

# The Judea Journal

The First Congregational Church of Washington, Connecticut



## A Message from our Pastor

*“For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under heaven” – Ecclesiastes 3:1*

A year ago, the Journal article I wrote for the New Year mentioned that we had gone through all the major events in the church together – Easter, the Green Fair, Mixing of the Waters, Harvest Dinner, and Christmas to name a few. We’ve done all those things again, but in very different ways. A year ago, none of us would have imagined we would be experiencing the Green Fair in August over a full weekend, and then again in October. None of us would have imagined being able to accommodate our musician in Scotland, our Worship Assistant in Vermont, our service on the Green, and it all working flawlessly. And certainly none of us would have imagined Christmas Eve on a computer.

We’ve all weathered this pandemic storm to the best of our ability, and now with vaccines being distributed there is some light at the end of this tunnel. But we’re still in the tunnel. And yet, plans are happening. Our Epiphany series, “Come and See!” will find God in a number of disparate places. There will be more opportunities to help our neighbors in various capacities, like Food Drives and Blood Drives. I read a tweet where someone commented churches were closed because of the pandemic, and I almost laughed. Yes, the building may be closed to public gatherings, but our church has been doing quite a bit for each other and for our community.

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### Online Worship

**10 AM Sunday Worship**

**10:30 AM Monday  
Scripture Discussion Group**  
(invitation on page 5)

(Connection details p 8)

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 winter season? Special kind of Zoom gathering ... with a theme or just to goof around... Contact [Pastor Robyn](#).

## Call to Quarterly Meeting on Sunday, January 10

To virtually follow immediately after worship.

- Approval of minutes from September Quarterly Meeting
- Reports from Council Chairs
- New business

I hope you can join us!

Trish Grinnell, Moderator



## General Church Info and Council's Corner

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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.

- 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 - 860-361-6949
- 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

### 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



## 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, alberttrowbridge@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 – Looking Forward** *(continued from page 1)*

As we think about the new year, and coming back together at some point, what sort of programs or events would you like to see? What are you passionate about that you think would be great to offer at our campus? It's once again a clean slate, and with our new perspective of having stayed apart, what are some ways you would like to see us come together when it is once again safe to do so?

This past year has been challenging and frustrating, but also full of wonder and joy. I am blessed to have spent it with you, and I am grateful serve First Congregational during this very unusual time. We are stronger for all these challenges, we've

become adept at thinking outside the box, and when we do get back together, we will be able to provide deeper, richer experiences after the reflection and down time we've had.

Many blessings to you in this New Year!



With you  
on the journey,  
*Pastor Robyn*

[Pastor.Robyn@firstchurchwashingtonct.org](mailto:Pastor.Robyn@firstchurchwashingtonct.org)



*Impressive results from the Holiday in the Depot Food drive in December!*

**Yes, the building may be closed to public gatherings, but our church has been doing quite a bit for each other**

**2020-21 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:**  
**Jan 10, Apr 11, Jun 13 (Annual Mtg)**

**Changing of the Guard: Vice-Moderator/Stewardship**

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. During the pandemic, the Council has been meeting via Zoom.

This coming June, Tony Vengrove will conclude his term as Vice-Moderator/ Stewardship Chair and a replacement candidate will be needed. The term is 3 years. Fundraising experience is a plus but not required. The person filling this position is highly encouraged to assemble a Stewardship committee to share in the planning and execution of Stewardship campaigns and related activities. The specific requirements for the position is provided, on the right, as excerpted from our church By-Laws. It is a great introduction to the inner workings of the church without a large commitment of time.

**Excerpted from By-Laws, Article VI, Section 4 Vice-Moderator/ Stewardship**

- A. "... shall preside at meetings of the Church Council and of the Congregation in the event that the Moderator is absent or unable to perform the duty."
- B. "... serve as Chair of the Stewardship Committee."
- C. "... submit an annual budget to the Council for Stewardship expenses."
- D. "...report monthly to the Church Council and annually to the Church and the Annual Meeting."

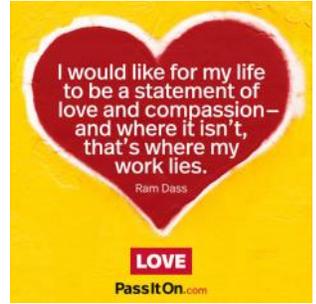
*Please contact Wayne Hileman (860-868-7235) or Lee Parsons (860-946-7798) to learn more or to volunteer.*

# Missions and Outreach

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

## HOLIDAY GIFTS

Holiday Greetings to you all and I hope that you are healthy, hopeful and seeking peace. As December nears its' end, I wanted to express my gratitude for all of the many, many heartfelt gifts that were given by you to help support the Angel Gift Tree program at Friends in Service to Humanity (F.I.S.H.) of Northwestern CT in Torrington. I wanted to share with you their mission statement:



The mission at FISH is to meet the most basic of human needs - food, shelter and hope.

