

# THE CORNERSTONE

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

**Welcome to September 2017 at First Church!**

**Please join us for Worship!**

## August 27th

### Backpack Blessing Sunday

Service at 9:30 am in the Sanctuary  
Students and Adults are encouraged to bring their  
back packs and briefcases to the service to be blessed  
for the upcoming school year.  
After the blessing, students will be dismissed to  
Palmer Hall for the Backpack Mission Project and  
activities.

## September 3rd

Service at 9:30 am in the Sanctuary  
with Holy Communion  
Rev. George Harris, preaching

## September 10th

### Rally Day!

Service at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary  
with the Sacrament of Baptism  
Rev. George Harris, preaching  
followed by a celebration at 11:00 am

## September 17th

Regular Sunday Services Resume  
Service at 8:30 am in the Chapel and  
10:00 am in the Sanctuary  
Rev. George Harris, preaching

## September 24th

### YASC Commissioning Sunday!

8:30 am in the Chapel  
10:00 am in the Sanctuary  
Rev. Kevin Weikel, preaching



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**Rev. George Harris**

**Senior Minister**

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Out of Office  
Tuesdays

## ***Pastor Pondering***

Forget Christmas in July, It's Time for Easter in August!

Though I have never participated, I know Christmas in July is “a thing.” People who can't get enough of Christmas or those just looking for an excuse to throw a party host events with a Christmas theme in July (though I expect the baby Jesus can nary be found). When I left the house this morning, burdened by the news of the day, and saw that my rose bushes are in bloom it occurred to me that, more than a Christmas party in July, we need more Easter in August!

In May, my Aunt Dot, sent me six bare-root rose “bushes” in the mail as thanks for performing a grave-side service for her husband, my Uncle Sunny. I opened the box to find what looked like a bunch of brown sticks. You know from other stories I have told that I have the brownest of thumbs, so this box of dead wood was unrecognizable to me until I read the enclosed card. The instructions promised that by following some simple steps, these bare roots and stems would soon produce beautiful roses. I had my doubts, and if it wasn't for some sense of duty to my Aunt Dot I might have just left them where they lay. But obligation can be a powerful motivator, so before a couple days passed I followed the steps and planted the sticks along my driveway. Sure enough, the stems quickly began to sprout leaves and have continued to grow throughout the summer.

There has been the occasional challenge. I sought advice on Facebook on how to prune them; pretty simple it turns out but even the most basic tasks can seem intimidating if you have never done them. A number of you offered helpful advice, and church members even invited me and my family over to dinner, followed by a hands-on demonstration of rose pruning in their garden! There have been bugs, brown leaves, and other worries, but now the bushes are producing beautiful blossoms.

The story of Jesus' Passion is one of persecution, suffering and death. Likewise, today's headlines are filled with stories of persecution, suffering and death, whether it be nuclear sabre rattling or Nazi marches. At the same time, members of our church are carrying their own crosses, whether terminal illness, depression, or a broken marriage.

As we anticipate the beginning of the church year, let's prepare for Easter in August (and September... and October...). God is doing a new thing and so is First Church!

We are planning a number of initiatives to promote resurrection and new life in our church and community. Read the column by our new Young Adult Service Community (YASC) Congregational Coordinator, Jennifer Sanborn, about ways the Spirit of resurrection is moving in this exciting new ministry. Also read about the coming church-wide book group for Rob Bell's book, *What is the Bible?* Whether you are a biblical novice or experienced veteran of Bible studies, I guarantee that Bell's perspective will make the Bible newly interesting, accessible, and relevant to you! And stay tuned for information about a Greater Hartford Faith-Based Community Organizing Initiative. These, along with our continuing commitment to Spirit-filled, creative, engaging and relevant, Sunday worship remind us that Easter is more than a once-a-year invitation to resurrection celebration, but an everyday commitment we make to bring new life to a hurting world.

And just as my rose bushes required community participation (and a dinner invitation!) to bring forth beautiful blossoms from that which appeared to be dead, so we must all pitch in to make resurrection real in the church, the community, and our lives. I'll see you in church!

In Christ, Pastor George

## ***A Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel***

Greetings!

