

The Cornerstone

First Church is an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

JANUARY 2015 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join Us!

Worship Service: 8:30 am in the Chapel, 10 am in the Sanctuary

January 4

Second Sunday after Christmas

Matthew 2:1-12

Gifts for the Christ Child

Rev. Kevin Weikel preaching

January 11

First Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 1:1-5

Mark 1:4-11

Creating Order out of Chaos

Rev. Dianne Arakawa preaching

January 18

Second Sunday after Epiphany

I Samuel 3:1-10

John 1:43-51

Hearing the Call

Rev. Dianne Arakawa preaching

January 25

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Mark 1:14-20

Changing Course

Rev. Dianne Arakawa preaching



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Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

January 19th at 1 pm
First Church of Christ
Sanctuary

On this national holiday members of our congregation and the town of Simsbury are invited to come together to recommit ourselves to the ideals of racial equality, non-violence, and peace-making.



**Rev. Dianne
Arakawa
Transitional Senior
Minister**

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Out of Office
Fridays

A Message from Rev. Dianne Arakawa, Transitional Senior Minister

Dear Friends,

For us in the Church, January marks the bright beautiful season of Epiphany. This is when we look for and try to understand appearances of God in our lives. Be it watching these manifestations in other people's lives, hearing their stories about it, or seeing it unfold in our own daily experiences – Epiphany is a time to listen, look around, and become aware both externally and internally of Christ's presence.

One way, I find, is to look to nature and to naturalists, who record the design and changes in our world. So far, I notice, we have had at least one heavy snowstorm in the Farmington Valley. The native grasses, blue green evergreens and oak limbs were weighed down by the wet snow, which glistened when the sun returned the following day. (My excitement surrounding the first snow of the season seemed no different than when I first experienced it years ago.)

I am reminded of the story of Wilson Bentley, better known as "Snowflake" Bentley. He was the naturalist, who took the first photograph of a snowflake in 1885 in Jericho, Vermont, and later identified the differences among them. Raised by farming parents and unschooled in his rural setting, Bentley grew up learning to read his mother's set of encyclopedias. As a result he became an astute observer of nature, particularly clouds, fog, rainfall, and snow. He yearned to learn more about God's world.

At age fifteen Bentley began studying snowflakes under a microscope. He would try to make drawings of what he saw, working as rapidly as he could before they melted. He continued this scientific method for three years, collecting hundreds of drawings of snow crystals. Eventually his parents took most of their hard-earned savings to buy him a newly invented camera with a microscope attached. Bentley caught snowflakes on black velvet, placed them on glass plates, took photos of them -- and soon came to realize that no two snowflakes were alike!

His photographs were collected in his book called Snow Crystals, and articles about his findings were published in well-known reputable scientific journals. After his death in 1931 most of his collection was given to the Buffalo Museum of Science as well as to friends. These photographs showed the meticulousness of his work, the complexity and beauty of nature, and the irrefutable proof that, despite the seeming sameness of snow, no two snowflakes are exactly alike.

The natural beauty of our world, even down to the smallest and seemingly most insignificant snowflakes, which Bentley called "tiny miracles of beauty," bespeaks the magnificence and grandeur of God's creation. And Snowflake Bentley's life work showing us a part of this world at the microscopic level is a manifestation of God-with-us.

Happy Epiphany, and New Year,

Dianne

A Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel, Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Happy New Year!

I came across this lovely poem recently, and I found it appropriate to share with you as we begin the New Year.

Christian New Year's Resolutions

By Joanna Fuchs

How can I use the New Year
To better serve my Lord?
I'll read my Bible every day,
And be more in accord.

I'll find new ways to serve others;
I'll love my neighbor, too.
I'll focus on "give" instead of "get"
In everything I do.

I'll forgive the people I'm mad at;
Angry feelings I'll discard;
I'll try to love my enemies,
Even though it's hard.

In the new year, I'll lift people up,
Instead of putting them down.
I'll fill my heart with love and joy,
And never wear a frown.

I'll let go of my worries;
I'll put it all in God's hands;
I'll repent and try to sin less,
And obey all God's commands.

