

The SPIRE



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
in Wethersfield

VOL. 77, NO. 9 • FEBRUARY 2026

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A Note from Pastor Todd

January stirs our longing for spring: we've completed the celebrations of Advent; crossed the threshold into the New Year; and now we're in the depths of winter, waiting for the world to thaw. It's cold. Take heart, spring is coming.

Soon we'll be mapping out our gardens for the growing season. Before long, we'll be transferring starter plants to soil. I'll confess, I'm not the best garden planner, way too many tomatoes in too little of a space. Perhaps this year I'll learn from past mistakes.

A trellis would help, a nice sturdy trellis to guide my tomato vines upward and give them the breathing room they need to flourish. Core values function a lot like a trellis.

We've just completed a sermon series releasing four fresh core values into the life of our congregation: Wholehearted Worship; Intergenerational Community; Healthy Discipleship; and Compassionate Mission. These core values help to articulate our identity and inform our decision making. Like a trellis, they provide a framework to help our community grow, together. They help us know what to prune, what to nurture, and when to harvest.

What do we do next with these? First, we pray. Pray that the Holy Spirit will instill these values into each of our lives. Second, we engage. Engage in conversation with others around our core values. Ask questions. Seek understanding. Use these core values as a lens to examine your own life and practices. Third, we support. We all have a role to play in stewarding the gifts and opportunities these core values will bring.

Winter will end, I promise, and spring will arrive. There is a fresh season of growth on the horizon for First Church. Now is the time to set our trellis in the soil, to seek the wisdom of Jesus as He helps us to understand who we are becoming.



Ash Wednesday, February 18th
6:30 PM in the Meetinghouse

Lenten Services
Wednesdays, February 25th-March 25th
6:30-7:30 PM in the Meetinghouse

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, March 29th
9 AM Traditional | 10:30 AM Contemporary

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd
7:00 PM in the Meetinghouse

Good Friday, April 3rd
2:00 PM in the Meetinghouse

Easter Sunday Services

Sunday, April 5th
Sunrise Service-6:30 AM
"Cemetery Hill" behind the Meetinghouse

9:00 AM Contemporary Service
10:30 AM Traditional Service
Both in the Meetinghouse

Easter Breakfast
7:30 AM in Keith Jones Hall
Suggested Donation: \$5/person, \$15/family

CAMPUS UPDATES

Steeple Project

The Babbidge Construction Company of New Haven has been selected as the construction management firm for the project. Initial costing estimates have been solicited from an array of contractors and have been shared with the steeple committee, and are within the original \$3 million project estimate. Babbidge has recommended that we preorder replacement bricks and decorative finials, as the 18th C. steeple bricks are of a unique size and composition that must be custom fabricated, a process that will take up to six months. A timeline for the project is under review by the steeple committee.

To date, the fund-raising campaign has raised \$800,000, a good start but there's a long way to go. The committee is actively exploring multiple avenues of outside funding and support, but we need to pledge significantly more to show a real commitment to the project.

"All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings, and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord." Exodus 35:21



Safety & Security Team

Building security upgrades are being made to provide greater access control to our buildings, through the installation of electronic locking mechanisms on the doors, and remote access locking capabilities. These upgrades will be made on a rolling basis as we work through the entire campus. CPR and AED use training and certification will be provided to select staff and volunteers over the next month, enhancing our medical emergency response capabilities.

Save The Dates!

Annual Meeting

Sunday, April 12th in the Meetinghouse following the Combined Service at 10:00 AM

Mastering Motherhood

Thursday Mornings through May 2nd
9:15 AM-11:30 AM in Keith Jones Hall

Property Committee

Property Committee Needs: We are actively seeking volunteers to periodically lend a hand in maintaining our buildings and campus. If you ave a talent for gardening, or are skilled in painting, basic carpentry, electrical or plumbing, or any other maintenance skill, and would like to offer a lending hand as projects present themselves, and as your time allows, please reach out to the Committee at propertycommittee@firstchurch.org

Rental Property Update: Renovations are progressing on schedule in the front apartment, with occupancy of this fully renovated and completely updated 2-bedroom apartment available as early as March.

Spring Work Day: Our Spring work day is scheduled for **Saturday, May 30th**. The rain date will be Saturday June 6th. Please mark your calendars and join us for a morning spent beautifying our campus.



YOUTH & CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

What is God Doing in Children's Ministry?

Over the past few years, the Children & Youth Ministries have been blessed to have new families engage in our programming. Since the Fall of 2024, the Children's Ministry Database has grown from 30 registered children to over 60! Our regular attendance on any given week has grown in that same timeframe by 20%. We are so happy to see that First Church is somewhere that kids of all ages enjoy spending time in fellowship. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please fill out our interest form at www.firstchurch.org/children.



Easter Egg Hunt

Join us on **Saturday, April 4th from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM** for some Easter fun! We will begin with crafts and activities. Then we will gather for an Easter story, followed by the highly anticipated search for colorful eggs hidden throughout the church grounds. This event will be held rain or shine! We can't wait to see you there! Register by visiting www.firstchurch.org/events. Questions? Contact Megan at children@firstchurch.org.

