

FaithWorks

Volume 57 Issue 10

December/January 2017



Pastor's Message

At the oddest times, it seems, people sing.

Mary, a young woman visited by an angel, drawn to visit her much older relative, Elizabeth, sings. Two women bound together by unlikely pregnancies sing unlikely songs. Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, father of John the Baptist, sings when in his old age he receives the gift of a son. With discordant harmonies that mark God's coming to the world, Advent people sing.

I remember a Friday afternoon some years ago, perilously close to Christmas, when I put on my armor, got into my car and headed for the mall. I approached the turn—a left turn, of course. Traffic was horrendous, so I lurched at every opening. At last there was almost a break in the traffic, only one car stood between me and the parking lot, and it had its left turn signal on raising my hopes, but showed no signs of slowing down to enter the turning lane in front of me. I lurched a bit more and said, "I don't believe her." I was right. The driver had no intention of turning, although her left turn signal was blinking a bright red and green.

Then I saw why. The driver of the car was singing! With her head back and her mouth wide open she was bellowing with all her might. There is no way she could have heard her turn signal clicking, because she was drowning out all other noise with a joyous song!

People sing at the oddest moments—in the shower, in their cars, in the grocery store checkout line, even at church.

During Advent this year, we will focus on the songs people sing as they wait for Jesus to come. They are songs of joy and songs of sadness, songs of hope and songs of despair—they are the songs that speak to us where we are. I hope you will join your church family in worship this Advent. We are Advent people and we need to sing the songs of Christmas together.

Advent blessings,
Pastor Ron

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

37 Main Street, Southington, CT 06489

860-628-6958/ Fax 860-621-0402

E-mail: office@fccsouthington.org

Website: FCCSouthington.org



OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday, 9am—1pm

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 a.m. Chapel Communion

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

11:15 a.m. Contemporary Worship

FOR PASTORAL EMERGENCIES

Call 860-628-6958 during office hours
or our Pastoral Emergency line: 860-385-4884

Pastor Ron rbrown@fccsouthington.org
Pastor Rachel rachel@fccsouthington.org

Ministers to the World:
The Whole Congregation

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown
Associate Pastor	Rev. Rachel J. Bahr
Contemporary Music Coordinators	Steve Nyren Melissa Mirisola
Directors of Christian Education	Karlene Archambeault Carole Lantz
Director of Music Ministries/Organist	Louis S. Vollono, Jr.
Tech/Communications	Dawn Gambacini
Office Coordinator	Mira Morel
Custodian	Lynn Bushnell
Collector	Ray Dischiono
Bookkeeper	Allison LeBarron
Minister of Music Emeritus	John R. Parsons



We pray for

- Priscilla Griffin and family grieving the death of her nephew, Bruce (11/9)
- Chris and Tracy Chaltas and family grieving the death of Chris' stepmother, Suzanne (11/2)

Continued prayers for the Davenport family, Karen Barna, Mary Bea (Lee Morris' mother), Lou and Karen Bushee, Art Hansen, Jamie (Kathy Williams' brother), Embert Dwelley, Doris LaRese, Faith Sullivan, George Moore, John Noble, Christine Blakey (Donna Blakey's daughter-in-law), Joshua, Helen Deckert, Jerry Szylobryt (Sabina Vance's uncle), Ben (Morris Eisenberg's nephew), Reny (Irene) Janelle, Carolyn Mansolf, Tracey Gabree, Bryan, Peggy Thibodeau, Todd Lawson, Fran Sperry, Mary Bugbee, Carolyn Beadle, Betsy Roberts, our Stephen Ministers and care-receivers, and the Caring Ministry team and friends.



Service of Remembrance

Many of us struggle with sadness and grief during the holiday season. Join us **Monday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m.** in the meetinghouse for our annual Service of Healing and Remembrance in to acknowledge that God's presence is also for those who mourn and struggle, and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness. We invite you to bring anyone who may need comfort this holiday season.





Thank You to...

