



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

# The Landmark

**September 2021**

**First Congregational Church  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
Vol. 67, Number 9**

## *“Creating Space to ... Mend”*

First Church's theme for the 2021-2022 program year is “Creating Space to ... Mend.” After months of lockdown, and a year and a half of pandemic we all feel varying degrees of cabin fever and perhaps a little claustrophobic. One of the things we have counted on at First Church during difficult times - being able to gather in community – is fraught, and many have felt a little lost. We have tried different ways in worship, in music, in education and fellowship to allow us to gather safely to feel connected in spirit, if not always in body. Regardless many still feel isolated and disconnected from our faith community. This pandemic time has torn part of the fabric of our church family.

To help mend the sense of community which is an integral part of the tapestry that is First Church, we will focus this year on creating space – intentional, safe, sacred space. Any time that requires us to do things in new ways - creative work - requires space for possibilities to emerge. The same is true of grief: we need time and space to discern what the loss means, and allow the caterpillar to form a chrysalis to emerge as something new. We grieve what has been lost in the pandemic— loved ones, financial/business stability, dreams & possibilities, and the list goes on. But there has been some new life as well: new projects, businesses and new ways of doing things have emerged, and kindnesses abound – people helping neighbor and those far away.

This year we invite you to create space for yourself, your family – and we will create space for our faith community. In that space, we will focus on mending ourselves individually, as well as lovingly repair the tapestry that is First Church. We will make space to worship, to allow Scripture to inspire us, to pray, to let music move us, to explore ways for children and youth and adults to grow in faith, to make space for safe ways of fellowship—to sit and listen for God's guidance.

In hope,  
Church Staff

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER:**

**September 5: 9:00am In-person worship**

*Blessing of School Backpacks – see Judi's letter,  
Children & Youth Ministries, page 3.*

**September 12: 10:00am In-person worship-**

*we switch back to 10am worship for the program year.  
PRAYground for Children, see Judi's letter, page 3*

**September 19: 10:00am In-person worship**

*9am Sunday School with Judi via Facebook Live*

**September 26: 10:00am In-person worship**

*9am Sunday School with Judi via Facebook Live*

*Masks are required for in-person worship. There are some here if you forget yours.*

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](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.org).***



**CLERGY PHONE-IN HOURS**

Clergy are available to speak with you during weekly phone-in hours: Ginger: Tuesdays 9-11am

Jake: Wednesdays 2 – 4pm

You may also make appointments for other times by calling the office phone 203-453-5249 and leaving a message for Ginger at ext. 204 or Jake at ext. 205.

**“30 MINUTES OF JOY”**

Take a music break on Thursdays at 12:00 noon for Bill Speed's 30 minutes of live music on organ and piano. Join him on the church's Facebook page, or in person!

**PARISH CARE TEAM****CONTACT FOR SEPTEMBER**

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

**DEACON OF THE MONTH**

Deacon for September is Amanda Patrick. Please contact her (203-530-9005) if you have questions or reflections about the spiritual life of the church.

**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER  
UPPER ROOM DEVOTIONALS**

are available to pick up in the narthex.

**FOOD DONATIONS**

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

Please continue to support local food banks as the need is still critical for those with food insecurity. Drop-off locations/ times for the Guilford Food Bank are listed below. Monetary donations are welcome; please mail them to Guilford Food Bank, c/o Guilford Social Services, 263 Church St., Guilford, 06437.

**Drop-off Locations:** Guilford Food Bank, Fridays 9:00am- Noon; Big Y, Daily 7:00am – 10:00pm; Palumbo's Automotive, M – F, 7:00am – 6:00pm; Sat, 7:00am - Noon

**BAPTISMS**

August 1, 2021

Sailor May Elder

child of Kaitlyn Hanes and Mason Elder

August 15, 2021

Abigail Riley Bohren

Patrick William Bohren

children of Allison and Johnathan Bohren

**NEW KEYS AND SECURITY SYSTEM!**

The locks to the Moore Education Bldg were re-keyed over the summer – if you have an old key – it no longer works! Also, ***the new security system installed over the summer will go live on Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>***. Anyone unlocking either the Sanctuary or the Moore Educational Building doors may need to disarm the alarm - for which you will need a security code. (The instructions to disarm or arm will be at the keypad.)

For keys, contact Susan Leete (203-752-8589 or [sgleete@comcast.net](mailto:sgleete@comcast.net) or Peter Rebuzzini (203-453-2516 or [prebuzz@cshore.com](mailto:prebuzz@cshore.com).)