During the last week of July, First Church youth and youth leaders traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi, to work with Back Bay Mission; a mission agency of the United Church of Christ. Our young people painted the inside of one home and the outside of another, served meals at the local soup kitchen, staffed Back Bay Mission's food pantry and volunteered at Back Bay Mission's Micah Day Center. In the evenings our group enjoyed fellowship with one another, sang songs together, and engaged in discussions connecting the entire experience to our faith.

First Church has a longstanding relationship with Back Bay Mission. In the years after Hurricane Katrina, at least five different groups of First Church volunteers traveled to Biloxi and worked with the agency on hurricane relief and recovery. Our church gave generously to the rebuilding and expanding of Back Bay Mission through shrimp boil fundraisers in Palmer Hall and donations from our Board of Mission and Outreach. Our former Sr. Minister, Jonathan Morgan, served on the Back Bay Mission Board of Directors. First Church member Margo Kilbon served as Back Bay Mission's Connecticut Representative, traveling around the state spreading the word about the good work of Back Bay Mission. With this history in mind, it was especially meaningful to witness the thriving ministry of Back Bay Mission.

The scripture on every Back Bay Mission logo comes from Micah 6:8, "Do justice, love kindness and mercy, and walk humbly with your God." The story behind the scripture is that the people of Israel had lost their way. While they thought offering sacrifices was the best way to please God, Micah told them that burned offerings – year-old calves or thousands of rams covered in oil, as the scripture goes – means little. Instead, what is most pleasing to God is doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly.

During our trip, we talked about the different ways we attempt to please God, whether that's offering a prayer for a situation in the world or going to church on a Sunday morning. We then discussed how, like the people of Israel, these offerings mean little unless they inspire us to stand up for justice, show mercy, and walk humbly with God.

As a new ministry program year begins at First Church, there is much excitement in the air. Rally Day, Church School, Youth Programs, Bible Studies, Music Ministries, worship, and of course the new YASC program, I can hardly wait! At the same time, our participation in these programs must inspire us to more. To truly please God, we must promote justice and fairness, show mercy and kindness, and demonstrate humility in all that we do. This is our mandate as people of faith. May it be so.

Peace to you,

Kevin



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## ***A Message from Jennifer***

**I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.**

Isaiah 43:19 (NRSV)

I have made a career of “doing a new thing,” in my willingness to venture out for new opportunities and by specializing in roles that are responsible for launching new programs and initiatives. This is creative, energized space, in my experience, and it’s also where collaboration and connection are most essential....one cannot “do a new thing” on one’s own! Bringing a vision like the Young Adult Service Community to fruition occasionally means encountering obstacles or unforeseen challenges--”We’re flying the plane while building it,” I often say. The gift of these encounters is bearing witness to “the way being made in the wilderness,” and I try to pause often to perceive God’s hand in what is transpiring in, through, and between us.

Since joining First Church in late June, I have had multiple such experiences. While the foundation was well-established--service sites were secured; interns were committed to us and to this experience; a generous gift enabled programmatic support--there are challenges along even the best-laid path.

- We were in need of a particular kind of range/stove in the house for safe use by all our interns, and Holloway’s Appliance Center offered to donate exactly what we needed. A way was made!
- Our interns were facing a long and challenging commute to their service sites in Hartford via public transportation. Hearing of this, Kathy and Peter Wildman offered to donate the car that had belonged to Peter’s father, Lynn Wildman. A river in the desert!
- As I write, church members are signing up to provide the final items needed to turn 6 West Street into a gracious home for our young adults, and the house has been beautifully furnished thanks to the connections of Kris Barnett. If you’ve driven by the house recently, you know that Colton Glenn, facilities manager, has been clearing the overgrowth that was encroaching on the house....he is literally making a way through what was looking like a wilderness!

If you are still seeking your opportunity to contribute, stay tuned. We will stock the kitchen for the interns’ arrival on or around September 22nd, and there will be opportunities throughout the year to lend a hand, a voice, or an ear to these young adults who will bring such energy and new life into our midst!

On September 24th, in worship, and in next month's Cornerstone, we'll introduce you to Bekah Anderson, Anastasia Damyan, and a still-to-be-selected intern (we hope and pray!), as well as tell you about the sites where they will be serving.