- Our Caring Ministry team who help to share our church with friends who are no longer able to join us for worship, or who are experiencing a time of convalescence by visiting, sending cards or delivering flowers, or mailing our bulletin and sermons.
- Everyone who came out to Peace Café for the Gordon E. Ellis benefit concert. \$615 was raised for the girls and young women at Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca!
- As always, to the wonderful folks who faithfully fold our bulletins and newsletters!
- The cast and crew of *And Then They Came for Me* for creating a powerful and important piece of theater!
- All who participated in our annual CROP Walk. We raised \$1361.00. 25% of all Southington proceeds stay in our community. We had a good turn out for a rainy, blustery day. Participants carried food donations to Bread for Life and Donna Ayer (Director of BFL) gave us a tour of the new facilities and a presentation about BFL.



Lennox Elizabeth Wells

Daughter of Mira Morel and Brian Wells

November 5, 2017

HOSPITALITY NIGHT!

FOOD, FUN, FRIENDS & FESTIVITIES!

In conjunction with White Christmas In the Community and the Southington Downtown Merchant Association's annual holiday event, FCC will be hosting a jolly-good time in Memorial Hall:



Friday, December 1, 2017
5:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Christmas Tag Sale, Bake Sale, Activity Tables, Christmas Music, Basket Drawing and more!

Are You Blessed with Mobility?

We strive to keep our small parking lot open for those who may have mobility challenges. Please consider parking in the large lot to our north or in the municipal lot across the green. Thank you for your consideration!



Merry Christmas

from Your Church Staff!

The Church Office will be CLOSED Christmas Day, December 25 and New Year's Day, January 1.

Advent Sermon Series

Have you ever noticed that as Christmas approaches nearly everybody sings. Good voices and bad join in the carols of Christmas. During Advent Pastor Ron and Pastor Rachel will be picking up on that theme and preaching a sermon series called, "The Songs of Advent."



Biblical characters sing too. During Advent worship you will hear Advent songs of the people we meet in the first chapter of the Gospel

of Luke: **December 3: The Song of Mary** (Luke 1:46-55), **December 10: The Song of Elizabeth** (Luke 1:39-45), **December 17: The Song of Zechariah** (Luke 1:68-79)

Dinner at Outback for a Cause

FCC's Leadership Development Board will be raising money to support it's ministry of supporting volunteer efforts throughout our church. On **Thursday, December 14 from 4:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.** we will be hosting "A Night Outback" at Outback Steakhouse in Southington.

All are welcome. Come out and enjoy a great meal with



family and friends and Outback will generously donate 15% of your bill to our church. Just let your server know you are with FCC Southington. **Mark your calendar now!** We are hoping to have 100 folks dine with us! We encourage you to sign up online at www.groupraise.com/events/45526 or just come and enjoy.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S RETREATS

Spiritual AND Religious

FCC Men's Retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center Sharon, CT January 27-28, 2018

Many men today identify themselves as "spiritual, but not religious." Sometimes, that is not enough. This year, the annual men's retreat will explore the balance between what it means to be a "spiritual" man and a "church" man. How does our spirituality effect our religious practice? How does our commitment to be involved in the church enhance or detract from our lives as spiritual men? Cost for the retreat is \$150 which includes lodging, food and retreat materials. Sign-up outside Pastor Ron's office. **Deadline for sign-up is January 7, 2018.**

A Weekend by the Sea - A Weekend to Change Your Life

FCC Women's Retreat at Mercy by the Sea Madison, CT March 9-11, 2018

In our busy and harried world, it is often difficult to find a peaceful moment or setting whereby a woman can evaluate who she has been and who she can become. By taking herself away for a day, a weekend or a week a woman can "find her essence and begin to welcome the person she left behind while meeting the needs of the others." Sign-up on the sheet outside Pastor Ron's Office! Cost for the retreat is \$250—covers meals, lodging and retreat materials. **Deadline for sign-up is February 4.**

Family Promise: You Can Make a Difference!

