A Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends,

"Welcome!"

It’s a happy word with multiple uses. It’s a verb, as in, “You are welcome here!” It’s a noun, as in “Thank you for your warm welcome.” And it’s an adjective, as in, “You’re welcome!” when someone says, “Thanks!”

No matter how we use the word, “welcome” lies at the heart who we are. We follow the One who welcomed lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors, foreigners, the unclean, the despised, forgotten and rejected of society. Jesus welcomed everyone without judgment, with unconditional regard, and a spirit of welcome. So do we.

By definition we are not a closed community, but one that is open, affirming and welcoming. Following the radically inclusive ministry of Jesus, each of us called to share his spirit of welcome.

I am so grateful to everyone who helps to create a welcoming atmosphere in our congregation, especially Cheri Evan and the Steward for Ministry Within the Congregation, April Obermeyer, who work alongside, the Welcome Ministry Team, the Deacons, the Ushers, the Greeters, the Coffee and Tea Makers and Servers, Hosts and Bakers of the Fellowship Hour, and to everyone who greets another in love.

Which gets me to my point. Every day, let’s each of us reach out to another person in love, especially someone who is lonely or down or to a person who is not really a friend. Reach out with the welcoming spirit of Jesus.

Each Sunday, make it a point to reach out with a welcoming spirit, especially to someone you don’t know. Don’t be afraid to say, “Hello, I’m so-and-so. I’m happy to meet you! What’s your name?” Invite a visitor or new comer to join you for a cup of coffee or tea. If you see someone standing alone at Fellowship, go over and say “Welcome!”

It feels great when you are greeted with a warm "Welcome!” doesn’t it? Think how good it will feel to be the one extending that greeting, on behalf of Jesus who welcomes each of us, each and every day.

Grace and peace,

[Signature]
Covenant to Care

Thank you to all who donated the beautiful Easter baskets. We are always amazed at the generosity and dedication of this congregation. You continue to go above and beyond!

While you are doing your spring cleaning, if you come across any extra sheets, bedding or dishes and utensils, we have a family in need. This family also has three small children in need of clothes. They need girl’s size 4T (shoe size 9-10 toddler), and boys sizes 6 and 10-12 (shoes 13 toddler and 2.5 boys). Any donations can be left either inside or just outside of the church office. Please label sizes of sheets and clothes and mark that they are for Covenant to Care. Thank you!

Our next drive will be in June when we will start the sign-ups for the backpacks due in August. Details will follow in the June Herald. Enjoy your spring!

Greater Bridgeport CROP Walk

Sunday, May 3rd at 1:30pm. This walk helps raise money to feed the hungry in our community through organizations such as Operation Hope and the Bridgeport Rescue Mission and provide basic services to people in the developing world through Church World Service. The walk begins and ends at United Congregational Church in Bridgeport. You can choose to walk a 2.7-mile or 5-mile loop.

A dedicated and generous walker from First Church has offered a matching challenge and will match up to $500 in donations raised by new walkers! To register and/or donate online go to: http://hunger.cwsglobal.org/goto/firstchurchfairfield.

Marc Sulzycki (msulzycki@yahoo.com, 203.893.5741).

Opportunities to Serve

Operation Hope Suppers

You can help feed hungry neighbors by cooking a Sunday evening meal for Operation Hope. Sign up to cook for 25 or 50 people any Sunday in the next few months.

Contact Rob Greenbaum at robgreenbaum@gmail.com for more information.

Soup Kitchen Saint

Join the team Wednesday, May 13th at 7pm in the Wakeman kitchen as we prepare food for 200 people at Merton House.

Contact Patty Gregory pzarra@optonline.net or 203-333-7789

Outdoor Worship on Mother’s Day - May 10th

Come at 8:00 am to
The Audubon Center,
2325 Burr Street

We’ll walk into the bird sanctuary to worship God in the beauty of nature. Dress casually with shoes or boots that can handle wet ground and bring something to sit on. See you there!

SAVE THE DATE!!

Day of Service
on Sunday, September 27, 2015.

This day will be modeled after last fall’s event with work projects set-up in the Town of Fairfield and in nearby Bridgeport.

Please reserve this day as an opportunity to give of your time and your talent to those in need in our area.
Living Your Faith: A 4 Week Small Group for Adults

May 3, 10, 17, & 24
9-10am in the 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.

May 3 Dust What does God see in us?
May 10 Kickball If God really cares about us, why don’t we have what we want?
May 17 Store Is anger the issue, or is the real problem what you get angry about?
May 24 Noise Why are we so afraid of silence?

Come once, or twice, or come to all four! You can check out a sample of the videos ahead of time at: http://nooma.com/

CHILD CARE PROVIDED

Any questions? e-mail Wendy Muschett at wendymuschett@optonline.net.

