

Landmark

November 2021

First Congregational Church An Open and Affirming Congregation Vol. 67, Number 11

landmark@firstchurchguilford.org

THOUGHTS AS WE ENTER NOVEMBER...

Many find so much joy in the changing colors of autumn leaves. They move me, delight me, and comfort me too. I wait for this change all year. And - I am saddened when the leaves fall, usually following a storm that rolls in just before Thanksgiving.

How do we appreciate these glorious days and yet lean into the "For such a time is this" philosophy from the book of Esther? Just like the beauty of leaves that adorn the trees, people come into our lives for but a season. When they leave, we can feel tossed about.

Several have asked a question about clergy and staff changes over the past decade. One person asked, "Is there something wrong with us?" We have a wonderful collection of people settled in a beautiful town. So true! However, we do not match everyone's call or heart's desire *forever*. Sarah, former clergy who left, headed west with Beth to the part of the country that met their spiritual and recreational needs. The beauty of the mountains called to them. Becky, former director for children's ministries left, when she had the opportunity to minister on the same church staff as her husband. They had spent most of their married life serving congregations together. Jake, another clergy person recently moved to work in the non-profit world. His various life experiences and heritage match this work plus he has the weekends free to share with Gerhard.

When life feels bare and we miss the vivid folks who move us, delight us, and comfort us, may we remember to celebrate the gift of our time together, too.

After mentioning transitions in a recent service, one church member asked about our students, too. They inquired if we are a teaching parish and acknowledged that we expect our interns will only spend a year with us. For the past three years we have hosted students who have enriched our lives. We have had the opportunity to empower them to discover their ministries. Maybe through our seminarians we can learn to appreciate the days we do have together.

Another member suggested we are a launching parish. I love this idea. As our members, clergy, or staff move to different places in the world to follow the calls of their hearts, they take some of the beauty of our church family and this town with them. May we send them off well. May we cherish, and celebrate the moments when we say, "For such a time is this!"

Peace, Ginger



NOVEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP

Masked and physically distanced in the Sanctuary

November 7, 14, 21, 28 at 10:00am

Those unable to attend in person may worship virtually via the email sent out Sunday morning.

Those not online who request it will receive a hard copy of the bulletin and sermon via mail.

If you are not on the worship email list please contact the Church Office at office@firstchurchguilford.org.

ADVENT BEGINS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH!

THANK YOU!

Dear First Church Members,

In this season when I am prayerfully building something new - a new career with the ADL as the Associate Director in Connecticut, new postpandemic friendships, new relationship with the UCC as a community-based minister, new family realities without our grandparent generation, and rebuilding a 1930 Dutch Colonial Revival home in Milford (in need of more work than the inspector implied) - the gift cards to Lowes and Home Depot were the perfect symbolic sendoff. Gerhard and I would like to express again our deep gratitude for our two years of fun, engaging, and complex shared ministry and for your generosity of spirit and resources in sending us to this new building phase of our lives and careers with such grace and abundance.

With Gratitude Always, *Jake*

"30 MINUTES OF JOY"



Take a music break on Thursdays at 12noon! Bill Speed continues his 30 minutes of live music with different themes each week. Enjoy live music and learn a bit about the stories of the composers and the pieces they wrote. Join him on the church's Facebook page, or in person!

PARISH CARE TEAM CONTACT FOR NOVEMBER

Please notify Barb Hazall (203-640-3907) of anyone who may need a prayer shawl or a note of sympathy or encouragement.

DEACON FOR NOVEMBER

Please contact Anita Soucy (203-980-6947) if you have questions or reflections about the spiritual life of the church.

LANDMARK EMAIL landmark@firstchurchguilford.org

Please submit all articles to this email address. This will keep all Landmark communication in one place.

Submission deadline: the 15th of each month.

