

FaithWorks

Volume 65 Issue 1

January 2019



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*O sing to the Lord a new
song; sing to the Lord, all the
earth. Sing to the Lord, bless
his name; tell of his
salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the
nations, his marvelous
works among all the peoples.*

Psalm 96: 1-3

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
An Open & Affirming Congregation
37 Main Street, Southington, CT 06489
860-628-6958/ Fax 860-621-0402
E-mail: office@fccsouthington.org



Website: FCCSouthington.org
Facebook.com/FCCSouthington

OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday
9 AM to 1 PM

SUNDAY SERVICES
8:00 a.m. **Chapel Communion**
9:30 a.m. **Traditional Worship**
11:15 a.m. **Contemporary Worship**
unless otherwise noted

FOR PASTORAL EMERGENCIES
Call 860-628-6958 during office hours
or our Pastoral Emergency line:

860-385-4884

Pastor Ron rbrown@fccsouthington.org

Ministers to the World:
The Whole Congregation

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown
Choir Dir./Organist	Concetta Scavone
Contemporary Music Coordinators	Steve Nyren Melissa Mirisola
Directors of Christian Education	Karlene Archambeault Carole Lantz
Dir. of Communications	D. Windham Vance
Office Coordinator	Mira Morel
Collector	Ray Dischino
Bookkeeper	Allison LeBarron
Min. of Music Emeritus	John R. Parsons

Joys & Concerns

We pray for Bob, Carolyn, Chuck, Chrissy, Debi, Doris, Faith, Richard, Hannah, Joe, Judy, and for Todd.

Ongoing Concerns: We continue to pray for Bryan, Carolyn, Bill, Jennifer, Helen, DJ, Bill, Tom, Elizabeth, Todd, Debbie, Laura, Tony, Nellie, Fran, Peggy, Holly & Jenna and our Stephen Ministers and care-receivers and Caring Ministry team and friends.

If you have a prayer request you would like added, please contact the church office
At 860-628-6958 or office@fccsouthington.org



We celebrate the birth of
Alexandra Renee Heft
born December 16th to parents
Nicole and Tyler Heft and
grandmother Sherry Davenport



Athena Sharon Agudo
on December 16th
Parents Diego & Kristin Agudo

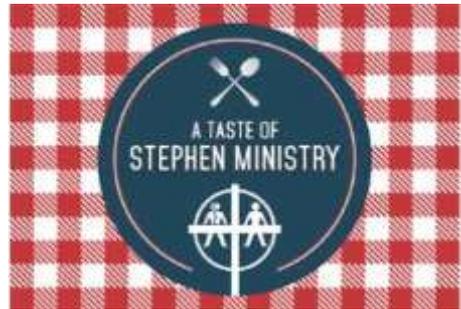


What is Stephen Ministry all about, anyway?

Looking at people in our community, you might not notice that a lot of people are struggling with something - divorces, deaths, illnesses, violence, hurts, job loses, problems of loved ones. Quite often, we feel brokenness, separation from the life we had, feelings of loss and emptiness. A previous minister used to have a prayer that began...."We are a people who constantly do things, say things and think things that build walls of separation between ourselves and others, between ourselves and God." He'd go on to say, "But thanks be to God, because of our condition of separation, we are addressed by a Word of healing and a Word of hope." Our Stephen Ministers help bring that word of healing and hope to their Care Receivers. Some people aren't getting the help they need because they don't want anyone to know, but the first and foremost word for Stephen Ministry is "confidentiality". Stephen Ministers, working one on one, listen, build trust, and love in a nonjudgmental, compassionate way as they help their Care Receiver journey toward wholeness.

We have a new class beginning in January, on Thursday evenings. Following the 50 hour training and commissioning, Stephen Ministers apply caring skills to interactions with their Care Receivers and also in other relationships and discover their whole lives are enriched.

Stephen Ministers are given support, supervision, guidance and continuing education throughout their years of service. We provide training for many other churches, building a family of Stephen Ministers and bringing love and understanding among faith communities in our area. Contact Steve Palmieri if you'd like to be in the class or Pastor Ron if you'd like a Stephen Minister.



