

The Judea Journal

The First Congregational Church of Washington, Connecticut



Planting Seeds

By the Rev. Robyn Gray, PhD

“He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.’” – Matthew 13:31-32

Grace to you and peace in these uncertain and unusual times. I hope you are keeping safe, staying healthy, and are making plans on how you will navigate what looks to be a challenging winter.

Back in May, our Missions Team led by Jim Esslinger decided to have First Church host what we called a “Drive-By Food Drive.” It was still early days of the pandemic, and we wanted everyone – donors and volunteers – to be safe, so we asked people to put their donations in their trunk or backseat and volunteers would take them from there. We had no idea how it would turn out, yet when all was said and done, our little Food Drive, with our 14 volunteers, shared about \$6,000 and 2,000 pounds of food with the Washington/Warren and New Milford Food Pantries.

But we shared much more than that – we shared an idea that has spawned 4 more Drive-By Food Drives, and spun off a produce collection at the Farmers Market in the Depot as well. That mustard seed of an idea has spurred our friends, families, and neighbors to drop off over \$13,000 in cash donations and more than 7,200 pounds of food from the Food Drives, and another \$5,400 in cash donations and many pounds of food for the New

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We are BACK TO ZOOM beginning November 1.

10 AM Sunday Worship

10:30 AM Monday Bible Study

(Connection details p10)

Reach Out to others!
(Contact the church office if you need a church directory of members and friends)

Got any great ideas for new ways we can get together this fall and winter season? Special kind of Zoom gathering ... with a theme or just to goof around...Contact

[Pastor Robyn.](#)

WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF CONGREGATIONS PRESENTS



SATURDAY, NOV. 7th
10 am - 2 pm

at

Salem Covenant Church
96 Baldwin Hill Rd
Washington Depot, CT

Collecting shelf-stable food, personal care and household cleaning items for the Washington/Warren and New Milford Food Banks.

Monetary Donations Welcome!

(See pg 5 for needs list)

REMEMBER!

Daylight savings time ends on 10/31 - Saturday night and clocks go BACK One Hour early Sunday morning.



General Church Info and Council's Corner

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Changing of the Guard: Personnel Director

Our Church Council oversees all of the activities of the church, manages and initiates programs, and manages the financial and physical assets of the church, among other details. The Council consists of the Pastor and ten elected members namely: the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Finance Chair, Senior Deacon, Head Trustee, Missions Chair, Christian Education Chair, Music Chair, and Personnel Chair.

The Personnel Director is one of several vacancies that will happen at the end of this church fiscal year (June 2021). I have been privileged to work with the employees of our church for the past six years and have enjoyed the interactions. I am pleased to engage with them and there have been no significant issues. I have had the pleasure of learning more about what our staff does for the church and telling them about how much we appreciate the myriad of efforts on our behalf they demonstrate in so many ways.



[Continued on page 3](#)

2020-21 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:

**Jan 10, Apr 11,
Jun 13 (Annual Meeting)**

FCC STAFF and COUNCIL

Rev. Robyn Gray, Pastor 860-868-0569, x 11
Pastor.Robyn@firstchurchwashingtonct.org
Available by phone or email; email is preferred.

Carrie Loyd, Christian Ed Superintendent
Email: DCE@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Jesse Ofgang, Organist/Principal Musician
music@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Kathleen Sauvageau, Bookkeeper
Bookkeeper@firstchurchwashingtonct.org
*By appointment as needed;
always available by email.*

Karen Esslinger, Admin. Assistant
admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org
860-868-0569, ext10

Mon and Wed, 1 pm—5:30 pm (remote)
Tues and Thurs, 9 am—1:30 pm (remote)

