

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD – May 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 10 am Staff Meeting 6pm QCRR Meeting	3 10am Funeral Service for Vernon Phelps	4 7:00pm Choir	5	6
7 10:15am Worship Congregational Meeting	8 9AM –1PM Sewing & Service	9	10 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	11 7:00pm Choir	12	13
14 10:15am Worship	15	16 6:30pm Ministry Leadership Team Meeting	17 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	18 7:00pm Choir	19 10am Set-Up & Prep for Breakfast	20 7am-11 Monthly Breakfast! 9am – Noon Plant Sale
21 10:15am Worship 2 nd Hour Behavioral Covenant & Nomination Process	22	23	24 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group	25 7:00pm Choir	26	27
28 10:15am Worship	29	30	31 1:00pm-2:30 Book Group			

MAY 7TH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Dear First Church Friends,

Sunday, May 7 we are holding a congregational meeting to vote on proposed new Constitution and bylaws. A second agenda item will be approval of a nominating process for ministry team leaders and the governing board. The governing board will be part of the new structure we've all discussed during the past year. A description of the board's role and responsibilities was sent previously, as were the Constitution and bylaws. The links go to the versions sent last week. Reformatted versions will be available at the Congregational Meeting. Here are the links:

[Draft Board Description](#)

[Draft Constitution & Bylaws](#)

[Summary of Significant Revisions](#)

Thanks to all of you who attended the two Second Hour meetings we held to review, discuss, and help revise the Constitution and bylaws. We won't be taking suggested changes at the meeting next week since we've already met twice to do that. But these are living documents so, if you didn't have the opportunity to offer your views, we will take any notes or suggestions and consider changes at next year's June congregational meeting.

Our current bylaws require us to have a 25 percent quorum of current members in order to amend the Constitution and bylaws. So please attend the meeting and be sure to sign in. The meeting will be in the sanctuary immediately following worship and the bylaws vote will be first on the agenda.

Janna, Deb, Jim, Ava, Dave (Steering Committee)

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee has established a sub-committee to develop a Conflict Resolution Process. The committee has met twice to develop a draft and once with our regional conference minister Tamara Moreland to discuss our behavioral covenant and the draft policy. The draft policy is at the end of this newsletter.

There will be a second hour discussion on May 21st following church. We will be reviewing our behavioral covenant and its history and would like feedback on the conflict resolution policy which relies heavily on the behavioral covenant. Please join us for this discussion or reach out to a member of the committee if you have feedback or suggestions.

Committee members include:

Deb Richards
Howard Drescher
Donna Clauson
Julie Menard
Jean Bell
Louise Wright

Cheryl Chase
Pat Felletter
Bill Briggs
Laurel Thurman
Jim McGaughery
Ann Plumley

CALLING ALL INTERESTED MEMBERS MINISTRY TEAM VACANCIES

Are you interested in serving on one of the Ministry Teams or the Governing Board - if so - please contact one of the pastors to discuss. Please find below the openings that are available.

1 vacancy - Administry
1 vacancy- Ministry of Spiritual Life
2 vacancies - Ministry of Caring
7-11 members for the Governing Board

FIRST CHURCH FAITH FORMATION

The celebration of Easter continues at First Church as we live resurrection life in act of justice and mercy, beauty and compassion.

SUNDAY, MAY 7

We gather around Jesus' Welcome Table to listen for God's Word in stories of shepherds and sheep, care and provision in Psalm 23 and John 10:1-10. Worship Circle gathers with the theme, "Glad and Generous Hearts." Following Worship, we consider the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws and Nominations Process to fill vacant ministry leadership positions.

Psalm 23 offers a picture of a God who cares for all of our needs: "The Lord is my shepherd." Chances are that many, if not most, can identify the passage at hand by simply hearing or reading those five words. Consider your own familiarity with those words. What are the memories and associations they evoke?

A Prayer for the Week...

Holy Shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, where we celebrate with you forever. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 14

In Worship, we listen for God's Word in stories of martyrdom and promise in Acts 7:55-60 and John 14:1-14. The Children's Worship Circle centers with the theme, "Stand Firm."

John 14:1-14 Jesus establishes his place with God and invites us to join him there. How do you find your place with God? How do you, or how might you, nurture this sacred place in your day-to-day living?

A Prayer for the Week...

