

Landmark

MAY 2021

First Congregational Church An Open and Affirming Congregation Vol. 67, Number 5



PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Pilgrim Fellowship's Spring looks different again this year! Spring is usually a time for me to really gear up for the PF service trip, often to some place very remote with more than 100 of my favorite people! Last year I held on to that nervous excitement of planning a trip right up until the middle of March. I kept hoping things would change and we could fill up the two charter buses and head to Jonesville, VA. Unfortunately, it never happened; nor did our planned trip to Boston in the summer of 2020. I was heartbroken, but these students are so resilient and continued to be involved in keeping the PF community connected and to continue its mission!

PF began making plans to be of service to one another and others nearby who are in need - and that is just what we did last spring, summer and fall! We made signs of encouragement to post anywhere and everywhere, we wrote letters to thank and connect with others, we chalked our sidewalks and driveways with words and images of hope and love, we made facemasks by the 100's, we baked cookies and brownies and rice crispy treats for Community Dining Room, we made soup to share with others, we packed pizza for Meals on Wheels, we collected socks, underwear, personal hygiene items and subway cards for New Haven's Chapel on the Green and for Navajo Nation, we collected food and donations for the Guilford Food Bank (filling their space at least three times), we dressed up like elves with Santa outside so kids could drive by and see Santa and give him their Christmas letters, we delivered gifts to children, we collected sports equipment, animal rescue supplies, and books to share with organizations to distribute, and we built a handicap ramp for a local gentleman who was thrilled to be able to get outside to the mailbox! Amazing! Really amazing!

Spring is here again, there was no trip to a remote location, all of us together, but we used our compassion and love of serving to create a week of being together in limited numbers to serve others in a new way! You may have seen us outside on the church lawn during April Spring Break. PF members and friends along with our committed PF adults, volunteered their vacation time to work together to build from scratch; 14 Adirondack Chairs, 16 picnic tables and benches. All will be donated to transitional housing in New Haven and Bridgeport for New Reach and Columbus House for their outdoor seating areas. We also made over 20 birdhouses to be donated to Habitat for Humanity. There were also over 25 students who volunteered time during the week to build fencing for Habitat homes in New Haven!

Cheers to these young people who chose to use their Spring break time to serve others, people they may never meet. Their passion to serve has not been squelched by two Springs of cancelled trips!

We are planning for a service trip to Boston this summer! In a confusing, frustrating time we can choose action, love and compassion. I can't wait to see what our next PF adventure will be. I am so grateful for the opportunities and support that so many share in our PF program.

Judi Wallace
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

MAY WORSHIP

Sundays in May (2, 9, 16, 23, 30): In-person worship at 10:00am- Register to attend on the website or call the Church Office. Those unable to attend in person may worship virtually via the email sent out Sunday morning. Those not online may request to receive a hard copy of the bulletin and sermon via mail.

MOTHER'S DAY REMEMBRANCE Sunday, May 9th 9:30am Memorial Garden

All are welcome to join us for an informal gathering in the Memorial Garden to remember our mothers. If raining, gather in the Chapel.

RENEWAL IN PLACE- SABBATICAL MOMENT

As Ginger has set apart this three-month time period for Sabbatical rest and renewal, she has left us a wonderful gift in her 'Life in the Time of Covid – Renewal' lectionary and activity calendar.

Jake and I will preach from this calendar each week with music coordinated by Bill. Judi and Penelope will also participate by highlighting the activity that is listed that corresponds to the scripture reading.

We would like to encourage you, first, to follow along and engage the scripture and the activity. Secondly, we invite you to share with the congregation how you have integrated 'Renewal in Place' in your life. We would like to highlight what you have done in the Steeple and we will also take a minute in worship to have a 'Renewal in Place' moment where we can offer others a glimpse on what you have done.

It is in this way that we can all perhaps enjoy just a small portion of Ginger's sabbatical with her. Please reach out to Suzanne or anyone on the Ministry team with your offerings.

Suzanne

Week of: Activity Scripture

May 3 Learn to cook something new

John 21: 9 -10

May 10 Frame family photo.......Colossians 3: 13

May 17 Ted Talk: Waiting is a Beast by Theresa

May 24 Choose a motto/mantra 1 Peter 4: 8 –10

May 31 Plant something......Song of Songs 6: 11

CLERGY PHONE-IN HOURS

Clergy will be available by phone during their dropin hours. Please call 203-453-5249 to speak with: **Suzanne -** Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am -12noon **Jake -** Wednesdays from 2-4pm.