Al Trowbridge, Sexton (860) 868-0230, altrowbridge@earthlink.net

Council Members

Rev. Robyn Gray, PhD Pastor, 860-868-0569, X 11

Trish Grinnell, Moderator, 860-799-0190

Tony Vengrove, Vice-Moderator/ Stewardship,
860-799-0054

Michelle Gorra, Treasurer, 860-868-7852

Susan Elliott, Clerk and Deacons' Rep 860-567-3768

Millie Johnson, Christian Ed. (860)354-0569

Steve Wadelton, Finance, 860-868-9822

Jim Esslinger, Missions, (860) 919-5207

Alecia Evans, Music & Drama, 860-868-2864

John Lintner, Personnel, 860-868-0019

Ben Grinnell, Trustee, 860-318-6044

Pastor's Message – Planting Seeds (continued from page 1)

Milford Culinary School, the beneficiary of the Farmers Market donations, which help them make hot meals for food insecure and homebound seniors. And there are still a few weeks left for the Farmers Market and there is no end in sight for the Food Drives! The next one is scheduled for 7 November from 10-2 at Salem Covenant. That tiny mustard seed of an idea has created thousands of meals for those struggling in our community in the last 6 months.

That's not all that sprouted from that one idea, though. Our neighbor, St Johns Episcopal Church, had wanted to help with our first Food Drive, but contacted us a little too late. The next thing we knew, Father Hahneman and I were talking about ways area clergy

could work together for the community, and the Washington Council of Congregations was born. This interfaith and ecumenical group has come together to work toward harnessing the power of all of our congregations to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, lift up the sick and lonely, and help all our kids have a great education. So not only has a great tree resulted from that mustard seed, but the birds are nesting in its branches, creating even more new life where there previously was none.

All this from one idea.

As we begin to hunker down as the days get shorter and the north wind begins to blow colder, if you have an idea for something First Church can do to help us and

our neighbors in any way, contact me and we'll see how we can plant another mustard seed together.

Thanksgiving is only a few weeks away. I am thankful for each and every one of you, for your energy, for your enthusiasm, for your dependability, for your warmth, and for your generosity. Life is better for having all of you in it.



With you on the journey,

Pastor Robyn

Pastor.Robyn@firstchurchwashingtonct.org



Personnel Director (continued from page 2)

In return they report that they are happy to be working for the church and that the atmosphere of church employment is good and constructive.

In the fall I meet with each employee and the appropriate supervisor. We review the details of their contract or job description, making comments, requests, or adjustments as appropriate. These meetings are very collegial and last from 30 to 60 minutes. I have always felt gratified to be engaged in this process. All the participants have reflected to me their satisfaction with my work and this process.

As Personnel Director, I am part of the Church Council. Participation with the Church Council is also a pleasure. Typically, we meet once a month, except August, for about 90 minutes, give or take. The work of the church is fascinating and important.

Please consider participating on the Church Council as Personnel Director.

John Lintner

Excerpted from By-Laws, Article VI, Section 7 [Personnel Director]

- A. "... the liaison between the church staff and the Council. ... bring staff concerns to the attention of the Council and Council concerns to members of the staff."
- B. "... responsible for maintaining up-to-date contracts and job descriptions, and bringing all changes before the Church Council for approval."
- C. "... responsible for gathering performance evaluations from all supervisors of staff. He or she shall conduct the annual performance reviews with all staff and make recommendations to the council regarding compensation prior to the formulation of the annual budget."
- D. "The Personnel Director shall be an ex-officio member of all search committees."

Missions and Outreach

Jim Esslinger, Missions Chair, jimmyess@hotmail.com or 860-919-5207

Despite some changes and limitations, we continue find ways to support neighbors near and far with well-known activities that have become traditions in this church but also responding to new conditions and needs as they become known to us. Please continue to check in for opportunities to pitch in or let us know if you hear of a new need and wish to work together to make something happen. Let's plant more seeds.

This fall, we were able to gather of the generosity of some of our members, at least 40 hygiene kits for distribution by CWS to refugees and others experiencing a natural disaster or nagging poverty. We expect to bless these kits during worship on November 8 before they go off to be delivered to a CWS collection depot.

On November 7, the Washington Council of Congregations will hold another Drive-Thru Food Drive. See pages 1 and 5 for all the details on how you can participate. If that date is not convenient, you may drop off at our church's Parish House food cart by the main entrance Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm.

