

THE PARISHIONER

April 2025

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

The Cross – *the topic of our 2-part Lenten Series!*

~ April 6 & 13 ~

No symbol represents the Christian faith more universally than the cross. And yet the Christian message of the cross has been confusing to many, confounding to others, and downright problematic for some who endeavor to live the Christian faith.

- How do we make sense of the idea that we are saved through Jesus' death when we know that human beings killed Jesus, including political leaders, religious leaders, crowds of ordinary people, not to mention his disciples who ditched him, betrayed him, and left him to die?
- At the same time, we sense that something profound and holy happened through Jesus' death on the cross.

If you have ever wondered about the message of the cross, you're not alone. It's easy to get mixed up in our understanding and practice because there is a paradox *embedded in the gospels themselves!*

Join us for this very special opportunity to be led by Rev. Dr. Mark Heim in exploring the gospel messages and deepening our understanding of the cross.

Sundays: April 6 & 13

11:00 – 12:30 (after worship)

Parish Hall

Delicious lunch & fun childcare provided!

Lenten & Easter blessings,

Rev. Susan

Welcome our Lenten Program Leader: S. Mark Heim



Mark is the Samuel Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School. He has studied, taught, and written extensively on comparative theology, religious pluralism, atonement, ecumenical relations, and science and theology, receiving numerous awards. An ordained American Baptist minister, Mark has served on the World Council of Churches and on many ecumenical commissions.

In the spring of 2024, Mark and his wife Melissa walked a portion of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, and in the fall, they spent 6 weeks in Rome where Mark taught at the Gregorian University in a program that brings together Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians to study each other's traditions. Mark also co-teaches a course on theology and medicine with Prof. Benjamin Doolittle from Yale School of Medicine; they are currently completing a book on the interface of faith and medicine. Mark and Melissa live in New Haven and especially delight in time with their two grown children and two grandchildren in Washington, DC and Philadelphia.



Lenten Program 2025
 a 2-part series
 led by Rev. Dr. Mark Heim



Saved from Sacrifice:
Two Sides of the Cross

The cross is the central symbol of Christianity. Some say Christianity would be better off without it. Others say the faith that Christ died for us *is* Christianity. This conflict reflects a paradox embedded in the gospel narratives themselves: Jesus’ death saves the world, and it ought not to happen. There is a saving act of God in the cross, and there is a sinful human act. These two are so close together that it’s easy for them to get mixed up in our understanding and practice. In these sessions, we will explore two sides of the cross, in hopes of deepening our Lenten journey.

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall
Lunch will be served
Childcare will be available

**** April 6: Paradox in the Cross**

What’s Behind the Cross? Exploring the Biblical Context
 Sacrifice: The Good Bad Thing

“These are obviously troubled texts, but what troubles them is the truth.” – Gil Bailie

**** April 13: The Cross and New Community**

What Comes After the Cross? Looking for the Christian meaning
 Substitutes for Sacrifice

“Like the light, it is at once the thing that we need to see,
 and the thing that permits us to see it.” – René Girard



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FCCW CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

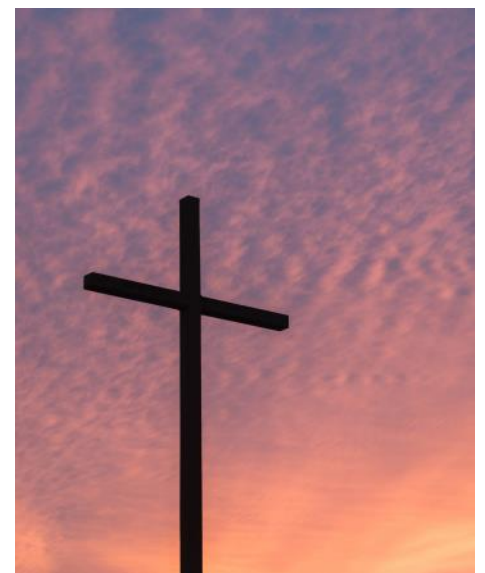
April 2025

Your FCCW Church Council met, with a quorum present, at its regularly scheduled meeting in the Parish House in March. As usual each of FCCW's Boards/Committees presented an updated report regarding its respective activities during the previous month. After an opening prayer, Rev. Murtha presented her report detailing her varied activities during the previous month, and plans for the coming Lenten season. The Treasurer's report was presented and accepted. Trustees continue to work on plans for the leasing of space to the Woodbridge Child Center. (See comments, below) The Deacons report dealt with the annual review of the pastor's performance during the past year and job description recommendations for the coming year.

The Music Committee reported that the concert was a success and well attended Personnel reported that a new computer is being purchased for the office. Building and Grounds will be temporarily represented by Richard Prescott, as Joyce Simpson has stepped down from that position. The scouts have completed their equipment move from the Parish House but will continue to conduct meetings there. There were no updates from other committees.