GUEST PREACHER SUNDAY, MAY 9TH The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister, Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

We are excited and grateful to have our new Exec. Conference Minister preach for First Church! Conference Staff are not permitted to visit churches in person, so Rev. Goodwin will be with us by video which will be projected in worship.

Rev. Goodwin, a Chicago native, began his post on Jan. 1, 2021. He is the first openly LGBT black person to serve as a Conference Minister in the UCC. As the Chief Vision-Keeper, he is responsible for guiding the conference and its affiliates to have a positive and lasting impact in our world.

Rev. Goodwin is a member of the United Church of Christ Board, the UCC Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, and the Global Ministries Board. He brings to his varying leadership roles extensive experience in pastoral ministry and higher education. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Theology from Boston College; a Master of Education in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration from The University of Vermont; a Master of Arts in Transforming Spirituality from Seattle University; and is currently a doctoral candidate in San Francisco Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program where his dissertation topic is, "Praying Through: Using group spiritual direction as a strategy for the retention of African American men in predominately white seminaries in the United Church of Christ (UCC)."

PARISH CARE TEAM CONTACT PERSON

Parish Care Team contact person for May is Jamie Mikolay (203-887-2054). Please notify her of anyone who may need a note of sympathy or encouragement.

DEACON OF THE MONTH

Deacon for May is Anita Soucy (203-980-6947). Please contact Anita if you have feedback or questions about the spiritual life of the church.

STAY CONNECTED VIA FACEBOOK LIVE!

Sundays at 9:00am: Sunday School with Judi Wallace

Thursdays at noon: 30 Minutes of Joy concert by

Bill Speed

Ginger & Jake's Wednesday noon Bible Study will resume after Ginger returns from sabbatical.

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS April 13, 2021

Treasurer Report

Paul Kuehn

 We are doing well: 30% of income at a quarter of the way through the year. Paul developed new graphs to compare financial status with previous years. Report approved.

Board of Finance

- Joint meeting with Stewardship and Board of Finance.
- Want to identify and forecast income going forward. Number of pledgers decreasing, but income is holding steady. Want to make budget more of a year-round educational process.
- Balance of two operating accounts at Webster Bank is substantial. Some funds in a money market account that is not accruing interest. Pondering their options: move it to Vanguard or work with Trustees for UCC management?
- 1. Do we want to return the money market money to an interest-bearing account?
- 2. If we decide to move it, how do we want to invest it?
- Board of Finance meeting later this month and they will discuss the two questions.

Adjustment to Lead Minister Salary Stephen Dudley

- Last year Ginger quietly reduced her salary by \$5,000 during the pandemic. The new budget added 1% to the reduced salary.
- Motion to reinstate the \$5,000 to her salary and calculate the 1% increase on the full salary, retroactive to January, to get her back to where she should be. Motion approved.

Ministers' Report Suzanne Wagner, Jake Joseph

- Suzanne Wagner
 - On the job for a week and a half. Started on Easter and met with Ginger and Parish Care Team on Easter Monday. Suzanne and Jake are following Ginger's lectionary for preaching. Bill will use the lectionary for worship music, Judi will use it for her Sunday School "Live with Judi" videos, Dawn (Cherub Choir), Nancy (Junior Choir) and Bill will use the themes in their Sunday afternoon youth gatherings.
 - PF Service Week is underway building things at church and in New Haven.
 - Office hours Tuesday and Thursday, from 10 to noon and Sundays.
 - Feels like she is part of the community because her brother and his wife have lived in Guilford for 17 years.

Jake Joseph

- Welcomed Suzanne.
- Almost completed the conversion to F1Go.
 We are no longer paying for Church Windows.
- Jake showed a graph of subscribers to The Steeple. We have almost 700 subscribers.
 175 additions over the past year.
- 49.7% of people go into our website and newsletters through their phones rather than computers.