A new Stephen Ministry class will begin

January 3rd and you can be a part of a wonderful ministry, sharing your gifts of caring, compassion and listening skills. After your training, you can be paired with someone who needs a loving heart to journey with them through a difficult time in their life. Care receivers benefit from confidential relationships that allow them to talk and be heard by a Stephen Minister that has been selected just for them. For more information, contact Pastor Ron (rbrown@fccsouthington.org) or Steve Palmieri (spalmieri21@gmail.com).

Stephen Ministry is a steel beam strengthening our church behind the scenes. Without our Stephen Ministers offering to care to those who **need it, our congregation wouldn't be** nearly as strong.

- Rev. Daryl Madi, Greetree
Community Church in Kirkwood, MO

Church School Calendar



January 6 - Church school at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services

January 13 - Church school at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services

January 20 - Church school at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services

January 27 - Church school at **10:00 a.m. combined service**, children will remain in church school for duration of Congregational Meeting.

Church School Chuckle

Recently in church school, the children were exploring what heaven was all about. The teacher asked, "What do you think it takes to get into heaven?" The answers were coming fast and furious, "kindness and respect to others, no crimes, loving cats, believing in God." One quiet boy, who hadn't commented, finally said, "*You have to die.*" Priceless! The best answer yet!

Interested in helping in a class? It's fun and you will be making a difference in young lives. Helpers don't need to prepare a lesson - just be an extra set of hands and let God shine through your love. Contact Carole or Karlene if you are interested or have questions.

Please make sure to visit our website for the most up-to-date information regarding our Christian Education program. You can also contact our CE Directors Carole Lantz and Karlene Archambeault at carole@fccsouthington.org or karlene@fccsouthington.org.

Associate Pastor Search Update

After a period of discernment and after reflecting on the work of the Planning for the Future Task Force, the Board of Deacons began the process of seeking a fulltime Associate Pastor in November. According to the church by laws, the Board of Deacons "oversees the hiring, supervision, compensation and dismissal of all associate ministers, seminarians and ministers-in-training." Fulfilling that responsibility, the Deacons have established a search committee to work through the normal procedures in place through the Connecticut Conference of the UCC to identify and call an Associate Pastor. The Deacons appointed ten people to the search committee:

Linda Accuosti, Bethany Andrews, Pastor Ron Brown, Alexa Chaltas, Greg Cook, Michael Ericsson, Dave Hagen, Clare Lindsey, Rich McCarty & John Zimmerman

They have already begun to meet. Please keep them in your prayers as they discern whom God is calling

During my year at a Divinity School in New York City, I ended up as the pastor of a small mission center in New York City called Graffiti Baptist Ministry. To say that this 23-year-old who had rarely left the southern Appalachian Mountains in western North Carolina was in way over my head is a dramatic understatement.

One day I visited Michael, a man who lived in a vacant lot on East 6th Street between Avenues C and D. Although most of his stories probably originated in the bottle of Night Train wine at his feet, I always liked listening to him. He lived in a shack constructed from the leftovers of a Habitat for Humanity project. His glazed look demonstrated that the alcohol and drugs he thought would ease his pain only made it more intense.

I had gone to take Michael a few cans of food. It was a busy day and I felt good about making the sacrifice to squeeze in one more “pastoral” call. Michael asked me to pray with him before I left, saying that he wanted to pray first.

Michael asked God to help his hurting neighbors who needed food and shelter. He said he wanted to be a neighbor to the folks who lived in the streets. Although Michael was one of the most desperate people I have ever met, his prayer revealed that he somehow knew how to accept others, how to give without expecting to receive, how to be a neighbor. The piety and arrogance of my ministerial attitude haunted me. I wanted to be God’s servant and felt righteous about my sacrifice. But neither Michael nor God needed a servant.

They needed more: a neighbor.

Michael nudged me to conclude the prayer. Completely without words to pray, tears came to my eyes. As I uttered “amen,” I felt Michael’s needle-scarred arms embrace me. Michael did not need a servant to reach down to him from above. He needed a neighbor to be with him in his pain, and he had reached out to me. He changed my life.