Thank you to all the Family Promise volunteers who shared their time with our guest families
December 3—10!

1. Volunteering is easy, fun, and rewarding!
2. Our next host week is **February 11—18!** Please mark your calendar now to lend a hand that week. Sign-ups will be available soon on our website at FCCSouthington.org/share or by calling the church office at 860-628-6958.
3. Remember, you do not need to be trained in order to cook a meal or to help with set-up and clean-up.

Thank you for helping these families who are in great need!

Support for Families Living with Mental Illness

NEW! Starting on Wednesday, December 13, a NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group! We will meet **the second Wednesday of each month, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.** in room 206. Led by trained volunteer facilitators, this group is free and is available to any adult families, partners and friends who have been affected by and/or are living with a loved one with a mental health illness. NAMI and the Facilitators do not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies. Contact the facilitators Mary 203-213-6732 or Amy 860-637-5458 with any questions.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDER FORM



Cost: \$15.00

Orders Due: December 10

Ordered by _____

Phone _____

Given by (as printed in bulletin) _____

I will purchase _____ red double-poinsettia plants at \$15 each.

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

_____ I will take my plants on Sunday, 12/24.

_____ I will leave my plant.

Please make all checks payable to:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH and in Memo, POINSETTIA

Send to: First Congregational Church
Flower Committee
37 Main Street, Southington, CT 06489
Questions? Call Kathy LaBarre 860-628-2904

FAITH FORMATION

Bagels and Bible Study

Everyone is invited to join Pastor Ron before work for tasty bagels, brief Bible study and stimulating conversation. At our meeting on December 14, we will read together the stories about Jesus' birth recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It is always fun to discover what the Bible really says about the Christmas story.

After a break for the holidays, we will resume our study of the Gospel of John on January 11. Brief readings to prepare for the Bible study are emailed to participants before each meeting. We meet **every other Thursday from 7:00-7:45 a.m.** in Memorial Hall. We can't promise any answers, but we have a great time and learn a lot from exploring the questions. No previous Bible study experience is necessary and new folks are always welcome. Each session stands alone, so come when you can. **Upcoming meetings on December 14, January 11 and 25.**



Bible Study at The Orchards

This weekly Bible study meets in the Small Dining Room of The Orchards located at 34 Hobart Street in Southington. Several residents of The Orchards attend this Bible study, but it is open to everyone. We meet **every Wednesday from 10:00-10:30 a.m.** to study the scripture passages that will be read at the First Congregational Church worship services the following Sunday. **All are welcome!** (We will not meet on Dec 27, Jan 3, or Jan 10.)

December/January Worship at FCC

Worship at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Dec 3: First Sunday of Advent

Sermon Series: Songs of Advent—Mary
The Rev. Rachel J. Bahr, preaching

Dec 10: Second Sunday of Advent

Sermon Series: Songs of Advent—Elizabeth
The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, preaching

Dec 17: Third Sunday of Advent

Sermon Series: Songs of Advent—Zechariah
The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, preaching

Dec 24: Christmas Eve

8:00 a.m. Chapel Communion

10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant

5:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion

Dec 31: First Sunday after Christmas

The Rev. Rachel J. Bahr, preaching

Jan 7: Star Gift Sunday

Reflections from Our Community

Jan 14: Second Sunday after Epiphany

The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, preaching

Jan 21: Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, preaching

Jan 28: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

The Rev. Rachel J. Bahr, preaching

Visit FCCSouthington.org/worship-this-week for the most up-to-date info about worship services.

BULLETIN BOARD

Southington Historic Ornament

The Southington Historical Society has Christmas ornaments available for purchase which feature our beloved church. Cost is \$15 each. Stop by outside Pastor Ron's office to see the ornament and sign up to get yours.

Game Night for Adults Friday, Dec 15, Jan 19 7:00 p.m.

Held on the third Friday of each month. Beverages are provided. Please bring a small snack to share. Come solo or bring a friend. New games are always welcome! Questions: See Meredith Mann or Carolyn Mansolf. Inclement weather will



Chair Yoga!

