

THE CORNERSTONE

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



APRIL 2016 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join Us!

**Worship Services: 8:30 am in the Chapel,
10 am in the Sanctuary**

April 3rd **Second Sunday of Easter**
with Holy Communion
Resurrection: Believing Thomas
John 20:19-31
Rev. George Harris

April 10th **Third Sunday of Easter**
Resurrection: Fan Fiction
John 21:1-19
Rev. George Harris

April 17th **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
The Miracle of Showing Up
Acts 9:36-43
Rev. Kevin Weikel

April 24th **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
Resurrection: Imagine
Revelation 21:1-16
Rev. George Harris

Inside of this Issue

Worship Schedule	Pg. 1
Pastor Pondering	Pg. 2
Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel	Pg. 3
Youth & Young Adults	Pg. 3
Music Notes by Mark Mercier	Pg. 4
Children’s Ministries	Pg. 5
General Info	Pg. 6-7
President’s Message	Pg. 7
FCC Boards and Committees	Pg. 8
Fellowship Hour Hosts	Pg. 8

Members and Friends of First Church.
You are cordially invited to the installation of our new pastor.

The Rev. George M. Harris
Senior Minister

Sunday, April 17, 2016
3 o'clock in the afternoon in the Sanctuary
Reception to follow in Palmer Hall





**Rev. George Harris
Senior Minister**

860-651-3593 x14
gharris@
fccsimsbury.org

Out of Office
Tuesdays

Pastor Pondering

What Could Be Better Than That?

In 1978, when I was sixteen years old, my father helped me buy a 1969 MGB convertible. It wasn't in great shape - missing a front bumper, had ripped upholstery and a cheap coat of paint - and cost only a thousand dollars. But it was fire-engine red, had knock-off wire wheels, and it was mine! Our first car represents independence, both practically and symbolically. The symbolic value of my little, red convertible was especially strong; it screamed FREEDOM! There is a picture in my high school yearbook of me driving my MG, top down, friend in the passenger seat, with two teenage girls perched precariously behind the two seats, their arms thrust in the air, and huge smiles on all our faces! What could be better than that?

Well, within my first year of owning that sweet icon of freedom I had accumulated four tickets and had my license suspended. The citations included a fender bender, speeding, rolling through a stop sign, and a late-night "chase" through the streets of my town with two friends who also drove British sports cars. Now, thirty-six years later and a father of a teenager myself, I shake my head and wonder, what was my father thinking? Honestly, I'm lucky to be alive.

In addition to losing my license (and freedom) I was required to complete a defensive driving class. As awful as this whole experience was, to this day I remember the core lesson of that class. Pay attention to other drivers. This simple practice forever changed my driving and in some way, my life. It's not all about me. I may be free, but that doesn't mean I can do whatever I want. I have a responsibility to other people.

We just celebrated Easter. Even more than a red, MG convertible, resurrection symbolizes freedom, liberation from persecution, suffering and death. Some Christians make the same mistake I did as a young driver and assume this freedom is meant for our personal enjoyment. Our American culture reinforces this self-centered understanding of *individual* freedom, freedom from authority. "No one can tell me what to do!"

But this is not the understanding of freedom revealed through the empty tomb. Like my defensive driving class, the gospels teach us that freedom comes with a commitment to and responsibility for one another. It's not all about us. As "the body of Christ," the church is meant to model both freedom and responsibility. This means that church members and even our boards can't just do whatever feels good and right. We must pay attention to one another, and by paying attention to each other we will come to experience true freedom from hardship and want. And THAT is even better than anything, even a teenage boy's red convertible!

A Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel

Tutoring in Hartford...Come join us!

We have some exciting news to share! Friends and Members of First Church have been invited to serve as after-school tutors for the students at Simpson-Waverly Elementary School in Hartford! We will tutor on Tuesday afternoons over the span through the end of the school year. Please see the schedule at the bottom of this page.