BAPTISM

Isabella Alfonsi Bonner child of Laura and Ben Bonner

Riley Oliver Mascelli child of Kate and Ryan Mascelli

Camden Daniel Murphy child of Cally and Daniel Murphy

Abdon Fischer Santiago child of Brooke Fischer and Richard Santiago



IN MEMORIAM

Norman R. Zabel March 12, 1935 – September 26, 2021

Joyce Dudley Norton March 28, 1924 – October 17, 2021

FOOD DONATIONS

I was hungry and you gave me food." Matt 25:35 Support of local food banks continues to be critical for those with food insecurity.

We invite you to continue our tradition of donating food to the Guilford Food Bank. Monetary



- Guilford Food Bank, 45 Stone House Lane, Fridays, 9:00am- Noon
- Big Y, 830 Boston Post Rd: 7:00am 10:00pm
- Palumbo's Automotive, 1099 Boston Post Rd M – F, 7:00am – 6:00pm; Sat. 7:00am - Noon

GROCERY CARDS AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE After Worship in the Narthex

Our grocery card program is an easy fundraiser for the church: \$100 (cash or check) buys a Big Y, Bishop's or Stop & Shop card – you receive \$100 of groceries and First Church receives 5%. Thanks to Bob Howard, Susan Leete, Shannon Clarkson and Jane Rowen who rotate selling the cards!

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS October 12, 2021

Treasurer Report

Paul Kuehn

- At the end of September, 75% of the year, we are at 73.6% of our income. Expenses are at 64% of our expense budget. Current YTD difference is just over \$67,000.
- Stephen noted that we do not want to keep the trend of expenses greater than budget.

Board of Finance Mary Jane Potter

- Board is refining the numbers. The Stewardship Committee has been given a \$610K budget estimate for 2022. The \$610K budget will be a challenge. There are always a small number of pledges who represent a large portion of our budget. As the large pledges leave, we need to figure out how to replace them. If anyone has contact Dick Harter ideas. or Stewardship will encourage people to pledge early and then use personal contact to get remaining pledges. Three ways to pledge or donate: through the membership database, the blue pledge card, all "Giving" links in communications from the church (like the Steeple).
- We have to be mindful that each person gives from what they have.
- Discussing how we tighten our budget has to be part of how we make our budget balance.
 Money follows mission. We have the mission, and the money should follow.

Minister's Report

- We did a great job sending Jake off on Sundayhe was so appreciative. It is important to be able
- to celebrate.
 Clara is a wonderful addition to FC staff. Her passion revolves around the Earth, God's
- passion revolves around the Earth, God's Creation and environmental ministry. Clara will preach on Indigenous peoples next week.
- Ginger is still catching up with weddings and Memorial services.
- Without Bill, Judi and Penelope, First Church's ministries would suffer. All are exhausted and need to remember the importance of self-care. Ginger reminded all that we need to connect with grace and love and kindness- to be the best self we can in relating to one another. The pandemic has caused anxiety and the upcoming election is causing worry.
- There will be an interfaith letter published supporting equity in schools.
- Katie Balestracci, Chair of Guilford Board of Education, will present our Adult Forum on November 14.

Recommendation of Possible Associate Search Committee and set meeting date for Special Congregational Meeting Stephen, Ginger

- A slate of members to serve on the Associate Minister Search Committee has been proposed.
 Many of them also served on the last search committee. Tentative Special Congregational Meeting set for October 24th.
- There are things that we learned over the last two years that will help us develop our profile and ask more probing questions. It is important to pay attention to references and ask questions about the candidates' growing edge.
- Peter Rebuzzini moved the slate forward and Gini King seconded. Motion passed.