Mondays at 10am in our Choir Room

This is a gentle yoga class. All donations (\$5 suggested) to benefit the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca in Ecuador.



Apple Harvest Festival Success

Thank you to the many volunteers that helped make the Apple Harvest a great success! We were also blessed with fabulous weather both weekends! Those that worked, had the opportunity to spend time in fellowship and community with one another and that's what it's all about, isn't it? Well, also it is our largest fundraiser too! So far as we tally up the finances, **we have exceeded \$20,000!** Please reach out to me if you are interested in assisting next year with the outside booth or kitchen. Or reach out to Karen and Brian Bradshaw to help with the vendor side.

~ Linda Accuosti

Morning Women's Group

Our annual Christmas Luncheon will be held **Tuesday, December 12 at 11:30 a.m.** at the AquaTurf. Call Bev Ryan at 860-666-8874 with questions.

Church Council Meeting

All are invited to our next meeting: **Monday, January 15 at 7:00 p.m.** in room 201/202. We will only meet on December 18 if there is an urgent need to do so. Please check our online calendar: FCCSouthington.org/events.

Stewardship in Action!

On November 19, we heard the Parable of the Talents and were challenged to use our gifts as faithful stewards. Our Music Ministry lived the parable as they provided combined praise at our Thanksgiving worship. With contemporary and traditional music, we were blessed to have many talented singers, bell ringers, and instrumentalists come together to enhance our worship. To our Gallery Singers, Roots Junior Choir, Branches Contemporary Ensemble, and Celebration Ringers: **thank you** for your time and talent. It was a fitting way to truly live the Gospel message. As we prepare for Christmas, new members to any of these groups are welcome!
~ Lou Vollono, Jr., Director of Music Ministries & Organist

Shopping at Patrick Baker & Sons?

Mention our church's name at the register (or if you are buying on the web, enter **22610** in the Church Code box on the checkout page) and they will credit our account with 10% of the purchase amount. Thank you for remembering FCC!

MORE BULLETIN BOARD NOTICES

Confidence, Independence, Great Friends and God, Too!

For 60 years, Silver Lake has been transforming kids' lives, opening their hearts to God and to great friendships that last a lifetime. Visit their website at SilverLakeCT.org for the summer conference schedule. Does your child like: Making art? Bicycling? Boating? Harry Potter? STEAM? The *Divergent* Series? Making music? Sports? Social Media? There's a Silver Lake Conference for that!

Registration begins January 15 for Silver Lake, the UCC summer camp in Sharon, CT. Camp is for children entering 4th grade and older. For more information and to register, go to silverlakect.org/summercamp. Scholarships are available. (Please contact Pastor Ron.)



The Generosity Project

During our Children's Moment on Thanksgiving Sunday our children and youth were challenged to take on "The Generosity Project." Pastor Rachel gave out \$60 of her own money in envelopes with denominations of \$1, \$2, or \$5 to come up with a "Generosity Project" that they think about and implement in our community over the next month or two. Pastor Rachel asked youth to keep in mind the Parable of the Talents from the gospel of Matthew 24.13-25. The only way to fail at this project is to do nothing with the gift. Take a risk and be generous! On **Sunday, January 7, 2018**, our annual "Star Gift Sunday," youth and children are encouraged to share about their generosity projects. We are also asking for everyone who participated to write a description of their project which we will share through the coming year!



From Gloria Gelpke

Thank you to everyone who reached out during my recent health concerns. I felt surrounded by love and prayers. The cards, phone calls, visitors, rides and meals were so supportive and helpful.

~ Gloria

From Art and Sandy Hansen

We both thank you so much for all the cards and thoughtfulness you have extended to us. We love the flowers that Lita and Fred brought us and it was nice to see them. We thank our other special friends that came to see us also!

