



**FIRST CHURCH**  
GUILFORD CT • FOUNDED IN 1643

# Landmark

**January 2022**

First Congregational Church  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
Vol. 68, Number 1  
[landmark@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:landmark@firstchurchguilford.org)

Greetings First Church,

Many artists have sung Linda Thompson and David Foster's 1990 song *Grown-Up Christmas List*. Every Advent, I find myself gravitating to the simple and yet profound list. After you read the lyrics, please ponder additions that come to your heart and mind.

*Do you remember me  
I sat upon your knee  
I wrote to you with childhood fantasies  
Well I'm all grown up now  
And still need help somehow  
I'm not a child but my heart still can dream  
So here's my lifelong wish  
My grown up Christmas list  
Not for myself but for a world in need  
No more lives torn apart  
That wars would never start  
And time would heal all hearts  
And everyone would have a friend  
And right would always win  
And love would never end, no  
This is my grown up Christmas list  
This is my only lifelong wish  
This is my grown up Christmas list*

As we live with things – a more-than-usual steady flow of things -- beyond our control, may we pray. Pray for our world, our community, our church, our families, and our friends to sense-feel the comfort that hope, love, joy, and peace will come.

Perhaps in these days we can remove the power of pandemic isolation by bundling up for community time outdoors. Maybe we can choose to engage church life in our current state of being - windows partially opened and faces masked. Maybe we let others know when we need support, even a gentle "push" to make our way "back" to relationships.

My grown-up Christmas list includes channeling positive energy, engaging struggle, and both practicing and inviting grace. Within two months one of my closest friends died, and another in that small inner circle of friends who are family almost died. Life is too dear to separate ourselves from one another through complaints and judgments. Through wishes, songs, prayers, and actions make hope, love, joy, and peace a reality!

*No more lives torn apart - **build community,**  
That wars would never start - **practice peace,**  
And time would heal all hearts - **know joy will come,**  
And everyone would have a friend - **love neighbor as self,**  
And right would always win - **work for justice.***

*May it be so!  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Church Family,  
Ginger*



**IN-PERSON WORSHIP:**

*Masked and physically distanced in the Sanctuary*

**Sundays January 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 at 10:00am.**

***In-person worship unless the temperature falls below 32 degrees- then Peppermint Penguin comes out – and you stay in and worship online.***

***Unsure if in-person worship is cancelled?***

Peppermint will appear **on the Church steps, on Facebook and the Church's webpage.**

The closing will be **listed on Channel 8 Closings list**, and there will be **a message on the Church Office voice mail.**



***Alternatives to In-person Worship:*** receive the worship email video sent out before the service. If you are not on the worship & Steeple email list, please contact the Church Office at [office@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.org)

For those not online you may request a hard copy of the bulletin and sermon via mail- contact the Church Office 203-453-5249



**“30 MINUTES OF JOY”**

Need some joy? Take a music break on Thursdays from 12noon – 12:30pm! Bill Speed continues his 30 minutes of live music. Join him on the church's Facebook page, or in person!

**JANUARY PARISH CARE TEAM CONTACT**

Please notify Pam D'Amico (860-338-4811) of anyone who may need a prayer shawl or a note of sympathy or encouragement.

**WE WARMLY WELCOME  
THE REV. JEANETTE HICKS  
Interim Associate Minister  
January- April 2022**

Rev. Jeanette Cooper Hicks is a native of Philadelphia. She was raised as a Roman Catholic, attended 12 years of Catholic school and graduated from Vassar College with an English degree. Her first call was to teaching elementary, and then college students. She never imagined she would work in a church but God had plans which lead her to seminary and ordained ministry. She studied at Union Theological (NYC), Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Boston School of Theology.

This former military family (Go Navy!) has been blessed to live across the country, in New York, Chicago, Louisville, North Carolina, and New Hampshire.

Rev. Hicks is ordained by the United Methodist Church with dual standing in the United Church of Christ. Pastor Jeanette has joyfully served churches in Kentucky, North Carolina and New England. She is passionate about artistic and creative worship. She is also a certified Spiritual Director and Hospice Chaplain volunteer.

Jeanette married Al, her college boyfriend, almost 25 years ago. She is happiest with a house full of people to feed. Pastor Jeanette needs copious cups of tea, good books, and long walks. Since 2014, Jeanette and Al have called Guilford home with their four lively children, a few “bonus children”, and the wonder-dog, Jack. Together they travel, ski, hike, and sing loudly on car trips.

**The Work of Christmas**

*by Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.



## CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

December 14, 2021

### Security System Presentation Peter Rebuzzini

- Chris Barrow presented on indoor security. His background is law enforcement and security, and emergency management, his experience in is with schools and churches.
- A flipchart will be placed in each room in the church and church school building, and next to every exit. Chart covers various emergencies, including health. Lists step-by-step what to do during an emergency.
- If there are concerns about safety, call 911 first.
- Terrific overview and have some next steps for church safety and security. Chart will help us stay calm in an emergency.

### Treasurer Report

- We are in pretty good shape.

### Discussion and possible action on Boy Scouts Bankruptcy and Annual Charter Agreement

Stephen Dudley/Lou Federici

#### Charter Agreement

- Concerns about the future of the Boy Scouts and our involvement as sponsors. Two issues: 1. Bankruptcy 2. How does the troop go forward? Church is party to the bankruptcy as a sponsor. Three options for us:
  - If we do nothing we would not be covered or protected from any law suit claims to the Boy Scout Organization.
  - If church makes substantial contribution to the settlement fund, we would be covered. There is no definition of "substantial."
  - Church can choose to elect coverage that is limited by the size of the settlement fund (least horrible option).
- If someone makes a claim against a troop, we could be liable as a sponsor. The Boy Scouts of America filed for bankruptcy because it was overwhelmed by claims.
- Stephen provided us with a draft of an annual agreement that we would have to sign as the "Chartered Organization" or sponsor of the Troop. The Troop has always had something like this. The agreement needs to be signed by the end of the year so that our troop can continue to exist after the New Year. Are we interested in continuing to sponsor the Troop? Are we willing to abide by all of the items in the Charter Agreement? By signing this agreement are we obligating the church to more than we have done in the past?

- Ginger expressed concern over the "oversight" listed in the agreement.
- Bill Speed expressed concern over our liability for organizations who use the church's space- Neighborhood Music School as a comparison, but they rent space. The troop doesn't rent space. The troop needs a sponsoring organization to survive.
- Keeping the Troop in compliance with the agreement is a big job- Anne Godsey did it in the past. Do we have the people to do it? We are having trouble filling Church committee positions. What is the legal liability if we don't hold up our obligations per the agreement?
- Peter R. moved that we continue to support the Troop for a year and see how it goes. Bob Howard seconded. Ginger amended that if the motion passes, then we must have the appropriate people to monitor and oversee. (Two church members willing to take this on.) Susan seconded the amendment. Motion passed. Lou Federici said he is committed to making sure there are appropriate people in place to oversee the Troop.

### Discussion of request to light Christmas tree in Sanctuary

Stephen Dudley

- Deacons make decisions about Sanctuary, but Stephen presenting idea to Council first regarding electric lights on tree. Do lights detract from the worship service? Several members agreed that lights would detract from worship. Stephen will refer issue to Deacons.

### Board of Finance

- New Standard Operating Procedures being edited. Hope to present at Annual Meeting.

### Budget for 2022

- Continue to move forward. Stewardship pledges average 10% greater than previous pledges. Only at 85% of target. Stephen reminded us that Stewardship is an "everybody" issue, not just the committee.

### Minister's Report

Ginger

- The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of First Church becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation is in February. We will reaffirm the covenant at the Annual Meeting. Deacons are tweaking some of the language to bring it up to date. Stephen will put adoption of the new language on the January Council agenda.

**Church Council Minutes****Minster's Report, continued**

- Christmas Eve Services at 5, 7 & 9:00pm. 7pm service hard for holiday dinner timing - hope to return to services at 5:00 & 10:00pm next year. If still in the pandemic, we might try 3:00, 5:00, and 9:00 and avoid 7:00 hour.
- Tomorrow night is Service of Quiet and Reflection for anyone whose holiday is not all joy and light.
- Staff feel general malaise of living in this time. Everyone is doing everything that they can. Let's try not to be grumpy around each other!

**Business Committee**

Peter Rebuzzini/  
Susan Leete

- Accomplished most of what BC planned.
- Speaking with Neighborhood Music School to plan for the spring.
- Mark will be on vacation December 23-31- Business Committee will cover his duties.
- NMS was supposed to calculate their use of the building and make payments. Had a glitch in their system. Check should arrive soon.

**Nominating**

Gail Tomsich/ Peter Rebuzzini

- Nominating is an "everyone" issue. If anyone has recommendations for committee members, ask them and put their names forward to Nominating. Two names needed for Nominating Committee from Church Council.

**Search Committee Update**

Stephen Dudley

- Update of Church Profile almost done. Hope to have it reviewed and posted in early January.