On Sunday, November 22, those who ordered Christmas wreaths or wreath products can pick up their orders on the Green **between noon and 3 pm. Reminder will go to those who ordered.**

Also, we will again offering opportunities to sponsor Food and Shelter for Christmas Memorials. Watch for the order form and instructions later in the month!

Don't know what to do but want to help? Give a call or send me an email! We can find a place where your gifts can benefit others.

News from Simply Smiles...

Most recently on the Cheyenne River Reservation in North Dakota, Simply Smiles has been helping to strengthening families and community with a first-of-its-kind intentional community of Native foster families serving the children most at-risk here. An overwhelming number of children on the reservation are removed from their homes due to significant safety concerns. In response, Simply Smiles is building a Children's Village with homes that will house foster parents and these children. This village provides the infrastructure for native people to intervene, protect, and help to raise the most vulnerable of children.

On the Reservation, Senior Program Manager Zach Gross and Clinical Director Hallie Riggs are safely on the ground and the first home is fully furnished. **An enormous THANK YOU to the Rotary Clubs of Mystic, The Stoningtons, Tribury, and Waterford, Connecticut for securing a grant of \$17,745 to full furnish the first home!** We are humbled by this incredible show of support of Simply Smiles *and* to the children who will soon be living in our care!

Go to <https://www.simplysmiles.org/crst-childrens-village> to read more about the Village.

A portion of your tithes and offerings goes to support Simply Smiles in work like this.



Coming in November!

"Angel Tree" gifts to go to Friends in Service to Humanity (F.I.S.H.) in Torrington this year.

Where there is a will, there is a way and so we will be doing an online version of our Angel Tree this year. Watch for more information in November about how to sponsor a child's special holiday gift.



Christian Education and Faith Formation

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Welcome back to Virtual Sunday School! While we remain virtual, we will be gathering from 9:15 am-9:55 am each Sunday on the same Zoom link as the Worship Service. Join us to catch up with some familiar faces, share our weekly gratitude, and play some games while we learn and stay in touch. All are welcome!



We will also be introducing Bite Sized Sunday School on the church's website! A library of activities, videos, and other resources designed specifically for our Sunday School kids will live on the website for access whenever you are ready for a little bit (or a lot!) of Sunday School. Instead of weekly emails, you will find a variety of fun options to put together an easy at-home lesson. More details to come!

If you have any questions or concerns about the programming, please do not hesitate to reach out (dce@firstchurchwashingtonct.org).

If you are not currently receiving emails regarding Sunday School and would like to be added to the list, please email Carrie at DCE@firstchurchwashingtonct.org to be added. The activities are aimed at Pre-K through fifth grade,



Youth Group

Calling all middle and high schoolers! You are invited to join us for a virtual Youth Group this winter. While we can't gather together in person, we will still be getting together monthly for fun and games. First up, Zoom Olympics! To be added to the email list for this group, please email Carrie at DCE@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Sara Osborne will lead Teen Talk this year if there are at least a few participants. This small group will meet on first Sundays of each month, after worship. Interested teens are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible.



The group discuss the ways in which they can not only get more involved in the church, but also how their faith gets involved in their lives outside of the church. If you or your youth are in high school and are interested in joining, please contact Sara Osborne. She can be reached at 860-480-4403, or by email at sao22289@gmail.com.

FOOD BANK NEEDS

So... you are thinking about supporting our food collection efforts. Terrific! Thank you. These are frequently requested items that are difficult to purchase in bulk through the Connecticut Food Bank or are not easily available:

Brown rice
Chicken or beef broth
Coffee, tea, hot chocolate
Basic condiments (ketchup, mayo, etc.)
Baking items - mixes, flour, sugar

Non-food items:

Children's diapers – larger sizes (4, 5, 6), pull ups and baby wipes
Shampoo, conditioners
Hand soap, body soap
Toothpaste, toothbrushes
Deodorant
Toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels

Standard needs:

Always – peanut butter and jelly/jam EXCEPT grape
Thick soups, stews, soup cups
Oatmeal, cereals (individual packets and smaller boxes are most welcomed by seniors)
Laundry soap (smaller size for seniors), dish washing detergent

Please avoid:

Ramen noodles
Grape jelly
Soda
Jello Cups

CALENDAR of ACTIVITIES and EVENTS for November

November

Weekly on Sundays:

9:15 am - Virtual Sunday School happens prior to worship when services are online. See Sunday School emails for most current status.

