



# Landmark

SEPTEMBER 2020

First Congregational Church  
An Open and Affirming Congregation

Vol. 66, Number 8

## LEANING INTO GOD

“Leaning into God” is First Church’s theme for 2020-2021. Usually staff will spend the summer planning for a new program year, and the energy is palpable as possibilities are considered of the ways we will put our faith into action for the year. How can our theme help us deepen our faith and bring hope and love to all the people and places in need of it? This year, our responses to God’s call will necessarily look different. In these times we are called to be more creative and flexible.

As our program year begins, our community and nation embark on the limited re-opening of schools and allow wider opening of businesses and gatherings. First Church, too, will begin limited in-person worship, with all the appropriate health protocol followed, masked, physical-distanced greeting as we try to keep everyone healthy. The congregation has been divided into groups so that during September and October we can invite all who wish to worship in person to attend at least once in 8 weeks. Please read the specifics under the “Worship” listing on page 2, and note that everyone planning to attend a service will need to RSVP to the Church Office (203-453-5249 or [office@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.org).)

The past six months have challenged us all, whether in health or economic/financial issues, in social distancing and isolation, in how we make sense and meaning of life, in our answers to: how do we feed our spirits and souls when unable to gather as the body of Christ? It has required continuing flexibility, creativity, and willingness to be open to how the Spirit moves... something that is challenging while grieving the loss of what we knew.

*continues*

What IS certain, is that when we struggle or hurt or grieving and we lean into God- we are held, there is solid ground beneath our feet, and we find hope and new life from the ashes. So, you are invited to live into our theme this year: leaning into God for support, for inspiration, and for the breath to offer the hope and new life to others.

*Our leaning into God will become:*

*learning, living,  
loving, laughing,  
longing, looking,  
listening, lingering,  
losing, lamenting,  
leading, luminating,  
laboring, liberating,  
life-giving. . .  
connecting us to God  
and to each other.*



Peace,  
First Church clergy and staff

## SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

### **PLEASE RSVP TO THE CHURCH OFFICE TO RESERVE A SEAT FOR WORSHIP**

#### **Sunday, Sept. 6: Communion/Jake's Installation**

10:00am In-person Worship for Jake's family, the Search Committee and UCC representatives  
Worship email will be sent out to all others

#### **Sunday, Sept. 13:**

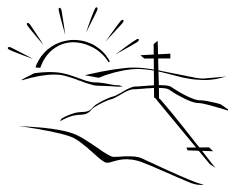
10:00am In-person worship for those 70 & older by RSVP. Worship email will be sent out to all others

#### **Sunday, Sept. 20:**

10:00am In-person worship for families with children Grade 4 & younger by RSVP. Worship email will be sent out to all others

#### **Sunday, Sept. 27:**

10:00am In-person worship for families with children grade 5 -college, Music, Trustees by RSVP. Worship email will be sent out to all others



### IN MEMORIAM

Cheryl Jean Secki  
February 9, 1948 – January 10, 2020

Rafael Angel Font  
July 13, 1934 – June 13, 2020

Kathryn Bucknam Corey  
May 10, 1961 – July 2020

Patricia Holsenbeck Russell  
September 4, 1937 – July 30, 2020

Elizabeth Campbell Pugh  
October 10, 1928 – August 1, 2020

### DEACONESS/VISITOR OF THE MONTH

**Deaconess/Visitor for September** is Pam Harding (203-533-5799). Please notify her of births, adoptions, or anyone who may need a note of sympathy, encouragement, or a prayer shawl.

### DEACON OF THE MONTH

**Deacon for September** is Amanda Patrick (203-530-9005). Please contact Amanda if you have questions or reflections about the spiritual life of the church, about church matters, or wish to schedule a **Home Communion visit**, please speak with Peggy.

### MONTHLY COMMITTEE REPORTS

We want to make sure we are not missing anyone. Is there anyone who should receive a monthly report, but has not received ones for their committee, or no longer needs to receive reports? Are there accounts a committee wishes to add/remove from its report? Please email Annemarie Alexa: [financeoffice@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:financeoffice@firstchurchguilford.org).

*Debbie Peluse, Assistant Treasurer*



### FOOD COLLECTION

*"...I was hungry and you gave me food." Matt 25:35*

Food insecurity continues. Though we won't collect the food at a worship service, we invite you to continue to support the Guilford Food Bank. Check the Guilford Food bank website for their recent needs. Food can be dropped off at Big Y and Palumbo's Automotive during their regular working hours. The Guilford Food bank receives donations on Friday mornings.