These New Year's resolutions
Are difficult, at best,
But there's something I can do each day
That will put my soul at rest:

I'll love my Lord with all my heart,
With all my mind and soul,
And if I do that essential thing,
All the rest will be in control.

Peace to you,
Kevin



Rev. Kevin Weikel
Associate Minister
for Youth and
Young Adults

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Out of Office
Wednesdays



Mark Mercier, Music Ministries

This time of year we spend a little time not only thinking about what lies in store and how we might change or better ourselves; we spend time looking back at the past year (my, didn't it go fast) and some of the things, good or bad, that happened to us and those that we know...

**Mark Mercier,
Director
of Music
Ministries**

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Out of Office
Tuesdays

In looking at the immediate past, I want to thank everyone who had something musically to do with the season from *Simsbury Celebrates* all the way through Christmas. In particular - the Chancel Choir learned and sang more music than ever before; Women's Praise - intrepid stalwarts that they are - sang for everything from the Town of Simsbury to Supper Club and everything in between... and they did it with a smile and a wonderfully constructive attitude. The Junior Choir and various members thereof, thanks to Lori Lemoine, contributed their voices for several 10 am services, the 9:00 pm Christmas Eve service, and the Sunday School pageant. The Choral Bells are gradually coming up to a full complement thanks to several new and some returning members, and they are playing quite well; the newly formed Men's Choir has gotten their feet wet with some contributions at Christmas, and are eager to learn and do more; And the Cherubs, thanks to Suzanne Osborne, meet weekly, sing with the abandon that only kids their age can do, and love doing it. We have a new soloist for Uncommon Worship in Erica Bontatibus, whose immense talent and experience folds well with the talents of musicians like the incomparable Doug Maher, Tom Pollizzi, and Peter Blake. Working with the Board of Music Ministries, under the very able leadership of the indefatigable Bruce Powell, has been not merely a pleasure - it has been inspirational. And the generosity of choir members and others, such as the Retired Men's Luncheon Crew, in the purchase of new (and quite comfy) choir chairs in the rehearsal room and the choir loft has been nothing short of incredible. It has certainly made our rehearsals more pleasurable (not that they weren't...). In short, this has been a great season, and I thank everyone.

This causes us to want to take a peek around the corner to see what lies ahead. Although you can never really know, I think that, given the wonderful people who take part in the music program here, we can definitely expect some interesting and creative things to happen. And I invite any or all to be a part in some way. Whether you sing, play, promote a concert, or have something educational to offer, take it from me - this is a terrific place to do any of that.

I hope that the New Year brings each of you good things: Joy, wonder, happiness, love, peace, and appreciation for all that is around you; and I hope God smiles on you all through all that happens to you in the upcoming year. Thank you all for being here...

—Mark

Message from the President

As 2014 comes to a close and we look ahead to next year I can write this entire column using just two words: Thank You!

Those two words apply to everyone reading this Cornerstone, to our wonderful staff, to our ministerial leaders and to all of the many, many members and friends of First Church who contribute so much of their time, talents, treasures and energy to our varied ministries. Together we spread the Good News and make a difference in so many lives, as we serve our neighbors in our church, our community, our nation and indeed our world in the name of Jesus. I look forward to even more in 2015!

Thank you!
Faithfully yours,
Jim Trimble

Message from the Treasurer

Our Stewardship campaign has been underway for over a month and continues. We encourage all who can to pledge this year. You will note a “Stewardship Thermometer” in church to show where we stand compared to our past levels and our ability to continue to provide our many programs and ministries for 2015. Please call the office with your commitment or mail in your pledge card.

The \$ pledge total is vital to our Board of Finance calculating our total income for our 2015 budget. Our expenses have been well controlled over the years but some costs are outside of our control and increasing. Last year, due to reduced income and fixed costs, we were forced to fund more money for operations from the endowment funds and transfer more money than is normal or sustainable from the special 2013 budget.

The Board of Finance is putting together our budget now with expectations of pledge income of around \$740,000 or so which will allow us to provide our many valuable existing programs, ministries, and outreach to our community. This is a sustainable level but more than last year. With your help, we will reach this level with assurance that this year will be a prosperous one for us all.

