

INSPIRE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GUILFORD'S SEMI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Waiting . . . and Listening

In last Sunday's sermon, Doug House reminded us that Advent is a time of waiting, waiting for what may come, waiting for when it may come. And it is also a time of listening. As we hurry from task to task, we don't take time to listen. To listen to others. To listen to ourselves. To listen for God.

To listen to others. To their joys and sorrows, to their needs and hopes. Let us find the time and take the time to listen, really listen, to others.

To listen to ourselves. What have we to say to ourselves? Who are we becoming?

To listen for God. We've been to church school. We've read (or read at) our Bibles. We've listened to countless sermons. But have we listened for God, listened to God?

This is the time to listen.

Dick Harter

I am Deacon of the Month for December. If you have a question about First Church and what is happening here, please call me. I will listen...and, if I can, respond.
203-208-2909

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ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP & PROGRAMS 2022

Sunday, November 27: First Sunday in Advent

Worship 8:30am (Chapel) & 10:00am (Sanctuary)

Nursery care & Sunday School 10:00am

Saturday, December 3: Santa Breakfast

9:00 – 11:00am Hosted by Pilgrim Fellowship.

Sunday, December 4: Second Sunday in Advent

Worship & Communion 8:30am (Chapel) & 10:00am (Sanctuary)

Nursery care & Sunday School at 10:00am



Caroling 11:30am – (meet in Fellowship Hall) Help spread some holiday cheer!

Night of Remembrance Service 4:00pm (Sanctuary) An interdenominational service for parents and families whose children have died—at any age. You are invited to bring a photo or memento of your beloved child. Please see RSVP details in this issue of InSpire.

Wednesday, December 14:

7:00pm Service of Quiet and Reflection (Sanctuary)- This service offers a space for quiet and a reset during the busy holiday season

Sunday, December 18: Fourth Sunday in Advent

No 8:30 Chapel service

Worship 10:00am (Sanctuary) Christmas Pageant: A retelling of the Christmas Story by youth and children.

11:00am Pilgrim Fellowship Cookie Stroll- in Fellowship Hall

Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24:

Worship 5:00pm & 10:00pm (Sanctuary)

Christmas Day: Worship 10:00am (Sanctuary) No Chapel service or Sunday School.

New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1: No Chapel service or Sunday School.



In the kinship of faith, we pray for:

all the people and communities shattered by guns and violence;
 the people of Ukraine,
 Bob H. on the death of his sister;
 Mary Lee D.;
 Merrilyn G.;
 John V. and family;
 David W. 's brother, Randy;
 Mark J.'s brother-in-law, David;
 Michael H.; Stan C., Brooke C. and Lorrienne C.;
 those impacted by the hurricanes and wildfires;
 those who suffer or are ill;
 those recovering from COVID and suffering from long COVID;
 those who are grieving, struggling or awaiting diagnosis;
 all health care workers;
 family and friends of those who have completed or are contemplating suicide;
 those living with chronic diseases, dementia, and cancer, and the families who care for them;
 those living with domestic violence;
 families dealing with addictions;
 for health and peace for all.

Night of Remembrance
Sunday, December 4, 2022
4 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Guilford

An interdenominational service of remembrance will be celebrated in memory of children who are forever in their families' hearts and God's loving embrace, Sunday, December 4, at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary at First Congregational Church of Guilford.

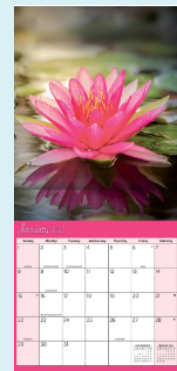
At whatever stage of life you lost your child, you are welcome.

Please bring a framed photo or memento of your child to place in the sanctuary during the service. Please RSVP to margoburkle@gmail.com or 203-996-8088.

Sponsored by First Congregational Church and St. George Church

Deacon for December: Please call Dick Harter (203-208-2909) if you have questions or reflections about the spiritual life of the church.