Through support programs, financial donations and the generosity of volunteers and area residents, we strive to reach out and nurture individuals, families and veterans who may find themselves in economic crisis. Our goal is to end homelessness and hunger by giving those in need the tools, resources and confidence needed to gain back their independence. We recognize the courage it takes to come forward and humbly ask for help. Every homeless person is an individual facing tough economic times; and every hungry family has their own unique story.

With the generosity of both our congregation and our community, together, WE have helped FISH in fulfilling their mission. For more information about this outreach program we have been supporting for several years please follow this link <https://www.fishnwct.org/>.

## HELPING NEIGHBORS in NEED

As the New Year approaches, many of us seem to be more than ready to turn the page on 2020 and look forward with positivity and hope to 2021. We have a chance to start the New Year off with an opportunity to put those feelings into action in January and February,

In the coming weeks, you will hear more about the United Church of Christ (UCC) Neighbors in Need fund and how your offering to this special mission of the United Church of Christ supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our children.

The 2020 theme is "all children have the right to simply be children". I love that theme! And I cannot think of a better day for the offering period to end, than Feb 14, 2021 Valentines Day. Look for information in the coming weeks on our Church Website, Judea Journal and the Church Facebook page. Please give generously.

**Neighbors in Need helps make A JUST world for All possible. For this to occur, it needs your support.**

## ONGOING BEHIND THE SCENES



Rescued food going to a service organization in Torrington

Throughout the year, there is regular outreach work done by members of our church community. These are focused primarily on helping those who are food insecure: through Loaves & Fishes food service, various food collections, and participating in the Food Rescue Network (*image, left*). In the summer, there is also work at the Judea Garden.

You can be part of a greater outreach effort! There are many opportunities to volunteer to help neighbors in need both local and in other towns, states, and countries. **(See the Blood Drive info on the next page for one.)** If you have a volunteer activity you would like to share with others, an idea for an all-church outreach activity, or if you are looking for a way to help, please contact me at the phone or email noted at the top of the page.

Also note that volunteers for non-profit organizations during the pandemic are still being sought. You can offer your services by registering at <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Information-For/Volunteers>.

# Christian Education and Faith Formation

## ADULTS



“Annie Baur, myself and Pastor Robyn have been meeting on Mondays at 10:30 on zoom to talk about the upcoming scripture. We would love to have many more participants. You don’t have to know anything about the bible to enjoy the time. I can attest to the not knowing part!! It’s very informal and Pastor Robyn is very informative. Sometimes I just listen. It’s a great way to understand the Bible and your own faith, whatever that may be. I am learning and love being with church friends. Come join us.” - Judie Gorra

WHEN: Monday mornings at 10:30

WHERE: Online via Zoom (same connection info as for Sunday worship—see page 8)  
From the comfort of your own home!

## 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!



You can also check out the Bite Sized Sunday School on our 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. To access, go to:

[http://www.firstchurchwashingtonct.org/sunday\\_school](http://www.firstchurchwashingtonct.org/sunday_school)

The activities are aimed at Pre-K through fifth grade, but all are welcome!

If you have any questions or concerns about the programming, or if you are not currently on our Sunday School mailing list but would like to be added, please reach out to Carrie at [dce@firstchurchwashingtonct.org](mailto:dce@firstchurchwashingtonct.org).

**BLOOD DRIVE - Friday, January 15, 1 - 5:30 pm**

**WHERE: St. John’s Episcopal Church, Washington**

**To reserve your time:** <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=StJohnsCT>

### FOOD BANK NEEDS

So... you are thinking about supporting our food collection efforts—either in our on-going collection in the Parish House entryway or at one of the Food Drives hosted by the Washington Council of Congregations. 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 January and February

**Daily:** Daily Devotional on Facebook, 9 am live. (Or by recording anytime!)  
<https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Washington-118422114837684/>

## 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)

Noon on Fridays - New Beginnings BYO Lunch in the church hall

## January

Friday, Jan 1—New Year’s Day

Sun, Jan 10 - Virtual Quarterly Congregational Meeting, immediately following worship. (Roughly 10:45 am)

Fri, Jan 15 - Red Cross Blood Drive at St. John’s Church. See home page announcement for registration link.