These young adults are preparing to do their own new thing in joining us, and I trust in the wide and warm welcome of this community to make their way smooth.

Thank you to all the members and friends of First Church and beyond who are helping us to do this new thing!



## *Musical Notes*

The new church year begins! It's kind of like waking up in the morning and seeing a brand new day ahead with new exciting possibilities, and the energy to get them done! This past summer was filled with things that I wanted to do, and I actually got to most of them. I made a list: some places I've always wanted to see; some things I wanted to do with the kids: fishing; camping; kayaking... and the beach! I was brought up on the ocean in Maine, and no summer would be complete without riding a couple of waves and sitting in the sun.

But great things are around the corner, and we hope that some of this winds up on your list of things "to do" for the coming year. Try out playing some bells for several rehearsals; join a men's, or a women's choir... Or a mixed choir – even for one or two Sundays. Go to a concert, or put one on. Do a little lip-synching. Sing at Christmas. Or else one (or more) of these very cool presentations: On Sunday, Nov 5, during the All-Saints worship service at 10, musically we will present as part of communion worship composer Bob Chilcott's "Little Jazz Mass." It is some great jazz, well written and inspirational. In January, as a celebration of Martin Luther King Day and his presence here in Simsbury, we will present Paul Halley's "Freedom Trilogy" with all the choirs, including the Junior Choir, and an amazing instrumental accompaniment. As part of Lent we will present Faure's beautifully stunning "Requiem."

But knowing that some may hesitate about getting up in front of to congregation to sing, I have an idea: When we sing this music from the chancel, some of you shy people who wish to learn that music and sing with us may also do it from the front pews (facing the choir) as part of the group. We'll rehearse it for a short while each Thursday evening –

Also, beginning in October, we will re-present an expanded version of what turned out to be a very successful series: our Monday evening "Choir 101" sessions. Each Monday (on non-meeting nights) we gather for 45-minute to an hour to learn and talk about things from reading music to some singing techniques to discussions on musical styles and the place music holds in worship, and your lives, today. A schedule will be released during September – come to what interests you, what would be helpful, or what you think you might like to learn about. This will make making music in any group (or even listening) less intimidating and a lot more enjoyable.

All in all, there's an excellent program here. But it won't exist without your participation. Come and be a part of something really great that will expand your soul and make you see life a little differently. Music can be a bit of an oasis from so much negativity that is out there these days, but it can also unite all of us – no matter what our opinion - in the expression of something that is so good in so many ways.

Here is our schedule: (all choirs start the week after Labor Day

Women's Praise Choir - Wednesdays at 4 PM beginning on Sept 6 – choir room.

Choral Bells – Thursdays at 6 PM beginning on Sept 7 – room 29

Men's Choir – Thursdays at 7 PM beginning on Sept 7 - choir room.

Chancel Choir – Thursdays at 7:30 PM until 9 beginning on Sept 7 - choir room.



Junior Choir will begin on Sept 17 – the week after Rally Day and will meet Sundays directly after church for 45 minutes. Someone will come to the Sunday school classes to bring kids to the choir room at the end of Sunday school.

See you in September! –  
Mark



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Out of Office  
Tuesdays



## Kids @ First

**Grow your heart at First Church!**



Visit [www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://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 Thursday. If you are not receiving the emails contact [ccole@fccsimsbury.org](mailto:ccole@fccsimsbury.org).



### Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

**August 27:** Backpack Blessing and Breakfast

**September 10:** First Day of Church School, Rally Day Picnic

**September 11:** Board of Christian Education Meeting at 5:30, Youth rm.

**October 1 :** World Communion Sunday, Feed the Children Mission Morning

**October 29:** Bible Sunday



## Welcome to the 2017-18 Church School Year!

Classes begin on Sept 10 @ 10am, students begin the morning in worship and are dismissed to class.

Join us for the picnic and celebration after the worship service.

### Fall Church School Teachers Needed

**Church school for the kids at First Church is only made possible because of dedicated volunteers like you!**



Please considering volunteering in our fall 2017 church school program. All the classroom materials and curriculum are provided to you. Teachers share the responsible of teaching a class, and decided who is teaching on any given Sunday. If you are interested in volunteering next year or would like more information please email [ccole@fccsimsbury.org](mailto:ccole@fccsimsbury.org).

