First Church of Christ in Saybrook
(Congregational)
United Church of Christ

Our midweek e-Tower newsletter, bringing to you all of the news fit to print about First Church.

**Merry Christmas!**

_The church office will be closed Monday 12/27, Tuesday 12/28 and Friday 12/31_

Visit our Website

**Services for Christmas Eve and Sunday, December 26th**

On Christmas Eve, Friday, Dec. 24th we will have a Traditional Service at 5:30 PM. _Dr. Annie B. Wilder will be our Service Minister on Christmas Eve._

On Sunday, December 26th, the first Sunday after Christmas we will have two services, a 9AM Jazz Service and a 10:30AM Traditional Service.

_Please welcome our Bridge Minister Rev. Martin Gibbs to his first Sunday services at First Church on 12/26!_

These preceding services will be both in-person and online via Facebook. Please be respectful to our most vulnerable by continuing to mask and social distance.

*Be sure to read the latest Moderator's Moment in this midweek for amended worship protocol.*

To view services online, please go to our Facebook site: [www.facebook.com/firstchurchOS](http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchOS).

[Click here to watch any of our services from the last month on YouTube.](http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchOS)

Click on the link below to view our service on Facebook from last week:

[Link to last Sunday's Combined Farewell Service for Rev. Ed on 12/19](http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchOS)

**First Church Calendar**

Stay informed of what is happening at First Church through the First Church Online Calendar.

[Click on this link to see the First Church calendar.](http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchOS)
Take a Double Visual Journey

Take a visual journey through art and scripture of the Nativity of the Lord
Click on this link or the picture below to take the journey..

![Adoration of the Shepherds](image1)

Adoration of the Shepherds
Gerrit van Honthorst, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, GDR

Take a visual journey through art and scripture of the First Sunday After Christmas
Click on this link or the picture below to take the journey..

![Jesus with the Elders](image2)

Jesus with the Elders
JESUS MAFA, Cameroon

Rev. Gibbs' Corner

Rev. Gibbs' Midweek Message

Click on this link to read Rev. Gibbs' first Midweek Message to First Church for December 23, 2021

Farewell to Rev. Ed

Please join us in wishing Rev. Ed a happy retirement as he continues his life's journey together with his wife Peg. We had a wonderful combined service last Sunday and reception honoring Rev. Ed for his seven years of tireless service and dedication to First Church.

Blessings to you, Rev. Ed.

Rev. Ed with son Geoff and wife Peg listing to Handel's "Largo" at our Farewell Service
Welcome Bridge Minister Rev. Martin Gibbs!

Please join us in welcoming our new Bridge Minister Rev. Martin Gibbs! Rev. Gibbs’ first service at First Church will be Sunday, December 26th.

Born and raised in Iowa, Rev. Gibbs graduated from Grinnell College, and received his Bachelors in Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School. His first church was in Maine, and since 1959 has been serving in CT. Rev. Gibbs has served in Congregational churches in North Madison, Ansonia, and Clinton, retiring in 2002.

Rev. Gibbs enjoys crossword puzzles and collects religious murder mysteries (1460 publications so far.). He also officiated high school football for 25 years. Married for 60 years, Rev. Gibbs and has his wife have 1 son and 1 granddaughter.

Rev. Martin Gibbs and Rev. Ed Cornell

UCC Daily Devotional

Did you know that the United Church of Christ has a Daily Devotional that will come directly to your In-Box? It’s free to us as a member church Just click on the link to sign up!

https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/

Thank You, Anonymous Donor!

First Church would like to thank the anonymous donor who gave $1,000 to First Church “to be used where it is needed most.” Thank you very much for your generosity!

Stewardship and Pledge Drive

This week’s Giving video comes from the Keaton family who posts many home-made music videos online and it’s a great Christmas song, “Mary Did You Know.” As you watch the video think of all we have to be thankful for: talented musicians and singers who share their gifts freely, family, children and the chaos that sometimes surrounds them. But the greatest gift of all is the subject of the song, Our Lord Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

If you’d like to share your blessings with those in the community through the missions of First Church of Old Saybrook, please visit our website at www.firstchurchsaybrook.org where you can make a one time or recurring donation.

Merry Christmas!

News from our Church Members
Nativity Set For First Church Has Arrived!

Come and join us as we help Mary and Joseph on their journey across our lawn to the manger. Each Sunday of Advent between the 9:00 AM and 10:30 services, the kids (old and young) are invited to help move the Wisemen and Mary and Joseph figures in our Nativity Set closer to the manger. After the Christmas Eve service, we will complete the journey by having all the figures move to the manger. This should be a meaningful and fun experience for all.