Parish Care Team Contact for December is Kathy Abbatello (203-640-8533.) Please call Kathy to notify her of a birth or adoption, or if someone is grieving or recovering and would welcome a card, meal, or prayer shawl.



Calendar Donations Requested for Backpacks and Duffle Bags

Are you receiving extra calendars for 2023 in the mail? If so, please consider donating them to our re-entry ministry for people who have been formerly incarcerated. Place in the box on the porch of Spencer House (State Street side). Thank you! – First Church Prison Ministry.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE JANUARY 6

Dear Committee and Board members:

Please send your 2022 annual reports to Linda Mahal, First Church's office administrator, by Friday, January 6, 2023, at office@firstchurchguilford.org.

Thank you!

Holiday Events Sponsored by Pilgrim Fellowship

No advance ticket sales – everyone can pay at the door – cash or check preferred.

Saturday, December 3 - Breakfast with Santa – 9-11 a.m., Fellowship Hall.

Enjoy pancakes, sausage, juice, hot chocolate & coffee served by Pilgrim Fellowship Elves.

Don't forget to have your picture taken with Santa! \$5/person - benefits the PF Service Trip

Sunday, December 11 - Join us for a **Soup & Bread Supper** in Fellowship Hall after Lessons & Carols (5 p.m. service). Enjoy warm soup, bread, cider & dessert - \$10/adult, \$5/children 10 & under. Proceeds will benefit the PF Service Trip

Sunday, December 18 - The **PF Cookie Stroll** will take place in Fellowship Hall after the 10 a.m. worship service. Purchase a bag for \$8 and fill it with your choice of cookies!

Sunday School Musings: On Hearing and Being Heard

Recently I received a note from a parent. We had had a lovely interchange about the nature of God and ways to continue to expand our attempts to give our children fuller glimpses of God's being. At the end of our conversation we thanked each other for the gift of being heard.

It dawned on me this morning that the Christmas season begins as the angel Gabriel has a sacred conversation with Mary—and she heard. Over the next few weeks the children will be exploring that conversation and celebrating the awesome birth story of Jesus, whom John calls in his gospel, “the Word (the message) of God.”

The children will present the pageant of Jesus' birth story on Sunday, December 18, at 10:00 a.m. Our practice will take place on Saturday, December 17, at 10:00 a.m. We would love as many animals, angels and shepherds as possible to participate. Please write and let me know whether you want your children to be a part of this incredible message. My email is deb@firstchurchguiford.org. Please join us and listen again. May we have fresh ears to hear.

–Deb Ruotolo, Director of Children and Family Ministries



Photo caption: These cards were made by the 5th–8th grade children for the staff at a local day program that supports adults with physical and developmental disabilities. They also made 20 most excellent peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which I delivered. The recipients were thrilled!

Flowers for Worship

We are grateful to Barbara Nickel and the Flower Committee for bringing the beauty of God's creation into the Sanctuary for Sunday and holiday worship services. As we return to more normal worship aspects, individuals and families are once again invited to give flowers for a given Sunday in memory or honor of loved ones or in celebration of an event. You may order an arrangement from a florist or request that Barb create one for you.

Please contact Barb for more information:
dfbnnickel@aol.com or 803-513-9787. Thank you.

Women's Fellowship & Outreach Luncheon - December 13

Women's Fellowship and Outreach group will be meeting for lunch at the Maritime Grille, Tuesday, December 13, at noon. If you wish to attend please call Barbara Johnson at 203-215-8455.



Preparing for Advent
November 30 6:30-8pm Fellowship Hall

Learn:	About Advent, the origins and traditions
Participate:	In seasonal crafts and service projects
Socialize:	With members of First Church of all ages
Snack!	Treats and warm beverages are provided

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

If you have a tree on your property that you would like to donate for the church's annual Christmas tree, please contact Kurt Linske at 860 961-2138 (Call or text) or kurt.linske@gmail.com (email). The desired tree height is 12 to 16 feet.

The Giving Tree

All cards for the Giving Tree are due Sunday, December 4. If you don't have an envelope or time to shop, we will take cash and/or checks. The tree will be in the narthex on Sunday. Donations may also be left in the letter slot in the side door of Spencer House (State Street entrance).