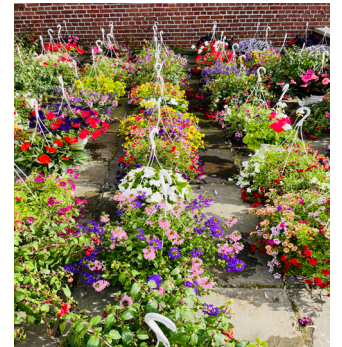


Vacation Bible Camp 2026!

RAINFOREST FALLS: July 20-24th from 8:45 AM-12:00 PM. Summer will be here before we know it, and we are excited to head to the rainforest for a week filled with exploring God's true nature. We will dive into His word through songs, games, Bible stories and meet our special guest Dr. Flit Flutterby to help root the campers in their relationship with God. Registration opens on April 1st for kids who have COMPLETED PK3-5th Grade! Look for the link to sign up to attend or volunteer at www.firstchurch.org/events. Cost is \$50 per child registering prior to July 1, multi-child discount and scholarships are available!

Mother's Day Plant Sale

The Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale will take place on **Saturday, May 9th and Sunday, May 10th from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM** on the front lawn! The proceeds will go towards Youth events & programs for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Come support our Youth Ministry by purchasing some beautiful flowers for your mom or a special woman in your life! If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Josh Arcata at youth@firstchurch.org.



How is God Moving in our Youth & Young Adults?

At our Youth Christmas Party just a few months ago, we had our highest Youth Group attendance in recent memory, with 28 students attending the party! But beyond the numbers, God is doing amazing things in our Youth. As **Intergenerational Community**—one of our four new core values—begins to sprout church-wide, our Youth are leading the charge. Several students have joined the contemporary worship team, and many are now joining us for Sunday morning worship each and every week.

This semester, we restructured Young Adults to emphasize group discipleship and are featuring the *Practicing the Way* course. This course helps followers of Jesus reorganize their lives around the core practices Jesus Himself taught His disciples: prayer, fasting, scripture, sabbath, solitude, community, generosity, service, and witness. Already, several of our Young Adults are beginning to live more intentionally, setting aside time each week for these practices, with the hope of truly being more like Jesus.

Book of Life

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Diana Pierini, January 1, 2026
Honora "Honey" Fox, January 7, 2026
John Wallace, February 4, 2026
Linda McGuire, January 29, 2026

Sunday Worship Times

First Sunday of the Month—combined service at 10:00 AM with communion in the Meetinghouse.

All other Sundays:
Traditional Service: 9:00 AM in the Meetinghouse

Contemporary Service: 10:30 AM in Keith Jones Hall

Both services are LIVE on our Youtube Channel at First Church Wethersfield.

facebook.com/FirstChurchPage
IG/first_church_wethersfield

FIRST NOW-If you would like to receive our weekly email First Church Now, email marief@firstchurch.org.

GIVING-Giving can be done online at firstchurch.org.

Staff Listing

Kerry Alleyne.....Custodian
Josh Arcata.....Director of Youth Ministries
Brigette Bean.....Preschool Assistant
Eddie Cruz.....Custodian
Marilyn Danielson.....Executive Assistant to Senior Pastor
Mike Davis.....Property Manager
Marie Fabian.....Communications
Diane Galloway.....Director of Caring & Women's Ministries
Jackie Hoswon.....Church Accountant
Megan Ettlinger.....Director of Children's Ministries
Rob Lundy.....Director of Technology & Production Services
Paula Mazo.....Finance Assttant
Sarah Penn.....Evening Receptionist
Lisa Roncaioli.....Director of Preschool
Nathan Scalise.....Contemporary Worship Leader
Todd Willard.....Senior Pastor

First Church of Christ

IN HISTORIC WETHERSFIELD
CONGREGATIONAL

860.529.1575 | Fax: 860.721.7861
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109

www.firstchurch.org
Email: info@firstchurch.org
The Spire online: firstchurch.org/resources

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Updates!

A Letter of Gratitude from Sean & Eve McCarthy

Dear First Church Family,

Eve and I would like to thank you all for the beautiful retirement reception, the thoughtful cards, and your generous retirement gift. Special, heart-felt appreciation for Pastor Todd, the staff, and the FCC Choir for making my ministry at First Church so very rewarding!

As the Irish Blessing says, *"And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand."*

Wishing you all God's blessings,
Sean & Eve



Easter Joy!



First Church is beautifully decorated with flowers on Easter Sunday, due to the generosity of the congregation. You may add to the joy by making a memorial contribution. Suggested donation is \$35. This completed form and your check (payable to "First Church of Christ") should reach the Church's Finance Office by Monday, March 23rd. Either mail to First Church, or place in the drop box located just outside the Finance Office.

This information (except phone number) will appear in print:

In loving memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Your phone number: _____

Please Print. Use additional paper if necessary.