Business Committee

Peter Rebuzzini/ Susan Leete

- Security system online. Only a few minor incidents so far. Contact Peter with issues- he will act as a clearinghouse for security. Some groups have confidentiality issues.
- A consultant has been hired offer security training for different situations (extreme weather, threats, medical emergencies, etc.). The first training will be with Church Council at the December meeting via Zoom.
- Labyrinth: the BC would like to move the rocks so that the lawn can be mowed/raked properly.
 Will contact Bill Weidmann. Peter moved, Barbara seconded, and motion passed.
- Susan Leete suggested that the fee for a sexton would be \$30 per hour for use of space applications received from now on when groups require a sexton. Susan moved, Peter seconded, and the motion passed.

Nominating Gail Tomsich/ Peter Rebuzzini

 February is coming up. There will be a meeting this week to talk about open slots.

New /Old Business

All

- A reminder that before a committee undertakes fundraising, it needs to be approved by Council.
 We are not silos, but One Church, One Budget.
- Stephen moved that the search committee offer a housing allowance to the next clergy rather than the apartment. Peter seconded. Motion approved.
- Gini King: Shoreline Interfaith Resettlement met last week - five faith communities and community involvement. Eight teams address specific needs. An application will be completed with IRIS. Congregations will be asked to contribute \$2000 to cover the apartment for first 6 months. Community can donate online.

STEWARDHIP UPDATE

With joy we join to plan for next year's ministry budget. The annual Stewardship Campaign is in full swing. In the fall we have the opportunity to pledge a specific dollar amount to financially support the proposed 2022 budget. By working together we can raise the funds necessary to empower our various ministries.

Since our initial request was mailed out in late September, we have received 77 pledges. Last year, we had a total of 203 pledges. The budget for 2022 is \$615,000 and we have raised \$232,000, which represents 37.8% of our goal. This is \$100,000 below where we were last October. The Stewardship Committee asks everyone to please take the time to pledge whatever amount you are able to give- every pledge counts! If you have had a good year financially, we ask you to please consider increasing your pledge from last year.

Please think about how the ministries of First Church have impacted your life or the lives of others. View the Stewardship testimonies on our website: Cindy Caligan, Cynthia Hirni and Bob Raines, and the Melvin family, and others, have offered their words about why they make an annual pledge to support First Church.

Please fill out your pledge card this week. You can drop it in the mail or in the offering basket at church on Sunday. Easier yet, please go to the web site https://firstchurchguilford.org and make your online pledge today.

The Stewardship Committee:

Cindy Caligan, Carrie Federici, Lou Federici, Dick Harter, Barbara Johnson and Chuck Ramsey

ANNUAL MEMORIAL CONCERT

Sunday, November 7th 4:00pm in the Sanctuary The Annual Memorial Concert will feature storytelling by Liza Catino accompanied by the music of Prokofiev and Poulenc. The classic tales of "Peter and the Wolf" and "Babar, the Little Elephant" will come to life in word and melody and picture, assisted by Bill Speed and the H. Philip Dudley Memorial Organ.

This concert, held this year on All Saints' Sunday, is a way for congregation members to remember and honor dear departed friends and family through the beauty of music. Our concert program features printed remembrances and memorials of your loved ones. If you would like to honor someone from your life in this year's program, please contact Bill Speed at bill@firstchurchguilford.org or 203-530-0392.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Autumn is a beautiful time of year in Guilford! As we continue to change like the seasons, we have new plans and ideas moving into another holiday time.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Christian Education is humming along! The first Sunday of each month we have had great success with an in-person, all-ages, outside Sunday School class! Nov. 7th is the next one. All aged children are welcome, beginning in worship at 10 am in the sanctuary and moving outside after the 10:16 Moment. On the other Sundays of the month join me for a LIVE with Judi lesson on our First Church Facebook page.

There are a couple awesome events coming up for students. On Wednesday, Nov. 10th from 4-5pm join Bill Speed, Dawn Perrotti and Nancy Kelly for a fun *FRIENDSGIVING gathering for grades K-6!* Older siblings are most welcome to come and help out! Join us for games, crafts, music & snacks outside!!