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be meeting on May 6th at noon on the stage area outside of the kitchen. For our Mother's Day theme we will be decorating hats and/or grapevine wreaths which can be used as a door or wall decoration. You provide your own hat and/or wreath to decorate. Women's Fellowship will provide the artificial flowers and seashells. If you have something that you would like to use for a decoration, feel free to bring it with you. Also, if anyone has a glue gun and glue sticks please bring them to the meeting. All church women are invited to attend. If you have any questions please contact Gloria Evans at (203) 255-6893

On May 20th Women's Fellowship will be hosting an Ice Cream Social at Parish Court. Set-up is at 12:30 p.m. Volunteers are always appreciated. If you have any questions please contact Gloria Evans at (203) 255-6893

Parish Notes

Baptisms
George Andrew Gustavson Ferris
child of Mark and Kristen Ferris
April 26, 2015

Mother's Day is fast approaching! The Store has many lovely items that would make a perfect gift.

We have a wide variety of tops for women and shirts and tees for men. Please come and take a look!

If you are getting ready for outdoor entertaining, come see the dishes and glassware that would make a lovely spring table.

Are you interested in volunteering at The Store? Please contact our manager, Marilyn Lord at: mlord1@charter.net or 203-259-1449

Store Hours:
M-F 10-3; Saturday 10-2

The Herald
What’s Happening– YOUTH MINISTRY

Fridays

The Loft*, 4-5:30pm, The Community House

*For lgbtq kids and their friends

Sundays

Confirmation  Confirming Our Faith 9:00-10:00am, in Rhodes Hall

Faith in Action youth group, Grades 7 & 8, 6:00-7:30 pm, in Rhodes Hall

Senior High Youth Group, Grades 9-12, 6:00 – 7:30 pm, in Rhodes Hall

Questions? Ideas? Call Jen, 259-8396 x15 or jcampbell@firstchurchfairfield.org

Youth Group will not meet on May 3rd (CROP Walk) or May 10th (Mother’s Day)

Bingo at the Carolton

May 17th @ 2:00pm

For more information contact Wendy Muschett
wendymuschett @optonline.net

Are you the parent of a lgbtq teenager or young adult?
Do you have questions or worries about your child?
Are you looking for a community of support?

The Loft Parent Group

meets once a month at
The Community House
127 Rowland Rd
From 6-7pm

Join us on these Fridays

May 29

We want to support you in supporting your child!
For more information call Liane at 203.556.1823 or
Jen at 203.543.8108
Vacation Bible School
June 22-25 9am-12pm CAMP for ages 3 years -5th grade
Families invited to closing worship and picnic Thursday 11-1
VBS will be a drop-off day time camp for kids this year. But don’t be sad, Grown-ups! You can still come: We are looking for people to help with the decorating team, storytelling tent, crafts, science, recreation leader and more! Please let me know if you would like to participate and take a Registration Form from the Children and Families Ministry board soon.

Pentecost May 24
Save the date and join in celebrating
Confirmation with our Confirming our Faith class as they become members of First Church.
Wear RED and show your support for these new members!

Welcome, Bishop Frank Caggiano!
We will have the honor of welcoming the Most Reverend Frank Caggiano, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport, as
Guest Preacher at the 10:15 Service of Worship on Sunday, June 21
Bishop Caggiano is a vital spiritual leader, gifted preacher, and visionary leader for the ecumenical ministry of Christ’s Church.
It is a singular honor that Bishop Caggiano has accepted our invitation to worship with us.
Please be sure to save June 21 for a special day in the life our congregation!

Reverend David Spollett’s Sabbatical
The sabbatical policy of First Church provides for a three month sabbatical for the Pastors to be taken every four years, in addition to one month vacation per year. In accordance with that policy, David Spollett is scheduled for his three month sabbatical and one moth vacation this year. Given the ongoing implementation of our new governance structure, David felt that this is not an opportune year for him to be away for four months.
David therefore proposed and the Personnel Board and Moderator Peter Mott have agreed that he will take his sabbatical in one month increments per year in 2015, 2016 and 2017, to be taken together with his one month vacation. This way David will be away two months each of the next three years. This summer, David will be away July 7 – September 7 (one month sabbatical and one month vacation). In order to provide consistent, excellent pastoral leadership and care, the Reverend Jennifer L. Campbell will take her vacation at other times of the year and will be assisted by the Reverend Arlene B. Studer during July and August.