Thanks for your faithful help.
Ron Patterson

Simply Smiles Mission Trip



May 2 – 9, 2015

The Farmington Valley Association (FVA) of the United Church of Christ is again sponsoring a joint mission trip to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Reservation in South Dakota. This will be the 3rd annual FVA Mission trip that will be made with representatives from all the churches in the valley. Five spots are available to members of First Church. Information Session: Wednesday, January 7th at 7:00 pm, Avon Congregational Church, 6 West Main Street, Avon. Please contact Dane Woodberry for more information @ 860 658 7996. Simply Smiles is dedicated to providing bright futures while improving the daily lives of impoverished children.

K.I.D.S. @ First

Kids Investigating Divine Stories at First Church

Visit www.firstchurchsimsbury.com to see the church school schedule, videos, and information about what the kids are doing at First Church.

Spring Church School Teachers and Shepherds Needed: Jan 4, —May 10, 2015

Help the kids at First Church of Christ grow in their heart as you grow yours, become a church school teacher or shepherd. Contact ccole@fccsimsbury.org.

Nursery – Kate Bruno, Tara Lafond

Pre-K— Suzanne Osborne, Jennifer Petron, Jess Buckle

Kindergarten Pattie Scanlon, Theresa Carlson

Rotation Program for grades 1-5: (teaching alternating weekends)

- Computer room – Sarah Wilmarth Guasta, David McElligott
- **Cooking room** – Sarah Leathers, **1 teacher needed**
- **Art room** – JoAnn Hogan, **1 teacher needed**

Shepherds:

- 1st & 2nd grade shepherd - Erin Naspo
- **4th grade shepherd – Needed**
- 3th & 5th grade shepherd – Jackie Brook

6th & 7th grade Pre-Confirmation class – Chris Morkan and Bryan Tawney

Children's Ministry News



Upcoming events for your Calendar

Jan 4: Spring Church School Session begins

Jan 18: Mission Project and Movie for grades K-7

Feb 1: Uncommon Worship: students attend church

Feb 7: Valentine Party/Parent's Night Out

Movie and Mission Project: Grades K-7

Sunday, January 18, 2015 in the Youth room



Students will be watching the movie "Elijah" and making toiletry kits for South Park Inn.

Items needed: toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, travel size tissue packages, hair brushes, combs, razors, travel size shaving cream, deodorant, and face cloths. A drop-off bin is located in front of Cindy Cole's office.

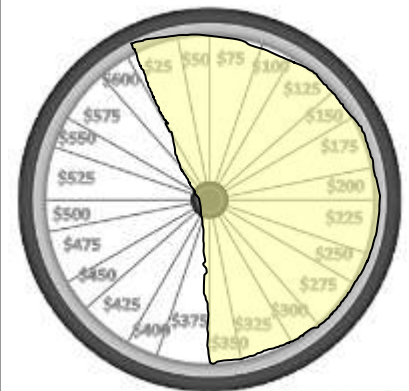


Church School Mission Project: Bicycle Ambulance for the Faith Health Care Clinic in Masooli, Uganda

Church School Offerings will be sent to the clinic to purchase a bicycle ambulance to support the families who visit the Faith Health Care Clinic in Masooli, Uganda. The ambulance is needed to help the families in Masooli get to and from the health center when they are unable to walk.

See <http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com> for additional information.

Each spoke space = \$25 dollars. We are trying to raise \$600 for the bicycle ambulance. Let's fill the spokes on this bicycle wheel! We have raised \$350.59 to date.



Uncommon Worship on February 1, 2015: Students will attend church



- Please wear your "Grow your Heart" T-shirts
- Student will have the opportunity to take Communion during the service. See www.firstchurchsimsbury.com for information about Communion for you and your child.