A few days after the Council meeting, we learned that the Woodbridge Child Center leasing project planned for the Parish House was dead. In an all-member memo sent on March 11 we were informed that the center would not be moving to the Parish House based on a vote of its board of directors, for reasons beyond the control of FCCW. There was a great deal of disappointment regarding this fact and some concern about where we went from here-----if anywhere! From my perspective, it just means that we have an excellent opportunity being presented to us. Why? There is a commercial on TV regarding the sale of personal life insurance policies: It shows an older woman sitting in a chair reflecting on money difficulties. The scene pans down below ground into a mine with two miners holding golden nuggets and shouting up to the woman: "Don't you know you're sitting on a gold mine? ", in reference to the monetary value of her life insurance policy if she were to sell it. We at FCCW, while not sitting on a gold mine, are sitting on a golden opportunity to continue our yearlong expenditure of time, effort and money to find an early childhood education program which would be interested in our Parish House space and location. There is, based on my reading, an expanded need for early childhood education locations and programs, as evidenced in part by the new plans coming out of the Connecticut Governor's office and State Legislature. We should and must continue to explore the market, as quickly as possible and not sit around and "cry over spilled milk:" We will need the income therefrom if all our other plans and projections for the future of FCCW, as developed and discussed over the last three years, are to be successfully implemented! Take a few moments and let members of the Trustees know that you support a continuing effort to use Parish House space for an early childhood education center program. Thanks for your time to read my comments. I know, and feel, they are in the best interests of FCCW's future.

Respectfully,
Richard A. Prescott, Moderator





**Hop Into Spring
Bunny
Bash**

APRIL 5, 2025
2:00 - 3:30 PM

**LIVE MUSIC WITH MICHELE URBAN
SCAVENGER HUNT
AWESOME GAMES
& FANTASTIC CRAFTS**

**PARISH HOUSE
5 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
WOODBRIDGE
FOR MORE INFO CALL
(203) 936-9356**

Kids Church Parent Gathering

April 27, 2025
11:15 AM—12:15 PM

In the large room adjacent to the
Kids Church Room

Join us to ...

- hear updates, news, and plans!
- share your hopes, questions, concerns, and suggestions!





EASTER FLOWERS

If you would like to donate an Easter Plant to decorate our Sanctuary for the Easter Service, please fill out the form below and return it with your check made out to the **First Church of Christ** and include **“Easter Plants” in the memo**. Mark below which plant you would like and the name of the person it is in memory of or in honor of. The list of donations will appear in the Easter bulletin. Please print the necessary information. **All forms and checks must be received in the church office by April 8th for the order to be placed.** Remember to check if you want to take the plant.

Easter Lily \$16.50 each _____ Tulip \$15 each _____ Daffodil \$15 each _____

Total Enclosed _____

GIVEN BY _____

IN MEMORY/HONOR OF (CIRCLE ONE)

I will take the plant after the Easter Service. _____ The plants will be left to decorate the church. _____

FCCW’s 2025 Easter Offering: One Great Hour of Sharing

Be the Light!

In our 2025 Easter Offering – “One Great Hour of Sharing” – First Church of Christ Woodbridge will be with joining thousands of UCC churches throughout the country to bring God’s light and hope to hurting people, domestically and around the world!

The primary mission of One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is to bring *immediate* relief aid when disaster strikes or when people are displaced due to violence or poverty. Our denomination can respond immediately, and in collaboration with local and international partners, because our many churches contribute in advance to this vital fund!

Beyond caring for urgent needs, our OGHS gifts will work to address root causes of vulnerability to ensure long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities. This work includes comprehensive development programs in many areas, including healthcare, education, agriculture, local financing, and women’s empowerment.

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God.”
– *Matthew 5:14, 16.*

Let us Be the Light this Easter!

For more information, contact:

Jinny Schneider, Board of Christian Service: vrgnschneider@yahoo.com

Rev. Susan Murtha, Interim Minister: PastorSusan@uccw.org

Jill Fahrback, Office Administrator: office@uccw.org





HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday, April 13

10:00 a.m. worship service

(in the sanctuary & via Zoom)

Palm Parade led by the children + Kids' Church

11:15 a.m. Lenten Program: *Two Sides of the Cross*

Lunch & childcare

Maundy Thursday, April 17

7:00 p.m. worship service in the sanctuary

Communion

Maundy Thursday scripture readings

Good Friday, April 18

The sanctuary will be open from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m.

for personal prayer and reading of scripture

Easter Sunday, April 20

10:00 a.m. worship service

(in the sanctuary & via Zoom)

Children's Message + Kids' Church

Easter Reflection: *God Has Moved On!*

Good news!

New members are joining First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, UCC

~ Sunday, May 4, 2025 ~

Please save the date –

to meet our new members & join in our shared covenant to walk together in faith!