Love,

Sandy and Art

Message from the Board of Generosity

“And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.” Joshua 23:14

You remember Joshua, right? Moses dies and God says 'Hey Joshua! You're the next batter. Suit up!' It's hard to imagine how much anxiety must have followed that calling. Joshua had some big shoes to fill. 'Sooo... let me get this right God... you want me to follow the guy that brought 10 plagues on Egypt, parted the Red Sea and delivered the Ten Commandments?' Who wouldn't want to sign up to be that guy... not!

Well, this scripture comes well after Joshua accepted God's calling. He'd already toppled Jericho and conquered Canaan when God lengthened the day by giving him enough daylight to conquer the Amorite kings. Joshua was old and he was dying. He was reminding the people God always keeps his promise even when things look impossible. I think he was saying 'you will do some amazing things after I'm gone if you trust God. You don't know what you're capable of... but God does. Don't cling to your doubts. Those are the anchors that will hold you back. Stretch to realize the vision God has for you.'

Fast forward to November 2017 at FCC. Our pledge receipts are more than 10% below plan. There are many reasons. Most of them are just life. People change jobs, retire, move, kids in college, death, divorce... the usual suspects... just more of it than planned this year. So we have a choice... we can accept this reality and the consequences that go with it ... or do something different. Who's up for doing something different? We don't know what we're capable of with God behind us. Let's find out!



As we bring 2017 to a close, the Generosity Board asks that you give the following requests prayerful consideration in the weeks ahead. Please give FCC your time and talent in 2018. How can you help FCC realize God's vision? Please look actively for others in need of receiving the Holy Spirit. Bring them to Christ. FCC can help. Please do more of those two things. God will show you, and them, the way... even if you don't know how. Lastly, if you've fallen behind on your pledges... please give some consideration to catching up. Doing more would be great... but the simple act of just fulfilling your pledge would help FCC continue to deliver on the promises to our congregation.

Thank you for all you do for FCC.

Yours in Christ,
The Generosity Board

Farewell Celebration for Ralph and Lynn Bushnell

Ralph Bushnell has been playing drums and singing with Branches, Lynn has been our church custodian (and all-around helping-hand with all our events!) for 17 years, and they have been church members since 1995! As they prepare to start a new chapter in a warmer climate, we will recognize their work among us during the **11:15 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 17**, and will celebrate them during Coffee & Conversation. We invite friends from the many decades of their time at FCC to join us as we wish God's blessings on their journey.

Stephen Ministry Training Begins January 4, 2018 Enrich Your Life and Your Care-Receiver's!

Stephen Ministry congregations equip and empower lay-caregivers (called Stephen Ministers) to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. We hope you will prayerfully consider training for Stephen Ministry. Contact Steve Palmieri at (860)620-3603 or spalmieri21@gmail.com, Sam or Irene Hendrickson at samh411@cox.net or irenev31@cox.net for more info.



Star Gift Sunday—January 7, 2018

Do you remember receiving your star gift on Epiphany Sunday last January? How has it guided your spiritual journey through 2017? Would you like to share your journey with the congregation? We invite people to share their star gift stories during the worship services on **Epiphany Sunday, January 7, 2018**. If you have a story to share, please contact Pastor Ron or Pastor Rachel. On Epiphany Sunday, as has become our tradition, everyone will receive a new star gift for 2018, a spiritual gift for reflection during the year.

Save These Dates:

Dec 1	Hospitality Night
Dec 3	First Sunday of Advent
Dec 4	Service of Healing and Remembrance
Dec 3 – 10	Family Promise Host Week
Dec 10	Poinsettia Orders Due
Dec 13	Mental Illness Family Support Group
Dec 15	Game Night for Adults
Dec 17	Farewell Celebration for Ralph and Lynn Bushnell
Dec 24	Christmas Eve—worship at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 5 p.m. and 10 p.m.
Jan 4	Stephen Ministry Training Class Begins
Jan 7	Star Gift Sunday
Jan 27-28	Men's Retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center

Check our online calendar any time at FCCSouthington.org/events.