Thank you, Jeanie and Betsy.
jeanie.cacopardo@gmail.com or
eschwammberger@gmail.com



First Church
Friendly Faces Friday

Your Name

What I love about First Church:
Your wonderful answer

YOU

About this photo: Narrative about this photo. Should be a moment where we learn something about you.

We need your help creating content for our Friend Faces Fridays posts on Facebook. Send your picture, plus a few words about why you love about First Church and a description of your photo. Email to reilly@firstchurchguilford.org - Thank you!



NEW LIFESTYLES WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The New Lifestyles organization describes its mission as “a women-powered community, based in New Haven, Connecticut. Our mission is to use peer mentorship and skill-building workshops to support women facing drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness, reentry into society, and other challenges.”

Janice Murray, Director and Founder of New Lifestyles Women Empowerment knows what the women they support are going through.

She and her volunteers offer mentorship from having lived experience with the same things the women they support are living.

Our church has been walking with Janice for the past year in her work with women and men, and in support of her goal to one day have a transitional house for women in New Haven. Together with The Reentry Center at Project More, First Congregational Church and New Lifestyles are searching for a way to work together toward the goal of a house.

Janice Murray also works part time for APT Foundation, which is a treatment and research organization started by Yale School of Medicine in 1970. On Christmas Eve, 2021 we joined with Janice to bring holiday gifts to the women in residential treatment, including some with children and some who are pregnant.

This year we will again contribute to gift bags for 50 women. Items will include hygiene items, hats, scarves and gloves, gently used coats, slippers and lounging clothing to sleep in. We look forward to bringing support to these women who are determined to change their lives.

Rev. Dr. Sandra Wiens, Prison and Reentry Minister

LABYRINTH WALK SUNDAY, DEC. 11, 5 P.M.

Join for prayer and meditation while walking amid the glowing luminaries . . .

There will be a prayer, ritual, and a chance to walk the labyrinth. This quiet time is a lovely way to open one's heart in preparation for the Lessons and Carols service at 5 p.m.

--Nancy Mann for the Tuesday Night Meditation and Prayer Group



REVERSE ADVENT

Countdown to Christmas by giving hope, peace, joy, and love. Each week, bring your items to worship and place them in the correct gift box under the tree in the sanctuary. All donations will be delivered in early January. Please stick to this list as these items come directly from the Community Dining Room wish list.

Each week put some items from the list in a box.

Once filled, donate your box to **Community Dinning Room in Branford.**

These items are taken directly from their wish list



Advent Week 1 Nov. 27 - Dec. 3	Advent Week 2 Dec. 4 - 10	Advent Week 3 Dec. 11 -17	Advent Week 4 Dec. 18 -24
Hope for a World Without Hunger	Peace of a Clean Space to Be	Joy of Having the Right Tools	Love of the Baby
Snack Chips Variety Pack Cracker & Cheese Sandwich Packs GoGo Squeeze Fruit Pouches Goldfish Crackers	Lysol Wipes Clorox Bleach Vinyl Gloves S, M, XL Tissue Boxes Heavy Duty 45 gallon trash bags	Ziplock Bags All sizes Masking Tape, 1in New Reusable Grocery Bags AA Batteries Stainless Steel Scouring Pads	Diapers sized Infant to 6 Baby Wipes Free of Fragrance Baby Wipes

OR Send an Amazon Gift Card of any amount to CDR



Help pile gifts under the First Church tree!