Also, we are still accepting donations to offset the cost of the Nativity Set. Please make checks payable to First Church, with Nativity Set in the memo field. Cash and electronic donations are also accepted.

Mary and Joseph Are On the Move!

Click on this link to watch Sam and Grace help Mary and Joseph on their journey across the lawn to Bethlehem.

December Blood Drive Results

Thank you to First Church for sponsoring the American Red Cross blood drive last Monday. We collected 37 units (2 over goal) which will help save up to 111 lives!

The next First Church Red Cross blood drive will be on February 18. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Old Saybrook to schedule an appointment.

Heat & Eat Corner News

On Tuesday the 14th we had 148 clients, and 370 lbs. of lasagna, dessert and French toast went out!

On Monday, January 17th we will be packing quarts of soup to go out on Tuesday, January 18th. Desserts are much appreciated.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you to Tina Kozlowski for this submission.

Fall Soup Kitchen and Pantry Items Needed

Our Pantries are in currently in need of the following:

- Empty & clean egg cartons
- Cereal, cereal, cereal
- Health & beauty products (feminine hygiene, deodorant, dental hygiene)
Mon. Dec 27th and Tues. Dec 28th we are closed. Mon. Jan 3rd 2022 we’re back to usual programming. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Staffed Old Saybrook Food Pantry drop-off times are:
Mondays, 9:00 - 11:00 am; 2:30 - 3:30 pm
Tuesdays, 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

For other drop-off times and locations CLICK HERE.

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First Church Masks for Sale

First Church now has masks for sale! These one size (adult) masks when worn will help protect you and those around you. Made of cotton and double-lined, promote your love of First Church the safe way!

The cost is $6 each. Please email the office at info@firstchurchsaybrook.org or call the office at (860) 388-3008 to purchase.

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Moderator’s Moment

Please welcome Alan Ringen as our new First Church Moderator!

In this Moderator's Moment, Alan explains the Leadership team's vote held Tuesday, November 9, 2021 to amend the current protocol for worship, in response to the challenges of the lingering coronavirus pandemic and in recognition of the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Please click on this link to read Alan Ringen's inaugural Moderator's Moment for November 11th.

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Video Message from Debbie Ringen and the Phasing Forward Team

Please click on the link below to watch a video from Parish Nurse Debbie Ringen on behalf of the Phasing Forward team regarding church policy and Covid.

Click here to watch Debbie’s video.

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The Arts at First Church

Christmas Eve Service Special Music

Greetings Fellow Congregants!

For the Christmas Eve Service this year, we will be welcoming a guest soloist, Kayla Bryan! Please join us for some wonderful music!

Click on this link to read Ms. Bryan's bio.
Prevent Illness This Winter: COVID and the FLU

*SNEUCC Minister of Health and Wellness Deborah Ringen writes:* COVID-19 (Omicron, Delta), Influenza A, Influenza B, Rhinovirus (common cold)... yikes, so many viruses in the air! Do not fear, get vaccinated!

[Click here to read more of Debbie's article in the SNEUCC news.](#)

When Someone in Worship Tests Positive for COVID

*Minister of Health and Wellness Deborah Ringen has released the following posts:* What do I do when someone who attended worship tests positive for COVID-19 one to two days later? Steps for congregations, plus CDC Recommendations.

[Click here to read more of Debbie's post.](#)

Centering Prayer Offering

First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown, NY is offering a centering prayer on Wednesday nights from 7PM-7:30PM.

It's available on their Facebook site: [https://www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown](https://www.facebook.com/fpcyorktown) and click on this link to see their latest prayer offering.

November Covid Update for Churches: Singing!

*SNEUCC Minister of Health and Wellness Deborah Ringen writes:* As congregations across the Southern New England Conference return to varying levels of in-person worship, laments are rising, becoming louder: We want to sing!

Some have thrown open the doors, gathering, and singing together, while others are remaining online only. The difference lies in the details. Church leadership chooses what is best for each individual congregation, often weighing factors such as: the community transmission rate, hospitalization numbers, death rate, vaccination status, congregation or community vulnerability and risk tolerance.

[Click here to read the entire article in the SNEUCC news.](#)

In Other News

Can You Walk a Straight Line?

If you can walk a straight line, and you'd like to volunteer to paint fresh lines in our parking lot, please contact the church office at info@firstchurchsaybrook.org or call 860-388-3008. We'll supply the paint and the line making apparatus.
First Church Goes Solar

Your Board of Trustees is excited to announce that we have made the decision to go Solar. We have chosen U.S. Green Technologies to install energy panels on the south side (away from the parking lot) of the CE building.