For security codes, contact Bob Howard (203-453-2842 or [mgbobh@gmail.com](mailto:mgbobh@gmail.com).)

**STATEMENTS OF GIVING**

After receiving the mailed statements in July, many members have asked about accessing the church web site to see their giving records. Yes! Please feel free to check your records at any time with the unique password you can set! Here are the steps:

1. Go to the Church website home page:  
<https://firstchurchguilford.org/>
2. On the menu at the top of the web page, go to “Get Connected”; then click on the “Member Login” at the bottom of the menu options.
3. At “Member Login”, enter your name and password and after hitting enter, you will be directed to your account page. If you do not yet have a password, the system will allow you to set one to create your private access to your information.
4. The account page contains 2 or 3 boxes and one box says, “My Giving,” where 3 menu items appear: Statement, Giving Entry, and Pledge. Click on Statement to see your records.

While checking your account, please also check your “Profile” page to be sure that the contact information we have for you is accurate! Thank you!

*Annemarie Alexa, Bookkeeper/Data Manager  
Mary Jane Potter, Financial Secretary*



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES****FALL 2021**

We have been busy making plans for this Fall that are safe and will keep families connected to their First Church community! ***We miss you!***

Check out the Christian Education calendar events below and if you are not receiving the CE Weekly Newsletter, email me at [judi@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:judi@firstchurchguilford.org) and I will make sure you receive it on Thursday mornings!

***ALL events happening in the Sanctuary and inside the church building will require masks and distancing for all people including children!***

**Sunday, Sept. 5 – 9:00am Worship** Labor Day Weekend ~ We invite all children and their families to worship; ***BRING YOUR BACKPACKS*** and school supplies so that we can bless them all as they begin a new school year - and receive a special gift from your church family!

**And Introducing the PRAYground!!**

Families: We invite you to come to worship with your children (***ALL people inside the sanctuary will be wearing face masks, children too please***) and they will be invited to the PRAYground in the front of the Sanctuary to engage in some quiet activities before they hear the 10:16 Children's Moment and then join Judi and some teachers outside for Sunday School. We will offer this once a month for the Fall.

**In-person Sunday School dates are:**

**Sept. 12, 10:00am**

**Oct. 3, 10:00am**

Also Bible Sunday for Grades 3, 4, 7 & 8)

**Nov. 7, 10:00am**

**Dec. 5, 10:00am**

**On Sundays when there is no in-person Sunday School, I will offer it via Facebook Live-** please join me there for Scripture and activities!

**Other Events:**

**Sunday, Sept. 26 ~ 11:00am** Family Baking

**Sunday, Oct. 24 ~ 11:00am** Family Baking

**Sunday, Nov. 21 ~** Family Apple Crisp-Making and Delivery

**Sunday, Nov. 28 ~** Family Advent Wreath-Making

**Sunday, Dec. 19 ~** Family Baking – afternoon

*Judi Wallace, Director*

**Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group**

Pilgrim Fellowship has also been busy this summer with a very successful service trip to Boston. Thank you for your support and prayers. The students learned and grew so much in our 6 days in Boston.

Applicants for the PF Leadership Team have interviewed, and we are ready to get started! **PF will begin Sunday night meetings on Sept. 26** with an outside picnic on the church grounds. This is of course, is subject to change with lots of unknowns around the pandemic situation.

We will have our ***annual Glow-in-the-Dark CROP Hunger Walk*** in October and continue to meet outside as we are able through the Fall months.

If you have a high school student interested in joining the PF program, please email me [judi@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:judi@firstchurchguilford.org) and I will be sure to get you onto the email list so you will receive info about upcoming PF plans!

*Bright Blessings as we inch forward with care!*

*Judi Wallace, Director*

**GROCERY CARDS AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE**

**Wednesdays 10:00am – Noon**

**Spencer House Finance Office**

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! Any questions, please call the Church Office.

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY THANK YOU!**

First Church's Prayer Shawl Ministry touches many lives as we continue to give prayer shawls to those who are grieving, recovering, struggling. It is a tangible reminder that they are thought of and prayed for. We have received many notes over the years thanking the Prayer Shawl Ministry for the gift of a prayer shawl.

***Thank you to all who knit – and to those who finished up shawls to drop off when our supply was low.*** If you are interested in learning about this ministry, please contact Pam Harding at 203-453-6545 or [pamsharding@yahoo.com](mailto:pamsharding@yahoo.com).