Risen Christ, you prepare a place for us, in the home of the Mother of us all. Draw us more deeply into yourself, through scripture read, water splashed, bread broken, wine poured, so that when our hearts are troubled, we will know you more completely as the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 21

In Worship, we listen for Jesus' promise of the coming Spirit in John 14 and Worship Circle celebrates that we are "Called Alongside."

Everything Jesus says is bracketed by the command to love. In your own experience, does the church do the same? How can politics in a real world be shaped by the commandment to love? How can this happen in your own life?

A Prayer for the Week...

Living and gracious God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you have brought us out to a spacious place where we are called to live as those redeemed. Empower us by your Spirit to keep your commandments, that we may show forth your love with gentle word and reverent deed to all your people. Amen.

SUNDAY, MAY 28

In Worship, we mark 40 days since Easter morning and remember Jesus' ascension into heaven. Worship Circle gathers with "All My Relations."

John 17:1-11 contains the prayer of Jesus as remembered by the early followers. If Jesus were to pray for your community, what things might be included? For what courageous acts of ministry among you might Jesus pray?

A Prayer for the Week...

Precious love, your ascended Son promised the gift of holy power. Send your Spirit of revelation and wisdom, that in the blessed freedom of hope, we may witness to the grace of forgiveness and sing songs of joy with the peoples of earth to the One who makes us one body. Amen.

Peace to you, Beloved of God.
Joe

QUIET CORNER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT UPDATE

Dear QCRR Volunteers and Supporters,

We're so excited to share the news that we will soon welcome Family #2 to their new Quiet Corner home. A Syrian family of two adults and three children has been assigned to QCRR; they are expected to May 3rd.

We have scant information about this family - just enough to anticipate the needs of a child who will enter kindergarten in the fall and her two younger siblings, and to imagine the daunting transitions to life in the US the two parents will experience. QCRR's mighty and creative team of volunteers has already been hard at work preparing for this family. Now that we know a bit about them, final house furnishing plans and other early stage resettlement arrangements can be made.

We so appreciate Dianne Sprague of WAIM and her mighty team of volunteers. The house looks beautiful! Our new family will appreciate all the extra thoughtful touches and will be delighted by their fully stocked pantry, thanks to Fatimah Salman.

Of course QCRR can always use money: there are a myriad of unexpected needs especially in the early stages of resettlement. **Checks can be sent to WAIM at P.O. Box 221; Willimantic, CT 06226; write QCRR in the memo line.** As a reminder, no one associated with QCRR is allowed to provide refugee family members with direct cash gifts or cash-equivalents like gift cards. Please be confident that the whole QCRR leadership team is engaged in anticipating the family's needs and will be making responsible use of your generous donations. We will continue to follow IRIS guidelines to make sure this family has everything that's essential, as well as to support them throughout the process of achieving financial stability.

Yes, we need volunteers, most especially **Arabic language speakers willing to serve as translators.** We will also be looking for ESL tutors / conversation partners; drivers willing to transport family members to appointments - especially drivers with 6+ passenger cars; and people willing to respond to the family's interests, showing them special features of life in Willimantic and throughout the Quiet Corner. Activities of interest to a family with young children are especially appropriate.

How to become a QCRR volunteer: If you desire a role with direct contact with any family member, **new as well as current volunteers must register at <http://tinyurl.com/QCRRVolunteer>** Volunteers in roles with direct family

ANNUAL FCC PLANT SALE

Our Annual Plan Sale will be held on Saturday May 20th from 9am-12 noon, rain or shine. Your donations will help make this, once again, a successful fundraiser for FCC. Homegrown perennials, annuals or veggies!

Please dig plants as early as possible and keep them potted. Label if at all possible, including the color if you remember it--that really helps to clinch a sale!

You can bring those plant offerings to church starting Thursday May 18th, and they can be left on the Browns Road side of the church near the wall.

MAY 14TH – CHURCH WORLD SERVICE BLANKETS FOR HOPE COLLECTION

For 35 years, the nonprofit organization La Puente has provided vital resources and services to people in crisis in Colorado's San Luis Valley.

Your support meant that we shipped CWS Blankets and CWS Kits to La Puente in 2016. The supplies were distributed to La Puente's homeless shelter and to residents in the San Juan Mountains living in the area known as the "flats." Many homes in the flats don't have running water or electricity. Most use firewood as their main heat source. In this high-altitude climate, winter temperatures can drop to life-threatening lows. Firewood can run out before winter ends.