We are going to Israel!
Please come with us!
There is no better way for Christians to visit Israel than on interfaith trip. Jews and Christians traveling together experience both the deep spiritual history of the land of our ancestors and the contemporary reality of the vibrant democratic society of the State of Israel and her citizens.
Departing on December 30, 2015, Rabbi James Prosnit and Rev. David Spollett will lead us as we will travel to Jerusalem, the Dead Sea and Masada, Galilee, Golan, and Tel Aviv, returning on January 10.
Coffee and Conversation for Moms
We’ll meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month
May 6th & 20th
9:30-10:30am Whole Foods Café

CASEY’S PLACE
Friday May 8th
6:30 – Wakeman Hall
Join us for fun and activities!

Meet Jen 12-2 pm on
Thursdays @ Las Vegas

Play for Hope
A play group for little ones and their caregivers
Meets Mondays at 10am in the Eliot Library, following the
Fairfield Public School Calendar
Please bring a non perishable food item for our friends at
Operation Hope.

QUAKERS IN RUSSIA
a Russian lunch and slide show!

With all the turmoil in Russia and Ukraine, did you know that the Quakers
are in Russia and Ukraine conducting nonviolent training? Come to hear
Dr. David McFadden, who is on the international board of Friends House
Moscow, talk about their work.

11:30 am after church
Sunday May 31
Russian salads and bread and cheese and
Ukrainian Borscht!

RSVP so we know how much food to prepare
office@firstchurchfairfield.org

A freewill offering will be taken to support Friends House Moscow, and David
will sell ($10) and sign his book, QUAKERS IN REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA, with all
proceeds to support Friends House Moscow

Hope to see you there!

Intro to First Church Would you like to learn more about First Church, connect with others and explore
how to live your faith?
Meet David and Jen Tuesday, May 12th in the Eunoia
Room (back of the Sanctuary) from 7:30-8:30pm. Child-
care available if requested.

Please call Cheri Evan @ 203-259-8396 x10 or
c Evan@first church fairfield. org to let us know you are coming!

Thanks for your compassionate care
Thank you for loving support, prayers, kind notes,
calls, and cards and abiding love during my mother’s illness and recent death. We have truly felt your sup-
port and the power of love in our congregation. Thank
you for being true friends and companions.

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Workcamp 2015!
La Puente Home in Alamosa Colorado
June 27-July 4, 2015

This year Jackie Sanna, Jeanette Sanna, Josephine Evan, Nick Evan, Jonah Melton, Reed Kelly, Ben Kelly, Cheri Evan, Pete Evan, Campbell Habetz and Jen Campbell are headed to Alamosa Colorado to serve with La Puente Home!

La Puente is a nonprofit organization serving Colorado's San Luis Valley by providing food, shelter, and advocacy for the homeless and community members in crisis.

La Puente endeavors to meet immediate needs and to empower people to live independently with dignity. With a homeless shelter, transitional housing, a food bank, community gardens, child care and school for children, a thrift store and a community coffee house, La Puente serves people in deep need. Find out more about this amazing organization at www.lapuente.net

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Senior High Work Camp
To Alamosa Colorado
to serve with
La Puente Home
June 27-July 4, 2015

SHARE
To support Workcamper

Attached is my check/cash for $25 per share.

I understand the dividends to be paid are:
*Satisfaction of supporting the spiritual growth
of the youth of First Church
*Knowledge that their work will be carried out
in solidarity with those living in poverty in Alamosa.
*A postcard with news from our week of service.
*Brunch for two at the Thank You Brunch in September.

Name

____________________________________
Address city/state/zip code

_________________________________  ___________
Cash Check #

Please make checks out to:
“First Church Congregational”
Put “Work Camp 2015” in the memo line.

Return your share form and donation to Rev. Jennifer Campbell
148 Beach Road, Fairfield CT 06824
Come grab a seat on the front lawn, watch the parade, join the fun and community!

Coffee, Doughnuts, Breakfast Sandwiches, Ice Cream, Bake Sale and Fun Activities for the kids

**Bake Sale Donations Needed**

"You bake it we’ll take it!"

Cookies, cupcakes, and brownies are good but a few cakes or pies for people who go to picnics is good to.

Please nothing that needs to be refrigerated or frozen!

Bring baked goods on Sunday the 24th or early on Monday.

Contact Wendy Muschett at wendymuschett@optonline.net

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Mrs. Claus’ Attic is back!

**2015 Three Kings Bazaar**

December 4 and 5

No electronics or furniture but we love toys, athletic equipment, kitchen items, knick-knacks, collectibles and nearly new decorative fabric items like pillows and tablecloths.

Of course we will still be having our used books, silent auction, baked goods, Christmas items, raffle baskets, luncheon and choir sing… and maybe a few assorted vendor tables, too.

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**Deadline for June Herald**

May 15th

Send all submissions to Cheri Evan cevan@firstchurchfairfield.org

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April 2015

Newsletter-The Herald