinary people like you and me to step forward. As they stepped forward, God did extraordinary things.  
What step is God asking you to take?*

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4** | *Go Up*

Todd Willard — [Psalm 122](#) (Not part of series)

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11** | *The Unfinished Reformation*

Glenn Sunshine — [1 Peter 2:4-12](#)

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18** | *Faith at Work*

Glenn Sunshine — [Colossians 3:1-17](#)

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25** | *Greater Things*

Deryk Richenburg — [John 14:12-14](#)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2** | *Ordinary Shepherd*

Deryk Richenburg — [Amos 4-5](#)

**Advent** begins in December this year.

Watch for our Wednesday night Advent Communion services.

# Executive Board — Member Update

## Money Matters



**This month**, the Board is updating the Congregation on First Church's financial status over the summer and the first quarter of this fiscal year. We are delighted to report that over the summer our giving recovered significantly, largely replacing the shortfall from

January and February. So far this fiscal year, giving is down slightly against last year. First Church has received about \$273,000 against a budget of \$290,000, but expenses are down even more, with the result being that overall income is about \$12,000 over expenses.

We want to point out that your giving supports great things here at First Church. An overview of what your contributions enable is as follows:

- **OUTREACH** — First Church will distribute a truly impressive \$125,000, directly supporting missionary activities, including support to our missionaries here and abroad, Hartford City Missions, South Park Inn, and many others.
- **INREACH** — We will spend about \$130,000 on internal programs this year, for our Midweek Connect dinners, *DivorceCare*, *GriefShare*, Alzheimer's Caregivers, Mastering Motherhood, Seniors' activities, and more.
- **WORSHIP / MUSIC / PASTORAL CARE** — We will spend about \$530,000 to deliver the worship experience here at First Church, maintain a Youth and a Prayer Ministry, and provide pastoral care for our congregation.

All of this while we maintain our historic Meetinghouse, which provides a unique contribution to our Church and our community. It is too easy to lose sight of all of the services that First Church delivers with your offerings, and it is good to have the opportunity to point this out again, this month.

Unfortunately, there are still real concerns about our long-term financial health.

**FIRST**, the Board had to authorize repairs to the Morgan House and the Marsh Building connector. These repairs were noted during the Budget Meeting and are no surprise, but they will require some amount of funding from the Endowment, an amount that we won't fully know until the contractor quotes come in but which may be up to \$50,000.

**SECOND**, it is important to remember that the budget passed in April was balanced by assuming about \$120,000 be drawn from our unrestricted Endowment. Fortunately, due to recent staff retirements, this looks more like \$70,000 to \$80,000 now. However, given that currently our unrestricted funds are about \$300K, right now it seems that we will use about 40% of it this year. The inescapable conclusion is that we are on the borderline—and *if* we

have a significant shortfall, as we did early this year, then First Church will be in a difficult position again. Unfortunately, in September, giving fell off to \$80,000 versus a budget of \$96,000, so this remains a real concern to the Board.

Our goals are to strengthen and build our *community of Jesus followers*, enhance and demonstrate our love of God and one another, and make disciples who reach out and serve others. This is our mission, and these are our goals.

We trust that people want to be part of a church because they believe in its mission, trust its leadership, desire a sense of fellowship and belonging, appreciate its fiscal responsibility, and are assured that their time and other efforts to support God's cause will not be wasted. They want to know that their involvement will be changing lives for Christ, including their own.

So, *thank you again* for your financial support this summer. Over the next couple of years, the Board and Church Administration will continue to work to achieve a budget that does not rely on our Endowment. The Board can only ask that you continue your financial support of First Church and prayerfully consider adding to your contributions so that we can continue our service to God and our neighbors here in our local communities.

## 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:

- **Mastering Motherhood** is off to a great start, with about 60 women attending the initial sessions. This is proving to be an extraordinary outreach, given that most of the women are not members of First Church—providing us with an opportunity to positively impact their lives in a real way, thereby opening the door for God to work in them through our witness in these classes.
- Likewise, **Trail Life USA Troop 1635** is also starting well, with over 50 parents and children attending the initial sessions. Here, too, the majority are not from First Church, again presenting us with an opportunity to draw people to Christ through a positive program for children.