Valentines Party/Parent's Night Out

Save the date:

Sat, Feb 7, 2015 in Palmer Hall
5pm-8:30pm

Please sign up and fill out the registration form

Activity Stations:

High Energy Stations: indoor basketball, bowling, Valentine

Twister, bounce house

Group Activities: Valentine Bingo, Valentine tag, Chocolate heart hunt

Movie: Veggie Tales: The Penniless Princess

Quiet Activities: Play Doh, doll house, crafts

Mission Project: making facecloth bunnies with bar soap for Carebags

Ages: 3(potty trained) - 6th grade, teen helpers are needed

Cost: free will offering

Dinner: Pizza, fresh fruit and vegetables, decorate your own cupcakes

Registration forms: will be available on the 3rd floor church school bulletin board

Junior Fellowship (JF) (for 7th & 8th graders)

JF gathers once per month from 2:10-4:30 pm during the school year (see the schedule below). At JF, we eat together, play games together, and participate in engaging activities and faith-based discussions together. The upcoming JF meeting is:

Friday, January 23

For more information or to add your email to our communication list, contact Rev. Kevin at kweikel@fccsimsbury.org

Confirmation (8th graders)

The Confirmation Year is a Concentrated Time of Exploring...

... what it means to be Christian. We do this through large and small group gatherings, mission/service work, experiencing and reflecting on worship, going on retreat, participating in the events and activities of Junior Fellowship (JF), and much more. The goal is for our Confirmands to build positive and grace-filled relationships with one another, develop a deeper understanding of God's love for all people, and explore what it means to follow Jesus. Upcoming Confirmation meetings are:



January/February— (specific times TBA)

Soup Kitchens in small groups at First Church and South Park Inn Shelter

Sunday, January 11, 5--7pm— Large Group Meeting (Baptism & Communion) in Palmer Hall for students

Sunday, January 25, 5--7pm— Small Group Meetings (Saints) at host homes for students

***Sunday, February 1—** Uncommon Worship in the Sanctuary. *Optional

For more information visit the Confirmation website @ www.fccsimsbury.org/youth-and-young-adult/confirmation-8th-grade, and/or contact Rev. Kevin Weikel.

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) (for 9th thru 12th graders)

Sunday, January 4 from 7:00-9:00pm: Regular Gathering in the Youth Room.

PF Alumni will join us to discuss life after high school.

Sunday, January 11 from 7:00-9:00pm:

7:00-8:00pm: 2015 Mission Pilgrimage to West Virginia Information Meeting in Palmer Hall.

8:00-9:00pm: Shortened Regular PF Youth Group Gathering in the Youth Room.

Sunday, January 18 from 7:00-9:00pm: Soup Kitchen! Food preparation, card making and hat organizing in the First Church Kitchen and Palmer Hall followed by serving at Immaculate Conception Shelter in Hartford. Everyone bring at least two knit hats to give away!

Sunday, January 25 from 7:00-9:00pm: Regular Gathering in the Youth Room. Topic: Family Dynamics



First Church of Christ

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~ Please notify the church office of any address changes. ~

