

## A Letter from Pastor Nicole

Dear First Church Community,

April greets us with Easter on its first day. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Easter is tied to the Jewish calendar, which is a lunar calendar, so this year Easter is quite early on April 1st. In the Bible, Easter follows the Passover, and so as we Christians ready ourselves for Easter, Jews are also celebrating the Passover. The seasons of the year are changing too, and winter gives way to spring, right at the same time as Passover and Easter. There is this feeling all at the same time that new life is coming; in our risen savior, in the liberation of God's people, and in the earth giving birth to its lush greenery.



One of the favorite hymns of First Church is the Easter hymn "In the Bulb There Is a Flower" by Natalie Sleeth. When I was a student minister in Chicago, my teaching pastor Rev. Norma Lee Barnhart told me the story of this hymn, because Natalie was one of her close personal friends. Natalie wrote this hymn when her husband was dying of a terminal illness, and this hymn was her testimony that death is not the final word; there is life after death; and hope for the future is always possible.

In the bulb there is a flower; in a seed, an apple tree;  
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Natalie went on to write many more songs after her husband's death, a total of 180 published works, many for children and children's choirs. Her music, especially "In the Bulb," have inspired countless people to have hope in the darkness.

Our faith calls us to believe in things not yet seen, and even not yet understood. We see the disciples go through a process of not believing, and then believing. We look to the spiritual leaders of our faith, in our church, and those whose stories we tell, to inspire us to have hope, to look to the flower in the bulb, and believe in the risen Christ who calls us to new life. Happy Easter!

Peace to you,

Pastor Nicole

## April Worship Schedule



**April 1**

**Easter Sunday**  
**9 AM and 11 AM**  
**Scripture:** Mark 16:1-8  
 "But She Did Tell"  
**Worship Leader:** Pastor Nicole



**April 8**

**Baptism Sunday**  
**Scripture:** John 20:19-31  
 "Doubting Thomas"  
**Worship Leader:** Pastor Adrienne



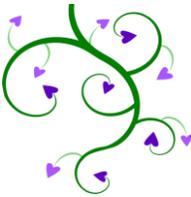
**April 15**

**The Third Sunday of Easter**  
**Scripture:** Luke 24:30-48  
 "Opening Ourselves to Jesus"  
**Worship Leader:** Pastor Nicole



**April 22**

**Music Sunday/Earth Day Celebrated**  
**Scripture:** John 10: 11-18  
 TBA  
**Worship Leader:** Choir/Music Ministry



**April 29**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
**Featuring contemporary music with Pastor Adrienne and others**  
**Scripture:** John 15:1-8  
 "Vines, Branches, and Vine growers"  
**Worship Leader:** Pastor Nicole

### Save the Date: Leadership Retreat April 20-22 at Silver Lake Conference Center

This retreat, which will be led by Rev. Michael Piazza (UCC Minister, Author, Hartford Seminary Professor, Consultant and Church Growth Specialist) is geared towards council members, deacons, and other church leaders. The cost is \$50 per person though some scholarships are available.



#### Retreat Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: #: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Some beds are top bunks. If you **cannot** climb to the top bunks please check here.

Do you need a ride? If so, please check this box.

Can you give rides? Check this box.  How many rides can you give? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form with your \$50 fee to the church office by April 16<sup>th</sup>

## Youth Ministries

Submitted by Pastor Adrienne

I love the Bible verse in John 1 that says, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” It is so wonderful to celebrate the Resurrection with you, and to know that death is not the end of the story. Even on the darkest day and in the darkest hour, the light of Jesus was not extinguished. What a powerful message of hope! I am honored to work with the youth at our church. They are a wonderful group of people filled with life and love and so much energy! As usual, we have many great things going on and would love for you to join us. Whether you are young or just young at heart, there is a place for you at the First Church in Windsor.



