

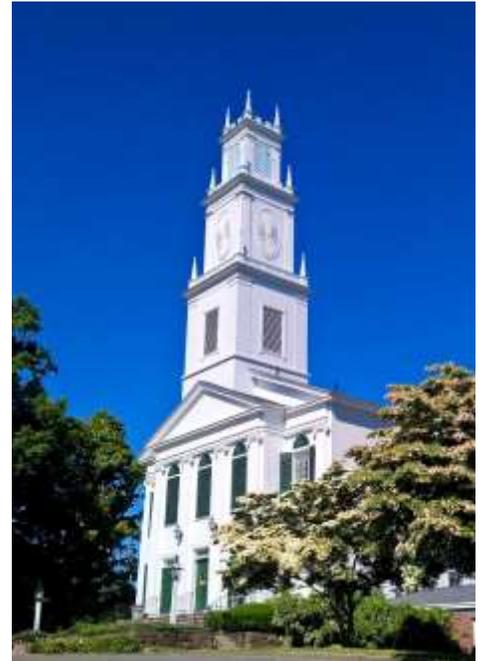
# THE CORNERSTONE

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

## JULY/AUGUST 2015 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join Us!

Summer Worship at 9:30 am



The Church Office will be CLOSED on Friday, July 3rd.

July 5

Rev. Kevin Weikel  
Genesis 28:15-16  
*Unexpected Places*

(Reflections from General Synod, the **United Church of Christ's** biennial gathering: Rev. Kevin Weikel, Marguerite Boslaugh, Gabby Cusano, and Maddie Earnhardt)

with Holy Communion

July 12

Rev. Dianne Arakawa  
2 Samuel 6:105, 12b-19  
*Our Jerusalems*

Baptism of Emerson Marie Armstrong, daughter of Jennifer and Michael Armstrong; and Baptism of Owen Blake Libros, son of Jocelyn and Adam Libros

July 19

Rev. Diane E. Kennedy, guest preacher  
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1  
Luke 15:11-24  
*Grace Notes*

July 26

Rev. David M. Powers, guest preacher  
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26  
*Witness to the Resurrection*

August 2

Rev. Dianne Arakawa  
John 6:24-35  
*Manna, Bread and Gluten-free*

with Holy Communion

August 9

Rev. Kevin Weikel  
Ephesians 4:24-32  
*Put It Away*

August 16

Rev. Michelle Hughes (Associate Conference Minister for Transitions), guest preacher  
Matthew 15:21-26  
*In God's Face*

August 23

Rev. Marcia L. Cox, guest preacher  
John 6:56-69  
*To Whom Can We Go?*

August 30

Rev. Terry Schmitt, guest preacher  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18  
Matthew 5:38-48  
*Love Beyond Fear*

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## Transitions



Rev. Dianne  
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Out of Office  
Fridays

Dear Friends,

Our Bible says in Genesis 2 that after the heavens and the earth were formed, God ended the work of Creation and rested. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Because of this convincing description, we stand in a long and particular tradition, which each week sets apart the Sabbath day for worship, re-creation and renewal. By participating in this timely ritual, we bring ourselves and the fruits of our labor into the presence of that which is most sacred and enduring to us. We have our lives and the lives of those in our community of faith blessed, just as we affirm the unending goodness and abundance of creation itself.

Summers, to me, are like extended Sabbaths, not just for the other six days of the week, but for the other working months of our year, whatever they are. Businesses, organizations, academia and churches have different understandings of what these periods and sabbaticals are and for what purposes they are. Regardless, they all acknowledge that some time away is beneficial in-and-of-itself and also enhances the regular patterns of employment, service, housekeeping and child-raising to which many of us have to return in order to maintain the quality of our lives.