Volunteers are need in order to offer the classes in bold print:

♥ **Pre-K (ages 3 & 4) - (At least 3 teachers needed)**

♥ Kindergarten – Patti Scanlon & Theresa Carlson

Rotation Program Shepherds accompany the kids as they rotate to the different classes, take attendance, monitor student behavior and assist the teacher where needed:

♥ Grades 1&2 – Jess Buckle

♥ Grade 3 – Suzanne Osborne

♥ Grades 4 & 5 – Karen Myers

Rotation Program Teachers. for Grades 1-5. remain in the class and teach the same lesson to the 3 different groups (above) that rotate to their room:

♥ **Art - (2 teachers needed)**

♥ Bible story - Jen Petron & Kristen Pomeroy

♥ **Cooking—(2 teachers needed)**

♥ Computer - David Mcelligott & Rob Dawson

♥ Pre-confirmation teachers – Erin Naspo & Anna Harris



### Fall Church School Registration:

Please register your students in the church school program.

*Students will not automatically be moved up to the next grade.*

Please go to the website:

[www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com)

to register online your children for the fall session.

### Backpack Mission Project:

Special thanks to all of you who helped fill the backpack for local school children!



### Church School Mission Projects:

One way parents can teach stewardship and generosity is to ensure that their child brings their offering envelope to church each Sunday. The student offering is placed in a separated account from the church. The offering is used exclusively for church school mission projects. Student can earn their offering by doing chores. The offering is collected from the kids as they leave the sanctuary to attend class.

This fall our offering will go toward the purchase of items for 48 Christmas stockings. These stockings will be donated to area social workers to help families have a joyful holiday.



## Youth and Young Adults

Junior Fellowship (JF) is youth group for 7th and 8th graders. JF gathers approximately one Friday per month from 2:10-4:30 pm, with additional special events scheduled from time to time. At a typical JF meeting our youth enjoy a snack, play games, participate in service projects and faith-based discussions. For students attending Henry James, the church bus comes to the rear parking lot for pickup. On JF Friday[s, the bus is parked in the back of the bus parking lot. Students simply walk out the back doors of Henry James, take a right past the gym and tennis courts, look to their left, and they won't be able to miss the church bus parked next to the field. Students attending schools other than Henry James can meet us at the church at 2:30pm.

First JF Gathering!

Friday, September 8th

2:10-4:30pm

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Confirmation at First Church is an intentional time of exploring what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We do this in large and small groups through fellowship, conversation, study, mission work, worship, and more. The goal is for for each student to grow in the knowledge that he or she is a magnificent creation of the Divine and deeply loved by God, and for each student to understand that God's love extends to all creation and all people. By the end of the Confirmation process, the hope is that each student has a desire to follow in Christ's way and officially join First Church.

Potluck Dinner & Information

Sunday, September 17th

5-7pm

Meeting for students and parents.

The last day to register for Confirmation is Wednesday, September 20.

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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.

Kidnap the Freshmen on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sorry, we can't publish the date and time because it's a secret!

First Regular PF Gathering Sunday, September 17th 7-9pm Youth Room

with icebreakers and get to know you activities!

Each student will fill out small group requests.

PF Bowling Sunday, September 24th 7-9pm

Small groups are revealed!

Drop off and pick up are both at the church.

[Visit the Youth and Young Adult Pages on our Website for Current, Up-to-Date Information!](#)

*Biloxi*

MS

destination: back bay mission ☐ biloxi, ms  
july 23-29 2017

immerse ☐ restore ☐ assist ☐ connect

## Reflections from Mission Trip 2017

At the end of July, our youth traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi, where they worked with Back Bay Mission Agency to refurbish homes. Below are some photos and reflections of our youth.

"There is one moment that really stands out to me from our trip. It was a time I really felt the presence of God. It was our first day of work and it was down pouring rain and extremely humid. When the rain finally finished we drove in our group of mini vans to a worksite to paint the interior of a house. On our way into the house, I caught the sight of a homeless man on a yellow bike. He sat up tall on his bike with his chest puffed out and his long beard flowing as he rode. At first Rev

Kev and I saw him wave at the mini van in front of us and both of our faces lit up with joy. Then when we passed him, he waved at us. Looking back at the two other mini vans behind us, I could see he waved at them as well. This man didn't need to wave at our van let alone any van, he didn't know us. I realized in that moment that he was carrying out God's kindness that we talked about from our focus scripture of the week from Micah 6:8, "Do justice, love mercy and kindness, and walk humbly with your God." The act of initiating a welcoming gesture showed me how valuable kindness can be. It is worth a wave to make someone's day a little happier."

