



The Judea Journal

Monthly Newsletter

FEATURES

- Lent and Easter
 - Holy Week Schedule (p 1)
- A Letter from the Pastor (p 1)
- Bell Support Project Update (p 4)
- Green Fair Update (p4)
- Green Team News (p 5)

In this issue:

Anniversaries/ Birthdays	7
Calendar	7
Christian Education	6
Coffee Hour	3
Governance	2
Earth Day Festivities	5
From the Pastor	1
Green Fair 2022	4
Green Team	5
Memorials - Weekly	7
Sunday Morning Ministry	3
Trustee Report	4
Worship Gathering Info	2

A Message from our Pastor

"Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." – Luke 6:37-38

The other day I participated in a free webinar that was advertised to help in rediscovering hope and energy in ministry. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a commercial for an extended seminar the sponsors were offering. But the premise of the presentation was interesting – what low- or no-budget activities can churches do to help support their communities where they are in these moments?

They gave a few examples – one was a women's group that was frustrated with their lack of membership. Instead of rolling down a kvetching rabbit hole, they talked to a few young mothers and created a practice of distributing teddy bears with little pockets in them, where they would insert an age-appropriate prayer for the receiver, that a parent or the child could read before going to sleep. The prayers were updated periodically. Another group went out to grain elevators to pray with farmers who were bringing the harvest. A different group took the opportunity of ongoing construction near their church to offer people the opportunity to write short prayers on colorful strips of cloth, which were attached to a construction fence for a brief time, and then later brought in and combined to create a beautiful altar cloth.

These examples got me to thinking – where and how can we be present as spiritual practitioners for our wider community.

[Continued, page 3](#)

Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY
April 10

10 am Service
in the Meeting House

Maundy Thursday
April 14

7:30 pm
A Tenebrae
service featuring
A Living Last
Supper

EASTER
April 17

Sunrise Service
@ the Stone Church,
New Preston
OR

10 am Service
in the Meeting House

**EASTER EGG
HUNT!**

Meet on the
church steps
after the 10 am
Easter Service

Prepare to find eggs
, solve clues, and
fill your
Easter basket!



General Church Info and Council's Corner

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 **NEW** "Vanco Mobile" 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



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

Sheila Anson

Susan Elliott

Judith Gorra

Dan Lovallo

Hailey Lovallo

Susan Loyd Turner

Cara Michalski

Henrietta Small

Terri Tibbatts

Dave Werkhoven

Ellen Willert

Sunday Services

Join us Sunday at 10 am
in person,
online via [Zoom](#) or [YouTube](#).

*No matter who you are - or where
you are -
you are welcome here!*

Online Connection Info:

Zoom

<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

YouTube, live or pre-recorded,
<https://tinyurl.com/firstchurch-youtube>

2021-22 Quarterly Meeting Schedule: 2022, March 27, June 12 (Annual Mtg)

FCC STAFF and COUNCIL

Rev. Robyn Gray, Pastor 860-868-0569, x 11

Available by phone or email; email is preferred.

Carrie Loyd, Christian Ed Superintendent

DCE@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

Jesse Ofgang, Organist/Principal Musician

Kathleen Sauvageau, Bookkeeper

By appointment as needed;
always available by email.

Karen Esslinger, Admin. Assistant

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

Council Members

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

Dimitri Willert, Moderator,

OPEN, Vice-Moderator/ Stewardship,

Michelle Gorra, Treasurer

Susan Elliott, Clerk and Deacons' Rep

Millie Johnson, Christian Education

Dick Connor, Finance

Carol Glintenkamp, Missions

Alecia Evans, Music & Drama

John Lintner, Personnel

Note that email addresses and phone numbers other than the church office number have been removed from the Deacon, Council and staff listings because of ongoing problems with phishing emails and texts sent to and among these addresses and numbers. Because we post on our website, we needed to take these security measures.

Please refer to the church directory for contact information.

Pastor's Message (cont'd from pg 1)

Not necessarily as another program under a ministry, but an opportunity to invite others into our own spiritual practices that we already do? In case you're wondering, some examples of spiritual practices are meditation, prayer, running or walking, being in nature, counting blessings/intentional gratitude, affirmations, or breathing exercises.