On Sunday, Nov. 14th, at 4-5pm join us for a **family baking time for the Community Dining Room!** Meet in Fellowship Hall Kitchen to make cookies!

On Sunday, Nov. 21, we begin to prepare for the season of Advent (which begins on Nov. 28th.) At 10:00am worship pick up your ADVENT Collection Bags! They were a huge success last year so we will collect again for the Guilford Food Bank! On November 21, there will also be Advent Wreath-Making available right after worship at 10:45, hopefully outside! Looking forward to a month of Gratitude and sharing when we can in ways we can!

PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP YOUTH GROUP

Pilgrim Fellowship is also humming along in a wonderful outside way!! We have welcomed over 100 high school students to our PF community in the first couple of meetings!

The Fall Leaf Raking Fundraiser will be Nov. 13 & 14; and Nov. 20 & 21! If you are interested in having PF rake leaves for you, we ask for donations for our service trips; \$100, \$200 or \$300 depending on the size of the yard. Please contact Judi!

One more thing! My husband and I are "Dancing for the Cause" - to benefit Raise the Roof CT - an arm of Habitat for Humanity! You can watch on November 12 and there is still time to donate! (See the next column.)

Thank you for supporting us and this awesome cause!!

Autumn Blessings, Judi Wallace, Director

DEACON DIGEST

As we find ourselves in November already or finally, I'm not sure which sentiment I feel. The year has flown by as many seem to do as I get older, and yet it was such a hard year for so many reasons that I find myself feeling relief that it is almost over. But I digress. November brings Thanksgiving, a time to reflect on all that we have to be thankful for, a time to fill our hearts with gratitude and prepare our hearts for the gladness and wonder of Advent.

With the hardships and the loss, sometimes we have to work a little harder to focus on the positives. I can always find the positives in the wonder of God's creation. When I was reflecting on writing this piece and finding gratitude, I recalled Milton singing "All Good Gifts" from *Godspell* in church recently.

We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land...
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand...
He sends us snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain...
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain...

We thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good, The seedtime and the harvest, our life our health our food, No gifts have we to offer for all thy love imparts But that which thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts!

While I have never had trouble appreciating the wonder of God's creation, especially all of the creatures of the earth, I recently had a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience that wonder in South Africa. Now, the farthest I have ever traveled prior to this trip is Aruba so it was an incredible adventure for me. I think I spent the entire twelve days walking around with my eyes and mouth open in awe of all I saw and experienced.

It was easy to see why Cape Town is listed among the most beautiful cities in the world. The beauty stands in contrast to the coast that rivals Big Sur of California (I will have to take our guide's word on that since I have never even been to California) and the wonder of Table Mountain standing guard over the city. The air feels fresh and clean. The people are warm and welcoming often greeting you as "my sister...we are all brothers and sisters from another mother". And then of course, the wildlife is mind blowing. We saw ostriches grazing along the roadside as we drove to the Cape of Good Hope, we encountered a troop of baboons on our way back and had a chance to visit the colony of African

penguins that live on Boulder Beach. Incredible! After six amazing days, we flew to a wildlife preserve on the east coast of South Africa for three days of safari. I thought I knew what to expect, but nothing could have prepared me for the way I felt sitting in on open range rover and driving past a giraffe nibbling leaves at the top of a tree not ten feet from the road! There just are no words to describe my wonder. With the help of our excellent guides, we saw so many of God's creatures: zebra, impala, kudu, water buffalo, a white rhino and her calf, leopards, elephants, hippos, lions, and so many varieties of birds, not to mention unique trees and plants. It still feels a bit like a dream. And sharing the trip with my daughter Hannah made it all the more special. What a gift.

All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above So thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord for all his love... I really wanna thank you Lord!

Despite the hardships of this world and life, there is no end to the love that God bestows upon us. How can the size of God's heart not get smaller? Wonder upon wonder.