10 am - Worship with us online (see connection details on page 10)

Sun, Nov 1 - 10 am Worship: All Saints Day

Tue, Nov 3 - ELECTION DAY

Sat, Nov 7 - Drive-Thru Food Drive (See page 1)

Sun, Nov 8 - 10 am Worship with blessing of Hygiene Kits for CWS (Missions effort)

Sat, Nov 14 - Our traditional Harvest Dinner has been canceled this year. Look out for possible “pop up” event in its place before Thanksgiving.

Wed, Nov 18 - 6:30 pm - Council Meeting

Sun, Nov 29 - First Sunday in Advent

December Special Advent happenings are currently in the works! Check back on our website, weekly emails, or in the December newsletter for more details.

Ways to give to our church



We appreciate your giving! Did you know you can give online, either click the “Give Online” icon above or the “Give Now” button on our Home page?

OTHER OPTIONS:

- Use the "GivePlus" Church phone app (available in Android or iPhone version)
- Online bill pay through your bank
- Mail a check to:
First Congregational Church
PO Box 1285
Washington, CT 06793

November Birthdays

- 2Sarah Low
- 8Lee Parsons
- 10Tom Tibbatts
- 12Quinn Evans
-Wynne Lewis
- 15Kathleen Sauvageau
- 18Truman Muszala
- 21Jim Esslinger
- 22James Willert
- 28Fredrick and Milla Eklund-Kaplan
- 29Paul Frank
- 30Topsy Pickett



December Birthdays

- 7Sue Elliott
- 8 Isalyn Lewis
-Alyssa and Caroline Parsons
- 9Annie Baur
- 24Ann Tibbatts
- 29Beth Lovallo
- 31Colin Loyd

ANNIVERSARIES: Nov and Dec

Nov 26 - Steve and Sue Wadelton

This is a great opportunity to reach out to other members of our church community and pass on your birthday or anniversary wishes!

Please let us know if we missed anyone so that we may update our database!!
Contact the church office at (860) 868-0569 or Admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Sunday Morning Ministry

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER: Sue Elliott and Susan Loyd Turner

DECEMBER: Terri Tibbatts and Henrietta Small

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

USHERS

Nov 1** - Carol Glintenkamp	Lee Parsons
Nov 8 - Trish Grinnell	Ben Grinnell
Nov 15 - John Lintner	Millie Johnson
Nov 22 - Anne Low	Sarah Jenkins
Nov 29 - Wayne Hileman	Sheila Anson
Dec 6 ** - Karen Esslinger	Jim Esslinger
Dec 13 - Madeline Gorra	Michael Gorra
Dec 20 - Michelle Gorra	Ben Grinnell
Dec 25 Early Service (Ushers if inside)	Judie G, Sheila A Liddy A
Dec 25 Late Service	TBD
Dec 27 - Kate Vengrove	Terri Tibbatts

Here is your chance to get social! Bring your own refreshments— or not. But plan to stay after worship in person for some social time online in the small coffee hour break-out “rooms” to check-in and maybe get to know other members a little better and catch up on what you and they have been up to. (People are broken out randomly... so it is always a surprise!)



Currently, only one Usher and one Worship Assistant are needed. Those on the schedule have received that full schedule through December by email, which includes a current description of the roles. These will change when we eventually move back into the Meeting House. Training will be provided at that time. **** Indicates a Communion Sunday.** It is “bring your own”, whether online or in person in the church building. Gather up a small amount of a drink and a bit of food before you sign into the service, or to take with you to the Meeting House. It doesn't matter what it is and it can be a cracker and water, donut and coffee, pop-tart and milk, whatever you have on hand (or a small amount that will travel well if you attend in person). Communion is the food of the people, and so it is for us!