**MUSIC MINISTRIES:****SINGING IN A TIME OF COVID**

**Adult Choir - Our first fall rehearsal will be Thursday, Sept. 9th, gathering at 7:15pm in the sanctuary.**

In late spring 2021, the CDC approved singing indoors without masks for vaccinated people, and our vaccinated singers who felt comfortable returned to the choir room and started making music together again without masks. We were even able in June to host in worship the Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus. However, due to the infectivity of the latest SARS-Cov2 variants, and the rise in 'breakthrough' infections of vaccinated people, the CDC now recommends mask usage indoors even for people who have been vaccinated, and that applies to singers. Mask-wearing while singing is not fun: it's hard to enunciate and make yourself heard through layers of cloth or paper. It's also harder to hear other singers when you're sitting further apart. Sadly, since August 2nd, Connecticut has been back at "high" instead of "medium" COVID risk. Until we get the okay from the CDC, and until Connecticut's new COVID cases subside to "medium" risk levels, we'll need to have curtailed singing for choir and congregation. Normally choir rehearsals last from 7:15 to 9:00pm; our fall 2021 rehearsals will be no more than 30 minutes. People who wish to sing with the choir must be vaccinated; masks must be worn inside the building at all times. Rehearsals will be in the sanctuary instead of the choir room, to permit greater distancing.

**Cherub and Junior Choirs will resume meeting after school on Wednesdays beginning Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>,** with great leadership from directors Dawn Perotti and Nancy Kelly. Junior Choir is held after school until 5:00pm in Fellowship Hall, and Cherub Choir is held 4:00 - 5:00pm in Griswold Hall. In response to the pandemic, we'll modify our program to keep kids safe: less singing, more speech chants and instruments, and other non-contact group activities. Look for details in the Christian Education weekly newsletter.

I know that there will be many singers who will (wisely) decide to wait to return to choral singing. It is clear at this time that any in-person events have some minimal risk, even to the vaccinated, and that singing increases that risk because of the breathing in and breathing out required to sing. I'm still vacillating about this decision to sing or not to sing, not only because of the medical risk from new variants: it doesn't feel right knowing that our musical community is being fractured into "people willing to risk singing" vs "people who don't feel safe singing at this time." If Guilford sees a surge in 'breakthrough' cases, especially as children return to

in-person schooling, we will suspend rehearsals until it's safer. If Connecticut moves back to "critical" COVID risk, rehearsals will also be suspended. But, for the fall, we'll see how many singers feel comfortable with the precautions we will be taking and will try to bring some small ensemble music periodically back to worship. Contact me at [bill@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:bill@firstchurchguilford.org) if you've got any questions or suggestions, as we musicians try to find a safe path forward, walking in the valley of the shadow of pandemic.

*Bill Speed, Director*

**DEACON DIGEST**

Recently I took this photo of this common, unremarkable dandelion which has been relegated to the inauspicious category of weeds. Yet each little parachute of fluff is carefully and wonderfully made.



There are over 100 species throughout the world. If you zoom in on the photo, it reveals many different colors—pinks, blues, yellows—as well as patterns which point to an undeniable creative “order.” On a closer look, this humble weed surely points to the mind of a master creator.

Pondering the wonders of this dandelion put me in mind of a familiar Bible verse: “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you...” (*Matthew 6*).

When Jesus spoke he often used illustrations from nature to help them understand what God is like—things that everyone could relate to, such as trees, sheep, rocks, stars, lilies and grass. If God can take care of billions of blades of grass and countless dandelions, which are here today and gone tomorrow, how much more will God take care of us?

There is a phrase, “the devil is in the details” ...well, actually, God is in the details. What does it say about God that God creates such a common plant with such meticulous detail? What does it say about how God regards us? May the wonders of creation move us to faith in the One who knows our needs even before we ask, and who loves us more than our hearts can imagine. “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

*Amanda Patrick, Deacon for September*



### NEW REGIONAL MINISTER ENVIRONMENTAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Emma Brewer-Wallin is the new Minister for Environmental & Economic Justice for the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. Emma began her ministry in July and will work closely with UCC congregations' Green Teams (aka Environmental Ministry Teams, Environmental Justice Task Forces, etc.) to support congregations in making God's love real through engagement in environmental and economic justice. Emma graduated from Harvard Divinity School in May. She has already interviewed the SNEUCC Environmental Ministry Team to ask us about our priorities for moving forward with environmental justice efforts in our respective churches. Contact Emma to get involved in the Conference's efforts toward environmental and economic justice at [brewer-walline@sneucc.org](mailto:brewer-walline@sneucc.org).