Tutoring through First Church has a long history. Over the years, adults and youth have participated in separate tutoring programs at various elementary schools throughout Hartford. In recent years, these opportunities fizzled out as some of these programs lost their funding, while others, located on the other side of Hartford, made for a cumbersome drive through rush hour traffic.

This current opportunity is intergenerational, for youth and adults alike, and only 25 minutes away!

Through his work and connections at Hands on Hartford, Dave Wadhams learned of the tutoring program at Simpson-Waverley. Dave promptly arranged a meeting with the principal of the school, the lead teacher of the tutoring program and myself, where we learned about their neighborhood and school, their tutoring program, and how this might be a wonderful for opportunity for their students and our congregation. They are very excited to have us, and we can't wait to get started!

Schedule:

On the Tuesday's below, the church bus will pick up our high school youth at SHS at 2:10 pm. Adults will meet the church bus at the Dunkin' Donuts in the center of Simsbury at 2:30 pm. From there, we'll ride together to Simpson-Waverly School. We will return by 5:45 pm.

- April 5
- No tutoring April 12
- April 19
- April 26
- No tutoring May 3
- May 10
- May 17
- May 24
- May 31
- June 7 (last day of tutoring)

Youth participants will need a completed [Student Information Form](#); adult participants will need to read our [Safe Church Policy](#) and complete a [Safe Church Volunteer Form](#). All forms should be submitted to the church office 24 hours prior to your first time tutoring. To check if you already have these forms on file, please contact Cathie Behrens at cbehrens@fccsimsbury.org or 860-651-3593. For all other questions, feel free to contact me at kweikel@fccsimsbury.org or 860-651-3593.

Peace to you, Kevin



Rev. Kevin Weikel
Associate
Minister for
Youth and
Young Adults

860-651-3593 x16
kweikel@fccsimsbury.org

Out of Office
Wednesdays

Youth and Young Adults

Junior Fellowship (JF) is our youth group for **7th and 8th graders**. JF gathers approximately once every three weeks, from 2:10-4:30 pm during the school year. At JF, we eat together, play games together, and participate in engaging activities and faith-based discussions together.

Friday, April 1st **2:10-4:30 pm** in Palmer Hall/Youth Room

Thursday, April 21st **2:10-4:30 pm** in Palmer Hall/Youth Room

The **Confirmation** year is a concentrated time for **8th graders** to explore what it means to be Christian. Through large and small group gatherings, mission/service work, experiencing and reflecting on worship, going on retreat, participating in the events and activities of JF, and much more, our Confirmands build positive and grace-filled relationships with one another, and develop a deeper understanding of God's love for all people, while exploring what it means to follow Jesus.

Sunday, April 3rd **Session 13** in the Youth Room (5-7pm)
Bible Reading: "The Church" - Lesson: "Christian Living"

Sunday, April 17th **Session 14** in the Youth Room (5-7 pm)
Bible Readings: "The Body of Christ" - Lesson: "The Faith Journey Continues"

TBD **Small Groups**
Pizza with Rev. Kev

Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) is for **all 9th through 12th graders** no matter their religious background, or ideas about God. Everyone is welcome. PF is a place to play, discuss, worship, grow, serve, and love. PF is a place for teenagers to journey together in faith. PF meets for fellowship, retreats, mission opportunities, and more.

Sunday, April 3rd **7-9 pm** in the Youth Room. Presentation on Healing Meals by Sarah Leathers, and thinking about working for God by Will Leathers.

Sunday, April 10th **7-9 pm** in the Youth Room. Topic, "The Colors of Justice" led by Annie Petitti.

Sunday, April 17th **3 pm** in the Sanctuary. Pastor George's Installation Service.

Saturday, April 23rd into Sunday, April 24th Power Down Retreat (more information to come).