Music Ministry

“It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.” - Pope Benedict XVI

As so much of music has been stifled in this challenging year, I'm sure we all will be looking to the season of Advent with music in our souls and hopeful hearts. While we won't be singing live as a congregation, with Jesse's expertise there will be beautiful recordings and a few surprises with guests soloists and guitarists. SingOut! CT will be singing live outside with amplification in full Dickensian costumes sometime in December. A glad Noel will ring out through the Litchfield Hills during this upcoming season of Advent. We hope you will stay tuned and join us for our virtual and live outdoor events.

Flowers dedicated in memorial for All Saints Day, Nov 1, are live flowers in the Meeting House for our Zoom worship service. Dedications for both are also shared for that week on our website home page.



Steeple Lighting memorials are also displayed online but the steeple is still lit at night and a is a prominent beacons that remind us also of our God of light and hope.

Flowers

Nov 1 In celebration of Howie Bronson's long life and service to First Church and his community, given by His Family.

Nov 8, 15 & 22 **OPEN** and available to reserve for your memorial intention.

Nov 29 through Advent We will have Christmas memorials available to sponsor. Watch for more information in the coming weeks.

Steeple Lighting

Nov 1 In loving memory of Mimi and George Bender, given by Betty Bender Synnestvedt and Erik, and Jed Synnestvedt

Nov 8 **OPEN** and available to reserve for your memorial intention.

Nov 15 In Memory of John Mullen, given by Liz and Art Peterson

Nov 22 & 29 In loving memory of Estelle, Howard and Margery Bronson, Clinton and Helen Swan, Helen Swan Coughlin, and Frances Swan Mygatt given by the Bronson Family

Flowers are \$70 per week. Steeple Lighting is \$25 per week.

Consider honoring a loved one or special occasion by sponsoring flowers or steeple lighting! If you have a particular date or dates you wish to sponsor flowers or steeple lighting at any time during the year to honor or remember someone or something, please contact Karen in the church office to verify date availability. Call (860) 868-0569 or email: admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Please note that while we are worshipping online, the flowers are virtual. We are producing a lovely floral slide with your dedication and displaying during our online worship service and also on our home page for the week that you reserve. Steeple lighting is still happening as usual, and in addition to the actual nighttime lighting, we have added a virtual memorial slide, too, presented in the same way as the flowers.



Our deacons are responsible for the worship, hospitality, and pastoral care of the church. They are available to speak with you about any matters pertaining to these things. You may contact

them at the numbers beside each name.

Specific “deacons of the month” are listed in the bulletins on Sunday.

Wayne Hileman - 860-868-7235
Sheila Anson - 860-868-2786
Susan Elliott - 860-567-3768
Judith Gorra - 860-868-7023

Dan Lovallo - 860-361-6949
Hailey Lovallo - 860-3616949
Susan Loyd Turner-
860-868-0868
Cara Michalski - 860-484-4533
Henrietta Small- 860-729-3952
Terri Tibbatts - 860-350-1919
Dave Werkhoven -860-671-0569
Ellen Willert - 860-605-7902



Green Team Update!

This year has been challenging in so many ways and it seems that environmental stewardship has often taken a back burner to safety—but it doesn't have to! Are there some things we cannot do with restrictions in place? Sure. Are there many things still that we can do to help shift our world to more sustainable living? Absolutely! So I thought it was a great time to revisit things that hopefully have become part of your more sustainable life but if not, you can take a few minutes to go through this list to either give yourself some assurance and acknowledgement for what you DO or to remind you of what else you CAN do.