I always remember Michael as a New Year begins because he reminds me that the only way that I can help change the world is by being a neighbor. Only by seeing every person as God sees them, as a neighbor who needs me to see them and love them, can the dream we pray each week become a reality—“thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Blessings,
Pastor Ron



BULLETIN BOARD



Everyone is invited to join Pastor Ron before work for tasty bagels, brief Bible study, and stimulating conversation. We are currently studying the Gospel of John. Brief readings to prepare for the Bible study will be emailed to participants before each meeting. We will meet every other Thursday from 7:00-7:45 a.m. in Memorial Hall—this month on **January 10th and 24th**. 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. Email Pastor Ron rbrown@fccsouthington.org for more information. All are welcome!

Will be starting back up in 2019! Please join us for a fun night of fellowship and games. We will be meeting **January 18th, February 15th, March 15th and April 12th at 7:00 PM** in Memorial Hall. Everyone brings a snack to share.



Morning Women's Group

Will meet the second Tuesday of the month starting in January around 9:30 AM. We will host our Lenten Lunch in March. If you have any questions please contact Meredith Mann at mersm@cox.net



All-Church Retreat at Silver Lake

Do you want to worship, learn and play together in "God's Backyard?" We are in the process of putting together an all-church retreat at Silver Lake for **March of 2019. A date has not been set, but please let us know if you are interested.** Not sure what Silver Lake is? Talk to Pastor Ron, Windham Vance or the youth of our church who have attended in the past. You can also visit their website www.silverlakect.org or [facebook.com SilverLakeCT/](https://www.facebook.com/SilverLakeCT/)

Chair Yoga

Mondays at 10am in our Choir Room This is a gentle yoga class. All donations (\$5 suggested) benefit the girls of Fundación SorDominga Bocca in Ecuador.



Do You Know of Someone Without Access to a Computer?

If you or someone you know does not have access we can provide them with hard copies of any digital documents or sermons. Please call or stop by the church office during office hours (9a-1p Monday thru Friday) or email Windham Vance at happenings@fccsouthington.org to obtain your copy.



Star Gift Sunday

Be sure to be at FCC on Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2019, to receive a new star gift for 2019, a spiritual gift for reflection during the year. You will also hear stories from members of the congregation about how their 2018 star gifts guided them through the year. It is a worship service not to be missed!



Symbols of Advent Scavenger Hunt

We hope you had fun with our Scavenger Hunt! On **January 6th** we will draw an adult and a child's name for a prize. Good luck to all those who participated.

Hospitality Night Thank You

Thank you to everyone who helped with FCC's Hospitality Night at White Christmas in the Community. Attendees enjoyed shopping for holiday decorations, joyful singing, delicious soup, hot beverages, the opportunity to support the church's ministries via quilted items, cookies and baskets, and extravagant hospitality.

Joanne Kelleher



Members of FCC will hold a Congregational Meeting to approve the 2019 budget on **Sunday, January 27** immediately following the 10:00 AM combined service. Children will stay at Church School. Once the meeting is over, join us for lunch at our Soup Social down in Memorial Hall. **Please contact the office** to help donate soup or bread.



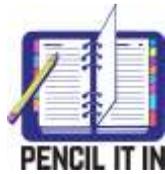
...to God and My Country

Please join us on **Sunday, February 10, 2019** during our 9:30 am worship service as we celebrate Scout Sunday. All Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Venture Scouts are invited to join us. If you would like to participate in the service or have any questions, please contact Windham Vance at happenings@fccsouthington.org.



Good Deeds Are On Sale!

Come one, come all and purchase some of the wonderful deeds or services donated by various members of our loving church community! Whether it be baking, sewing, yard-work, or other service, chances are that we have it for sale! Visit the EFF table after all 3 services. Full purchase price of a deed goes directly to the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca, our mission partner in Ecuador. Payment for deeds due upon purchase please. Get yours today, they're going fast!