## Status Update

The search for a **Music Director and Organist** is still ongoing. A promising candidate has been identified and First Church Leadership is having discussions with him about possibly joining us here at First Church.

Our **Midweek Connect** dinners-plus have resumed on Wednesdays, providing yet another way for members to build a stronger community at First Church. The dinners are followed by an evening of Bible study for adults—Glenn Sunshine's class "**Making Disciples Jesus' Way**" based on his book *The Kingdom Unleashed*, and Diane Galloway's class for women, "**No Other Gods: The Unrivalled Pursuit of Christ**"—along with activities for grades 1-4 and 5-8. See details at [firstchurch.org/mc](http://firstchurch.org/mc).



## Community Thanksgiving Dinner

This year, First Church, in partnership with the Town of Wethersfield Social Services, will be hosting a Thanksgiving Dinner to serve those in our surrounding community who do not have a place to gather with others.

The meal will be served on **Thursday November 22, Thanksgiving Day**, beginning at 11:30 a.m. in Keith Jones Hall.

There are several ways that members of our First Church community can be involved—you can volunteer to help with food preparation on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday morning; you can provide transportation to guests in need; you can volunteer to serve and participate in the event itself on Thanksgiving Day; or you can support the meal by contributing needed food items.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact **Pastor Todd** at 860.529.1575 x205.



## Christmas Joy!

Our Church is filled with **poinsettias** during the week of Christmas, due to the generosity of the congregation. **You may add to the joy** by making a contribution to the **memorial Christmas flowers**. **Suggested donation is \$35.**

This completed form and your check (payable to "First Church of Christ") should reach the church's Finance Office by **Tuesday, December 4**. Either mail them to First Church or place them in the drop box located just outside the Finance Office.

**This information (except phone number) will appear in print:**

In loving memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT • USE ADDITIONAL PAPER IF NECESSARY

## Christmas Concert

First Church Choir  
Cantata Singers  
James Barry, Organist  
Linda Henderson, Director

Sunday, December 9, at 4:00 PM

Save the date for this glorious concert, and watch for details!

PHOTO BY DAVID SPICER

## FAMILY MINISTRY

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD** — This is our 21st year of participating! Share Christ's love with a child in need by packing a shoe box with items you select and purchase. Get a shoebox (or use your own) and info in the Wells Area on **Sunday, Nov. 4 or 11**, and **return full boxes by Sunday, Nov. 18**. Details, and how to fill a box, are at [firstchurch.org/occ](http://firstchurch.org/occ).

**THE TRUE BEAUTY GIRLS' WEEKEND** is **Friday to Saturday, Nov. 16-17**. Girls in grades 7-12 are invited to this unforgettable experience. The \$40 fee covers all meals, snacks, crafts, and other activities. Register at [firstchurch.org/truebeauty](http://firstchurch.org/truebeauty). We'd love to have more women involved this year. To help directly, or to sponsor a girl, call **Di Krause** at 860.529.1575 x303.

**PAGEANT-PLUS Preview** — We will host a **Christmas Pageant** in the Meetinghouse on **Sunday, Dec. 16**, as part of a special 4:30 to 6:30 event! After the Pageant, we will have a **Celebration** in Keith Jones Hall, with games, food, and fun surprises for all ages. To get involved as a volunteer, contact **Di** at [dianek@firstchurch.org](mailto:dianek@firstchurch.org) or 860.529.1575 x303. To register your child for the pageant, visit [firstchurch.org/pageant](http://firstchurch.org/pageant) (see photos!). **NOTE:** There will be one rehearsal, on **Saturday, Dec. 15**, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

## PRESCHOOL

**GO NUTS Preschool Pecan Fundraiser** — a delicious opportunity to support our preschool! Just in time for the holidays are *Fancy Pecan Halves*, *Dark Chocolate Covered*, *Turtle Clusters* and *Cinnamon Glazed!* Look for the order table in the Wells Area **this Sunday, Oct. 28**, order online at [firstchurch.org/pecans](http://firstchurch.org/pecans), or call **Pat** at 860.529.1575. **Ordering deadline is Tuesday, October 30!**

## BOOK OF LIFE

### ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Richard T. "Dick" Fippinger, August 28, 2018  
S. Jane Wieder, August 29, 2018  
Symond Yavener, September 27, 2018  
Henry L. Haddad, October 1, 2018  
Juanita "Johnnie" Hart, October 4, 2018  
Margaret "Peg" Petruzzelli, October 15, 2018

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

### Dear Friends and First Church Family,

I was flabbergasted when I received your incredibly generous and loving gift last week. Thank you so much for your grace, and for years of friendship and encouragement. I can't say it enough: it has been such a privilege to serve you! And it is going to be an even greater privilege to worship alongside you at First Church.