Nancy Leckerling

### ECHO ECO

We are excited that the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal will finally preach at First Church on Sunday, Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Antal was the Conference Minister and President of the Massachusetts UCC Conference 2006 - 2018 and now serves as the Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the UCC's General Minister and President in Cleveland. His acclaimed book, *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith must Work for Change*, was the focus for a five-session study group at First Church attended by more than 20 people. Enthused and excited by the book's message, the group recommended that Jim be invited to preach here. There will be copies of his book available in the pews prior to his sermon for advance reading and study.

Jim's sermon will be rooted in the theme of his book and ministry: there is an interconnectivity between climate justice and care of Creation and all other forms of injustice such as hunger, refugees, inequality, deadly viruses and war, and that the church's new vocation has to be care of Creation so that future generations might live in harmony with God's Creation. Jim will also help us work through what we as individuals and FCCG, can do to help preserve our planet.

Weather permitting, we hope to offer an outside program and light lunch following worship – a further opportunity to talk further with Jim about the climate crisis and climate justice. Please join us!

Jon Leckerling Co-Chair, Environmental Ministry Team

### BEACH CLEAN UP ON THE HARBOUR AT CRISCUOLO PARK, NEW HAVEN!

**Saturday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> 2 – 4pm**

Come to the intergenerational beach clean-up sponsored by the Interreligious Eco Justice Network (IREJN) Interfaith Eco Kids, Save the Sound and IREJN. Travel in family pods to Criscuolo Park and meet in the Lot, where Save the Sound staff will instruct and equip us with everything we need. Wear work clothes, your mask, and be sure to get there a little before 2:00pm so everyone can start together. Terri Eickel, Director of the Interreligious Eco Justice Network IREJN, will greet us. To register or for questions, contact [lynnsilverwolf@gmail.com](mailto:lynnsilverwolf@gmail.com).

Together we can help keep garbage out of the Sound and have some fun too!

Lynn Johnson  
Earth Activist  
31 Woodland St. 10B  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-324-9249



### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH SEPTEMBER MEETING

**Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm**

**In the Memorial Garden (weather permitting)  
If not, in the Sanctuary**

Women's Fellowship and Outreach (formerly known as the Alpha Club) changed its name to better communicate its mission. It is open to any woman who would like to participate. This first meeting of the new program year will be a welcome and planning meeting. Please come and bring your ideas! If you would like more information, please contact Barb Nickel at 803-513-9787,

### HEARTFELT THANKS

*to all those who volunteer to keep our campus running and beautiful. There are hours and hours logged by members of many committees and boards – thank you for your faith in action.*



## UCC 33<sup>RD</sup> GENERAL SYNOD RECAP JULY 11-18, 2021

Instead of traveling to Kansas City for the biennial UCC General Synod this year, 715 delegates and 2,000 visitors gathered online for the first time for a week of inspiring worship, motivational speakers, more than 50 workshops, lively debates about and votes on resolutions put forth by UCC congregations across the country and watching our UCC polity “in action”.

I “attended” Synod, whose theme was “Rooted in Love”, eight days and found it to be a rich learning experience! All week, we contemplated the question “what does rooted in God’s love look like?” when played out in our congregations as a response to what’s going on in the world. Rev. Ben Chavis, former UCC President, preached at the opening worship about the intersection of faith, justice and love, and the core of his impassioned message was that the only real answer to all the problems we face is a religious, spiritual one.

The three awesome keynote speakers during the week were: Valerie Kaur, filmmaker, civil rights lawyer, Sikh activist and author (whose book See No Stranger I bought and can’t wait to read) who provided us with a “revolutionary love compass” a guide to help the U.S. transition into a “multi-racial democracy”; Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, Executive Director of Global Justice for Sojourners, who urged “beloved community” as an antidote to the “twin viruses” of systemic racism and toxic polarization; and Dr. Joy DeGruy, author, speaker and social scientist, who laid out a program for uncovering racism and “unleashing repair”.

Eleven important resolutions were presented, discussed in hearings, and voted on by the delegates. Those passed by the Synod assembly included: A Resolution on the Rights of Nature (I will report more on this in the October Landmark); a Resolution to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis; a Resolution for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel; a Resolution to Ban Conversion Therapy; A Resolution for the UCC to Become a Church of Contemplatives in Action; and a Resolution to Recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). We heard some powerful preachers and sang some wonderful hymns including “Rooted and Grounded in Love”, “Break Up Your Fallow Ground” and “Sing a New World Into Being”, which I hope we can sing in our church!