Last month, a group of youth and adults from our church traveled to New York City for an ecumenical Nightwatch event at St. John the Divine. We had a wonderful time! Our Confirmation class cooked and served dinner for two shelter meals at ImmaCare. We will celebrate Easter with a delicious Brunch and Egg Hunt for the kids, and we had our first ever Pie Factory and Sale led by Pastor Nicole. Youth and adults who will attend our Youth Service Trip this summer made 50 pies and quiches! We quickly sold out and raised over \$500 for our trip this summer! Thanks to all of you who purchased a pie!

### Coming up this month



**April 18** is our first Pub Theology meeting at the Hungry Rhino in Windsor Locks from **6:30-8:00 PM**. All are welcome, and invited to bring a friend! Join us for food, drinks, fellowship and great conversation. Plan to purchase your own food and beverages, and be provided with great fellowship and conversation. Please see Pastor Adrienne if you need childcare.

Join us **April 25** at **6:30 PM** in Nelson Hall when Pastor Adrienne will talk about practical ways we can share our faith with the children in our lives. One copy of Traci Smith’s book, *Faithful Families – Creating Sacred Moments at Home*, will be available to each family who attends. Dinner will be served at 7

On **April 28** our Young Adults will help prepare and serve food for the shelter meal at ImmaCare. If you are between the ages of 18-30 and are interested in helping, see Pastor Adrienne.



**April 29** is **Family Worship Sunday**, and all of our kids and youth will be invited to stay in worship with their families. Pastor Adrienne will be helping lead **contemporary music** at worship that morning.



**April 29** we will have a **Youth Scavenger Hunt** from **4:00 - 6:00 PM**. Stay tuned for more details! Put it on your calendar – this is going to be fun! This event is open to middle and high schoolers.

## **News from Parish Caring Ministries**

*Submitted by April Michaud*

We are seeking leaders and musicians for spring lay-lead services at locations in our community on the following dates - No experience necessary!

Thursday, April 12 at 2 PM in Kimberly Hall  
Tuesday, April 17 at 1 PM in Stonebrook Village  
Thursday, April 19 at 1 PM Delamere Woods  
Tuesday, May 1 at 2 PM Windsor Rehab  
Tuesday, May 15 at 1 PM in Stonebrook Village  
Thursday, May 17 at 1 PM at Delamere Woods



Following these services listed above, we will break for the summer months and will resume in September. This is a wonderful and rewarding way to share your time and talents with those in local nursing homes or retirement communities. If you would like to volunteer or learn more, please contact April Michaud at 860.298.0193 or at [aprilmichaudct@comcast.net](mailto:aprilmichaudct@comcast.net)

## **Book Buddy Update**

*Submitted by Ginny Drapeau*

A great big thank you to all of our adult Book Buddies for your great response to our September/October collection of books. You were all most generous and we had enough books to go around for our two classes, for 3 visits to each class this school year.

On November 13th, we went to read to the kindergarten class at Simpson-Waverly School in Hartford. We received our usual excited welcome from the children, who were very well behaved and enjoyed the books we read to them. The afternoon ended with the passing out of books to our little Buddies. We read to the Early Learning Center on March 9<sup>th</sup> and returned to Simpson-Waverly March 12<sup>th</sup>. Both visits were a pleasure as always.

As you may know, Simpson-Waverly is being closed at the end of this school year. Our wonderful kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Cyr, wants to continue with the Book Buddy program next year, so we are hoping that we will be able to go to whatever school she will be teaching at. We may have 2 kindergarten classes at that school, and when we add more little Buddies to our program, we may only be able to visit them twice a year, depending on the number of books that our church Buddies are able to contribute. We will be talking about the program with the Outreach Committee next month. We will be doing our final reading of the year towards the end of May or early June. Please feel free to let us know if you would like to join us.



