

THE PARISHIONER

January 2025

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST WOODBRIDGE, CT *since 1738*
An Open, Welcoming, and Affirming Church

Epiphany!

Epiphany is my favorite church season – a season of growing light, physically and spiritually! It begins on January 6 when we celebrate the Magi’s (read gentiles’) arrival at the manger and their recognition of God’s presence and work in the Christ child. The season continues through the weeks leading up to Ash Wednesday. Throughout, we hear gospel stories of God’s truth and grace manifest to all, and we practice putting them into our own lives as followers. To begin this season, I chose an Epiphany reflection from this year’s United Church of Christ Advent – Christmastide Devotional; see below. May it bless your spirit and deepen your faith!

Epiphany blessings,
Rev. Susan

Awe-full Decisions

By Rev. Liz Miller



When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. – Matthew 2:10

Professor of Psychology Dr. Dacher Keltner performed a 2014 study where participants were put into rooms with either awe-inspiring plants or less-inspiring ones. At their end of the agreed time, on their way out of the room, participants were asked if they were willing to volunteer more of their time to fold origami peace-cranes for tsunami victims in Japan. The ones who had been surrounded by awe volunteered more time than the ones in less-inspiring surroundings. Dr. Keltner’s conclusion? “Awe inspires sacrifice...awe awakens the better angels of our nature.”

If awe stirs us to act in a manner that helps others, the star that led the magi from King Herod to the baby Jesus may have been more than a practical, celestial compass. As the “star of wonder,” it became the moral compass that empowered them to go home a different way, avoiding King Herod’s fear-mongering threats and saving the life of the Prince of Peace.

Every day I am faced with micro and macro decisions that ask me to choose a different way, a way that prioritizes needs beyond my own. Will I toss my trash on the ground or will I walk the 100 feet to a trash can? Will I tithe my salary to justice work or will I put that 10% toward a more luxurious vacation? Will I choose self-protection, or will I choose to protect the powerless?

When we find ourselves at a critical juncture, may we heed the wisdom of the magi and
Follow the stars, looking up and out to all that invokes awe.

Prayer: Star of royal beauty bright: inspire me to do the next right thing.

FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

January 2025

Your Church Council met in a ZOOM meeting on December 2, 2024, with a quorum present. The Rev. Susan Murtha reported on her activities for the previous month. She presented the new revised and rewritten FCCW Safe Conduct Policies. Joan Rifkin, who assisted her in this process, also was present at the meeting and participated in the discussion. These policies had to be updated in order that FCCW was following the required procedures. There was detailed discussion regarding the matter by those present. The new revision was approved by a unanimous vote. The new policies will be presented to members at an informational meeting at a future date. A note of thanks goes out to Rev. Murtha and Joan Rifkin for all their time and work in revising these policies.

It was noted that we are fortunate to having new members on Boards and Committees. New viewpoints are a mutual benefit to us all. The Christmas Eve service will be at 3:30 PM this year. The Congregational meeting will be held on January 26, 2025, at 11:15 AM in the Parish House. A Soup and Bread fellowship meal is being planned for a Sunday after church in February.

All-in-all we continue to see progress in our efforts to successfully move into the future. The revision of the Safe Conduct Policies is but one indication that we are assessing, reviewing and revising, as required, our organization and planning efforts. Also, just another indication that so much has, and is, being done for the future improvements of the church. All this work will be a long-range benefit to the community we serve and our own future existence. There has been unbelievable progress in the last year in our planning for the future of FCCW. A great deal of work has been devoted by the Rev. Murtha in this progress. Her leadership in developing the Family & Children Ministries program and its growth and impact within the church during this past year is, yes is ---Why FCCW has a future! Our Board of Trustees and some of its members have devoted a great deal of time, effort and energy to the Early Childhood School and Cell Tower Lease projects. All in one year! And the best is yet to come, as long as we continue to stay the course and see that FCCW has a meaningful future. I know we will! Why? Because I know you! Stay with us. And, if, for some reason or other, you haven't been involved, please do so. FCCW is here to stay! And the future promises a brighter future. How? Stay tuned!