~Veronica Glick

"On Tuesday in Biloxi, our group with pastor George himself was assigned to go to the local soup kitchen, loaves and fishes. While we were there, we served a barber named Shane, who cut hair on an upside down bucket outside of the kitchen. Shane was a friendly man, and pastor George, needing a haircut, decided to ask Shane for a trim afterwards.

It was pouring outside, so the soup kitchen allowed Shane to bring his equipment inside and gave George his haircut in the soup kitchen lobby. While he was cutting, Shane shared his life story. He told us about how unlucky he was, about how his ex girlfriend ran him over in his own car out of anger, about how one of his kids died and another was suffering through cancer, and about how Katrina ruined his career as a barber.

But, when Shane started singing gospel songs, everything changed. He became very happy and upbeat, and had a sense of hope and love within him. The gospels seemingly revived Shane, making him feel as if nothing was wrong in the world, and he was still just a small town kid from the south. This amazed me, the fact that despite everything that he has been through, the songs of God and word of Jesus gave him so much hope and love, that nothing seemed to bother him. Shane was the happiest man ever in that moment, all because God truly motivated him, made him feel like everything was alright. Hearing Shane sing so happily made me feel grateful for the opportunities I have and the wonderful life I live, and I know I'll never forget how God changed Shane that day."

~Mason Thomsen

"Regi was a guest at the Micah Day Center, a place where those experiencing homelessness can drop in to do laundry, take a shower, use a computer and have a cup of coffee. This is important because in Biloxi there is a rule against overnight shelters. The Micah Day Center also provides a way for those experiencing homelessness to have physical address and phone number. Regi told me and three other people his story and the affect of drugs and alcohol on his life and how he made some bad decisions to get himself where he was. The part that stood out to me was when he told us that he realized he was heading in a terrible direction and needed to turn his life around. Regi told us, in tears, that he had tried to commit suicide and that Jesus helped him through that time. He also told us that he learned to read with the Bible and that he has applied to jobs in order to attempt and make his life better. He told us his childhood dream was to be a preacher. Regis story was an



amazing example of how God is with you every step of the way. Even though so much had gone wrong in his life, Regi always knew that God was right there with him and that was what kept his attitude positive.

The other person who stood out to me was Julie, whose house we were painting the exterior of. Julie told a group of us her story and how she lived through Katrina in that very house. It was touching to hear her story but at the end she was moved to tears thanking us. She didn't cry when she was talking about throwing away her belongings or being scared in the face of the storm, she cried out of happiness that, in her words, "y'all haven't forgotten us down here because it really isn't better yet" I saw God in the way she thanked us and the way that she could share her life experiences with us.



God shines through even in the hardest of times which helps us to know that God is there in the best times too."

~Sarah Ackles

### SARAH STOPS HUNGER EVENT

THIS YEAR, FOLLOWING THE WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY SERVICE ON **OCTOBER 1ST**, SARAH STOPS HUNGER WILL BE MAKING ANOTHER 10,000 MEALS!

WE NEED YOUR HELP DONATING AT [SARAHSTOPSHUNGER.COM](http://SARAHSTOPSHUNGER.COM) TO PURCHASE THE MEALS WITH RISE AGAINST HUNGER! MEALS ARE 29 CENTS EACH AND WITH EVERYONE'S HELP WE CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN. WE WILL HELP TO FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE AS WE CELEBRATE WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY WITH CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD. OUR CONGREGATION IS WORKING TOWARDS HANDS ON INVOLVEMENT OF ALL AGES WHEN GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE AFTER THE 10:00 AM SERVICE ON OCTOBER 1ST IN PALMER HALL.**

**DONATIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE AT [SARAHSTOPSHUNGER.COM](http://SARAHSTOPSHUNGER.COM) OR AT THE EVENT.**



### Back by Popular Demand!

What once was a customary, expected, sight for "Great Pumpkin" believers in Simsbury, is returning for Fall 2017!