Missions



Quilt Group

We meet every other Wednesday from 10am–noon in room 201/2 to quilt and enjoy fellowship. Not a quilter? Join us and we'll give you an easy job to do or come for the fellowship. Questions? Contact Carole Lantz at carole@fccsouthington.org or 860-628-6958.

Meeting dates: December 6 (off-site) and 20, January 3, 17, and 31

Make Christmas Brighter for a Child or Senior in Need

This year our holiday gifts will go to 25 seniors and 75 children in our own community through Southington Community Services. Gift Tags are available in Memorial Hall and each has the age, gender and gift ideas for a senior or child. All gifts should be wrapped and returned with the Gift Tag attached by **Sunday, December 17**. Thank you for your generosity!

Salvation Army Bell-Ringing

**Saturday, December 9
9:00 a.m.—9:00 p.m.**



Sign up for a one hour shift as a bell ringer at Stop & Shop on December 9. When we ring the bell for the Salvation Army, 90% of the money raised stays in town to help Southington residents in need. The remaining 10% will be used in the Hartford area. Sign-up outside Pastor Ron's office.

Food Pantry Donations

The food pantry at Southington Community Services is always in need of donations. Please leave non-perishable items in the Hope chest located in the Narthex at the front of the church. Last month we delivered about \$70 worth of food. Thank you for helping those in need!

Mission Trip to Ecuador

A profound and fun opportunity! Our August 2018 mission trip to Ecuador will include 5 nights in Guayaquil, with the 25 girls and young women we support at Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca. Then we'll spend 4 nights in Quito and Otavalo, touring these amazing cities. Deadline for sign-up is January 30, 2018 and requires a deposit at that time. See flyer for details (on the credenza outside the church office) or visit FCCSouthington.org/share#eff Contact Pastor Ron or Clare Lindsey with questions.

Caring Ministry

Our next Caring Ministry meeting will be **Monday, December 11 at 11:00 a.m.** for our annual Christmas Luncheon. Please call Carolyn Mansolf with questions, **860-621-5082**.

Meal Ministry for you or a church member who is going through a difficult time, surgery, etc. Call Carolyn Mansolf, 860-621-5082.

Transportation Ministry If you are in need of a ride to church or a doctor's appointment, or if you are able to provide rides occasionally to church and/or doctor's appointments. Please call Diana Sheard, 860-793-2765.

Getting to Know Our 11:15 a.m. Nursery Workers...

It's not just babysitting! It's all about building a foundation for our children! Our care givers' voices and hugs are introducing our little ones to the love of God and teaching them how to trust. If you'd like to explore volunteering in our Nursery, please contact Karen Bradshaw, Carole or Karlene. Let God's light shine through you to our little angels!! Please meet our 11:15 a.m. care givers:

Barbara Nati grew up Catholic in Meriden and was the first "girl" altar server! She joined us at FCC about 6 years ago and has one daughter. Barbara attended Middlesex Community College, has a real estate license and works for Calcagni Real Estate in Plantsville. She also serves on our Mission Board, helps with Family Promise and is a Confirmation Mentor.

Mary Carter comes to us from the East Hampton Catholic church. She has her Master's Degree in Social Work and is retired as a counselor for psychiatric outpatients at the River Valley Service. She loves gardening and helps at the UCONN older adult learning garden center in Waterbury. Mary loves the children and shows God's love through her smile.

Trinity Cardillo has been helping in our Nursery since her Confirmation year. She has completed a babysitting, lifeguard and first aid course, loves kids and babysits regularly. She loves sports and singing, helps out on our mission projects and has a contagious smile!

Melody Lacombe has worked in our Nursery since her Confirmation year and loves working with the children. She babysits regularly and loves writing and directing. She is in the process of publishing her book and directing and filming the movie version!

Gayle Rossi has taught all levels in Children's Ministry at FCC and is involved with the Boy Scouts, Graphics and Gardening. Gayle is employed by the Southington Schools as a Secretary. Gayle's smile and laugh brings cheer to the little ones.