Musical Notes



**Mark Mercier,
Director
of Music
Ministries**

860-651-3593
x21
mmercier@
fccsimsbury.org

Out of Office
Tuesdays

Happy Easter season, everyone! What a tremendous and glorious Easter week this was – beginning with a Palm Sunday service and parade with exciting anthems by our bell and chancel choirs, a moving Maundy Thursday service, and a truly joyous Easter Sunday with music from the classical to the contemporary. All the choirs did a tremendous job – and I want to thank everyone who had a hand in the music this season. Women’s Praise Choir sang a wonderful concert at Plainville Congregational Church, and is thinking about duplicating it here. The Men’s Choir is improving by the week, and did an outstanding prelude on Maundy Thursday. The Choral Bells were terrific on Palm Sunday; the Juniors did a great job on Easter Sunday, and the Chancel Choir is sounding absolutely exceptional. We definitely want to thank our new and old choir friends for helping out as well, along with the Cornerstone Brass players - Chris, John and Joe, not to mention our intrepid and impeccable timpani player Dennis Marolda. The Uncommon Band was great at the early Easter Service and looks forward to playing on April 17th, when the Cherubs will join them for the prelude. If I left anyone out, please know that did not mean to, and that I love you just as much.

All that being said, in the words of Yogi Berra – “It ain’t over ‘till it’s over”. Easter is definitely not the end of the church year, and there’s a lot that’s still going on. In addition to our regular rehearsals and Sunday contributions, there are a few other notable things. The Junior Choir will be doing a choir exchange with the Junior Choir from the Methodist Church – they will come here, and we will go there. It’s always fun to get a big group of kids together, and it sounds great. Also we have an upcoming concert in Palmer Hall on May the 6th in the evening: Bridgit Davis will come up from New York for a return engagement – she was here two years back, and was absolutely fantastic. She sings some familiar material along with originals, in a folk-rock-jazz style that is mesmerizing. Additionally she is joined by her band mates, including First Church alumnus, expert guitarist Sam Petitti. This is a concert that can be enjoyed by anyone of any age – so we encourage all to come, enjoy some refreshments, and listen to some great music.

Music at First Church is alive and well, thanks to all who are taking part. It connects us to God in a wonderful, indescribable way – please know that you are all welcome to be a part at any time!

Happy Easter!

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. Weekly church school emails are sent to parents on Fridays. If you are not receiving the emails contact ccole@fccsimsbury.org.

TAG SALE :

To Benefit First Church Children's Ministry Programs

Saturday: April 30, 9am-4pm, early bird entrance fee 8:30-9am is \$10

Drop off of all tag sale goods will be from Noon -8pm Thursday (April 28) and 9am-3pm Friday (April 29)

Volunteer shopping and party: April 29, 5-7pm

The annual church tag sale will once again be coming your way April 30, 2016. As spring arrives and we think about cleaning out our closets, garages, attics, and basements, we can also plan to select our "best" stuff for the tag sale. The tag sale proceeds helps the church school run the babysitting events, workshops, mission projects, and purchase of supplies and equipment.



We do very well with:

Costume jewelry and accessories; furniture pieces; holiday decorations; china, cutlery, pottery and glassware; children's games, books and toys; small appliances that are clean and working; radios and CD players that work; garden and workshop tools, adult books published within the last five years, and nice baskets.

There are, however, a few categories of items we do not need:

Computers/keyboards/monitors and computer tables, VHS players, air conditioners, televisions, clothes, broken items (all appliances must be in working condition for us to accept them), exercise equipment, old skis, drapery rods, old suitcases, bikes over 5 years old, light fixtures/fluorescent ceiling fixtures.

Please clean up furniture (especially children's) and make sure everything you bring in is ready for sale. Imagine us trying to clean and make presentable for sale thousands of items brought in by many people.

If you would be willing to work on the tag sale to benefit the children at First Church, call or email : Kim Tawney , 860-716-5237, kimtawney@gmail.com & Cindy Cole, 860-651-3593, ccole@fccsimsbury.org.

Silver Lake Conference Center:

Silver Lake is a UCC overnight camp for kids in the fourth through twelfth grade.