Craig Lambert, who just retired as Deputy Editor of the Harvard Magazine last year, has written a profound book on the topic of work. Called Shadow Work: The Unpaid, Unseen Jobs that Fill Your Day, it points out how over the years, even with the benefits of technology, our work has significantly increased, and how **today we also do “shadow work,” the labor transferred from providers to customers. He writes: “Life has become busier. Somehow there seems to be less time in the day, although days remain indisputable twenty-four hours long. In truth, time isn’t vanishing, only free time is.”**

Some of us now have the privilege of working at home in our own rearranged studies, but oftentimes put in longer concentrated hours. A young couple in

finance, whom I counseled years ago told me that they were so tired of bringing home work and having to answer their phones or text messages 24/7 that they stopped. They retired their devices every **night at nine o’clock and placed them in the top drawer of their common bureau in order to save their marriage.**

**We do other kinds of “shadow work,”** as well. When we go to super markets and pick up their electronic wands or scan with our own mobile devices, we perform **that store’s work for them. There is almost no need to talk with a human being, except perhaps at customer service. We bag our items, pay our bills, check out and steer our carts to our cars, only to have to return them to their proper places. Similarly, when we go to banks we use our cards to enter or drive through designated spaces to use their bank machines in order to deposit or withdraw. We thereby do that bank’s work. There is really no service, except perhaps the ability to conduct our routine personal affairs at any time day or night. Furthermore, when we take trips in cars, planes or trains, we become our own travel agents. We check our itineraries, pump our gas and clean our cars. We purchase our own tickets, print our own boarding passes, weigh and measure our luggage, and confirm our departures. Having put in more than full days of work, we are drawn to do additional “shadow work,” the outsourcing of businesses and organizations.**

**Lambert’s book reminds us** stunningly that Sabbath and summers are crucial to our physical and spiritual health, and the network of interrelations that we cherish so deeply. This summer may our Sundays be set aside, not for **“shadow work” and complaints, but for blessing and sanctification. And may our summers, this summer, be filled, not with more-of-the-same and regrets, but with rest, refreshment, renewal, re-creation and revitalization for God’s sake and our own.**

Grace and peace,

Dianne

## *A Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel*

On Sunday, June 14th, I preached on The Parable of the Mustard Seed according to the Gospel of Mark. I talked about the complexities of wild mustard **and how odd it would have seemed to Jesus' audience that he used a mustard seed** and a mustard bush as images for the Kingdom of God. Wild mustard was considered to be a terrible weed – known mostly for its ability to take over a whole planting area, reduce crop quality, and sometimes kill off crops altogether. Furthermore, a fully-grown mustard bush would provide sanctuary for birds that could pull out valuable seeds and seedlings and destroy newly planted crops.

I asked during my sermon why Jesus would use such an image to describe the Kingdom of God, and I shared three conclusions. First, because the Kingdom of God is not as we might expect. It is the place where the first are last, and the last are first, where the exalted are humbled and the humble exalted, it is the place where the master washes the disciples feet. Second, because like a mustard bush, **the Gospel is to get into our stuff. It is to come in and take over. Christ's love, hope and peace are to make their way into our lives and snuff out hate, fear and violence.** Third and finally, just as a mustard bush provides sanctuary to unwanted birds, God welcomes those who others might not consider worthwhile, and we should, too.

I concluded the sermon by assigning summer homework (our children are assigned summer reading, so why not some summer homework for us adults as well?). The assignment was to take pictures of those places we experience the **Kingdom of God this summer, places where we see God's love, hope, peace and joy.** Our photos might be of a pristine sunrise or sunset, of someone working for love and justice, or of people smiling and laughing. Our photos need not be particularly obvious or grand; they are simply to be photos in which we see God's Kingdom.