Rebecca Stevens attended St. Aloysius and the Methodist Church before coming to FCC where she has taught and worked in the Nursery. She and husband, Warren, have a 14 year old daughter who also helps in our nursery. Rebecca has a Business Degree and works for Country Financial in Middletown in Production Development. She's a "Dance Mom", loves music, travel and book clubs.

Haley Andrews has been in our church family since she was 2 years old and has been helping in our Nursery and Preschool since confirmation. She has been trained in first aid, CPR, and babysitting and serves as a nanny for 2 children. She loves helping our little ones and enjoys sports, especially volley ball.

Kayla Byrne was confirmed at our church last year, is a member of our high school youth group and serves as a junior deacon. At school she plays soccer and runs track. She is so happy to be working with all of our little ones!

Maya Roberts has been attending FCC since preschool. She enjoys volunteering and likes watching the children in the nursery as they progress with learning social skills and interacting with other kids. Maya is a babysitter and on the color guard team at New Britain High School.

Bridget Stevens is a freshman at SHS but also spends half of her day at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts in the Dance program. She's been dancing for 13 years and loves competing and performing. She also loves movies, games, the trampoline park, working with the younger children and math!

Sophia Chaltas grew up in the church and enjoys volunteering, teaching and childcare in the Nursery. She is a member of the Youth Group, has been on 2 Mission Trips and was a counselor at Silver Lake for the past 2 years. Sophia does Track and Field at school, dances and is in the School Engineering Program. She is baby-sitter, first aid and CPR certified.

Amber Sarno previously attended St. Barnabus Church in North Haven before coming to FCC. She is a lawyer at Shipman and Goodwin and in her spare time, has served on the VGNS Board, is part of our Board of Trustees, loves reading and enjoying the outdoors. She and husband, Mark, have two children.

Brenna Smith has been in our church family since she was born and has been active in church school, Steeple players and youth group. She plays the violin, loves to sing and dance and is active in drama club at school. Brenna is also babysitter certified and loves to play with the little ones.



Interested in Health and Wellness?

Aimed at promoting action and understanding of health, fitness, nutrition, and mental, physical and spiritual well-being, we are looking for volunteers to help plan a ministry to reach out effectively to members of the church as well as the community at large. The goal is to have a ministry that is an accurate and effective clearinghouse of information on a wide range of health related topics. Please [contact Brian Bradshaw](#) at 860-680-1305.

Attention Young Adults

20- and 30-Somethings are invited to meet us at Pastor Rachel's house, 166 Berlin Avenue, Southington on **Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.** for friends, fun, faith and food! We use an online curriculum called "Wired Word". Questions? Contact Pastor Rachel or email her at Rachel@fccsouthington.org.

Church School News

Church School Schedule

December 3: Chapel Sunday

December 24, 10:00 a.m. service: Christmas Pageant presented by the youth of our church. No church school or nursery.

December 31: no church school, nursery as usual

January 7: Star Gift Sunday: Chapel Sunday

Christmas Pageant

Mark your calendars. This year our **10:00 am Christmas Eve** service will be a Christmas Pageant presented by the youth of our church (preschool – 8th grade.) Please keep the following dates free for rehearsals 12:30 – 1:30: December 3, December 10, December 17 (costume fitting – **must attend**.) To sign up or if you have any questions, please contact Pastor Rachel at Rachel@fccsouthington.org.

Mission Ideas During Advent

Get into the Spirit of Christmas by doing one or both of these mission ideas during Advent (beginning December 3). All items will be donated to Southington Community Services or Bread for Life.

“Reverse Advent Calendar”

Start on the First Day of Advent (December 3) and each day you add a non-perishable item to the box. On Christmas Eve bring the box to the 10:00 am Christmas Eve service.