We thank God for helping and guiding us during this past year. We look forward to His continued guidance in 2025. HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!

Respectfully, Your Moderator,

Richard A. Prescott



CALL TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

PARISH HOUSE MEETING ROOM
January 26, 2025, 11:15 AM

The January Congregational Meeting of FCCW is hereby called to:

1. Hear the Treasurer's Annual Fiscal Report
2. To adopt the Final Annual Budget for 2025
3. To elect the FCCW Treasurer
4. To elect members of the Board of Stewardship and members of the Nominating Committee
5. To hear and approve plans advanced by the FCCW Church Council and any other business which might come before the group

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stoddard, Clerk



Happy New Year from the Coffee Hour Crew! Coffee Hour is a popular way for FCCW members and visitors to mix and mingle in a casual way. As we turn the calendar to 2025, the Coffee Hour crew wants to acknowledge the generous cash donations made in 2024 that helped to defray some of the expense of this welcome fellowship. Thank you as well for the generous donations made to the UCC Disaster Relief Fund.

This year we are casting our net a little wider and asking for other congregation members to contribute refreshments as they are able. We would especially appreciate nutritious kid snacks. If this sounds like something you can do, please contact Bill More at 203 387 0090 to join in the rotation of goodie suppliers. We would love your home-made treats, but as Ina Garten has famously said "Store bought is just fine." Thank you!!



SNOW DAY 2025!

**The can't miss
event of the year!**



**Parish Hall
5 Meetinghouse Lane
Woodbridge**

**Live Family Music
with Michele Urban**

**Saturday
January 11**

1:30-3:00 PM

**Hot Chocolate
Crafts, Games
and activities
for all ages!**

Contact: 203-936-9356

**Bring the
whole
family!**



CHAMPLAIN TRIO TO PERFORM SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1st

Please join us in welcoming Vermont's acclaimed Champlain Trio on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary at the First Church of Christ, 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge. The Church will be hosting this trio in their *Timeless Trios* program, featuring Letitia Quante on violin, Hiromi Fukuda on piano, and Emily Taubl (who is originally from Woodbridge) on cello. It will be an afternoon of inspiring chamber music featuring works by Clara Schumann and Ludwig van Beethoven. All are welcome. There will be a free will offering.

The Music Committee will be hosting a reception after the concert in the Parish House. For more information, call the church office, 203-389-2119.

TRIMMING BEE 2024

On the afternoon of December 7, the First Church of Christ was decorated for Christmas. Volunteers of all ages placed candles, hung artificial and live wreaths on windows and outer doors, and installed the star in the apse. In addition to the experienced wreath-makers, three people who had never made a wreath before produced stunning wreaths that can be seen on the front of the church and on the front door of the parsonage. Well done, everyone.

Thanks go to those who provided fresh greens and holly, installed the lights on the driveway Christmas tree, to Troop 907 who set up the workshop, and to those who provided drinks and Christmas cookies for the volunteers.

Even Mrs. Goose dressed for season.



"SOUP"-ER BOWL

FELLOWSHIP LUNCH FOR ALL AGES



SOUP
BUFFET
&
MAC'N'
CHEESE



MUSIC WITH
MICHELE
URBAN

CAN
DONATIONS
WELCOME



SUNDAY, FEB 9, AT 11:15 AM

Parish Hall , 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT

For more info: 203-936-9356



Troop 907 News January 2025

Your BSA Troop 907 held year ending events on Saturday, December 7th. These included the annual pancake breakfast with the visit from Santa Claus as well as the December Court of Honor. Numerous merit badges and rank advancements were awarded to the 20 scouts in the troop in these Parish Hall events.

The troop successfully renewed its annual charter for year 2025 with First Church as the Chartering Organization.