Scout Troop 907

Scouts have planned their Spring Plant/Flower sale for the following dates:

- Saturday 4/19 10:00am-3:00pm at the Old Firehouse Green in Woodbridge
- Saturday 4/26 10:00am-3:00pm at the Old Firehouse Green in Woodbridge
- Saturday 5/3 10:00am-3:00pm at the Old Firehouse Green in Woodbridge
- 4:30pm-6:00pm at our Lady of Assumption Church (OLOA) Woodbridge, CT
- Sunday 5/4 7:30am-12:30pm at our Lady of Assumption Church (OLOA) Woodbridge, CT
- 9:30am-11:30am at First Church of Christ Woodbridge, CT

Delivery is available for no charge. Please support the troop as the fundraisers provide important funding for scout events, particularly advancement and Courts of Honor, throughout the year.

Shown are images from the scouts skiing at Mt. Southington late winter.

Scouts camped at Deer Lake camp the weekend of March 21-23 where they experienced star gazing in the night sky. In April a fun whitewater rafting campout is scheduled April 10-12 and in May canoeing and clamming in Rhode Island May 16-17. In June, scouts will support the church Strawberry Festival and camp and hold their spring Court of Honor at Hammonasset.

The Scouts BSA troop 907 website can be accessed at <http://troop907.org/>. You will note the calendar of upcoming events there. New and potential scouts and parents are always welcomed as is anyone's interest in the weekly troop 907 meetings in the Parish House scout room Thursdays 7:00 PM.

Yours in Scouting,

Rich Forselius

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 Bible Study each
Wednesday at 11 AM in the Parish House.

PARISHIONER DEADLINE

Articles and photos for the May edition of
The Parishioner are due by
Monday, April 21 2025.
*Please submit materials by email
office@uccw.org

WORSHIP SERVICES

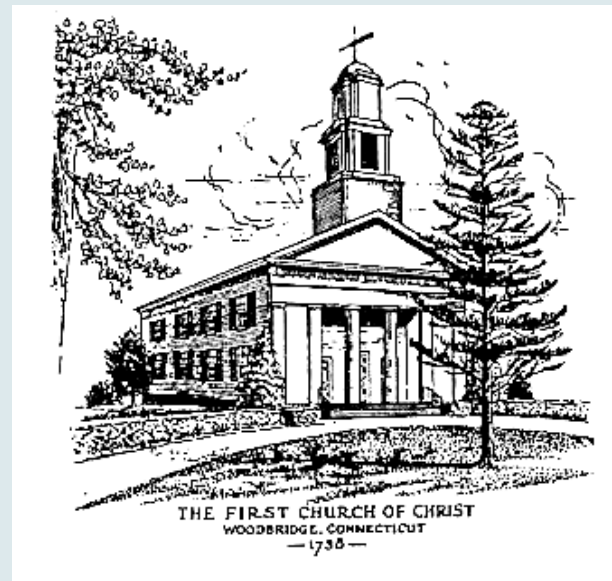
All are invited to gather in the
Meetinghouse for our 10 AM worship service.
For participation via Zoom,
see our website - uccw.org

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.



FCCW Staff:

Interim Minister: Rev. Susan Murtha (pastorsusan@uccw.org) (203) 936-9356

Volunteer Pastoral Care: Rev. Janice Touloukian (jantouloukian@gmail.com) (203) 915-1510

Coordinator for Children's Ministries: Nicole Giannetta (msnicole@uccw.org)

Office Administrator: Jill Fahrback (office@uccw.org) (203) 389-2119

Sexton/Custodian: Bob Turner

April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>30 10:00 am Worship 10:00am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>31 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>1 10:00 am Aerobics 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon</p>	<p>2 9:30 am Musical Folk 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>3 10:00 am Aerobics 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>4 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class</p>	<p>5 9:30 am Musical Folk 2:00 pm Bunny Bash Family Event</p>
<p>6 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am 2-Part Lenten Series 3:30 pm Girl Scouts</p>	<p>7 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:00 pm Council 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>8 10:00 am Aerobics 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon</p>	<p>9 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Deacons</p>	<p>10 10:00 am Aerobics 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>11 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class</p>	<p>12 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>13 10:00 am Palm Sunday 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am 2-Part Lenten Series</p>	<p>14 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>15 10:00 am Aerobics 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon</p>	<p>16 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>17 10:00 am Aerobics 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service</p>	<p>18 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 12 pm - 3 pm Good Friday</p>	<p>19 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>20 10:00 am Easter Sunday 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church</p>	<p>21 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>22 10:00 am Aerobics 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon</p>	<p>23 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>24 10:00 am Aerobics 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>25 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class</p>	<p>26 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>
<p>27 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am AA 10:10 am Kids Church 11:15 am Kids Church Parent Gathering 1:30 pm Private Party</p>	<p>28 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 1:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Search Committee 7:30 pm Lamp Post Group AA</p>	<p>29 10:00 am Aerobics 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7:30 pm AA 7:30 pm Ala-teen 7:30 pm Al-Anon</p>	<p>30 9:30 am Musical Folk 10:30 am Gentle Yoga 11:00 am Bible Study 2:00 pm Neighborhood Music School</p>	<p>1 10:00 am Aerobics 3:00 pm Neighborhood Music School 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>2 10:00 am T'ai Chi Class</p>	<p>3 9:30 am Musical Folk</p>

Key:

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