Business Committee Peter Rebuzzini/Susan Leete

- First Church Security package: propose electronic keypads to four entrances. The other seven entrances will have wireless connections so that we can see when they have been opened. Seven turret style cameras to watch the entrances and outdoor campus. Motion detectors inside the building. Continuous monitoring to the company. Training for key staff and personnel.
- Question about possibility of Spencer House cameras or Ring doorbell. Not currently being considered, but there is some flexibility with the system that the committee wants to purchase which will allow additions and modifications with relative cost efficiency.
- Interviewed five firms. Associated Security's (our current fire alarm system) proposal came in for just under \$20,000 (\$15K for system, \$5K for consultant). Grant application might not cover consultant but hoping the rest will be covered. If the grant doesn't come through, Business Committee has funds in the Major Maintenance Fund to cover the project.
- Monthly costs for monitoring. \$500 a year, but since they do our fire system, Business Committee hopes to negotiate a bundle. There will be a learning curve. There is a fee if police are called to the campus for false alarm.
- Alarms will not sound on the premises. Suggestion to put signs up to deter people entering the building with a key, but without a code. Suggestion that the code get updated regularly.
- Motion approved to take the security system proposal to the Board of Finance.

New /Old Business

 Steve Leete mentioned that the PF kids did a terrific job today and Judi was held up cleaning up and apologized that she couldn't attend the meeting.



Clare Laurel Kane Kirsten Rose Kane Emma Rose Lamberton Oliver Anthony Rausch Delilah Jane Vail

NEW MEMBERS April 4, 2021

Dwain and Malinda Fehon Joanna and Nathan Price NiCole and Ryan Schlagheck Mary Stevens

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

While there is certainly great hope with the Covid vaccine, we will not resume Sunday School classes until September. The wonderful news is that we will continue to host family events during the next months and through the summer! The next event will be Sunday, May 23rd. We hope you can join us: we have missed you! Check for event updates in the Christian Education Newsletter that comes out weekly via email. Please let me know if you are not receiving and would like to it judi@firstchurchguilford.org.

We hope to have a Vacation Bible School in late August. We are so excited to begin a new and hopeful year in Sunday School in September - stay tuned for details!

Until then, you can watch weekly Sunday School lessons on Facebook every Sunday, Live with Judi is at 9:00 am - or anytime you'd like to watch it!

Pilgrim Fellowship will continue to meet on Zoom for the remainder of the school year with possibly some outdoor meetings as well!

I hope you were able to stroll or drive by the church during Spring Break week in April to see the work PF students were participating in!

There is a plan for a PF Service Trip to Boston late in July! We are hoping we will be able to take 30 PFers on this trip and resume our favorite PF activity: helping others!

Happy May to you all! Looking forward in great hope!

Judi Wallace
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

DEACON DIGEST

As we move deeper into Spring, the season of hope and renewal, I am trying to shift my focus from the pandemic and all that it has taken from me and instead focus on having an attitude of gratitude. I lost my dad to Covid in January and I may never get over the devastation of that loss, but today I just want to be grateful for his life and his love. I was so blessed to have him always believe in me and support me in all my endeavors and to cheer me on through my journeys. I would not be the person that I am today without him. I am grateful.

We, as a church community, have a lot to be grateful for as well. We live in this stunningly beautiful town with farmland, forest and seashore. Our church campus is postcard pretty, and our clergy and staff are stellar. In particular at this time, I am grateful for Ginger's sabbatical time. She has been our steadfast guide and caregiver through many challenges in the last 5 years. She was solo pastor when Sarah felt a call to Colorado, and she did an amazing job with her usual energy, enthusiasm and care without taking a pay raise for the extra workload. This made a huge difference in our budget that year. She led us through the search process that brought our wonderful Jake to us. And now, even as she leaves us for her time of rest, renewal and reflection, she has found a way to care for us and be "with us" while she is away. She has provided us with a thorough and thoughtful "Sabbatical Syllabus" so that we can feel a connection and share in her spiritual journey. (See "Renewal in Place" page 2.)

Ginger also made sure to leave us in very capable and caring hands. Jake will be here though the sabbatical period providing us with our weekly Steeple newsletter and his thoughtful sermons and gentle care. Our wonderful staff will be continuing to do all of their tasks and sharing their talents to help our church community thrive. The Board of Deacons is always available to listen and to pray for any and all needs as they arise. And finally, Ginger has brought Rev. Suzanne Wagner who has connections here in Guilford! Imagine, her brother lives a few houses away from the church right on the Green! She comes to us with experience and enthusiasm for her 3 months with us. Suzanne plans to provide us with compassionate leadership and to care for us in the deepest pastoral way possible during her time with us. Please join us in welcoming her to our family of faith.