Thank you again for your lavish gift. We were so blessed.

—Tessa and John

## First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD  
CONGREGATIONAL

860.529.1575 | Fax: 860.721.7861  
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109  
[firstchurch.org](http://firstchurch.org)

Email: [info@firstchurch.org](mailto:info@firstchurch.org)

The Spire online: [firstchurch.org/spire](http://firstchurch.org/spire)

### Worship Times:

Traditional Services: 8:30 and 10:00 a.m.  
Contemporary "Wind" Service: 10:00 a.m.

[facebook.com/FirstChurchPage](https://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**, at [firstchurch.org](http://firstchurch.org) (the ONLINE GIVING tab).

Vickie Anderson ..... Director of Preschool  
Jey Deifell ..... Minister Emeritus  
Diane Galloway ..... Director of Caring Ministries  
Wayne Luman ..... Associate Minister  
Deryk Richenbourg ..... Senior Minister  
Andrew Shattuck ..... Church Administrator  
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 Dec. 5, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Friday, Nov. 23, at [daveg@firstchurch.org](mailto:daveg@firstchurch.org) or 860.529.1575 x225.

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## "Neighborhood Deacons"



Earlier this year, the deacons opted to launch a neighborhood initiative based on Grace Morgan's "Neighborhood Networkers," which some may recall from many years ago. The idea is to help us stay better connected as a church body and make sure we address concerns and needs promptly.

Each member of the congregation has been assigned to one of the current deacons. Every four months you will be contacted just to "check in."

Individuals occasionally have something on their mind or an issue that, for one reason or another, they are hesitant to bring to the attention of leadership or are unsure to whom to address it.

These periodic check-ins are the perfect opportunity for you to provide any feedback, prayer requests, needs, questions, or con-

cerns. Your deacon will convey the information to the Neighborhood Deacon Leader, who will ensure it gets directed appropriately.

Of course, we encourage you to contact any of the deacons at *any* time as conditions arise, or to attend one of the monthly deacons' meetings. We are here to serve you.

We sincerely desire to function as a church family and to make sure members know they are each loved and valued.

Unquestionably, we don't want anyone to feel overlooked; therefore, if a deacon hasn't reached you by the end of the year, it may simply mean that we do not have your current phone/email/street address on file. We ask that you would help us by contacting **Marilyn** at 860.529.1575 x213 or [marilynd@firstchurch.org](mailto:marilynd@firstchurch.org).

—Kate Stiffle, Deacon Emerita

**FMSC** — The next *Feed My Starving Children* food-packing event will be held in Berlin on **Sat., Nov. 17**, with a time slot for those from our church who wish to help pack. Please help us nourish children hungry in body and spirit! See **Joyce** in the Wells Area on **November 4 or 11**, or call her at 860.436.2923. Find address and details at [firstchurch.org/fmsc](http://firstchurch.org/fmsc).

**SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS** Seminar — No matter how long it's been since your loved one died, grief can make the holidays a pain-

ful time. But there is hope. Attend this encouraging seminar, **Sunday, November 4**, at 1:00 p.m. in the Morgan House. RSVP by calling 860.529.1575 x210. Come and discover new reasons to enjoy the holidays again.

**VOLUNTEER?** — To help at the **Wells Area Coffee Bar** (everything is pre-measured!), email **Jill McNally** at [jillradio@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jillradio@sbcglobal.net) or **Erin Cushing** at [elmcushing@gmail.com](mailto:elmcushing@gmail.com). To help with **Ushering**, please call **Lynne** at 860.529.3897. We'd love to hear from you!