Anita Soucy, Deacon for November



PRISON & RE-ENTRY MINISTRY FALL 2021

Throughout the pandemic, the Prison and Re-entry team has been working to meet requests for backpacks from neighboring communities of New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport. The Rev. Charlotte White contacted other churches during the pandemic and the responses were amazing. Over thirty backpacks were completed by youth groups as part of their summer programs. Several groups have made a commitment to continue.

First Church's Fall Backpack Collection will be on Sundays during November. We are initiating "Towel Sundays" in November. Please consider donating a set of towels which would include one bath, one hand towel and two face cloths. Donation baskets will be in the Narthex each Sunday.

Monetary donations are also welcome! You can contribute by checks (made payable to First Church with "Prison & Re-entry Ministries" on the memo line and mail to the Church Office, or via our website: www.firstchurchguilford.org. Click on "Donate." Marcia Myhre, Backpack Coordinator

THANK YOU!!

Thank you so much First Church Guilford for your generous donation to us for the 2021 Gala of Stars: Dancing for the Cause!!! The donation will go directly to Raise the Roof CT, benefitting families to have the ability to build and purchase homes. What a wonderful way to show faith in action and choosing love! Thank you from the bottom of our dancing hearts! You can watch the Gala Dancing for the Cause Event on November 12th at 7:30 pm online!! And there is still opportunity to donate to any of the Dancing Star couples by going www.raisetheroofct.org. Donate specifically to Judi Wallace by going to this link: Jeff https://give.classy.org/judiandjeff. Again, we are filled with love and gratitude for the generous support and cheering section!! Thank you! Judi and Jeff Wallace

THE GIVING TREE



The Giving Tree is an outreach ministry of First Church during the holiday season. We support Guilford families through Guilford Social Services and a wider reach of Covenant to Care children from the greater New Haven area. The

organizations request Gift Cards so the families have the joy of picking out their own holiday gifts. The gift cards can be for any amount.

This year there will be envelopes in the pews rather than a Tree in the narthex. Please:

Take an envelope found at the end of the pews in the Sanctuary- and follow the directions on it. Note that Covenant to Care only takes Walmart and Target cards; Guilford Social Services take any cards. The sealed envelopes containing the cards can be placed in the box in the Narthex or mailed to the Church Office *Gift Cards must be returned by Sunday Dec. 5^{th.}* Donations of cash or check are also welcome!.. Contact Jeanie Cacopardo (jeanie.cacopardo@gmail.com) or Betsy Schwammberger (eschwammberger@snet.net.)

CREATION CARE TIPS

Apply lawn fertilizer around Mother's Day and Labor Day- not after September. Choose non-chemical fertilizers to keep lawn runoff from harming streams and ponds, or feed your lawn organically by attaching a leaf-mulching blade to your mower to mulch leaves and grass clippings into the lawn. Also, planting native plants, shrubs and trees eliminates the need for fertilizer at all. Make raking leaves a fun family time enjoying the exercise in the crisp air, which limits the need for noisy leaf blowers. *Environmental Min. Team*

WELCOMING AN AFGHAN REFUGEE FAMILY SHORELINE INTERFAITH RESETTLEMENT

First Church has heard the call to welcome and support a refugee family in response to families coming to the United States from Afghanistan. It is expected that over 600 refugees will arrive in CT in the next few months. Five communities of faith have come together to form Shoreline Interfaith Resettlement: First Church, Christ Episcopal Church, St. George Catholic Church; North Madison Congregational Church and Temple Beth Tikvah. There are also many community people joining the project. We will work with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) as co-sponsors of a family.