As we enter the holiest time of year and ponder once again the death and resurrection of Jesus, what does it mean to be Easter people? How can we share the peace that passes all understanding with others? In our final weeks of Lenten reflection, what practices fill our souls, and what would be an easy way to share

them with the wider community, to let those in the community know they are loved and cared for?

Easter is a reminder of new life that comes from being loved and loving those around us, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. Let's share that love in new and interesting ways in this new season.



With you
on the journey,

Pastor Robyn

Pastor.Robyn@firstchurchwashingtonct.org



Sunday Morning Ministry Schedule

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

April : Sheila Anson and Wayne Hileman

	WORSHIP ASSISTANTS	USHERS
Apr 3 **	Ben Grinnell	Sue Elliott
Apr 10	Anne Low	Sheila Anson
Apr 17 (Easter)	Michael Gorra	Liddy Adams and Dave Werkhoven
Apr 24	Judie Gorra	Susan Loyd Turner

Sheila Anson sent out the schedule for the next few months. If you have not seen it, please contact Sheila at 860-318-5570.

** Indicates a Communion Sunday.

Grab something to eat and drink before you log in.

Photo Information

Photos are periodically taken during worship and other Church events and activities to share with our friends and membership online and in print. If you do not wish to have photos of you or your children (where applicable) used in Church promotional materials please let us know.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed for April and May!



Coffee Hours are back in a very simple format with the primary purpose being a chance to socialize with friends and get to know new folks. From the response of attendees recently, this satisfied a thirst beyond beverages. So our Deacons are encouraging VERY simple refreshments. A few items and the usual beverages. Set-up in the hall should take only about a half hour plus a little food gathering/prep at home. The ["Keep it Simple" guidelines can be downloaded here](#) or request a copy from the church office. And click here for our new [online sign-up list](#). There is even an optional checkbox to select if you are new to this and would like a buddy to show you the ropes.

If you you'd rather get on the schedule [by email](#), we'd be happy to work with you on that. But first take a glance at the [online form](#) to see which dates are still available.

**"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to
change the world. Today I am wise,
so I am changing myself."**

—Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273)
Persian Poet, Mystic

Trustee Update on the Bell Structure Project from Ben Grinnell

Summary

In 2019, while repainting the steeple of the church, a contractor discovered rotted wood around the exterior of the bell structure. Upon further inspection, the bell support structure itself was determined to be compromised by rot and age. Since then, the bells and chimes have been silent. This project will repair and replace the bell support structure so that the bells and chimes can ring again.

Since discovery of the problem and the silencing of the bells, we have been actively working on the project. We engaged an engineering firm to assess and create a plan of correction as well as manage the project. Bids were solicited recently with two qualified companies submitting. The bids are due soon and once received and reviewed, a company will be selected to do the work and a schedule established. The work is expected to be completed sometime this summer with some essential scaffolding around the steeple for contractor access.

The church will pay for the work when it is done and then fundraising will commence to cover the outlay. We have assembled a fundraising group to establish a plan with grant applications being an important part. We've also researched grants and applied for a matching grant with the State of Connecticut for historic preservation. This grant was secured and will require a community fundraising effort to meet half the cost of the project that is slated for this fall. Stay tuned for more as things unfold. Meanwhile, if you need more details on the nature of the project, read on. If you still have questions, you may contact Ben Grinnell.

Overview of the proposed project:

In 2019, while repainting the steeple of the church, a contractor discovered rotted wood around the exterior of the bell structure. Upon further inspection, the bell support structure itself was determined to be compromised by rot and age. This project will repair and replace the bell support structure and replace the roof around the belfry.

The project involves mostly interior work of replacing the bell structure and re-hanging the bells. However, in order to access the bell structure, the louvers on all sides of the belfry will be temporarily removed and stored. At the conclusion of the project, the louvers will be re-installed as before. In addition, the belfry roof, which is not visible from street level, will be replaced. This will involve the demolition and removal of the existing roof. The new roof will be ZCC metal roofing over two layers of membrane.

Description of the project need and why it is a priority:

The project is a priority for the church for two reasons. First, from a safety perspective, the bell structure supports 4 (four) bells which weigh several thousand pounds. The structure has been temporarily secured but this project would repair and replace the existing structure to re-establish a safe and secure future for the bells and the surrounding steeple. Secondly, since the discovery of this issue with the bell structure, the bells have been silent for the Washington community. The hope is to restore the bell structure and ring the bells again for the Washington Green and the community as a whole.