We so appreciate the generosity of all of our FCW Book Buddies. This is a joyous mission and we wish that all of you could see the excitement of the little Buddies when we arrive and the smiles on their faces when they receive their books. If you want to learn more about this program, please feel free to give us a call (Ginny Drapeau -860-219-9388/Andrea Schnure -860-683-2385) or talk to us after church. Shalom.

## Outreach Board News

*Submitted by Joyce Ward*

The Outreach Board leadership has changed hands from Marilyn Boehm to Co-chairs, Joyce Ward and Mike Bassett. Marilyn was an invaluable asset to the Board with her many years of charitable service and deep knowledge of various organizations. She knew how to maximize the impact of our volunteering efforts and donations. She shared her leadership skills, insights and taught the rest of us on the Outreach Board well. Thank you to Marilyn for her friendship and service.



Our initial focus this year is on finding service opportunities for the congregation that meet our church mission and interests. We have begun using a software program called Breeze that enables us to match individuals' interests with upcoming volunteer and service events. This was the purpose of the clipboard signup sheets/surveys which were passed around in church. For example, if you indicated that you had an interest in Social Justice your information is on a Social Justice list. When a Social Justice service opportunity comes up, everyone on the Social Justice list receives an email invite to join in the event. The event will also be announced in traditional ways, so that anyone who is not on the list can participate if they have an interest.

If you haven't filled out a volunteer interest survey yet you can do so by going to this link: <https://fcwucc.breezechms.com/form/da3fbb>.

This year, Outreach will be focusing on specific and timely communications, getting more people involved as volunteers and project leaders, and reviewing of all past donations and organizations supported, new organizations to support and determine if we will continue, discontinue and/or add new donors

Please give some thought to leading a project such as the Thanksgiving Baskets (late October), Backpack project (late July), Giving Tree Christmas (mid-November). The Outreach Board will provide funds and guidance.

### **March for Our Lives, Hartford, CT 3/24/18**

We arranged for attendees from First Church to carpool and attend as a group with a First Church Banner, T-shirts and Signage led by our newest Outreach Board member, Charlotte Ricketts.

### **Outreach Volunteer Shout Out**

The Outreach Board extends a special shout out to the dedicated Shelter Meal team of **Cindy Taplin and Pam Pietro** who along with a team of volunteers plan, arrange, supervise, cook, clean and serve meals for the shelter run by Immacare. Our church provides 4 shelter meals per year (January, February, March and November) for 75 men. This year we have added one more. Their hard work and dedication, always with a smile and upbeat attitude is a perfect example of love in action. **We thank and celebrate these two exceptional women and their "staff" of tireless volunteers. Let's celebrate them and remember that they are a blessing to us all.**



## Upcoming Events

Shad Derby Booth in partnership with the Membership Committee to collect do-nations for care packages for active military personnel.

Shelter Meal - one additional meal has been added for the year to be provided by the young adults in our congregation with Pastor Adrienne.

## Membership Committee Welcome to the Ray Family!

*Submitted by Laurel Pepin*



Please help me in welcoming the Ray family, Thurston Ray, Kim Lajoie-Ray and their boys Braden and Joseph Panus. The Rays live here in Windsor; Thurston works at an electrical supply company and Kim owns The Eyeglass Place in West Hartford and is a licensed optician. Kim and Thurston are raising their nephews Joseph, 9, who attends Clover Street School and Braden, 8 who attends Poquonock School.

Thurston and Kim met bicycling, a passion they continue to share with their boys, who can bicycle up to 21 miles a day! They enjoy planning their vacations around biking. The family also enjoys hiking and Kim enjoys white-water rafting. Joseph and Braden are happy to be part of our church school family. Joseph plays the violin and Braden plays the cello. Both boys like to play soccer and basketball, and Joe loves to play football.



As their sponsor, I have enjoyed getting to know them and to learn a little about their journey here. I invite you to introduce yourselves to Kim and Thurston and to Joe and Braden and welcome them to our family.