- **Registration is open now: go to www.silverlake.org. Click on "Silver Lake Registration."**
- Additional information is on the 3rd floor bulletin board.

Vacation Bible School: At Surf Shack VBS, the Surfers will hit the waves to develop a deeper understanding of God's awesome power!

June 20-24, Monday-Friday, 9am—noon

- We need an adult volunteer for every 5 kids who sign up. Volunteers are given free tuition for one child. Child care is available for kids of volunteers under age 4.
- Surfers must be at least four years old by May 31st or entering the 6th grade this fall.
- Registration fee is \$40.



Upcoming events for your Calendar

April 10: Church School Grades K-7 will see a movie and activity about Apostle Paul

April 28: noon—8pm collection of tag sale items in Palmer Hall

April 29: 9am -3pm collection of tag sale items in Palmer Hall, Volunteer shopping and party, 5-7pm

April 30: Tag Sale, 9am-4pm

March/April Church School Mission Project:

The students are collecting school supplies for **Smith Elementary School in New Britain**. Towards the end of the year, the teachers run out of supplies for their classroom. The church school will be helping to provide needed supplies.

Donations needed:

- stickers
- markers
- glue sticks
- Clear tape
- crayons
- pencils
- White board markers
- Copy paper
- Incentive prizes
- Kleenex
- Hand sanitizer
- Math flash cards



Our Memorial Garden

You may not be aware of it, but we have a lovely Memorial Garden on our church property. It was created in the 1990s and now contains the remains of 59 persons. The garden has a stone wall, stately walkway and benches set among lovely bushes, flowers, and a flowing fountain in good weather. It was designed to be a place for the peaceful and respectful interment of the ashes of our loved ones allowing quiet contemplation and remembrances by their families and friends.

Present and former members and friends of First Church and their families may use it for interment of their ashes of their loved ones. The fee for using the Memorial Garden is \$500 for members and their families, and \$700 for non-members. There is also an additional cost for the brass plaque with the name and date for the deceased which is mounted on nearby rocks. A Book of Remembrance is kept in the parlor area of the church with a page for an obituary, photograph or other written memorial to the deceased. These items are furnished by the family.

The ministers are pleased to offer the Garden and their services as part of their care for our members and families in their time of need. You are welcome to contact either of the ministers for more information and for support in time of bereavement. There are brochures available in the church office to answer any further questions you may have.

The Memorial Garden Committee



Community Farm of Simsbury

The Community Farm of Simsbury has asked the Board of Mission for help this spring. Prior to planting the organic vegetables, we are asked to help with the following: Maintenance for deer and pasture fences; tool cleaning and sharpening; cleaning wooden stakes; repairing chicken coop run and coop door.

Could YOU please donate a few hours of your time to help with these tasks?? Please contact Jenn Djambazov, the Farm Manager, at 425-879-5896, or jdjambazov@giftsoflovet.org.



Walk Against Hunger

Save The Date!

Annual Walk Against Hunger

Sunday, May 1st

More information to follow.



National Rebuilding Day 2016

Join us in this day-long, annual mission project (formerly known as Christmas in April) on Saturday, April 30th for fun, fellowship and some hard work as we assist a single mother in Hartford and her son by making their home a safe and secure place.

In past years our First Church Rebuilding Together Team has worked to help families and individuals in need by updating kitchens and bathrooms, painting interiors, installing sidewalks, helping with basement clean-up, as well as yard clean up and planting flowers. It's a great day for the volunteers and the homeowner family.

This year Rebuilding Together Hartford will be working on 29 homes within a four block radius - in the hopes that Rebuilding Day will be a boost to the entire neighborhood.

Come be a part of our team - sign up to volunteer directly at www.rthartford.org - when it asks for 'Group' - click on 'NRD-First Church Simsbury (Richard Derr)' or contact Richard or Esther Derr at rer74@live.com or by phone at 860-874-4111.