“Gifts for Baby Jesus”

Each week the children will bring “Gifts for Baby Jesus” to their Church School class or you can also bring them to the 10:00 am Christmas Eve Pageant service. **Suggested gifts:** baby bottle; pacifier; teething ring; receiving blanket; footed, long-sleeved onesie (size medium); baby socks; small infant-appropriate toys; baby soap; baby shampoo; wipes; sippy cup.

Pre-School for 3-Year-Olds

Village Green Nursery School now has open enrollment in our 3 year-old class (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-12) for the 2018-19 school year. Through play and teacher support, our school helps children develop important social skills. VGNS follows the Connecticut Early Learning and Development guidelines and offers parental involvement by having an open-door policy and by hosting several fun events for families throughout the year. For more information visit our website, vgns.org, or visit our Facebook page, [facebook.com/VillageGreenNurserySchool](https://www.facebook.com/VillageGreenNurserySchool), or call our school for a tour, [\(860\)628-6958 ext 13](tel:(860)628-6958).



Youth News

Confirmation Class

Sunday, December 10: 4:00 —9:00 p.m. Cathedral in the Night—RSVP today!

Join us for a wonderful opportunity to serve others! We are headed to Northampton to serve a meal and worship with the homeless. We will meet at church, travel to Northampton, unpack the food, worship together, then serve a hot meal to folks in the Park, returning by 9 pm. This is an incredible experience you won't want to miss! We will also be making a pasta dinner on **Saturday, December 9, 12-4pm**. We are looking for 3-4 helpers. Please RSVP by Sunday, December 3.

January 12-14: Retreat @ Silver Lake

We're headed to Silver Lake together for a meaningful weekend together in a beautiful place! We'll learn about the UCC, the roots of our denomination, as well as other UCC theology that connects to our lives. We'll have a blast together outdoors in God's Country. Cost is \$160, but if this is restrictive please speak with Pastor Rachel. Please turn in your check by Sunday, December 3.



Middle School Youth Group

Dec 1: 5-9pm Hospitality Night/Fundraiser

We need MSYG youth to help us sell snowman pops, baked goods, pretzels, popcorn, and apple cider at Hospitality Night. Please sign-up for a two hour shift: 5-7pm, or 7-9pm. Email Pastor Rachel to RSVP for a shift.

Dec 10: 4-8pm Cookie Baking Extravaganza

We will bake and decorate Christmas cookies for our Caring Ministry friends, play games, & pause for some reflection.

Jan 14: 5:30-7:30pm Star Gift Stories/Small Groups

We're creating break-out groups with our leaders and we will share about our own Star Gifts. Start thinking about your Star Gift now!

High School Youth Group

Dec 3: 5:30-7:30pm Games/Discussion

Come hang-out with your youth group friends! We'll have dinner together, have some down time, and play our favorite youth group games.

Dec 9: 5:30-8:30pm Family Promise Night

We are looking for youth who have had Family Promise training to serve our guests dinner as well as be a kind, fun, and compassionate presence, with possibility of games and conversation. Email Pastor Rachel to sign-up. All volunteers this week will be invited to Pastor Ron's for a Pizza Party!

Dec 31: New Year's Eve Bowling/Lock-in

We'll be going bowling, so bring \$20 to cover a couple games and any snacks. Then we'll come back to church for fun activities, sleepover and a nice hot breakfast together in the morning.

Jan 7: 5:30-7:30pm Games/Discussion

We'll have dinner together, hang out, and play our favorite games. Hope you can make it!

Jan 21: 5:30-7:30pm Healthy Relationships

Janaina & Jessica from the YWCA

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
37 Main Street
Southington, CT 06489



Christmas Eve Worship

8:00 am CHAPEL COMMUNION

Holy Communion, Pastor Ron's Christmas Message

10:00 am FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Christmas Pageant, Roots Choir

5:00 pm CONTEMPORARY CHRISTMAS

Ceremony of Lights, Pastor Rachel's Christmas Message, Branches—Contemporary Band

10:00 pm CANDLE LIGHT COMMUNION

Gallery Singers, Ceremony of Lights, Holy Communion, Pastor Ron's Christmas Message