**Review November Minutes**

Stephen Dudley

- Mary Jane Potter moved to accept. Anne seconded. Motion passed.

**New /Old Business**

All

- State sent check for the security system grant.
- Penelope reminded chairpersons to submit the Annual Reports for the Book of Reports by January 14<sup>th</sup>. To reduce size of book and reading of it, she's asking that reports be submitted in bullet point format.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47.

**ADVENT FOOD & HYGIENE COLLECTION**

Thanks to those who participated in this collection. If you have not already returned your bags, please bring them to church by January 12<sup>th</sup>!

**ANNUAL REPORTS DUE**

**Friday, January 14**

The Book of Reports created for First Church's Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 6 will be our snapshot of the church for 2021.

Board and Committee reports are due in the Church Office by Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to those who have already submitted theirs!

***This year, in an effort to save paper, and the amount of time needed to read the Book of Reports, we ask that reports be submitted in bullet point format with just the highlights.*** If you have questions, please contact Penelope in the Church Office.

**DEACON DIGEST**

*"And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."* Ephesians 2:17-18

Peace. Peace of Christ. Peace be with you. So our services begin as we greet one another.

We hope for peace; we pray for it. But when I stand listening to the silence of a gentle snowfall that muffles the din of the world and marvel at the quiet's healing power, I wonder why we don't talk about peace more often in our daily lives.

These days, it seems, more often we fight. At least we talk about fighting. We fight all the time. We fight for justice. We fight poverty. We fight for equality. We fight climate change. We fight for our families. We fight racism. We fight for education. We fight hatred. We even *fight* for peace.

What does it mean to make a word of violence ubiquitous in our shared language?

As 2022 dawns, I hope we can focus our words more often on the language of peace. There are so many generous words to choose that offer grace and love. May the peace of Christ go with us.

*Mark Mitchell, Deacon for January*

*Contact Mark 215-435-6192 if you have questions or reflections on the spiritual life of the church.*



### CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Christian Education and Pilgrim Fellowship look forward to a brand-new year! Happy 2022 to all!

Due to cold weather and the increase in COVID cases, ***Sunday School in January & February will be offered only via Facebook Live each Sunday morning at 9:00am.*** Sunday morning ***Nursery care*** will be suspended until further notice.

There will be a ***ZOOM Family Event*** on Sunday, January 23 from 5-5:45pm- a Scavenger Hunt!

***Pilgrim Fellowship*** will meet at its regularly scheduled meetings on January 9, 23 & 30 – it may be by zoom- so check for updates – and will focus on building community and learning ways we can continue to help others amidst truly challenging times!

New Year's Blessings to you

*Judi Wallace, Director*

[judi@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:judi@firstchurchguilford.org), 203-453-3324

### GROCERY CARDS AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE

#### After Worship in the Narthex

Our grocery card program is an easy fundraiser for the church: \$100 by 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 our grocery card team for making this possible.



The Town of Guilford is currently accepting applications for a **Social Services Program Intake Specialist**. It is a full-time exempt position with benefits, starting salary is \$43,250-\$44,547 per year depending on experience.

Any person interested in applying for this position should contact the Human Resources Department at the Town Hall for the job description and application.

**Application deadline** is 3:00pm on Friday, January 14, 2022. **Please note:** All employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit test results weekly.



***First Church on Christmas Eve***  
*Heartfelt thanks to all who made the church look festive inside and out!*





### ECO Echo

Happy New Year!! The Environmental Ministry Team's theme for this year is "Waste Not." Topics to be explored will include reducing food waste and composting to minimize environmental impact, and Ocean Plastics impact on Marine life.

This article focuses on how our plastic waste is impacting God's marine creatures. Future articles will discuss what we can do to reduce the plastic waste that is making its way into our oceans. The information used for this article is the paper published by Oceana, November 2020: Choked, Strangled, Drowned: The Plastic Crisis Unfolding in Our Oceans – Oceana, USA: <https://usa.oceana.org/reports/choked-strangled-drowned-plastics-crisis-unfolding-our-oceans/>. It is written for the non-scientist and I encourage you to download it.

In 2019, news outlets across the world reported on a beached whale that died after ingesting more than 88 pounds of plastic. It had starved, and its digestive acid, unable to break down the compacted mass filling its stomach, had begun eating away at the animal from the inside out. But not all incidents like this make the news.



Oceana has compiled for the first time the available data on plastic ingestion and entanglements in marine mammals and sea turtles in U.S. waters. This begins to paint a picture of an unfolding disaster: the flood of plastics into our oceans and the devastating impact it is having on marine life.