I promised I would talk this project up – that I would write about it here in the Cornerstone Newsletter, and put it in the weekly email. And I promised to **share the results of our project when the new program year begins this fall. I'm looking forward to seeing this fall how we experienced God's Kingdom over the summer!**

So, send me your photos – email them to [kweikel@fccsimsbury.org](mailto:kweikel@fccsimsbury.org), or mail them to **689 Hopmeadow Street. Together, let's look for the Kingdom of God among us and share!**

*Kevin*



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Out of Office  
Wednesdays

## Mission Pilgrimage to Appalachia

On July 25th, 70 youth and young adults from our church will be trekking to the Appalachian Mountains to help make improvements to the homes of the region's poorest families, as part of the nation-wide Appalachia Service Project (A.S.P.).

This area of the country suffers from a very high jobless rate and, for many of these families, their modest houses have been handed down from generation to generation. Faced with the struggle to buy food or medicine for their families, home maintenance becomes a low priority and, as a result, homes are crumbling.

Our volunteers will help make their homes warmer, safer and drier. As a result, we can show these folks that not even the highest mountains or deepest hollows can separate them from the love of God. Our participants often find that these families change *their* perspectives and lives!

We will return on Sunday, August 2nd closer to God and sporting bigger hearts! We will be inspired and excited about the work we've done and the lives we've touched.

Join us on Sunday, September 20th at the 10 am Worship for our "Mission Pilgrimage Sharing Worship" Service to hear first-hand about our adventures!

### Church School Volunteers Needed for Fall Session 2015

The church school is a co-operative program where parents work together to teach their children about their faith. Please contact [ccole@fccsimsbury.org](mailto:ccole@fccsimsbury.org) to volunteer.

Nursery: Tara Laford, Kate Bruno, Kim Tawney  
Preschool: Suzanne Osborne, Jess Buckle, 1 teacher still needed  
Kindergarten: Patti Scanlon and Theresa Carlson

Rotation Program Grades 1-5 Shepherds:  
Shepherds meet their students in the chapel each Sunday, take attendance, hand out name tags, etc. They lead the students to class and are in charge of monitoring class room behavior, building relationships, and assisting the teacher as required.

Grade 1 & 2: Erin Naspo  
Grade 3 & 4: Anna Harris  
Grade 5: Kelly McLellan

The rotation teachers: Teachers remain in the classroom teaching the same unit lesson to the different grades as they rotate into the room. Two teachers are assigned to each workshop and they decide which teacher is going to teach on a given Sunday.

Computer Room: Dave McElligot, Anthony Weber  
Cooking Room: Sarah Leathers, Leslie Reynolds  
Art Room: JoAnn Hogan, 1 teacher still needed

Bible Storytelling Room (Godly play style):  
Jennifer Petron, 1 teacher still needed

Pre-Confirmation class: 6th and 7th graders participate in a 2 year program that reviews the major stories in the Bible. The program uses videos, and workbooks with games and activities. Students participate in the church school mission projects, Church School Advent Service, and the Palmer Hall large group activities that occur through out the school year.

Teacher: Sarah Wilmarth Guasta  
Shepherd: Jackie Brook  
Substitute teachers, shepherds, teen aides still needed

## *President's Message*

I am writing this message on Memorial Day, a day on which we remember all those who gave their lives to fight for democracy and our freedom. On this day I came across a very interesting 90-second video clip on YouTube. In it, Clay Christensen, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, talks about how critical religion is to a functioning democracy. He argues that democracy works because most people, most of the time, voluntarily choose to obey the law. He credits religion with teaching people this behavior, because each week in churches and synagogues across our nation adults and children are taught that they are accountable not just to society but also to God. He **wonders what will happen to democracy if religion loses its influence. Christensen concludes: "Who will teach the next generation of Americans that they too need to voluntarily choose to obey the law? If you take away religion, you can't hire enough police."**

This short clip is very interesting and inspirational. It reminds us of the importance of being welcoming evangelists, spreading the good news of Jesus throughout our greater community. It also reminds us of the importance of our terrific Christian education programs for our children, young adults, and adults, and the life-long influence these strong programs provide. We are indeed blessed at First Church.