First Church will once again host a Pumpkin Patch!

As we all wait with Linus' anticipation and faith, keep watch for more details and information, coming soon!



### Fall Book Study Opportunity, Coming!

In October we will form multiple small groups for a six-week discussion of:

- Some may know Bell from his *NOOMA* video series; others may have read his book *Love Wins*.
- His writing is fast-paced, provocative and funny.
- *What is the Bible?* provides a perfect introduction for biblical novices while offering challenges to the most experienced Bible study veterans.

Beyond the learning opportunity, this is a perfect way to make new friends and deepen relationships with people you have known for years.

**Watch the midweek emails and Sunday bulletins for details about meeting days and times and how to sign up!**

## What Is the Bible?

How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything

Written and Read by

**Rob Bell**

New York Times Bestselling Author

***"A Glimpse of Our Church History..."***

***...from Ken Poppe on behalf of the Heritage Committee***



I came across a fascinating hard cover notebook in the archive room that includes the minutes of the meetings of the Ladies Guild of First Church from 1933-1950. They provide an interesting insight into an active group of women who met 5-6 times a year and who...

- hosted speakers, including missionaries, who shared experiences on travels to China, India, Turkey, Japan, Thailand, Peru and many other countries
- performed skits, sang hymns, prayed and were entertained by guest musicians and singers
- raised money through fairs and suppers to provide funds to 'Indian' reservations in Montana and North Dakota, 'negro' colleges and schools in the south, and recreation programs for tobacco workers in our area as well as church projects to pay bills for repairs to the kitchen and furnace
- made or collected clothing to be sent to areas in need during and after World War II

Here are some sample entries:

- November, 1936: [This may be a reference to a school (or college) in North Carolina founded in 1913 for 'disadvantaged mountain children.] 'It was voted to give \$20 to complete a scholarship gift to Crossnore College.'
- February, 1939: [Japan had invaded China in 1937.] 'Mrs. Mitchell a special offering for relief in China was taken. Amount received \$23.35.'
- January, 1941: [European nations still had colonies in Africa.] 'Our speaker has been a missionary in Algeria for thirteen years. She showed colored slides from pictures taken herself in this important French colony in North Africa...pictures of the camel caravans on the Sahara and of the men who are veiled—living in their tents of hides—surrounded by date palms. Colorful pictures of women carrying water in skins who told us that less than two jugs a day is cause for divorce.'
- March, 1942: [America had joined World War II in December, 1941.] 'Because of the rubber shortage a suggestion was made that only one car from each section of the parish be driven on meeting days. People driving cars to take turns if possible in asking members to ride.'
- \* February, 1991 [Women's Fellowship was a later version of the Ladies Guild, and it continued a commitment to the needs of others] 'To Reverend K.S. Mbamao: Our organization has just sent 19 boxes of clothing to your church in Namibia. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we extend our hand in friendship and love to you.'

Signed: Mary Hendrickson, President

**A Message from Marguerite Boslaugh, First Church Delegate to the UCC Regarding: General Synod 2017**

I attended General Synod (the every two-year gathering of UCC delegates and guests) in Baltimore this summer. Here are a few highlights--there's much more at the Synod website. [General Synod 2017 | June 30-July 4, 2017 | Baltimore, Maryland](#). Or feel free to email me at [mboslaugh@yahoo.com](mailto:mboslaugh@yahoo.com) for more details.

The daily worship services combined traditional hymns, contemporary music, lively preachers and sacred dance, into inspiring programs, each with a slightly different feel, but all inspiring and giving us time to rest and reflect between activities.

Many resolutions were passed by the body, including promoting greater inclusion of people with disabilities in all church activities, support for adult survivors of child abuse, naming gun violence as a public health emergency, urging action to combat the climate crisis, promoting economic justice and a \$15 minimum wage, declaring ourselves an Immigrant Welcoming Church (followed by a march to the local ICE headquarters) and endorsing a boycott of Wendy's (for mistreatment of farm workers.) However, the resolutions on Aid in Dying and Adoptee Access to Birth Certificates did not pass.