The biggest problem found was animals consuming plastic. Animals mistake plastic for food or inadvertently swallow plastic while feeding or swimming. The result is that it obstructs their digestion or lacerates their intestines, interfering with the ability to obtain the nourishment needed, leading to starvation and death. When animals become entangled in plastic, they can drown, choke to death or suffer physical trauma, such as amputation and infection. Entanglement can also lead to malnutrition when it prevents their ability to feed properly.

Some the report's key findings:

- Eighty-eight percent of the nearly 1,800 animals identified in this report were species listed as endangered or threatened with extinction under the Endangered Species Act.

- Plastics affected animals at all life stages, from recently hatched sea turtles to seal mothers with actively nursing pups.
- In the cases where plastic ingestion was the likely cause of or contributor to death, seven involved just one piece of plastic.
- Plastics ranged in size and type, from microplastics that were perforating the gastrointestinal tract of a baby sea turtle to DVD cases and huge plastic sheets that had been swallowed by whales.
- Bags, balloons, recreational fishing line, sheeting and food wrappers were the most common types of identifiable plastics consumed by these animals. Plastic packing straps, bags and balloons with strings were the most common items entangling the animals.

*Submitted by Kurt Linske*

*Environmental Ministry Team*

### RE-ENTRY WELCOME CENTER VISIT

First Church has had a long relationship with Community Partners in Action in Hartford. Charlotte White brought together Letty Russell, Shannon Clarkson and Deb Rogala of CPIA to establish a mentoring program with women re-entering society from prison. Rev. Sandra Wiens has kept this relationship alive since 2005. Pre-COVID, members of the Peace Affirmation and Justice Committee would visit MARTS House at Christmastime to bring cheer and gifts to the women living there, who were easing their way back to the community after prison terms. This year COVID kept us from visiting the house. On December 15, Sandra, Gay Harter, Shannon Clarkson and Judi Wallace visited the Re-entry Welcome Center instead and were warmly welcomed by staff members Virginia Wallace and Amy Arroyo, who received our gifts for the women. Individuals returning home from incarceration can find welcome and support at the Welcome Center - information, services- housing, substance abuse/mental health referrals, employment advice, identification help and much more.

The Center has been successful in connecting formerly incarcerated individuals with resources and preventing recidivism. It was awarded a federal grant as well as has continued support from the Hartford Foundation and the City. They have plans to expand space and support services. We left with a much greater appreciation of the crucial nature of the Center's work and delight that we continue in partnership in this ministry.

*Gay Harter for the PAJ and Prison Re-Entry Ministry.*



# January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2022</h1>					<b>12 Step Groups:</b> Sun 7:15a AA-GH Sun 1p NA - GH Tues 7p AA- Room 9	Wed 10a Alanon-FH Thurs NA 7p GH Fri 7:30p AA- FH Sat. 7:30a AA- GH
CH-Chapel CR-Choir Room FH-Fellowship Hall GH-Griswold Hall	MEB-Moore Ed Bldg ML-Minear Library Out- outside Sanc- Sanctuary					<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 9a Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship <i>No Pilgrim Fellowship</i>	<b>3</b> 7p Parish Care Team- Zoom	<b>4</b> Noon Staff Mtg 6: 30p Music Comm – zoom 7p Deacons- zoom	<b>5</b> 9a Meditation 7p Search Comm	<b>6</b> Noon 30 Minutes of Joy Concert- Sanc/FB Live 6:30p Troop 474-FH 7:15p Adult Choir-CR	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9am Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship 7p PF	<b>10</b> 7p Business Comm- 7p Confirmation	<b>11</b> Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Church Council	<b>12</b> 9a Meditation 7p Search Comm	<b>13</b> Noon 30 Minutes of Joy Concert- Sanct/FB Live 6:30p Troop 474-FH 7:15p Adult Choir-CR	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9am Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship <i>No Pilgrim Fellowship</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Human Resource-	<b>19</b> 9a Meditation 7p Search Comm	<b>20</b> Noon 30 Minutes of Joy Concert- Sanct/FB Live 6:30p Troop 474-FH 7:15p Adult Choir- CR	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9am Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship 7p PF	<b>24</b> 7p Confirmation 7p Finance 7p PF Committee	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 9a Meditation 7p Search Comm	<b>27</b> Noon 30 Minutes of Joy Concert- Sanct/FB Live 6:30p Troop 474-FH 7:15p Adult Choir- CR	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9am Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship 7p PF	<b>31</b>					



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return this sheet to the address above. Thank you.

## THE LANDMARK

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