All of this makes having an attitude of gratitude easy! So many blessings.

Peace.

Anita Soucy, Deacon for May

PINCHBECK SCHOLARSHIP

One of the annual joys of the Deacons is to be able to offer some financial assistance to students headed off to college or post-high school vocational training. We are able to do this because of a generous memorial fund set up by the Pinchbeck family in honor of Harriet W. and William E. Pinchbeck.

The same amount of money is available to the Deacons to distribute each year. We encourage donations to the fund, so that we will have more scholarship money for students. By contributing to the fund, in Harriet's and Bill's names, we help our young people who face the rising costs of tuition in post-secondary school education.

Application forms for the 2021-2022 academic year are available, request one from the Church Office office@firstchurchguilford.org. Please email completed applications to the Church Office by Friday, May 28, 2021. The scholarships will be awarded in June. All applications will be reviewed. The number of scholarships awarded depends on the number of applicants - preference will be given to first-time applicants. Please contact Sarah Beres with any questions. 203-314-7177 or by email sarah.beres@mac.com.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH RUMMAGE SALE Sat., May 8, 9:00am- 1:00pm (raindate- May 15)

We're cleaning out the shed, so we are not asking for your donations at this time. We are looking for volunteers to help: set up at 7:30 - 9am,

staff tables from 9am - 1pm, clean up from 1- 2pm

If you can help at any of these times, please let Kathy Abbatello know - kabbatell@sbcglobal.net or 203 457 0475. Women's Fellowship and Outreach (formerly Alpha Club) will donate the proceeds from this event to local and global charities.

GROCERY CARD SALES Wednesdays 10:00am – Noon State Street side of Spencer House

In this fundraiser, First Church sells grocery cards for Big Y, Bishop's and Stop & Shop. For \$100 in cash or check, you receive a card worth \$100 worth of groceries and the church receives \$5.

We no longer have a supply of grocery cards to give to those with food insecurity. If you are able to donate cards for clergy to distribute, please let the those selling the cards know – they can give you a receipt for tax purposes. Thank you!

BACKPACK COLLECTION

Collection dates: Sundays, May 16, 23 & 30

The Prison & Reentry Ministry again is preparing to stuff backpacks to give to men being released from prison. When released, they have the clothes they are wearing and very little else. The backpacks provide basic necessities such as socks, t shirts, towels, shaving supplies, shampoo, soap, toothpaste and brush, tablet and pen and a 10-ride bus pass. The backpacks enable someone to carry what they need with them.

New Haven now has a New Reentry Welcome Center at Project M.O.R.E., at 830 Grand Avenue. A one-stop-drop-off site for men and women getting out of prison and returning to New Haven, it will be a resource center to bring together human service professionals with formerly incarcerated persons, immediately after their release. Project M.O.R.E will continue to provide the services they have offered the formerly incarcerated for 47 years including housing and employment help, food resources, treatment for substance use disorders, mental health and medical treatment, and job placement. The center is looking for more organization partnerships, community volunteers, and employers to help. Volunteers will be needed to offer educational services and trade skills to clients. We have partnered with them to donate the hygiene back packs for men and duffel bags for women coming home.

The blessing of backpacks will be on Sunday, June 6th so donations will be received on the three previous Sundays. To manage safe contact with Covid restrictions, the best way to donate will be by a check which the ministry will use to purchase the needed items. A 10-ride bus pass is \$15.75. A backpack is \$10- \$15. The contents of one bag amount to about \$35. Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church with "Prison & Reentry Ministry backpack supplies" on the memoline

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to this ministry.

Sandra Wiens, Prison Ministry Coordinator

FOOD COLLECTION

"I was hungry & you gave me food." Matt 25:35 Food insecurity continues. We invite you to continue to support the Guilford Food Bank. Check their website for their current 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.



EMT PLANT & SEED SWAP Sunday, May 16th 11:00am-2:00pm (Weather permitting) First Church Lawn Masks & social distancing required

Come & trade vegetable plants, flower plants – annuals, perennials, bulbs, root divisions, house plants, succulents & more! Seeds, seedlings, and anything garden-related are welcomed.

Bring as many plants as you want. Please use individual containers, yogurt cups, etc., label what you bring, if you are able. Even if you have no plant to swap, come and talk plants & share your gardening tips! Contact Lisa Finnegan bird6781@gmail.com with questions.

Environmental Ministry Team

LABYRINTH HOME STRETCH!