Our UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer stated in his comprehensive “state of the church” address that he serves a denomination “on the move” to be a body fully committed to a love that seeks a just world for all. He urged us to turn our grief related to the pandemic and environmental racism into hope and action and our death into “new life”.

My favorite workshop of the many I attended was “Rooted and Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis” and was offered up by Rev. Dr. Jim Antal. Leah Schade, Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and Natasha De Jarnett, authors who all have essays in the book with the same title. Using top of the line videographers, audio technicians, editors, and musicians, this amazing Synod was planned all year by a team of creative, bold, and inspiring designers and most everything went off without a glitch. Pretty impressive!

Synod took time to celebrate and welcome new UCC congregations in Texas, Michigan, Indiana and California to our denomination. The very gifted Rev. Traci Blackmon was nominated and elected as the Associate General Minister of the UCC.

Lastly, one of my favorite parts of Synod, besides its accessibility for us all and getting to “see” clergy colleagues from all over the U.S., was “getting to know” the very gifted leaders of our denomination in the national setting in Cleveland--General Minister Dorhauer, Associate General Minister Blackmon, Minister of Environmental Justice Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, and Rev. Velma Love, Minister of Social Justice. Rev. Love, in her speech, said something that continues to replay in my mind this past month: “We’ve resisted the changes that would have brought us to racial equity. Let’s hope this time we are in it to win it.” For me, the whole Synod week was indeed “rooted in love”, and I came away proud to be a member of the United Church of Christ.

The next General Synod will be held in the summer of 2023 in Indianapolis with hopes that the pandemic will be past, and delegates can gather in person again. I hope to be there!

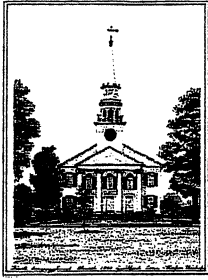
*Rev. Nancy Leckerling*



# September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>12 Step Groups:</b> Sun 7:15a AA-GH Sun 1p NA - GH Tues 7p AA- Room 9 Tues 7:30p Alanon-CH Wed 10a Alanon-FH Thurs NA 7p GH						
Fri 7:30p AA-FH Sat. 7:30a AA- GH Other groups meet online. – check 12 step websites for details						
			<b>1</b> 9a Meditation/Tai Chi-Zoom 2-4p Jake Phone hours 7p Trustees of Enduring Gifts-	<b>2</b> Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy – Sanct & FacebookLive	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9a In-person Worship	<b>6</b> <i>Labor Day- Church Offices Closed</i>	<b>7</b> <i>No Ginger hours</i> 9:30a – 3p Staff Retreat 7p Deacons	<b>8</b> 9a Med./Tai Chi- Zoom 2-4p Jake Phone hours	<b>9</b> Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy Sanct & FacebookLive	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 10a In-person Worship 7p PF Leadership Team-outside	<b>13</b> 7p Business Comm 7p Parish Care Team	<b>14</b> 9-11a Ginger Phone hours Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Church Council	<b>15</b> 9a Med./Tai Chi- Zoom 2-4p Jake Phone hours	<b>16</b> Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy Sanct & FacebookLive	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 10a In-person Worship 7p PF Leadership Team - outside	<b>20</b> 7 Confirmation 1 & 2- Sanctuary	<b>21</b> 9-11a Ginger Phone hours Noon- Staff Mtg 7p Human Resources	<b>22</b> 9a Meditation/Tai Chi-Zoom 2-4p Jake Phone hours	<b>23</b> Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy Sanct & FacebookLive	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10a In-person Worship 6p Pilgrim Fellowship Opening Gathering	<b>27</b> 7p Finance 7p PF Committee	<b>28</b> 9-11a Ginger Phone hours Noon- Staff Mtg	<b>29</b> 9a Meditation/Tai Chi-Zoom 2-4p Jake Phone hours	<b>30</b> Noon-12:30p Concert: 30 Minutes of Joy Sanct & FacebookLive		





**First Congregational Church**  
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To be removed from our mailing list  
return this sheet to the address above. Thank you.

**THE LANDMARK**  
Vol. 67, No. 9 September 2021

**THE LANDMARK editor:** Jeanie Cacopardo

**DEADLINE for the OCTOBER 2021 ISSUE:**  
**September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Please email articles to [landmark.fc@gmail.com](mailto:landmark.fc@gmail.com)  
(and copy [office@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.org)) or  
drop off the article at the Church Office.

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