We have signed a Power Purchase Agreement that limits our electric costs to 9 cents a kWh for 20 years (current rates are around 17 cents). As you may know, we are not eligible to take tax breaks from the state because we are tax exempt, but there are companies willing to own and install solar systems to receive these breaks. We are dealing with one such company. As a result, there are no up-front costs and payment will be made from the savings on electric power. In essence, this is free!

I thank Elaine McSorley for running point on this project, and I thank Charlie McSorley who lent his aid.

Thank you to Glenda Sohl for this article submission.

A Special Note from the Nominating Team

Hello Fellow Member,

Have you been wondering how you can help your church, meet some of your church family members and make a real difference in your own personal ministry at the same time? Well we have the answer! Join a team, group or committee today and you too can lend your vision and your voice to help form the future of First Church of Christ in Old Saybrook right away.

Currently we have openings in several key areas:

- Trustees' (It's ok, you don't need to be an accountant)
- Clerk
- Moderator
- Vice Moderator
- Diaconate Team Member
- In-Reach
- Personnel

Even during these unprecedented times First Church continues to lean into the future, and your help is appreciated! You don't need any special training to serve on most groups and the commitment can vary to suit your schedule. With the advent of Zoom and other web-based meeting services, many meetings are done online, and it really helps to have new ideas from members who have never served before.

First Church has always had a strong tradition of self-governance and we welcome the help and guidance of ALL of our members to help inform us on future directions. Please contact me via the church office at 860-388-3008 or email info@firstchurchsaybrook.org today for more information on how you can be an important part of your local church today.

Blessings,

Rick Allen
Nominating Team

In Memoriam Name Requests

During this time, as we are socially isolated and social communication is harder than ever, we want to make sure we remember those who we have lost during this period of isolation.

If you have lost someone during this time and you would like to have them remembered on our website, please send the appropriate information
Blair Fund Supports Community Need

The Blair Fund operates quietly within the body of First Church of Christ to help needy families in Old Saybrook. The Blair Fund was established in 1979 by Reginald Blair, who bequeathed money in his will to 'help the poor of Old Saybrook.' Each year, monies are disbursed to support individuals in several ways.

Some ways the Blair Fund is making a difference include summer camperships at the Old Saybrook Park and Recreation, support of Family of the Month, sponsorship of Youth and Family Services programs for needy seniors, as well as an annual Blair Fund Scholarship for graduating Old Saybrook High School seniors. Typically, we support individuals and families who meet the qualifications for SNAP guidelines. In addition to the support mentioned above, in the past we have supported needy individuals who have experienced financial hardships with utility bills, medical bills, gas cards, etc.

During the current pandemic crisis, we anticipate an increased need in our community. If you or someone you know may benefit from Blair Fund support, you can reach out to Rev. Ed, who may make a third party application on behalf of a needy person or family. Third party applications are always anonymous and confidential. In addition, if you wish to help support the Blair Fund, donations are always welcome. If you have any questions about the Blair Fund itself, you may reach out to members of the board: Val Cook, Ann Shea, or Karina Julius.

Shop Online and Support First Church with ShopWithScrip

It's not easy finding a gift for a birthday or anniversary without leaving your home. But we have the solution. Get your giftee a Scrip cash card to her favorite online store, and FaceTime her smile!

Visit ShopWithScrip.com for details on the program, and get the membership code from Glenda Sohl at glendasohl@gmail.com. You will have 723 choices!

Follow us Online!

Visit our official Website

Visit our official website (www.firstchurchsaybrook.org) to learn about our church programs and services.

First Church Saybrook Official Website
Follow Us on Facebook

Follow First Church's social profile on Facebook (www.facebook.com/firstchurchos). This is where we broadcast our LIVE Sunday Services, with a 9 a.m. Jazz Service and a 10:30 a.m. Traditional Service.

Follow us on YouTube

First Church Saybrook's YouTube channel is where you can find the video archives of our online Sunday Services, as well as Rev. Ed's video messages, and our Church School Coordinator's "Moment from the Cloud." Subscribe to First Church's YouTube Channel today!

First Church Saybrook YouTube Channel

Support First Church

We are here for you, but we can't be here without your support. Please consider giving to First Church to support our mission in Christ.

First Church has partnered with Vanco payment solutions to provide an online solution to tithing and the fulfillment of Pledges to First Church.

Click on this link or the picture above to donate to First Church through Vanco.

First Church also accepts donations through PayPal.

Click on this link or the picture above to donate to First Church through PayPal.

First Church of Christ in Saybrook | 366 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

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