In addition to our General Minister John Dorhauer and the newly elected Executive Minister for Justice and Witness, Traci Blackmon, Synod speakers included Glennon Doyle (author of Love Warrior, giving herself as a example of the church's relevance today) and Aaron Mair (President of the Sierra Club, discussing the connections between pollution and racism.)

The "theme" for the next several years was announced at Synod: "Three Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children and Love of Creation." All of us are encouraged to use these Three Great Loves as a lens to view our mission and activities, and to share our thoughts and actions with the wider church.

One closing thought--if you can get to a Synod, whether as guest, volunteer or delegate, I highly recommend it. It's a wonderful way to experience both the diversity and the unity of our United Church of Christ.

## Save the Date!

### Note your calendar for these upcoming important dates:

Sunday, August 27 <sup>th</sup>	Backpack Blessing Sunday, Children to prepare backpacks for Mission Project
Monday, September 4 <sup>th</sup>	Church Office Closed - Labor Day
Tuesday, September 5 <sup>th</sup>	Executive Committee Meeting
September 6 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup>	Music Ministry Practices begin
Friday, September 8 <sup>th</sup>	First JF Gathering for 2017-18
Sunday, September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Rally Day Note: only 10:00 am Service, Celebration to follow
Monday, September 11 <sup>th</sup>	All Boards Resume after Summer Hiatus
Sunday, September 17 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 and 10:00 am Sunday Services Resume
	Jr. Choir Begins
	First PF Gathering for 2017-18
	Confirmation Student and Parent Dinner Meeting
Sunday, September 24 <sup>th</sup>	YASC Commissioning Sunday
Sunday October 1 <sup>st</sup>	World Communion Sunday
	Neighbors in Need Offering Received
	Sarah Stops Hunger Event
Monday, October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Church Office Closed- Columbus Day
Sunday October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Mission and Outreach Sunday
Sunday October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	ONA Sunday
Sunday October 29 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Sunday
	New Member Orientation following Worship
	All -Church Event
October (all month)	Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser

SAVE  
the  
DATE

### For a Complete Copy of our Monthly Calendar:

Please go to our [website and click on Church Calendar](#) to get the most current information.

If you would prefer a printed copy, please call the church office, we will be happy to print one and send it to you!



- **First Church Announces the use of Google Forms!** If you are involved in the Children's or Youth Ministry you may have had an opportunity to utilize this great new tool. A fillable form that sends the information directly into the Church office. No need to download, no need to save, no need to print. Next to online donations and sliced bread, this is the greatest thing yet! Watch your email for links that are easy to access and use, for ALL of us!
- **If you are on a Board or Committee**, please be sure you have assigned someone to check your mailbox in the Church Office. When items come in to the office, we place them in your mailbox, regular checking assures nothing is missed. If you cannot find your mailbox please contact the Church Office and we can assist you.
- **October 2017 Cornerstone Submission** Deadline: *Tuesday September 19th!*

### Wednesday Women's Group

The 4th Wednesday women's study group is welcoming new members.

Our first meeting of the "new year" will be on Wednesday, September 27th from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the church library.

Over a brown bag lunch, we'll begin our discussion of The Gift of Tomorrow by Robert A. Raines.

In recent years we've discussed books by C.S. Lewis, Harvey Cox, Barbara Brown Taylor, Henri Nouwen, and Anne Lamott.

If you'd like more information about the group or would like to order a book, please call Pat Ketchpel at 860-658-9357. Please join us!

## First Church of Christ

689 Hopmeadow St  
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First Church Invites *You* to Join Us!  
**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10<sup>am</sup>**  
Celebration to follow at 11<sup>am</sup>



We invite everyone in our  
surrounding community and  
beyond to come worship with  
us at 10:00 am.

Then join the celebration to kick  
off the church year!

Delicious food, bounce house,  
dunk tank, and great community.

Event takes place,  
Rain or Shine!



Beginning September 17th:  
Sunday Services at 8:30 am in the Chapel and 10 am in the Sanctuary

## First Church of Christ, Simsbury

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

**Following Christ • Building Community • Changing Lives**

689 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury • 860-651-3593 • [fccsimsbury.org](http://fccsimsbury.org)

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

## First Church of Christ

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Simsbury, CT 06070