Robert Lockwood, the Rural Outreach Initiative's Case Manager for La Puente, travels the flats and meets with the families living there. He provides resources when he can and always passes along essential information about where to access needed services. Last winter, Robert distributed all of the warm, wool Church World Service Blankets and Hygiene Kits he had on hand.

Jesus said, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). God has blessed us with so much, and we have much to share. Share this love by providing CWS Blankets to those in need. Each blanket costs only \$10, but these blankets can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth and encouragement.

contact must provide information for criminal and driving record background checks, and participate in an orientation program covering guidelines for work with refugees. Information about the date and time of the next training session will be available soon. The training provides some cultural information and typical refugee needs, and describes appropriate boundaries and best practices expected of QCRR volunteers, including confidentiality requirements and other policies. Volunteers completing this program are expected to wear QCRR ID badges whenever providing direct services to our family members. **Jimmy Clarke will serve as Volunteer Manager** for this family, with backup from Libby Scott and other core team members.

All volunteers and interested persons are welcome to participate in our **volunteer meeting, held the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm at The First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC in Mansfield Center, 549 Storrs Rd (Corner of Browns Rd and RT 195, at the RT 89 intersection.)** The next meeting is June 7th.

For additional information or help navigating how to become involved with QCRR, please contact Jen Beck at: qccr.411@gmail.com

In peace and with tremendous gratitude for your heart for this essential work,

Steve Lane and Ann Plumley, QCRR co-leaders
Eric Goldberg, Case Manager

BREAKFAST, BREAKFAST, BREAKFAST

We continue to have our First Church breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Our breakfasts are open to everyone and we would like to welcome you to join us along with your friends and neighbors.

We serve omelets, eggs, home fries, sausage and have fresh baked sweet bread offering each month. Our guests have enjoyed their morning visits with friends as they eat their food. Please consider joining us!

We would like to thank everyone who has faithfully joined us to help prepare, serve and clean-up after each event. It has been wonderful to see the outpouring of support of so many people willing to help make these breakfast events so successful. Thank you for your continued help in making our 3rd Saturday breakfast a First Church Community event.

Donna & Jean

A NOTE FROM ROBERTA SMITH

I have had remarkable recoveries from two strokes! I believe these recoveries are partly due to you all, for your prayers, encouragement, best wishes, visits, flowers and many beautiful cards while I was at Douglas Manor and the months when I returned home.

I wish you all to know how deeply I appreciate this. I am so happy now to be in my beloved home and returning to my church family and to your warm welcome. I look forward to meeting the new members who joined our church during my absence.

Bless you all. I am so very, very grateful and thankful to our blessed Lord.

Roberta Smith

FIRST CHURCH INFORMATION

- **Looking for Photos of First Church in Action.** Sometimes, a picture really is worth a thousand words – both in a newsletter and on social media. If you have an opportunity to take a picture of a First Church activity, or of one or more of our members engaging in fellowship or community service activities, please consider forwarding the image to Wendy in the Church Office. With appropriate permission, we would like to share what we are doing with others.
- **Care Cards:** Each week we suggest several people or groups who might be strengthened with notes of caring prayer and love. Stationery is provided. We invite you to take a quick minute during fellowship time to write a note, put the recipient's name on the envelope and leave it on the table to be mailed Tuesday morning. Thank you for this demonstration of our connectedness and love!
- We're a **Tuna Church!** This means you are invited to put a can of tuna fish into the net bag in Fellowship Hall every once in a while. We're committed to providing 30 cans of tuna each month to our local food banks, so add a can of tuna to your shopping list. Your help is greatly appreciated! Please look for dolphin-safe tuna. It is better for all God's creatures! Also, please be aware when purchasing tuna that Greenpeace indicates that Chicken of the Sea brand uses destructive fishing practices. We are also collecting canned fruit. Let's keep up the good work!
- **Reminder:** if you need to reach Pastor Ann or Pastor Joe for an emergency, please call their cell phones: **Ann - 781-223-4914 and Joe - 608-354-3686.** Emails and texts are also another quick way to get in touch with them. They check office messages on days they are at church and irregularly on other days.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

MAY

05/04	SHELBY SACCOMANNO
05/08	CLAIRE REYNOLDS STEVE LANE MEGAN PHELPS
05/09	SANDY BAXTER
05/15	KAY HOLT EMILIE SACCOMANNO
05/20	RICHARD CHURCHILL
05/21	GEOFFREY EVANS
05/22	MAYA WELLS
05/24	ANNE BLADEN ANDREW KERENSKY
05/25	NADIA HAERYFAR
05/28	JEAN BELL MOSES SALMAN
05/30	SEAN FISHER
05/31	HEATHER EVANS