I encourage you to watch this short but powerful video. The link is below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1snjLxAWw>

*Jim Trimble*

## Summer Guest Preachers

Rev. Diane E. Kennedy continues to feel called to preach and does pulpit supply. She is a retired Presbyterian pastor from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and has served for 23 years in Michigan, Ohio and New York, including youth ministry for the Michigan Conference and some college teaching. She was ordained in 1977, holding degrees from Yale Divinity School and Swarthmore College. Raised in the New York City suburbs with her family, she is the daughter of John and Margaret Kennedy, who is an active member.

Rev. David M. Powers is the recent author of *Damnable Heresy: William Pynchon, the Indians, and the First Book Banned (and Burned) in Boston*, and offers pulpit supply. He has served as Minister of the Dennis Union Church on the Cape for 16 years, Saugatauck Congregational Church in Westport, CT, the Briarcliff Congregational Church in NY, and also as an intentional Interim Pastor at a variety of churches, most recently in Wellfleet. He has degrees from Harvard Divinity School and Carleton College.

Rev. Michelle Hughes is the new Associate Conference Minister/UCC for Transitions in CT, working with the Revs. Kent Siladi, Tamara Moreland, Tom Clough and others. She has served as an interim minister, college chaplain and community organizer in the Chicago area from where she recently moved.

Rev. Marcia L. Cox is an intentional Interim Pastor. She has served most recently in Glastonbury, Goshen, Plainville, Ellington, Prospect and New Hartford. She was also a Chaplaincy Resident at the Healthcare Chaplaincy in New York City. Marcia holds a degree from Yale Divinity School.

Rev. Terry Schmitt just completed an Interim in Waterbury. He continues to serve as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding, a member of the West Hartford Board of Education and the Capitol Region Educational Council. He was the Senior Minister at Center Congregational Church in Manchester for 11 years. Terry holds degrees from Yale University, Eden Theological Seminary and Brown University.

**Kids Investigating Divine Stories 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.

Register your children for the 2015-16 Church School year!  
Forms available @ [www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com)

**New Bible Story Rotation Class:**

The rotation program for grades 1-5 will be opening a new classroom in the fall of 2015. This rotation classroom will be using Godly Play style curriculum. We hope that this new rotation class will provide the students the opportunity to think more deeply and creatively about what the Bible stories have to say to them.

**Please consider making a donation towards this year’s stories for our new “Playing with the Word” rotation room in honor of, or in memory of, or in celebration of a loved one.** The donation card on the Bible story basket or box should say:

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like my contribution to go towards:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jonah Story Set \$169.95               | <input type="checkbox"/> Parable Synthesis “I am” Statements \$70.95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How The Church Tells Time \$159        | <input type="checkbox"/> Advent Story Complete Set \$188.75          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Morning Set \$220 (pre-K class) | <input type="checkbox"/> The Lord’s Prayer Set \$67                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Esther Story Set \$179                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs of Holy Week Set \$104                |

Make checks payable to: First Church of Christ, Simsbury. Thank you for helping to enrich and enhance the faith formation in our students at First Church.

**Back Pack Blessing - Save the Date: Aug 23rd @ 9:30**

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.



Continental breakfast to follow the service sponsored by the Board of Christian Education.



**Summer Church School Session**

July 5: Adventures in Odyssey: A Twist In Time – a lesson about how every action, no matter how insignificant it seems, can have dramatic consequences.

July 15: Adventures in Odyssey: Escape From The Forbidden Matrix – a lesson about the dangers of **wasting time and discovering what’s really important in life.**

July 19: Adventures in Odyssey: The Caves of Qumran – a lesson on what you treasure.

July 26– August 16: Students attend the worship service.

# Vacation Bible School Photos

(for more picture see VBS 2015 at [www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com))



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## FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE

July 12	Board of Music Ministries
July 19	Board of Personnel
July 26	tbd
August 2	Faith Circle
August 9	tbd
August 16	Committee of Deacons
August 23	Board of Christian Education
August 30	tbd

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

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