You are cordially invited to SUPPER CLUB on **Friday, April 15, 2016**
Social time: 6 pm ~ Dinner time: 6:30 pm ~ Program time: 7:45 pm

We welcome Spring with an evening program and presentation by Dr. Roger Preston on “Birding.” Roger is a Connecticut native, born in Manchester, attended Tufts Dental School in Boston, and served in the US Army from 1954-1957. He moved to Simsbury in 1961 where he established his dental practice and his home. His interest in birding was stimulated as a Boy Scout, and has evolved over the years into great expertise. He continues to work with the Hartford Audubon Society and Simsbury Land Trust.



Reservations—at the cost of \$16/ person—need to be called in to either Cynthia Yoczik (860.658.7460) or Mim Shepard (860.470.3943) no later than Monday, April 11, 2016. All are welcome! Dinner catered by Harvest Café & Bakery

It’s SPRING and Opportunity is knocking at YOUR door ...

The opportunity for you to further participate and contribute to your Church as well as to enhance your faith journey awaits you! The Nominating Committee is preparing for our Annual Meeting on May 1st by offering opportunities for you to serve on one of our Church’s Boards or Committees. Perhaps you have been thinking about exploration of such opportunities and your involvement with the new energy and excitement provided by Pastor George’s arrival. There are a wide variety of church Boards and Committees that invite your participation and contribution—Music, Finance, Worship, Christian Education, Mission and Outreach, Deacons, Trustees, and Personnel are the large boards/committees, but there are other groups that exist and provide an expression of your faith, such as First Church Friends, Memorial Garden Committee, Care Bags Ministry, Called to Care, and Women’s Ministry to name a few. To learn more and/or to join in the rewards of service to First Church and our community, please contact Dane Woodberry of the Nominating Committee at (860) 658-7996.



President’s Message

This month my message is a financial update. While this is certainly not the most exciting message you will read, it is an important one.

At our annual financial meeting in February, the congregation unanimously passed the budget recommended by the Finance Committee and presented by Treasurer Ron Patterson. That budget, which projects a small deficit, was based on pledge income of \$710,000. At the time, we had actual pledges of about \$650,000. There is nothing unusual about this. We were comfortable with that budget for several reasons. For example, we typically continue to receive late pledges after the annual financial meeting. New members who join throughout the year are likely to pledge, and some people simply give to the church without actually pledging.

This year, however, I am already concerned that pledge income may not come in as high as budgeted. We did not receive as many late pledges as we anticipated. As of today, we only have 276 pledges and actual pledges of only \$655,000, which is significantly below our goal of \$710,000, and below last year. If our outlook for the full year does not improve, we will need to consider cutting some programs later this year, so we do not create an even larger deficit. So, please regard this message as a reminder that if you have not yet pledged, we do need to hear from you so that we can increase our confidence that we will indeed reach our income targets. This is also a chance for all of us to re-think our 2016 pledge in light of this projected shortfall. Perhaps you received a larger tax refund or annual bonus than you anticipated when you pledged way back in November, and wish to give a portion to First Church. If so, we would love to hear from you as well.

I am excited by all the activity at First Church, and truly appreciate all of your support.
Faithfully yours,
Jim Trimble

If you have not yet made your pledge or if you would like to increase your pledge to help us reach our goals, please email the amount to Cathie Behrens at cbehrens@fccsimsbury.org and she will create or correct your pledge card and send you an acknowledgement. Thank you in advance for your continued generosity.



