Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Rachel Held Evans was one of this generation’s most important public theologians. Her power as a theologian did not depend on formal theological education or ecclesiastical endorsement, but her personal faith, keen intellect, willingness to change, and an ability to speak the truth in love. It was said that she had “a gift for taking the treasures of the gospel off the high shelf and making them accessible.”

Sadly Rachel died at the age of 37 on May 4 this year. We mourn her death, leaving behind her husband and their two young children. Her death is a great loss for them, of course, and for all who looked to her wise faith and sharp intellect for guidance and understanding.

In her mind, we are called to trust Jesus and love the Bible, not the other way around. In her blogs, podcasts, and writings Evans identified the Sacraments as standing at the center of the church, reaching out to the world. Indeed it was the Sacraments that drew her back to church after a time of wandering.

Baptism is the Sacrament of Vocation in which we are welcomed into the Body of Christ and become Christians, people who follow Jesus.

Communion is the Sacrament of Discipleship in which we are nourished as Christians to live and serve each other and the world as disciples of Jesus.

Evans was raised and educated in a conservative, evangelical home, church, and college. As an adult she came to a very different view and understanding of the gospel. Perhaps that is why she was described by an old friend as “scandalously inclusive” when she wrote:

*The gospel doesn’t need a coalition devoted to keeping the wrong people out. It needs a family of sinners, saved by grace, committed to tearing down the walls, throwing open the doors, and shouting “Welcome! There’s bread and wine. Come eat with us and talk.” This isn’t a kingdom for the worthy; it’s a kingdom for the hungry.*

Evans is spot on, don’t you think? Sounds a lot like what we aspire to be at First Church, doesn’t it? “Scandalously inclusive!” Let that be one of our mottos!

Thanks be to God who has invited us on this journey, for giving us the Sacraments, who inspired Rachel Held Evans, and is inspiring us to follow Jesus. Thanks be to God for you, faithful disciples who proclaim God’s love in word and deed!

Courage and peace,

P.S. I look forward to worshiping with you on October 6 with our Brothers and Sisters from First Baptist Church Stratford. Pastor Sutton will preach and we will share in the Sacrament of Communion! To God be the Glory!
Soup Kitchen Saints
Join the Soup Kitchen Saints team Wednesday, October 9th @ 6:30 pm in the Wakeman kitchen as we prepare a meal for 200 people at Merton House.
For more information contact:
Gail Beauchemin 203-209-7962,
sophie2kim@yahoo.com
or
Jane Keller 203-258-1145,
janeekeller@att.net

Coat Drive
October 13-October 27
We will be collecting gently used adult and children's coats and jackets to be donated to LifeBridge Community Services "Community Closet" program, assisting families in need in Greater Bridgeport and lower Fairfield County. A collection box will be located outside the sanctuary during that time period. We will also accept other gently used outerwear items such as hats, gloves, scarves and boots.

Don't forget to bring non-perishable items this month they particularly need: cereal, pasta sauce, chili, stew, canned fruit, jelly and toilet paper. Put donations in the grocery carts outside the Chapel or Sanctuary.

Thank you for helping to keep the Operation Hope Pantry full!

Operation Hope's Community Kitchen serves our neighbors who are homeless, are at risk of homelessness or are just in need of a hot meal. First Church is honored to participate by committing to providing the meal every Sunday.

At this time we are seeking volunteers to prepare and provide meals for the dates listed below. Starter kits with detailed directions and cooking pans are available to get the ball rolling! Please sign up at the Operation Hope table outside the sanctuary or by writing an email to ohfcmeals@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for supporting Operation Hope!
Lauren Winston - winston.lauren@gmail.com

Read Aloud Day October 24th
Please save Thursday, October 24th from 9 to 10 am for Read Aloud Day in Bridgeport! Join First Church members to read at our School Volunteer Association of Bridgeport partner, Madison School, or another school of your choice. Sign up today! 203-275-1120

Covenant to Care
Thank You!
We collected 16 beautiful backpacks for Covenant to Care in August.
Our wonderful congregation came through again! We're very grateful for your generosity. Sixteen deserving children started school this year with everything they need for the school year.
We are again indebted to all who donated to the backpack sign up.
Our next sign up will be for Thanksgiving baskets, coming all too soon!
Blessings to all.
Marilyn, Kim and Jessie
Thank you to all who have "welcomed the stranger" through setting apartments for refugees through our partnership with CIRI and other local churches. Just this summer we have welcomed refugees from Iran, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. In addition to the apartment cleaning and setup, our ministry includes providing groceries, gathering toys and books for the children, and supplying household items. Each refugee who arrives in Bridgeport feels like they have just arrived home thanks to the work of our team. If you want to be involved in donation and setup please email Nikki at Treschukenney@gmail.com. Below is our ongoing Amazon wish list - feel free to buy directly or bring items purchased locally to our CIRI box in Wakeman Hall.