Wed, Jan 20 - Council Meeting (Virtual)

## February

Sunday, Feb 14 - Neighbors in Need offerings taken through this date.

Wed, Feb 17 - Ash Wednesday, Lent begins  
 - Council Meeting (Virtual)

## Sunday Morning Ministry

DEACONS OF THE MONTH	
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY: TBD	
WORSHIP ASSISTANTS	USHERS
Jan 3** - Judie Gorra .....	Susan Loyd Turner
Jan 10 - Abbie Gorra .....	Michelle Gorra
Jan 17 - Dan Lovallo .....	Judie Gorra
Jan 24 - Cara Michalski .....	Karen Esslinger
Jan 31 - Carol Glintenkamp .....	Lee Parsons

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”, so gather up a small amount of a drink and a bit of food before you sign into the service on Zoom so we can all break bread together.



Then stick around after worship for a big group chat. Or just hang around with the group and listen to the conversation and soak in the company of friends.

## January Birthdays

- 5 ..... Amanda Armstrong,  
..... Erica Ryland  
..... & Steve Wadelton
- 6 ..... Ellen Willert, Armin Baur
- 13 .... Mary Bronson
- 21 .... Helen Hughes
- 28 .... Maryellen Geoghan
- 29 .... Karen Esslinger
- 30 .... Stephen Willert



## February Birthdays

- 3 ..... Douglas Urquhart
- 9 ..... Dimitri Willert
- 12 ..... Tessa Johnson
- 18 ..... Abbie Gorra
- 22 ..... Judie Gorra,  
..... Leslie Lintner  
..... & Sarah Osborne
- 24 ..... Susan Loyd Turner
- 28 ..... Andrew Grinnell

## ANNIVERSARIES: Jan and Feb

- January 4 - Trish and Ben Grinnell
- February 14 - Pam and Tom Osborne
- February 28 - Jennifer and Doug Urquhart



## A Prayer for the Earth

All-powerful God,  
 you are present in the whole universe  
 and in the smallest of your creatures.  
 You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  
 Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.  
 Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  
 O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
 so precious in your eyes.  
 Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that  
 we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those  
 who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
 Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contem-  
 plation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we  
 journey towards your infinite light.  
 We thank you for being with us each day.  
 Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

A Prayer for Our Earth is from Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*,  
and is a call for greater care of the Earth and of each other.

“Never underestimate  
 the power of a small  
 group of committed  
 people to change the  
 world. In fact, it is the  
 only thing that ever has.”  
 ~ Margaret Mead

*Will you pray this prayer with us regularly and join us as we explore the issue of climate change this year? Together let's learn all we can to help us to be better stewards of this Earth, its climate, and of each other and to preserve a future for generations to come..*

*Please watch for learning opportunities at First Church and commit to building the new.*

There are no scheduled memorials for the month of January.



### Flowers

February 7 In celebration of Estelle Bronson's long life and service to First Church and her community, given by the Bronson Family.

February 21 **OPEN and available to reserve for your memorial intention.**

February 28 Given by David and Sarah Low for their grandpa, Rick Faubert

### Steeple Lighting

February All weeks in February are **OPEN and available to reserve for your memorial intention.**

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

New year scheduling will commence this month. If you would like to honor a loved one or special occasion/intention, please contact Karen in the church office with any particular date or dates you wish to sponsor flowers or steeple lighting at any time during the year to check for openings. Call (860) 868-0569 or email: [admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org](mailto: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.

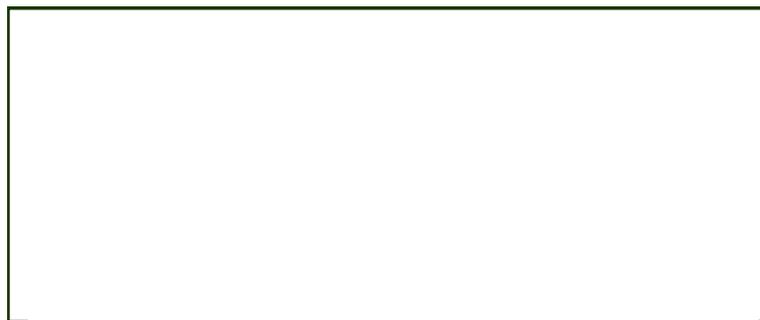
## The First Congregational

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



### Join us online:

- **Worship on Sun at 10 am**
- **Scripture Discussion Group  
Mon, 10:30 am**

### All are welcome to attend!

The Sunday worship guide is available on our Home Page or in or in weekly emailed announcements.

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!