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MANSFIELD (UCC) (CONGREGATIONAL)

Ministers

All the People of the Church

Pastors

Rev. Ann Plumley & Rev. Joseph Blotz

Music Director

Cathie Rowe

Organist

Erik Haeger

Office Administrator

Wendy O'Connor

Childcare Provider

Emily Salman

Church Office Hours Tues. - Fri. 9am-1pm – Closed Mondays

Tel.: (860) 423-9008 **E-mail :** firstchurchmansfield@snet.net

Website: www.myFCC.info

Like us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/FCCMansfield

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Rationale

“Conflict is inevitable in any community of persons engaged in creating meaning in their lives. A congregation can anticipate incidents of conflict and plan for their healthy resolution. Managed well, conflict contributes to the growth of the individual and the community.

The First Church of Christ, Congregational, Mansfield CT is a community dedicated to accepting and embracing diversity. Within this commitment there is an inherent diversity of thought and vision as to how we carry out the work of the church. For the most part, differences of opinion or thought are dealt with productively through our Behavioral Covenant. The covenant guides us to listen without judgment, value one another’s ideas and feelings, speak honestly and directly, and foster growth and understanding among us, so that our actions and intentions embody God’s vision.

Steps of the Conflict Resolution Process

Step One – The first step to any disagreement or conflict is for the two parties involved to speak directly with each other, practicing the guidance offered by the behavioral covenant. Often the conflict is a result of mis-communication. It is our goal that open and honest dialogue will assist with resolution of the conflict or misunderstanding.

Step Two- If either party is not comfortable or willing to sit with the other party, or if direct conversation does not resolve the conflict, then a third party should be brought in. This process should be initiated by contacting one of the pastors. Both parties should agree to the assignment of the third party. The conversation with the third party should take place at a time and place that is most comfortable for all involved. At any time, either party should call on a pastor for counsel. Gossip or recruitment of members to support ones position is strongly discouraged and is not in keeping with the behavioral covenant. This is considered a confidential process.

Step Three – If either party is not comfortable with sitting with a third party who is a member of the congregation or if one is not available, then an independent and neutral third party from outside the congregation will be brought in.

Step Four – In the event that the parties are not able to reach agreement, they must agree to live in good faith with respect and acknowledgement of the position of the other party. If at any time, either party acts in a way that causes concern for the well-being, openness, safety and stability of the congregation as a whole, the matter will be referred to the Governing Board for consideration and possible action pursuant to the Church Constitution and By-laws.

As stated in the church by-laws – Unlawful or unsafe conduct by a church member will not be tolerated. Members are expected to act in accordance with safe church polices and to interact in good faith as outlined in the behavioral covenant. No acts of intimidation or harassment of church members or participants will be tolerated. If a member disregards the safe church polices or provisions of the behavioral covenant, that member may be censured or suspended from membership, but only after faithful efforts have been made to secure the members commitment to alter his or her conduct.

Guidance for the Conflict Resolution Process

The conflict resolution process is intended for two members who have a true conflict that limits their ability to participate in the full life of the church. It is not intended to be used as a venue to air minor concerns or grievances that should be addressed with the guidance of the behavioral covenant.

The process should not be used to debate, resurrect or attempt to contest or undermine decisions made by the congregation through a congregational vote. Participating in life of the church may at times, mean speaking out about

concerns, and even registering dissent from the majority perspective. However, it is incumbent on all members to express their views in a respectful manner and in a spirit of love, just as it is incumbent on all to recognize the need to respect and abide by a formal decision. If a member disagrees with a formal decision made by the congregation, they need to be able to participate in the life of the church that is bound by such decisions. They need to be able to participate gracefully in the life of the church.

At all times during the conflict resolution process, the parties need to be supported spiritually and emotionally. At all times, the parties should feel that the church is a safe and supportive place.

At no time during the conflict should either member look to solicit support by fracturing the church community. Rallying members to support or dismiss a members feelings or claims is not in keeping with the behavioral covenant. Dismissive conversation to members of the congregation or the broader community regarding another member of the congregation will not be tolerated.

Supporting Documents

First Church of Christ Behavioral Covenant

First Church of Christ Safe Conduct Policy

Conflict Resolution Process and Procedure All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, 2001.