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/253AC6AZCBU2L

Refugee Resettlement

The Committee that has been working on the strategic pathway of Working for Racial Justice invites the Congregation to begin this exciting journey with us! Join us for “One Book, One Congregation” in the reading of Debby Irving’s Waking Up White. Books will be available ($12.00) for sale after services during the month of October.

We are very fortunate to have been able to actually book Debby Irving to visit with us on Saturday November 2nd for an author talk! Please plan to attend a book discussion prior to Debby Irving’s visit to help digest the ideas in her book and prepare for what she has to tell us. To accommodate scheduling, we are facilitating the discussion on three different nights so you can attend the one that is most convenient: 10/22, 10/23, and 10/24, from 7-8:30 pm each evening.

For this month’s reflection, please consider the excellent 1619 Project from the New York Times Magazine. The year 2019 marks the 400th year since the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown colony, and led by Nikole-Hannah Jones, this project brings together leading voices on race in America to examine all the terrible and far-reaching consequences of that fateful event. The essays span multiple issues of the magazine and are accompanied by a podcast series from the NYT’s The Daily podcast. The interactive page for the project can be found at https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html and episodes of the 1619 podcast can be found on your podcast app of choice, or by googling "1619 podcast".

If you have a suggestion for Reflections on Race, please pass it along to one of our working group members. We are: Lucas Walker, Rita Skog, David McKinnis, Charlotte Dyslin, Anna Marotti, Pertrinea Cash, Lauren DeNisco, Kathy Lea and David Spollett.
Disciple Road Needs YOU!

Shepherds and Workshop Leaders Needed!
Can’t volunteer every Sunday, that’s OK!

Contact Alex Ackley to help out…
aackley@firstchurchfairfield.org

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2019 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SIGNUP
SUNDAY OCT 13TH AND SUNDAY OCT 20TH

First meeting on Nov 10th after the 10:15 worship service.
Children of all ages are welcome to participate.

Contact Alex Ackley at aackley@firstchurchfairfield.org for more information.

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Youth Service Trip 2020

Cheyenne River Reservation,
La Plant, South Dakota
with Simply Smiles
August 1-8

All are welcome ages 15 to Adult

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Book your sitters now and join us for our first Parent Fellowship Gathering!

Let’s get connected as parents so we can support each other as we raise our children with love and faith.

We will share our stories, get to know each other better, discuss different topics, and explore ways to support each other in the great adventure of parenting.

THURSDAY, October 10 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in The Loft

For more information, please email Holly Sulzycki hsulzycki@gmail.com or Lucas Walker lucas.walker.7@gmail.com

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We are back before and after Sunday services.

Did you know you can use your gift cards to buy gas at Stop and Shop gas stations? Remember, when you buy a Stop and Shop or ShopRite gift card to shop for the upcoming One Book, One Congregation potluck, Two Houses, One Home luncheon, Operation Hope meal prep, Compassionate Care, and your own meals, First Church will receive 5% of your purchase! As always, thank you for your support!!!

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The Tiossapa Topa School.
The local K-12 school allows us to use the gym, the track, and sports fields most weeks during the summer.

The playground (or as the kids call it, “the park”) has swings, a climbing wall, slide, monkey bars, balance beam, and spider web.

The Sam D. Horse Community Center building is where you will set up indoor craft and activity stations.

The horseshoe court is regulation size and fenced in.

The garden is a peaceful spot and a great space for learning about plants & nature.

The basketball court is the place to be! Join the kids in a 3x3 tournament or get a big game of knock-out going.

Stop & Shop

There is plenty of open space for tag, kickball, capture the flag, and other team activities.
The Middle Road!

Melissa Hain and Wendy Muschett are looking forward to gathering together with all of the 6-8 graders on Sunday mornings during our Middle Road time. We look forward to welcoming our newest 6th graders and seeing familiar faces. When dismissed from 10:15 worship, make your way to the Loft above Wakeman Hall where we will be waiting to greet you!

Each Sunday will have a different focus: Faith in Film, Bible Fun, Youth Service Sundays and the Joining the Generations Project. Come join the fun!