We are almost there! After almost two years of meetings, visioning and planning ending with Annual Meeting 2021, the Labyrinth could start construction soon. As Ginger described in her last article before leaving on sabbatical, A Walk About," the vision for a labyrinth is as a community resource, a space for our First Church family members of every age to deepen in prayer and the Sacred.

As a surprise to welcome Ginger back after her sabbatical, and in celebration of her five and a half years of ministry here, we would love to try to raise the additional funds needed for construction - approximately \$5,000. You can send a check made payable to First Congregational Church, with "Labyrinth" on the memo line, or go to our website under "Give" and make a contribution.

We are grateful to Bill Weidmann for his vision and passion for this project. The staff is excited about having this labyrinth for opportunities for prayer and faith formation programs.

Everyone is invited to **World Labyrinth Day Celebration on Saturday, May** 1st **at** 12:30pm at
First Church. This is an opportunity to learn more
about the practice of intentionally, prayerfully
walking a labyrinth. There will be fun activities, with
a prayer walk around our temporary labyrinth at
1:00pm. For more information, please contact Bill
Weidmann at 203-887-4847.

ECO Echo

Part of the mission of the Environmental Ministry Team is to endorse policies that make the beauty of God's world accessible to all of God's people. In that regard we felt it important to share the new direction that the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is taking to make that goal possible.

NPCA recently developed a mission statement entitled, "Our Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion," that lays out its vision for the future priorities of the national park system. It begins by recognizing the racist history of the parks. admitting that "our visionary founders marginalized certain people," and that "we were not always on the right side of justice." Many of the national parks were created by usurping lands that indigenous people called home for thousands of years. NPCA starts its mission statement by looking at itself and committing to creating a diverse parks service so that every aspect of their organization, including staff, board, advisory councils and volunteers, represent a broad spectrum of races, cultures and languages. The parks service recognizes that it needs this diversity to gain the benefit of differing perspectives, thoughts and ideas. (Currently NPCA is over 80% white).

NPCA is also developing additional strategies to attract "those who have been historically excluded or have felt unwelcome due to socio-economic reasons. biased or unrepresentative interpretation, historical trauma, language barriers, fear for their personal safety, or any reasons related to discrimination or injustice." Its recent annual report revealed that visitors were overwhelmingly White, with just one in 10 being Hispanic and 7% African American NPCA is working to establish authentic and long-lasting relationships communities and cultures who once inhabited these lands, and to ensure they have a wide range of economic, educational and spiritual opportunities to share their knowledge and meaningfully contribute to this revitalized vision of the parks system. We will share other news about NPCA in future issues of the Landmark. In the meantime, you can check out what is happening in the parks system by going to ww.npca.org.

David & Phyllis Whitin, Environmental Ministry Team



30 9a Sunday School- Facebook Live Church Offices 10a In-person Worship: Closed	ic, Baking-	day School- sbook Live person Worship: nstructions on Plant Swap- nurch Lawn To Confirmation 2- Zoom Zoom Toom Toom Toom Toom Toom Toom	9a Sunday School- Facebook Live 9:30a Mother's Day Remembrance- MGdn 10a In-person Worship: RSVP instructions on page 2	2 9a Sunday School- Facebook Live 10a In-person Worship: RSVP instructions on page 2 11a Confirm1-MemGdn 7p PF Zoom 4 10a-Noon Suzanne Phone hours Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Deacons- Zoom 7p PF Zoom 4 10a-Noon Suzanne Phone hours Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Deacons- Zoom 7	y 2(Sunday Monday Tuesday
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12 Step Groups: Sun 7:15a AA-Chapel Thurs NA 7p Chapel Sat. 7:30a AA- Chapel	28	21 5p Wedding Reh	14	7 5-7p Music Fundraiser Plant pick-up		Friday
Other 12-steps are meeting online. Contact 12 step program website to get meeting details	29	22 3p Wedding	15 Rummage Sale Rain date	8 9a-1p Women's Fellowship Rummage Sale- Church Lawn	12:30p World Labyrinth Day Celebration- Church Lawn	Saturday



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(and copy office@firstchurchguilford.org) or

drop off the article at the Church Office.

THE LANDMARK editor: Jeanie Cacopardo

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DEADLINE for the JUNE 2021 ISSUE

To be removed from our mailing list

return this sheet to the address above. Thank you.

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