January 6	Star Gift Sunday
January 18-20	Confirmation Retreat
January 27	Congregational Meeting
February 1-3	The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
February 8-9	The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
February 10	Scout Sunday

Check our online calendar any time at [FCCSouthington.org/events](https://www.fccsouthington.org/events)



Thanks
for Your
Support!

Thank you to everyone who fulfilled their 2018 pledge commitment or who made a pledge for 2019. Contact Ray Dischino at collector@fccsouthington.org or 860-628-6958 with any questions about the amount pledged or your contributions to date.

Capital Campaign pledges, as of **December 21st**, are just over **75%** towards our goal! Pledge cards are available in the pews or pledges can be made online by visiting the church website and clicking on the share tab then donate tab. Scroll to the bottom of the page and both forms can be found there. Click on the image of the form to fill them out.



Online Donations to FCC

Want to make a contribution to our church? It's simple! Scan the QR code provided or visit our church website . There you can learn about pledging and lots of different ways to support our doing of God's work in the world!



There is also the option online to fill out your pledge and Capital Campaign forms. To do so, please visit our website at <https://www.fccsouthington.org/donate> and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Missions



Grateful Threads will return to their regular meeting dates of **January 2nd, 16th and 30th**. We meet from 10:00 a.m. to noon and look forward to getting together again and sharing news about quilting and a little news about each other as well. Have a happy new year and we will see you in 2019!



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our shawls are given to those in need of comfort, whether from illness, sorrow, loneliness or loss. Prayer shawls are available upon request to church members and their friends and family.

If you knit or crochet, consider making and donating shawls to our ministry. Patterns, needles and yarn are available if needed. Call Kathy LaBarre, 860-628-2904. **Please pin a tag with your name on each shawl you knit/crochet.**

Caring Ministry

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.

If you want more information about caring ministry or want to be a part of it, please contact Carolyn Mansolf via the number listed above.

Support for Families Living with Mental Illness

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family

Support Group normally meets on **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. Contact the facilitators Mary Potter 203-213-6732 or Amy Truskowski 860-637-5458 with questions.



Thanks to all those who helped serve at Bread for Life during Christmas. BFL Provides lunch five days a week at their home at 31 Vermont Ave. They deliver meals to the home bound and to senior housing authority facilities and we collaborate with the Southington school system on the breakfast program and summer feeding program. Their goal is that no one in Southington goes hungry and continue to look for new ways to serve our community. Thanks for volunteering your time!

Church School & Program News

Sunday School Synopsis: A look at what the children are learning in Sunday School each week

January 6 Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi were likely Zoroastrian astronomers: scientists who had learned to study stars as part of their religion. They believed their god had charge of the stars until one day it was consumed by the fire of a star. Which is why they were consumed by the study of stars and it brought them to the feet of Christ. God works in many ways and walks with us on our journey too.



January 13 Luke 3:15-17,21-22

On Baptism of Jesus Sunday, we look back to God's promises fulfilled in Jesus. This week's Isaiah passage shows us a future gaze to the fulfilment of God's promise to one day gather people from East, West, North, and South in the realm of God.

This week's backward glance and future gaze remind us that Jesus is the center of all of God's promises.

January 20 John 2:1-11

God acts in unexpected ways. Today's scriptures remind us to stay open to the new places and new ways that God's work is revealed. We must take notice of God's surprising activity in the world.

January 27 Luke 4:14-21

The children will learn how to live in a way that pleases God. They will see God's guidance so they can live into the fullness of who God created them to be.

Are you looking for a wonderful nursery school experience for your child? Your search is over! Village Green Nursery School, located right here in FCC is now accepting registrations for the 2019-20 school year. We only have openings in our T/Th classes for the 3 year-olds which runs 9-12. We follow the SPS calendar. VGNS is dedicated to providing a caring, supportive and developmentally appropriate environment, offering a wide variety of activities designed to reflect each child's interest and abilities. Our website offers more information about our program and our Facebook page showcases our daily and special activities. Please feel free to call or email if you have questions or would like to schedule a tour.