The troop took the year ending holidays off and will start up again for 2025 on January 2nd. Interested potential scouts and their parents are always welcome to attend the weekly 7:00 PM Thursday meetings in the Parish House scout room. Events planned in the new year include January camping, skiing, West Point, go-karting, camping at Camp Whiting in Woodbridge, whitewater rafting, the spring flower/fertilizer fundraiser, a Court of Honor and family event at Hammonasset State Park, a week at Camp Sequassen, and assisting at the First Church Strawberry Festival once again. As you can tell, this is a very active youth led troop.

Happy New Year,

Rich Forselius

Troop 907 Committee Chair/Chartered Organization Representative

forselius@snet.net



FCCW OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome to join our weekly Bible Study every Wednesday at 11 a.m. in the Parish House.

PARISHIONER DEADLINE

Articles and photos for the February edition of *The Parishioner* are due by Tuesday January 21st 2025
*Please submit materials by email
office@uccw.org

WORSHIP SERVICE

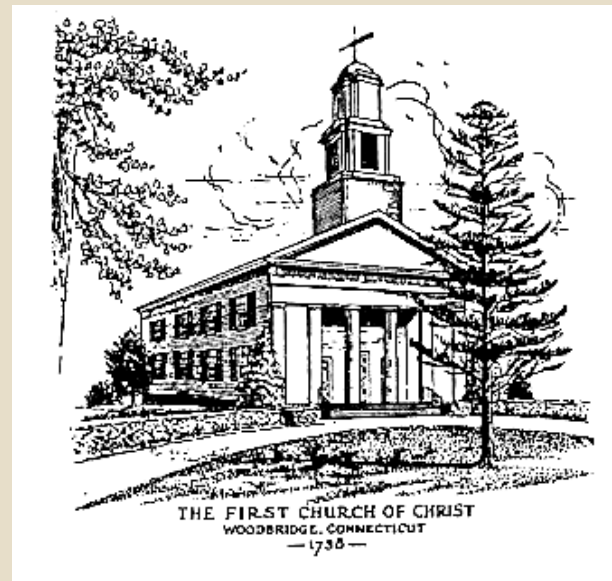
All are invited to gather in the Meetinghouse for our 10:00 a.m. worship service. For participation via Zoom, see our website - uccw.org

MARKING LIFE'S PASSAGES

Please contact the office with any birth or death notices, baptisms or memorial service dates.

Printed copies of *The Parishioner* are always available in the church office and on our church's website.

If you would like to go paperless and only receive an emailed copy, contact the church office.



Interim Minister: Rev. Susan Murtha (pastorsusan@uccw.org) (203) 936-9356
Pastoral Care: Rev. Janice Touloukian (jantouloukian@gmail.com) (203) 915-1510
Office Administrator: Jill Fahrback (office@uccw.org) (203) 389-2119
Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner
Coordinator for Children's Ministries: Nicole Giannetta & Anna Haep

January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>29 10:00 am Worship 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Play</p>	<p>30 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>31 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>1 ** Happy New Years!</p>	<p>2 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:00 pm Private Yoga Class</p>
<p>5 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:00 am Neighborhood Music School 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>6 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 2:00 pm Church Council 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>7 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:00 am Woodbridge Garden Club 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>8 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>9 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>10 9:30 am Musical Folk 1:30 pm Snow Day Family Fun Event</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>13 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>14 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>15 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>16 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>17 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>20 ** Martin Luther King Jr. Day 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>21 9:30 am Musical Folk 3:30 pm Christmas Eve Service 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>22 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>23 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>24 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>27 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>28 9:30 am Musical Folk 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm AI-Anon</p>	<p>29 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>30 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>31 9:30 am Musical Folk 3:00 PM Champlain Trio Music Concert 4:00 pm Reception</p>	<p>1</p>

Key

Sanctuary, Board Room, Parish Hall, Kids' Church Room, Memorial Room, Music Room, Kitchen, Online,

** The church office will be closed Jan. 1st for New Years Day and January 20th for Martin Luther King Jr. Day