- *Shopping bags:* Hopefully, you are using your reusable bags again—because you can! You do need to ask your grocer if you can use reusable produce bags. And for those who continued to save up their single use plastic bags and film, you can still take it to Walmart or Big Y for recycling.
- *Using your own containers for bulk foods:* Still self-serve bulk is not yet available again but my fish market has offered to let bring my own containers for fish. My meat market does not allow this yet. It doesn't hurt to ask!
- *Plastic beverage bottles, cans:* Because most stores stopped accepting deposit bottles and cans in the spring, there has actually been a shortage of recyclable PET plastic and also aluminum cans. Be sure to get yours back to the recycling centers now! And get back into the habit if you use product packaged in this way. I've seen plenty of these things on the sides of the road again so now that the roadside vegetation is dying back, it's also a great time to do roadside pick up and recycle.
- Single stream recycling - Thankfully has continued. Check RecycleCT.com to make sure you are recycling right.

Seek alternatives to things you may do now. Audrey Liquard, a good friend of mine, said in an interview on moving toward a zero-waste life (www.millcitytimes.com/news/the-mill-city-times-interview-audrey-liquard-zero-waste-advo.html), “[you can seek to learn} a lot about trash: how we make it, where it goes, and how to reduce it.

Reducing waste forces us to examine our choices, look closely at how things are produced, and ask questions of producers. We are in a powerful position as consumers. When we reduce our waste, our lives become simpler, and we are more in touch with our planet and our health. We realize all the connectedness. There are many resources today to show us how to reduce waste. Two of my favorites are [Bea Johnson](#) and [Lauren Singer](#). Check them out! “

Members of the Green Team and others in our congregation have been sharing information about products we have found that are great, lower impact alternatives to things we use frequently. Try these or [let us know about others you have discovered](#). There are new companies springing up and offering all sorts of great products that are smart and light on the carbon footprint. Here are just a few:

- Dropps.com - Makes laundry and dishwasher pods. They are plant-based and packaging is cardboard, and the storage container doubles as a shipping box. Reduced price if you subscribe.
- Tru Earth - Laundry detergent sheets. This Canadian company produces wafer-like sheets of detergent that dissolve in the wash water. They ship in a thin cardboard envelope! Space saver, neat and easy to use!
- Bamboo Toothbrushes - Various suppliers with similar product. Once the nylon bristles are removed, the bamboo is compostable. Watch out for the packaging and select products that use minimal paper or cardboard packaging.
- Dental floss - DentalLace.com and other similar suppliers provide dental floss made of silk or plant-based material in refillable containers. Packaging for Dental Lace is all compostable.

ALTERNATIVE ZERO WASTE RECYCLING

Washington Environmental Council (WEC-CT.org) has recently sponsored more boxes to collect Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and gloves. Collection boxes can be found at the Town Hall and at the Washington Ambulance Assoc. For more information check their Instagram page and website. And don't forget about the zero waste collection boxes in the Parish House: oral care products, Brita filters and packaging, writing utensils. Drop off your EMPTY materials in the boxes in the kitchen or oral care by the staircase.

The First Congregational

6 Kirby Road
P.O. Box 1285

Phone: 860-868-0569

E-mail:

admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org



**POSTMASTER: ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE DELIVERY**

Whoever you are, and wherever you are on your life's journey, you are welcome here.

Worship Services Online



We are BACK TO ZOOM!

Join us online:

- **Worship on Sun at 10 am**
- **Bible Study Mon, 10:30 am**

All are welcome to attend!

Our worship services use Zoom, a meeting software that allows for us to join together and see each other. To join via your computer or smart phone, you'll need to click on this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/598785427>

Meeting ID: 598 785 427

Password: 572708

To phone in (audio only):
(646)558-8656

Meeting ID: 598785427#

Password: 572708

You'll be asked to download the Zoom software if it's not already on your device. It's totally free.

When you enter the meeting, your audio will be muted. Worship services are recorded for those who can't be there or just wish to watch it again.

To view previous worship services, go to our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Washington-118422114837684/>

And plan to type in a joy or concern in the chat window so they can be read out loud during the service. A helpful way to do this is to write things down as you think of them during the week so you can be sure to remember during the service!

To learn about guidelines for when we do return to the Meeting House, go to:
www.firstchurchwashingtonct.org/guidelines_for_gathering