Warmly,

Shannon Knudsen, Director

(860)628-6958 ext. 113

vgnsstaff@gmail.com

<http://www.vgns.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VillageGreenNurserySchool/>





January 6, 2019 - Epiphany - Star Gift Sunday

8:00 a.m (Chapel), 9:30 a.m. (Traditional) and 11:15 a.m. (Contemporary) services
Nursery care (infant – age 2) and Church School (preschool - grade 8) at the
9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services.

January 13

8:00 a.m (Chapel), 9:30 a.m. (Traditional) and 11:15 a.m. (Contemporary) services
Nursery care (infant – age 2) and Church School (preschool - grade 8) at the
9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services.

January 20

8:00 a.m (Chapel), 9:30 a.m. (Traditional) and 11:15 a.m. (Contemporary) services
Nursery care (infant – age 2) and Church School (preschool - grade 8) at the
9:30 and 11:15 a.m. services.

January 27 - Congregational Meeting

8:00 a.m. (Chapel) & 10:00 a.m. (Combined) services
children will remain in church school for duration of Congregational Meeting.

**For the most up-to-date worship schedule please visit our church
website and click on the *worship* tab.**



Steeple Players Presents:

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Tickets are now on sale!

Show Dates are as follows:

Friday, February 1st at 7:00 PM, Saturday

February 2nd at 7:00 PM and a matinee on

Sunday, February 3rd at 2:00 PM

Friday, February 8th at 7:00 PM &

Saturday, February 9th at 7:00 PM

Tickets can be purchased by visiting our church website www.fccsouthington.org

MUSIC MINISTRY



We have a wonderful music ministry here at First Congregational Church! Our groups are open to all ages to join. Please check them out to find a group that fits you the best. We look forward to seeing you!

Roots is our youth choir here at FCC. Children in grades 2-5 are welcome to join. We rehearse every **Tuesday from 6:00-7:00 p.m.** in the choir room.

Gallery Singers is our adult choir and sings at our 9:30 a.m. traditional worship service. We rehearse every **Thursday from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** in the choir room.

For more information please contact our Choir Director/Organist Concetta Scavone at cscavone@fccsouthington.org

Branches is our contemporary music group that performs at our 11:15 a.m. contemporary worship service. We rehearse every **Tuesday from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** in the meetinghouse.

For more information please contact them at branches@fccsouthington.org

Celebration Ringers

Have you ever played in a handbell choir? Do you want to learn how? Come join the Celebration Ringers here at FCC! We meet on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. in the choir room. We welcome anyone from 8th grade and up. No musical experience is necessary (although it helps!) We are a relaxed and fun group and try to play about once a month during worship.

Please contact Patty Nichols with any questions at patty.a.nichols@gmail.com.



YOUTH AND ADULT GROUPS



Elementary Youth School Youth Group

Held first meeting of year on October 29th

Please contact Jen Thomas (jstomas618@gmail.com) and Steve Palmieri (spalmieri21@gmail.com) for more information.

Middle School Youth Group Grades 6-8

All youth in grades 6 - 8 are invited to participate in our middle school youth program. We generally meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 5:30 p.m.

Please contact Brian Bradshaw (brianbradshaw@cox.net), Dan Green (dannyg4114@yahoo.com) or Dave Wendt (wendtdjrk@yahoo.com) for more information.

High School Youth Group Grades 9-12

All youth in grades 9 - 12 are invited to participate in our high school youth program.

Please contact Judy Orofino (judyorof0104@gmail.com) or Christy Shamus (shamus11@sbcglobal.net) for more information.



Please come join us for some fun, fellowship and a good meal! We meet **Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. until around 7:00 p.m. in Memorial Hall** (if that's not available, then rooms 201/202.) Someone volunteers each week to cook a main meal while everyone else contributes with drinks, desserts, etc.

On the **first Tuesday of every month**, we text to decide a location to meet up for dinner. We hope to see you soon! Questions? Please contact Dan Green at danny64114@yahoo.com.

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**Thanks for checking in during worship and events to let everyone
know all of the amazing things going on here at FCC!**