**Current needs are: mac & cheese; canned peas/corn/string beans; hearty soups; canned beans; jelly; mayo; mustard; sugar; coffee & tea; jello/pudding; dessert mixes; toothpaste; dish detergent; laundry detergent; facial tissues.**

## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Special Zoom Meeting August 23, 2020

Discussion and action on request for facilities use by Guilford Center for Children

Peter Rebuzzini/Marti Carlson

- Marti Carlson presented – Request for use of Church School Building by Guilford Center for Children (GCC) and Before and After School Care (BASC)
- Rooms 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, and Griswold Hall daily, Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays
- 7:00am to 6:00pm
- BASC is in the process of obtaining permission from the state and the town Building and Zoning Department, and has been inspected by the Guilford Fire Marshal and the state inspector from the CT Office of Early Childhood Education (OEC), with no reported concerns. Our local health official has taken a water sample for lead testing and is arranging for a Comprehensive Lead Analysis.
- BASC will follow all protocol and is responsible for cleaning and sanitizing. Teachers will clean every area that is touched, but we will still be responsible for cleaning the hallways.
- All church property: pianos, books, and toys, will be removed from the rooms and placed in unused rooms.
- Pick up and Drop off will be staggered on Broad Street
- BASC Staff will be responsible for locking and unlocking the doors.
- Judi Wallace will move her office to the Minear Library.
- License agreement similar to the Neighborhood Music School without the fees, added COVID rider, insurance is the same.
- Business Committee is 100% in support of this proposal.
- 12 Step Groups that are using our space are meeting on weekends in the Chapel. If we continue with this agreement, we will contact all of the 12 Step groups to let them know the new use and will coordinate a new plan with them if more of the groups need to find a space inside.
- License agreement would go through mid-October, but might be extended, subject to appropriate conditions at the time.
- We can hold a maximum of 60 kids.
- Impact on Mark's duties? He is around, but he will use the same protocol as he does with

Neighborhood Music School (doesn't go on floors between 8am and 5pm).

- Any increased costs will be covered by the Guilford Center for Children. They are providing a community service and we are viewing the use of our building as a community outreach mission.
- Anticipating getting the kids outside for mask breaks. They will not be allowed in the Memorial Garden.
- The GCC Staff will assist the kids with their distance learning while they are at the Church.
- Business Committee has updated WiFi in the building for church purposes, but will also accommodate this program.
- Peter Rebuzzini made the motion to approve and Brian Wiley seconded the agreement. Council approved the community outreach.

Action on Motion for Account at Webster Bank

Stephen/Bill Bailey/Mary Jane Potter

- The Church Council of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, CT, voted favorably to approve, for the safekeeping of the Safety Deposit of our new Spencer House Tenant, the establishment of an escrow account at Webster Bank. The tenant started renting the apartment in July 2020.
- Susan Leete made the motion and Brian Wiley seconded. Motion approved. Council authorized Church Treasurer Bill Bailey and Assistant Treasurer Debbie Peluse to establish the account at Webster Bank and to be the Church's signatories for the account.

### FROM THE UCC PENSION BOARDS INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS DURING COVID

#### [COVID-19 - Insurance Board](#)

The Insurance Board is committed to providing information and resources for our participants. This comprehensive resource is our curation of relevant new legislation, insurance coverage and overall best practices to guide churches during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please visit [www.insuranceboard.org](http://www.insuranceboard.org). For those not online, please contact the Church Office.

## FIRST CHURCH COVID RESPONSE TEAM

The pandemic has forced changes in the way many Church activities take place. The Grace of God and efforts by many church leaders have allowed First Church to thrive. Nonetheless, in some areas, the current workload is unsustainable. To ensure that we support all of our church family during these days, the First Congregational Church of Guilford, CT hereby establishes a COVID Response Team whose purpose is to support the Church leadership, congregants, and wider Guilford community in addressing the challenges brought on by the ongoing COVID pandemic. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- COVID Response Team members will assist Church leadership in outreach and ministry to congregants, particularly those that may be especially impacted by COVID. This may be done in cooperation with Deaconesses, Stewardship, and other committees.
- COVID Response Team members will assist Church leadership in planning and implementing a transition to in-person worship, as permitted by civil and UCC authorities: including appropriate physical distancing and related procedures to promote health and safety practices. Temperature checks, seating restrictions, and careful management of how congregants enter and leave the sanctuary will likely be required for many months. This may be done in cooperation with the ushers and other committees.
- COVID Response Team members will support Church efforts to minister to the Guilford community impacted by COVID. This may be done in cooperation with the Community and Global Justice committee, and liaison with Christine Cohen and other government officials.

Useful skills for COVID Response Team members: individuals with compassionate communications skills to reach out to individual members and families, and to manage the logistics of restricted in-person services; conduct basic medical screenings. To better understand and interpret public health guidance, the COVID Response Team is looking for persons with a background in health or a high comfort level with COVID related science.