First Church of Christ

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January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale, Boy Scout Hall outdoor yard 8:30 AM Adult Study Group, Classroom 29 10:00 AM 10 am Hymn Sing & Worship Service only with tentative Baptism Cayden David Hartman, Sanctuary 11:00 AM Junior Choir, Music Room 11:30 AM Lunch Bunch Gathering 7:00 PM No PF Youth Group (Christmas Break)	29 Annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale, Boy Scout Hall outdoor yard 10:00 AM CCC	30 Annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale, Boy Scout Hall outdoor yard	31 Annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Sale, Boy Scout Hall outdoor yard	1 Church Office Closed (New Years Day) 7:00 PM AA-Alcoholics Anonymous Mtg, Rm 28	2	3 9:00 AM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Eagle Coat of Honor, Palmer Hall & Kitchen 6:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Eagle Coat of Honor, Sanctuary
4 Second Sunday after Christmas 8:30 AM Adult Study Group, Classroom 29 8:30 AM Early Worship, Chapel 10:00 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary 11:00 AM Junior Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM PF Youth Group (for 9th thru 12th graders), Palmer Hall & Youth Room	5 10:00 AM CCC 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 1:00 PM American Red Cross Blood Drive 7:30 PM Executive Council Mtg., Parsons' Study	6 7:00 PM Cub Scout Pack 276 Leadership Mtg, Parsons' Study	7 4:00 PM Women's Praise Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	8 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal, Room 29 6:00 PM Boy Scout First Aide Merit Badge Class, Parsons' Study 6:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Leadership Mtg., Palmer Hall 7:00 PM AA-Alcoholics Anonymous Mtg, Rm 28 7:30 PM Chancel Choir/ Music Room 7:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Adult Committee Mtg., Palmer Hall 7:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Venture Mtg., Youth Room	9 10:00 AM Farmington Valley Transition Academy, Palmer Hall/ Kitchen	10
11 First Sunday after Epiphany Tentative Baptism Date (2nd Sunday of mo) 8:30 AM Adult Study Group, Classroom 29 8:30 AM Early Worship, Chapel 10:00 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary 11:00 AM Junior Choir, Music Room 11:15 AM Care Bag Committee Assembly, Rm 29 5:00 PM Confirmation Large Grp Mtg (Baptism & Communion), Palmer Hall 7:00 PM PF Youth Group (for 9th thru 12th graders), Palmer Hall & Youth Room	12 10:00 AM CCC 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 7:00 PM Board of Worship (formerly Elders) Mtg., Parsons' Study 7:30 PM All Boards Meeting - All Rooms 7:30 PM Board of Mission & Outreach, Parlor	13 9:00 AM Retired Men's Luncheon Prep & Setup, Kitchen 12:00 PM Retired Men's Luncheon 6:30 PM Cub Scout Pack 276 Den Meeting, Classrooms 26, 27, 28, 29 and Library 7:00 PM Deacon's Committee Mtg., Library 7:00 PM PF Youth Advisor Meeting, Kevin's Office	14 4:00 PM Women's Praise Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	15 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal, Room 29 6:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Mtg., Palmer Hall/Kitchen 7:00 PM AA-Alcoholics Anonymous Mtg, Rm 28 7:30 PM Chancel Choir/ Music Room	16	17
18 Second Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 AM Adult Study Group, Classroom 29 8:30 AM Early Worship, Chapel 10:00 AM Sunday Morning Kids Movie, Palmer Hall 10:00 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary 11:00 AM Junior Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM PF Youth Group (for 9th thru 12th graders), Palmer Hall & Youth Room	19 Church Office Closed (MLK Jr Day) 10:00 AM CCC 1:00 PM American Red Cross Blood Drive 1:00 PM Martin Luther King Day Celebration, Sanctuary & Chapel 7:30 PM Officers Mtg., Sr. Minister's Office	20 9:30 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry Morning Gathering, Rm 28 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry Evening Gathering, Rm 28	21 4:00 PM Women's Praise Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	22 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal, Room 29 6:00 PM Boy Scout First Aide Merit Badge Class, Parsons' Study 6:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Mtg., Palmer Hall/Kitchen 7:00 PM AA-Alcoholics Anonymous Mtg, Rm 28 7:30 PM Chancel Choir/ Music Room	23 2:10 PM JF Monthly Group Meeting, Palmer Hall & Youth Room 2:15 PM JF Palmer Hall	24
25 Third Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 AM Adult Study Group, Classroom 29 8:30 AM Early Worship, Chapel 9:30 AM Church School Breakfast Parlor 10:00 AM Worship Service, Sanctuary 11:00 AM Junior Choir, Music Room 11:30 AM Lunch Bunch Gathering 5:00 PM Confirmation Small Group Mtg (Saints) at host homes for students 7:00 PM PF Youth Group (for 9th thru 12th graders), Palmer Hall & Youth Room	26 10:00 AM CCC 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29	27 10:00 AM Card Making Group, Rm 28 6:00 PM Masooli FMHCC Board Meeting, Parsons' Study 6:30 PM Cub Scout Pack 276 Monthly Meeting, Palmer Hall/ kitchen	28 9:30 AM Cornerstone Collators, Parsons' Study 12:00 PM 4th Wednesday Group Room 28 4:00 PM Women's Praise Choir, Music Room 7:00 PM Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	29 12:00 PM Hopmeadow Nursery School Dance, Room 29 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal, Room 29 6:30 PM Troop 76 Boy Scouts Mtg., Palmer Hall/Kitchen 7:00 PM AA-Alcoholics Anonymous Mtg, Rm 28 7:30 PM Chancel Choir/ Music Room	30	31 11:00 AM Cub Scout Pack 276 Pinewood Derby, Palmer Hall