## Women's Club News

*Submitted by Beth Horlitz*



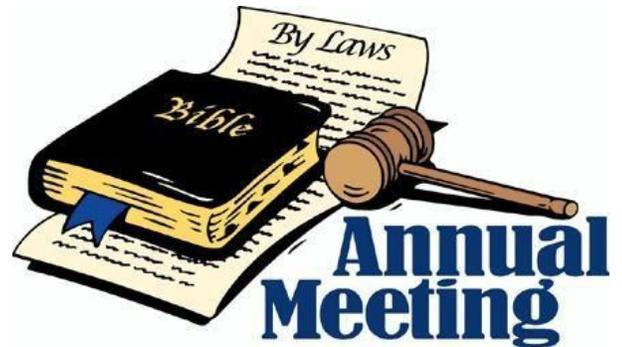
On Tuesday, April 10, the Women's Club will meet at noon in Nelson Hall. The program will be Colonial Era Medical Practices presented by Dr. Bill Harris. Bring your sandwich. Dessert and beverages are provided. If you plan to attend and are not on a calling list, please contact Carmen Delgado or Susan Gardner so that we have dessert and seats for all. As always, we extend a warm welcome to the women and men of the church and their friends.

## Tri-Conference Annual Meeting

*Submitted by Michael Novak*

The annual combined meeting of the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island UCC conferences will be held June 15-16 at the Mass Mutual Center in downtown Springfield MA. Rev. Traci Blackmon, always a great speaker, will deliver the keynote address.

First Church is a member of the Connecticut conference, which has been working for several years with the MA and RI conferences toward merging. This meeting is expected to take important votes about proposed bylaws and other organizational matters. As always, there will also be resolutions on social justice, and other issues that are important to all of our churches. In past years, resolutions have been proposed on such matters as marijuana legalization and expansion of casino gambling. The conferences have staff to lobby on accepted resolutions, and they have an exceptional record so these are important votes for all of us.

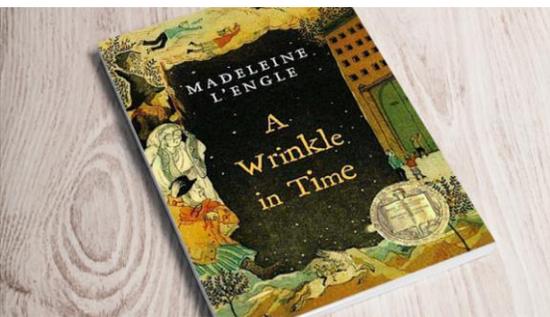


If you would like more information on this meeting, visit the [www.ctucc.org](http://www.ctucc.org) website and click on the link for the **Tri-Conference Annual Meeting**. Any member can register to attend by clicking on the **Register Now** link on the meeting page. First Church is allowed two lay delegates plus one youth delegate (under age 22). If you would like to be able to vote on all resolutions, please contact the First Church office to determine if a delegate position is open.

Most resolutions considered at the Annual Meeting originate in a local church. Broad support of that church at the Conference Annual Meeting is important. If you have a resolution in mind that should be proposed at any Annual Meeting of the conferences, please discuss it with Pastor Nicole and Cabinet Chair Scott Burghoff. Some work will be required jointly with the CT Conference staff to create the actual resolution. Another conference in the UCC may also be considering a similar resolution. If adopted, these common causes are sometimes proposed for broader adoption at the biannual UCC Synod.

## Sunday Morning Book Club: A Wrinkle in Time Events

*Submitted by Lauren Pepin*



If you are a quick reader and start now, you can join the Sunday Morning Book Club discussion of *A Wrinkle in Time* on Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 8am in the Morrell Room

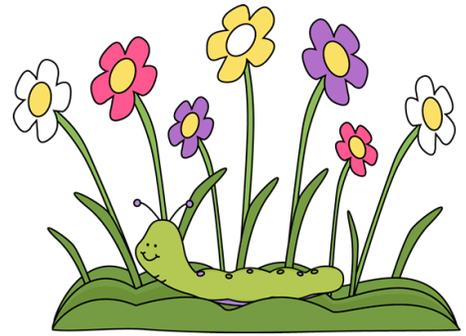
We are also organizing an evening pot luck meal together and then we will break into small groups for a book discussion. Watch for announcements in the bulletin and the weekly email notices, for the date.