The task is a large one beginning with finding an apartment and furnishing it, welcoming the family and helping them become familiar with the community. Once the family arrives attention will be given to education, healthcare, employment, transportation, learning a new language, and forming new relationships and friends. *Many have asked: how can I help?*

- Volunteer for one of the working teams.
 Contact Claudia Buzzi at <u>cibuzzi@gmail.com</u> or Gini King at <u>ginikingir@gmail.com</u>.
- Donate furniture, kitchen equipment, new linens, or a truck to move the furniture. Contact Diane Grasso at equidoc99@gmail.com.
- Make a monetary contribution. The five congregations will need to raise \$2,500 each. There are two ways to contribute: Write a check payable to First Congregational Church with "Refugee Fund" on the memo line. Or go to our website www.firstchurchguilford.org, on the right corner find the "Giving" tab, then click the "Refugee Resettlement Fund" button.

To remain informed of SHIR activities, meetings and volunteer opportunities go to Shoreline Interfaith Resettlement Facebook page. All the volunteers of Shoreline Interfaith Resettlement are thankful for your interest, support and prayers. *Gini King*

LABYRINTH UPDATE:

To date \$14,585 of the \$25,000 needed to complete the Labyrinth has been raised. Fundraising will resume in the new year once our ministry budget is met. Note that Church Council has requested that the Labyrinth area be safe and ready for the coming months – the stones and rocks will be removed to prevent them from being a tripping hazard when covered with leaves or snow. The painted lines will be maintained so the Labyrinth may still be used for prayer.

Bill Weidmann

						No PF
				2p Women's Fellowship & Outreach- FH		Advent 9am Sunday School on Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship
				Noon- Staff Mtg-Sanct		First Sunday of
				30	29	28
						3p Memorial Svc-Sanct
						PF Leaf-raking
		Closed			7p PF Comm- zoom	10a In-person Worship 10:45 Advent wreathmaking
	Church Offices Closed	Thanksgiving Day- Church Offices	9a Meditation-Sanct	Noon- Staff Mtg-Sanct	7p Finance- Zoom 7 Confirmation-Sanct	9am Sunday School on Facebook Live
27	26	25	24	23	22	21
		Sanct				4-5p Family baking for CommDiningRm- FH
		7:15p Adult Choir-				PF Leaf-raking
		Sanct & FacebookLive				10a In-person Worship
PF Leaf-raking		Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy	9a Meditation-Sanct	Noon- Staff Mtg-Sanct		9am Sunday School on Facebook Live
20	19	18	17	16	15	14
						7p Pilgrim Fellowship- outside
		7:15p Adult Choir- Sanct		Narthex	7p Confirmation-Sanct	4p Annual Memorial Concert- Sanct
		Sanct & FacebookLive	4-5p Friendsgiving for Grades K-6- GH	7p Church Council-	zoom zoom	School outside
PF Leaf-raking		Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Jov	9a Meditation-Sanct	Noon Staff Mtg-Sanct	7n Business Comm	10a In-person Worship
13	12	11	10	9	8	7
		7:15p Adult Choir- Sanct		7p Deacons- Sanct	zoom	
		30 Minutes of Joy Sanct & FacebookLive	Sanct	6: 30p Music Comm – CR	Sanct 7p Parish Care Team-	CH-Chapel CR-Choir Room
6	CTI	A Noon-12:30p Concert:	3 9am Meditation-	Noon Staff Mtg-Sanct	7 _b Human Resources-	Sanct- Sanctuary FH-Fellowship Hall
Sat. 7.30a AA- GIT					TITO	F 4 6
Wed AA 7:30p-Rm 9 Thurs NA 7p GH Fri 7:30p AA- FH Sct 7:30p AA- GH	Sun 7:15a AA-GH Sun 1p NA - GH Tues 7p AA- Room 9			2021	ember	Nove
Wed 10a Alanon-FH	49 Ston Groups	Timisanj	Weditesday	Tuesday	Monday	Sunday
Saturday	Friday	Thursday	Wednesday	Tuesday	Monday	C.



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Please email articles to landmark@firstchurchguilford.org

DEADLINE for the **NOVEMBER 2021 ISSUE**:

November 15th

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Vol. 67, No. 11 November 2021

THE LANDMARK

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