Green Fair 2022

The 2022 version of the Green Fair will be Saturday, July 9. The committee is starting preparations for another fantastic event with some changes this year. Since the Parish House will be less available for storage of large items, we have decided to bypass large furniture this year. We will still accept chairs and nice rugs but gone (for now at least!) are the beds, dressers, tables, etc. We are also rethinking the food and are considering a food truck or two. Other additions include an expected increase in music offerings and silent auction items. Children's area will have more crafts and activities as well.

What does all this mean for you? It means we need help! Help getting quality auction items. Help with making the bake tent the best ever! Help in all other the areas as well. If you have helped before, we will be sure to tap you again. If you are new to our community, please ask where you can be most useful. This is truly a community event and we welcome all to pitch in and join the fun! Any questions? Contact fair c-chairs Scott Brady or at Michael Gorra.



Green Team Update

The Green Team is active again and revitalized by a new to-us program called “The Green Congregation Challenge”. The Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) sponsors this program that aims to:

Provide structure and resources for congregations to make meaningful changes that will contribute to the urgent and necessary global effort of caring for our environment.

And, *with hope*, create a more just and healthy future for everyone and for generations to come.

What is it? The Green Congregation Challenge has four levels of certification that moves us progressively toward deeper and more effective change-making. In each of the levels, there are five categories:

Educate – includes church and community outreach to share current environmental information and ways that folks can take personal action.

Organize – Address the structure of our Green Team efforts to make it integral to our church life.

Reduce/ Recycle/ Rethink – Take action within the church facilities and promote to church members and our greater community the concepts of reducing energy use and overall carbon footprint and change the way we do things.

Connect – Connect with other local organizations as well as larger groups in our region to share/gather information.

Advocate – This is another educational component that deals specifically with the democratic process. It will include workshops, discussion groups, and other educational opportunities to teach people how to communicate their environmental (and other) values to government representatives.

Haven't we done a lot in the previous years? Well... yes we have! Indeed the Green Team has held numerous educational activities and have taken some good measures in this church to reduce, recycle and reuse and wish to acknowledge and honor that work. Some of those things, like eliminating single use plastic water bottles and taking energy conservation measures are discrete items in the challenge and so those are being taken as accomplishments toward the challenge. But for the educational, reduce/ recycle/rethink, connecting and advocating categories, we're starting fresh with a larger team, new energy and new activities. There is plenty of work to do here and outward into each of our church families and into the community and we're looking forward to digging in.

Anyone interested in helping our church become a greener congregation is invited to join us at any of our upcoming Green Team meetings. By taking up the challenge and committing to taking incremental but important steps toward protecting God's Creation, we can take action to promote a shift toward a better, healthier and more stable environment for everyone.

Our next meeting will be in person on a Sunday after worship in

May. Your voice matters! Join us.

Stay tuned in weekly eNews for the specific meeting dates.

For more information on the program and its details, go to:

<https://www.sneucc.org/environmental-ministries>



EARTH DAY WEEKEND

Sunday, April 24,
join us for a special
Earth Day worship
service and coffee hour.
There will be a brief
presentation during
coffee hour, too.

Saturday, April 23
11am - 1pm

Washington
Environmental Council
(WEC) will be hosting a
celebration of 50 years
of rich history at Judy
Black Memorial Park
and Gardens with:

- A wonderful display of WEC's history
- Family and earth friendly activities
- Refreshments
- The WEC annual Roadside Cleanup initiative
- Environmentally focused Shepaug High School students will present their senior projects.
- Plus more from the Town of Washington and other local organizations.

Christian Education and Faith Formation

SUNDAY SCHOOL and YOUTH GROUP

The Sunday Schoolers have been hard at work making an Easter video this month! They have written the script, built a set, created their characters, and collaborated with one another to brainstorm their creative touches! Along the way, they've explored the story in new ways and learned a bit more about the meaning of Easter and why we celebrate. Keep an eye out for their creative claymation in the coming weeks!