Ways to Give this Holiday Season

Scarves, Hats, and Gloves (adult sizes)
Benefits: Citizen Re-Entry Programs
Where: Place on the Christmas Tree as decoration

Underwear and Socks (adult sizes, all genders)
Benefits: Citizen Re-Entry Programs
Where: Place in the marked box under the tree





Reverse Advent Calendar**
Benefits: Community Dining Room in Branford
Where: Place in the marked boxes under the tree
** Find on Facebook, InSpire, or Sanctuary

December 2022 First Congregational Church of Guilford			Abbreviation Key: Ch-Chapel CR-Choir Room FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Griswold Hall MEB-Moore Ed. Bldg	MG-Memorial Garden ML-Minear Library North--Narthex Out- Outside Sanct- Sanctuary SJCL-	In-person 12-step Groups: Sun 7:15a AA-GH Sun 2p NA-GH Tues 7p AA- Rm. 9 Wed 10a AIAnon-FH	Wed 7p AA-GH Thurs NA 7:30p-GH Fri 7:30p AA- FH Sat. 7:30a AA- GH
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Dec Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy- off-site 6:30p BSA-FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	2 Dec AA meets elsewhere 7:30p & 9p GHS Holiday Concerts-Sanct. Tickets required	3 Dec 9-11a Santa Breakfast – FH 6:30p & 8p GHS Holiday Concerts-Sanct. Tickets required
4 Dec Communion 8:30a Worship-Chapel 10a Worship-Sanct. 10a Sunday School 11:15a FC Ringers-Sanct. 11:30a Caroling Off-Campus 4p Night of Remembrance service - Sanct. 6p PF Leaders FH 7p PF Mtg. FH	5 Dec 7p PCT - FH	6 Dec 12:15p Staff-FH 7p Deacons – Narth. 7p Music Cmte. - CR	7 Dec 7p Trustees - Rm. 9 7p Confirmation Christmas Party - FH/Sanct.	8 Dec Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct. 6:30p BSA-FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	9 Dec	10 Dec 8a Tree Set-up – Sanct. 9a Rehearsal - Lessons & Carols – Sanct.
11 Dec 8:30a Worship-Chapel 10a Worship-Sanct. 10a Sunday School 11:15a FC Ringers-Sanct. 4p Labyrinth Walk 5p Lessons & Carols-Sanct. 6p PF Soup & Bread-FH	12 Dec <i>InSpire deadline</i> 7p Bus. Cmte - Narth.	13 Dec 12:15p Staff-FH 12p WFO Luncheon – Maritime Grille	14 Dec <i>InSpire published</i> 7p Service of Quiet and Reflection – Sanct.	15 Dec Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct. 6:30p BSA-FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	16 Dec	17 Dec 10a Pageant rehearsal – Sanct.
18 Dec 10 a.m. Worship – One service today -- with Children's Christmas Pageant - Sanct. 11a PF Cookie Stroll (after 10a Worship) 11:15 Ringers – Sanct.	19 Dec	20 Dec 12:15p Staff-FH 7p HR - FH	21 Dec	22 Dec Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct. 6:30p BSA-FH 7:15p Sr. Choir-CR	23 Dec	24 Dec Christmas Eve 5p Family Worship – Sanct. 10p Candlelight Worship – Sanct.
25 Dec Christmas Day 10 a.m. Worship – One service today -- Sanct. Sunday School does not meet	26 Dec Church Offices Closed	27 Dec	28 Dec	29 Dec Noon - 30 Minutes of Joy-Sanct	30 Dec	31 Dec

InSpire Submissions

Deadlines for InSpire: Noon on Monday, December 12; Monday, January 2; Monday, January 16

Stewardship Made Easy

You can use this QR code to quickly make your 2023 online pledge:



First Church Acronyms Decoder

BSA - Boy Scouts of America
 CE - Christian Education
 C&GJ - Community & Global Justice
 EMT - Environmental Ministry Team
 PAJ - Peace, Affirmation, and Justice
 PCT - Parish Care Team
 PF - Pilgrim Fellowship
 WFO - Women's Fellowship & Outreach

Zoom Meditation -- See you in 2023

The Tuesday and Wednesday meditation groups will not be meeting during the month of December. We will resume January 3 and 4.
 Best wishes – Nancy Mann

InSpire

December 2022

First Congregational Church Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham, Lead Minister
ginger@firstchurchguilford.org

The Rev. Reilly Paige, Associate Minister
reilly@firstchurchguilford.org

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