Response Team Term: The COVID Response Team will plan to be active for a two-year period. No later than spring of 2022 First Church Leadership will determine if the team needs to continue or may revise its basic responsibilities based on the needs of the congregation. *Ginger and Jake*

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

As we continue to find creative and fun ways to stay connected and enjoy the Fall; plans are being made.

For Christian Education at First Church we invite you to have your children join Judi Wallace LIVE on Facebook every Sunday at noon for an interactive opportunity for a story, a lesson, a craft or game and just some fun from a First Church setting!

As everything is shifting, we too are shifting and planning to insure the health and safety of everyone. Sunday School during worship and Nursery Care are on hold. Our greatest hope is to return to those programs in January 2021! Be assured, in the Sunday Worship for families, your children of ALL ages are **welcome** in the sanctuary.

We also have several Family Events planned for the Fall that will be held outside on the Church lawn. Please register for these events by emailing me at: [judi@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:judi@firstchurchguilford.org). We sure hope you can join us for some of these get togethers. Masks will be mandatory, and distancing will be arranged.

### Christian Education Plans for Fall!

Sept 13 at 4:00 pm - Praying in Color Sidewalk art

Sept. 27 at 9:00 am - Kid's Special Prayer Walk

Oct. 4 at 4:00 pm - Community Garden/CROP Hunger Walk month

Oct. 9-12 - Family Scavenger Hunt - Do it in a day or over the long weekend! Zoom on Monday evening to share and name the winners!

Oct. 18 at 9:00 am - Storytelling and Writing - Guest

Nov. 1 at 4:00 pm - Bird Feeders

Nov. 15 at 9:00 am - Labyrinth and Meditation - Guest

Dec. 6 at 4:00 pm – Campfire

### Confirmation Plans

Confirmation this year will not begin until December 14<sup>th</sup> when we will have an orientation and Christmas party in some way! Please find the Confirmation Schedules for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students at [www.firstchurchguilford.org](http://www.firstchurchguilford.org).

If you have a student who is entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade this year and is interested in joining our First Year Confirmation class, please contact me.



**MUSIC MINISTRIES, *continued***

So, in the meantime, how can we still make music? Our virtual worship services have featured a bunch of soloists and small ensembles so far; we still have many opportunities for those of you who would like to play or sing for worship. We will also be organizing some small instrumental ensembles for September.

This summer I've arranged several pieces for handbells, in a way that no bells are shared between players. For these ensembles, we will be able to play on separate stations spaced a good social distance apart. We also have a set of pitched percussion (xylophones, metallophones) and drums that can be used in a socially-distant percussion group. If you are interested in any of these possibilities, or have some ideas of your own, email me at [bill@firstchurchquilford.org](mailto:bill@firstchurchquilford.org), and we'll include you in our ensemble planning.

*Bill Speed*  
Director of Music Ministries

**SILVER LAKE UPDATE**

*Silver Lake Conference Center is the outdoor ministry of our conference. Located in Sharon CT it offers summer conferences and other events throughout the year.*

Greetings from Silver Lake and THANK YOU! We have received a record number of donations this year and we are so grateful for the incredible outpouring of support. Your gifts ensure that Silver Lake's life-transforming ministry will continue for another 60 years – and beyond!

Though it's been a quiet, strange summer here, your year-round staff are working hard on what comes next. We are putting procedures and policies in place to allow us to safely welcome you back. Since July, we have been offering **day visits for families/households** to reserve a day to enjoy the site. We will continue to offer these visits at least through September. Starting in September, we will offer **overnight retreats for families/households**. We are finalizing those details, but more information will be coming soon! This fall, we will offer **adventure programming** to day groups. Youth, school and other groups will be able to come to Silver Lake for a day of team-building activities, adapted to allow for social distancing while still meeting the group's goals. Visit [www.silverlakect.org](http://www.silverlakect.org) for more information.

**ECO ECHO****FIRST CHURCH COMMUNAL GARDEN**

*We learn from our gardens to deal with the most urgent question of our time: how much is enough?*  
- Wendell Berry

Life in our garden is not only good, but abundant. The plants are healthy and productive: tomatoes, carrots, turnips, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, Swiss chard, kale, green beans, basil, rosemary, sage....

The addition to the southern side of the garden has given us space for many flowers which bring beauty and our allies, the beneficial insects and pollinators. The sunflowers are feeding the birds. Our gardeners are vibrant, healthy and having surrounded themselves with life, are feeling even more alive. Food is being harvested and shared.

A lot of living is going on in the garden and you can't have too much life. There can be too much of what goes against life, though. Why don't we all make a commitment to work on magnifying life and sharing it.

*Tom Finnegan, Environmental Ministry Team*