Easter is nearly here! In addition to the worship service on **Sunday, April 17th, the children are invited to participate in an Easter Egg hunt** following the service! Join us on the Green immediately after the conclusion of the service for celebratory fun! We will gather on the steps of the Meeting House to begin (we will split by age, kindergarten and younger will have their own designated area). Prepare to find eggs, solve clues, and fill your Easter basket! For planning purposes, the hunt is planned to take no more than 20 minutes and all candy is allergy friendly (list available). Hope to see you there!

Join us at Youth Group this spring! All middle and high schoolers are welcome to join in the fun, games, and community building on the fourth Sunday of the month from 11am-1pm. Upcoming meetings are Sunday, April 24th and Sunday, May 22.

If you are not currently on the Sunday School and/or Youth Group mailing lists, please contact Carrie Loyd to make sure you get the latest updates!



Curious about the photo above?
Next time you cross paths with a Youth Grouper, ask them to explain!



The Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in over a decade. There are several convenient drive locations in the area in the month of April, including the John Pettibone School and the VFW in New Milford and the Bantam and Morris Fire Companies. **Call 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767) or go to <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>**

BE A PART OF THE FOOD CHAIN!

The Washington-Warren and New Milford Food Banks rely on donations from people like us. Won't you make donation of food, cleaning supplies and personal care items to our local food banks a regular part of your routine.

You may drop off shelf stable food, personal care and cleaning products to the shopping cart in the Parish House entryway Monday–Friday, 8 am to 4 or Sunday mornings.

To see more about how the New Milford Food Bank operates and what it looks like, you can watch their video here: <https://www.facebook.com/TownofNewMilfordCT/videos/1082317702259089>



FOOD BANK NEEDS These are the most needed right now:

Canned Beans
Spam
Condiments (mayo, salsa, maple syrup)
Coffee and Tea
Dry Cereal
Juices (no grapefruit)
Seltzer

Baking Supplies (baking soda, vanilla)
Gluten Free non-perishables

Non-food items:

Toothpaste, toothbrushes
Paper Goods (Toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels)

Flowers

Apr 17 Easter Flowers and RIP Debt Relief

Apr 24 In loving memory of Nancy Houldin, given by her family.

April flower sponsorship dates open and available to sponsor: 4/3, 4/10

Steeple Lighting

Apr 3 Given by Susan McMaster in loving memory of her uncle, Edward Colton Fowler

April steeple lighting dates open and available to sponsor: 4/10, 4/17, 4/24

*If you would like to sponsor either flowers or steeple lighting in March. April or into the future,
please contact the church office. phone (860) 868-0569.*

CALENDAR of ACTIVITIES and EVENTS for April

Weekly on Sundays

We are back in-person in the Meeting House! And the online option continues for those who choose.

10 am - Worship with us (see details on p2)

10 am - Sunday School - . (see p 6)

3:30 - 7 pm - SingOutCT Rehearsals

Other Weekly Activities in Wersebe Hall

9:30 am - Mondays - Yoga for Mobility and Strength*

9:30 am - AA

10 am - Wednesdays - Gentle Flow*

5 pm - Wednesdays - Tai Chi**

5 pm - Thursdays - Tai Chi**

10 am - Fridays - AA Meeting

Noon Fridays - New Beginnings pot luck gathering in the church hall

* Preregistration is required for yoga -

Contact Julie Haesche at www.juliehaesche.com/

** For Tai Chi - Contact Jampa Stewart at Valley Spirit Wellness.

Drop-ins welcome.

April

Sun, Apr 10, 10 am - PALM SUNDAY Service

Thur, April 14, 7:30 pm - Maundy Thursday

Sun, Apr 17, EASTER

Sunrise Service on New Preston Hill

10 am - Service with Easter Egg Hunt on the Green immediately following

Wed, Apr 20, 6:30 pm - Council meeting

Sun, Apr 24, Earth Day Sunday - Special worship service and coffee hour to follow.

11-1 pm - Youth Group Meeting



April Birthdays

2.....Joe Mustich
3Henrietta Small
5.....Austin Farmer
6.....Eva Evans
18David Low
26..... Matt Brady
27.....Michelle Gorra
.....Cooper Vengrove
30Dan Lovallo

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.

Thanks for a Successful Church Cleanup Day!



With old junk removed, there will be some further sprucing up in some areas and likely another day, at some point, to remove some more items from the Meeting House basement.



*Stay Tuned for more
opportunities to help!*