## Early Learning Center Update

Submitted by Elith Howard

We are thankful that spring is finally here!! During the month of March, we had a great visit from the First Church in Windsor Book Buddies! The children listened to a few stories and were excited to bring books home with them at the end of the day. A special thank you to everyone who participates in the First Church in Windsor Book Buddies program! The children as well as the parents appreciate the books you donate, your time, and particularly your encouragement as it relates to the importance of early literacy.

As we enter into this month with a theme of “April Showers Bring May Flowers”, we are also ecstatic about the caterpillars this month will bring. The children will spend time taking about various life cycles and each class will receive their own container of caterpillars to observe as they go through the process of metamorphosis to become beautiful butterflies! Other life cycles the children will have the opportunity to experience includes the buds they see that will evolve into flowers. What a wonderful time of birth and rebirth!



Registration for the 2018-2019 school year is open!! If you have or know a child who will turn three prior to January 1, 2019, they may be eligible to join our program. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact the First Church Early Learning Center office at 860-688-4597 if you have any questions.

The First Church Early Learning Center Board of Directors is looking for a new Treasurer by May 2018. The person who would be a great fit for this role should have a strong understanding of financial reporting. If you are interested please contact First Church Early Learning Center Board Chair, Helen Davenport-Senuta or Director, Elith Howard. Thank you!

## Visioning Events Report

Submitted by Cassie Copeland

At the past two all church events, congregation members reflected on and contributed ideas rooted in our core values. The third event, *Discovering our Mission* challenged congregation members to craft statements around who we are as a church. Congregation members constructed statements in smaller groups that brainstormed various mission statements. Common threads among many of the ideas included faith, love and hope. By the end of the event the following mission statement was constructed based off of the input of members: **FCW strives to live by Faith, to be known by Love, and to be a voice of Hope.**



At the final all church event, *Looking into our Future* congregation members were able to brainstorm ideas about what our church will look like in the future. This activity challenged members to come up with ideas that were then placed in the following five categories: programs, outreach, buildings, people and other. In each of these categories, many creative ideas

were presented in addition to reviving activities for future congregation members. The activities that were brainstormed are rooted in the mission and values from the previous events.

Overall, the all church events have allowed congregation and community members to discover more about the history, values, mission and future of FCW. Through this Visioning process FCW will have a new perspective moving forward to create a positive impact on the larger Windsor community.

## **Notes from Around the Parish**

Dear Friends,

Susan and I loved the wonderful Valentine's Day Card we received from the Church School children. Many blessings to one and all, and best wishes for a joyful Easter and a vibrant spring!

Peace and prayers,  
Rick and Susan

Dear Friends,

Thank you for donating 6 bags of winter wear to the Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Service (IRIS) on 11/15/2017. We are deeply grateful for this gift of hospitality towards new Americans. IRIS has welcomed 28 refugees so far this year! Most are from Afghanistan and the Congo. As the miracles of refugee resettlement happen all around us at IRIS, we think of you and your generosity. Your gift helps provide a warm welcome to refugees like Ajmal's family, pictured below.

Originally from Afghanistan, Ajmal worked for the US Army for 8 years. Welcomed by IRIS last year, Ajmal is working at his first US job, delivering prescriptions for a local pharmacy. The joy of safe, new lives in the US can be seen in the smiles of his beautiful children! Refugees establish themselves quickly and make our communities more vibrant. Thank you for playing a role in easing their transition and providing them some of the comforts of home!



Sincerely,

Chris George  
Executive Director