First Church of Christ

689 Hopmeadow St
Simsbury CT 06070
(860) 651-3593
Fax (860) 408-9229
Kitchen (860) 658-9043
www.fccsimsbury.org

STAFF

Rev. George M. Harris
Senior Minister
gharris@fccsimsbury.org

Rev. Kevin Weikel
Associate Minister for
Youth and Young Adults
kweikel@fccsimsbury.org

Mark Mercier
Director of Music Ministries
mmercier@fccsimsbury.org

Cindy Cole
Director of Children's Ministries
ccole@fccsimsbury.org

Shannon Lindsay
Church Administrator
slindsay@fccsimsbury.org

Vacant
Administrative Assistant

Catherine Behrens
Membership Coordinator
cbehrens@fccsimsbury.org

Lisa Reed
Financial Assistant
lreed@fccsimsbury.org

Joe Martinez
Facilities Manager
jmartinez@fccsimsbury.org

*~ Please notify the
Church of any address
changes. ~*

*Sign up for our emails
and check our website.*

First Church of Christ Boards/Committees

Information - Involvement - Enrichment

This is to continue a monthly "Cornerstone" series of articles intended to inform you (and hopefully, to involve you and enrich your church life) about various and diverse Boards and Committees that help make up the fabric of First Church. Each month will feature the Boards and/or Committees that will host Fellowship Hour in Palmer Hall following Sunday morning 10 am worship. This will afford a dialogue opportunity for Boards/Committees to present their purposes and activities and for congregants to explore and discover opportunities for personal involvement and faith growth.

April 3rd—Board of Music Ministries

The Board of Music Ministries is a seven-member board that works closely with Mark Mercier, our Director of Music Ministries, to support and guide the diverse music groups and programs of our church. We have choirs for all ages, including the Cherub Choir, Junior Choir, Women's Praise, Men's Choir, and Chancel Choir, as well as the Uncommon Worship Band. Some participate in worship services on occasion and at special holidays, while the Chancel Choir sings in the 10:00 am service most Sundays. In addition to these groups, we also have an outstanding Bell Choir, for adults and teens. We also sponsor concerts on a regular basis, as a form of support of the arts and enhancement of our church's place in the community.

We believe in the importance of music and its ability to take us to another place. Imagine a church service with no music. It just wouldn't be the same. We have a very broad repertoire, from classical to contemporary, gospel to jazz. Each of the groups is unique in its own way, and all are open and eager to welcome new members! A great deal of effort goes into planning the music to support the theme of the service, as well as the season in our liturgical year. On top of all that, Mark has a way of making it all a whole lot of fun! All of the rehearsal schedules are published in the Sunday bulletin's church calendar insert and on the church website. Won't you join us? If you're interested, please contact Mark Mercier (mmercier@fccsimsbury.org) or Randy Cole (wrcole26@gmail.com) for more information.

April 10th—Board of Trustees & Grants

The Board of Trustees is responsible for managing and maintaining all the real and personal property of the church including renting Church facilities, leasing personal property, supervision of custodial staff, oversight of Church vehicles, and administering the Building and Grounds section of the operating budget. The Board is composed of nine adult members.

April 17th— Board of Finance & Control Sub Committee

The Board of Finance is authorized nine members plus the Treasurer, who serves as board chairperson, by the Church's By-Laws. The Board manages the financial matters of First Church which includes the budgets, endowments, accounting, financial controls and banking operations. The Board seeks members who have some financial/accounting background and an interest in helping First Church maintain its long tradition of fiscal soundness and funding its many ministries, mission outreaches, and projects. The Board, in conjunction with other Boards and the Executive Committee, develops and implements the Church's stewardship campaign each year.

April 24th—First Church Friends

First Church Friends is a group which visits members of the Church in their homes, in nursing homes, or hospitals. In addition, the group delivers poinsettias at Christmas and lilies at Easter to those in need. The group meets about every six weeks to share any concerns regarding visitations and to update the visitation list. During severe weather and/or power outages, the group contacts specific Church members to assure their well being and to offer assistance should such be needed. We welcome all those who would like to help us keep in touch with our church friends who benefit from some personal contact in their places of residence.

Upcoming Fellowship Hosts and Receptions

April 3rd	John and Betty Yocom's Farewell Reception, and the Board of Music Ministries.
April 10th	Board of Trustees & Grants
April 17th	Board of Finance & Control Sub Committee
April 24th	Dick and Claire Burns' Farewell Reception, and Friends of First Church.