- October Sundays
  10/6- NO Middle Road—First Baptist Visit and Luncheon
  10/13- Faith in Film
  10/20- Joining The Generation Sunday—select interview questions
  10/27- Youth Service Sunday **Meet in Wakeman Hall at 10:15

Any questions? Please email Wendy Muschett: wendymuschett@optonline.net or Melissa Hain: melhain@aol.com

Youth Group

Youth Group Be on the lookout for...Youth in Action!

Youth Group is for everyone in 7th-12th grade. Come and be a part of this great group of kids who come together to explore life and faith, serve our community, and have fun!

Youth Group meets most Sunday nights from 6:00-7:30pm in Rhodes Hall (below the Sanctuary)

Sunday, October 6: Youth Group from 6 to 7:30PM, Rhodes Hall Youth Room. Pizza provided.

Sunday, October 13: Youth Group from 6 to 7:30PM, Rhodes Hall Youth Room. Pizza provided.

Sunday, October 20: 2:30 to 3:30PM meet with Kristen as described above.
4 to 5PM, Community Sing Along followed by refreshments and fellowship at 5PM.

Sunday, October 27: Trick of Treat for Operation Hope; Details coming soon.

Questions email: Rev. Vern Swett—vswett@firstchurchfairfield.org

The Loft Community

The Loft is a safe space and loving community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning teens and their friends.

The Loft will meet at 3:30 pm in the Memorial Room at the Fairfield Public Library

For more information contact Liane Nelson—liane.nelson@gmail.com or Rev. Vern Swett—vswett@firstchurchfairfield.org
Living the Love of God

Consecration Sunday Events

Loving Offering Buffet
Saturday, November 9th 5:30 PM
Guest Preacher The Reverend Richard Floyd
Check him out at https://richardlfloyd.com

Consecration Sunday,
Sunday, November 10th
We will consecrate our pledges for 2020 in Worship at 8:15 and 10:15 am

You are invited to attend!

What: An Open Church Council Meeting
Where: Wakeman Hall
When: Tuesday, October 15th from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Why: Seeking to share news, we will be holding an open council meeting so that members and congregants can come up to speed on the latest church happenings, the road map to the future and to invite comment.

Highlights of the agenda include:

- Stewards reports
- Overview of the Needs Assessment
- Live streaming update
- Introducing our new website
- Financial report

RSVPs are highly encouraged so we can prepare a seat for you!

Please rsvp to April Obermeyer at: aprilobermeyer@gmail.com or Casey Mulqueen at: caseymulqueen@gmail.com. If you prefer, please feel free to call the church office at: 203-259-8396.
Women’s Spirituality Group

October 23
6:30 PM Eliot Library

Do you ever struggle with how to apply your faith in real life situations? Would you like to share in conversations about God, trust, anger, and the constant noise of the world we live in?

Using short videos from the NOOMA series, and thought provoking discussion questions we’ll explore issues of life and faith together. The NOOMA series is a compilation of short films that explore our world from a perspective of Jesus. Its creator, Rob Bell, describes it as a sermon in cinematic, visual form. You don’t need to have any prior knowledge of the Bible to walk through the doors! All you need is an open mind, curiosity, and a desire to deepen your understanding of what it means to live a Christian life.

Friday Morning Book Group

Please join our Book Group on Friday, October 4th at 10AM in the Elliot Library, Bring your coffee or tea and join us for a lively discussion on the New York Times Best Seller “A Gentlemen in Moscow” by Amor Towles.

Any questions, please feel free to call Joy Nazzaro 203-255-6945.

Happy Reading!

Three Kings Bazaar (3KB) is ONLY 2 months way!

We still need your help to make this year’s 3KB the best EVER!

Please consider where you like to volunteer and let me know by return email or phone call. You can choose to do 2 hours, an entire morning or afternoon, all day or just set-up or clean-up.

If you cannot give your time on the days of the 3KB there are many other ways to help:

- Bake something for the Baked Good table
- Donate Books...Jewelry...or Mrs. Claus’ Attic items
- Join the Carol Sing on Friday
- Shop at the Bazaar
- Eat at the Luncheon on Saturday
- Tell all your friends to stop by!

Donations for the Book Room and Mrs. Claus’ Attic will be taken starting November 11th in Wakeman Hall.

Thank you!
Maria A. Ferrante & Charlotte Dyslin
mferrante@firstchurchfairfield.org 203-259-8396 x106
An Open and Affirming Congregation
“No matter where you are on life’s journey you are always welcome here!”

Deadline for November Herald

October 14th
Send all submissions to Cheri Evan
covan@firstchurchfairfield.org

October 2019
Newsletter-The Herald