

# Main Street Musing

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTH WINDSOR

APRIL 2026

## *Hand-Me-Down Spirituality?*

As the youngest of three siblings, I often got the hand-me-downs of my brother's wardrobe. Some of his clothing fit and felt right on me, others were not a good fit and I felt wrong wearing them. They were, or I was at a stage of having outgrown other clothes – hand-me-downs made you aware of when you have outgrown what was outgrown before you received them!

Spiritual breakthrough or significant spiritual growth happens when we stop accepting the hand-me-downs of outworn and outmoded beliefs and practices is trying to fit into what no longer fits is forcing ourselves into another spiritual context and robbing us of finding our own fit or spiritual grounding.

As we advance (or not) forward in our individual and collective journey here at First UCC, we might ask ourselves if our advances forward are a good fit for us and our vision for our beloved faith community, or are we accepting hand-me-down conflicts, patterns and attitudes that simply don't suit us any longer? Are we trying to move into the future while wearing old clothes that just don't fit or even look good on us any longer? No more hand-me-downs, our faith must aim at being fresh, creative, vivid, robust and most importantly, our own fit, not some elses!



Love on the journey,

Pastor Dean

### Pastor Dean's Hours & Office

#### Schedule:

Tuesday - Friday 7:30 am - 12:00 pm;

Monday: Off

## *Church Committee*

Jean Jackson, Clerk

Clerk's highlights from the Church Committee meeting held March 10, 2026 -

- Treasurer's report - Sue Larsen joined us via Zoom. February's expenses were \$17,827.33. Income was \$15,247. Deficit for February is \$2,580.33; surplus year-to-date is \$1,991.70. Sue mentioned it was a normal month, with the large expenses being payroll and heating.
- Investments - Jean Trotman and Carroll Stearns were able to retrieve the investment report. February saw an increase of \$64,819.99 in the account; \$10,000 was withdrawn to cover expenses. The balance at the end of February was \$2,304,585.22.
- The next meeting will be held on April 14, 2026, at 6:30 pm in the Metzger Chapel and on Zoom. All are welcome to attend, whether or not you serve on a committee.



## *Trustees News*

Jean Trotman

We are working to get the Church a new credit card. We are also collecting information on rental rates in the area with the intent to update ours. We have started the evaluation of all spaces in both buildings to see if we can make better use of our spaces.

Bob Reynolds has been researching YouTube as an option to replace using Zoom for our services. We hope to give this a try shortly to see if it gives us better results than Zoom.



## *Church Fair News!*

Fair crafting workshops are taking place on Fridays plus Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 PM at Linda Dalpe's warehouse, 1090 Main St. Come craft with us! Let Linda know if you can make it so she can have something ready for you: 860/528-1936 or [lindald001@aol.com](mailto:lindald001@aol.com). Making items for the Holiday Fair is a year-round effort and we could use more hands.

## *Sewin4Servicemen 2026*

Sewin4servicemen is a group of dedicated sewers and quilters organized by First Church member, Judy Borré. For years they have been meeting in our church basement over the winter, generally four times for these all-day sewing projects. Patriotic lap quilts are made for deserving veterans in our town and surrounding towns as a special thank you for their brave service to our country.

Interested in joining us? Please contact the church office for more information:

(860)528-7992 or [firstchurchsw@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchsw@gmail.com) or

Follow the [Sewin4servicemen](#) group now on Facebook!

The next sewing event will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2026, in Fellowship Hall.

Here are photos of just some of our dedicated sewers from our 2026 events. This marks the 13<sup>th</sup> year of this annual event. Enjoy!



*Sewin4Servicemen 2026, cont.*





**Come Join Us**  
for a  
**SPRING TEA PARTY**



at  
First Congregational Church of  
South Windsor  
**Saturday, May 9, 2026**

Bigelow Tea will be here at  
First Church to give a tea presentation  
during our tea party!



**11:00 AM-1:30 PM**  
in Fellowship Hall



**Tickets are \$15**

Tickets are available in the church office. Please call (860) 528-7992

Ticket proceeds will benefit the Bigelow Tea Charities and First Church SW Capital Fund Lift Project.

**First Congregational Church**  
**993 Main Street**  
**South Windsor, CT 06074**



Linda Dalpe  
[Lindald001@aol.com](mailto:Lindald001@aol.com)  
(860) 528-1936

Tea and Refreshments  
will be served.

Carrie Morse  
[Firstchurchsw@gmail.com](mailto:Firstchurchsw@gmail.com)  
(860) 528-7992



[www.firstchurchsw.org](http://www.firstchurchsw.org)



## *Church Historian*

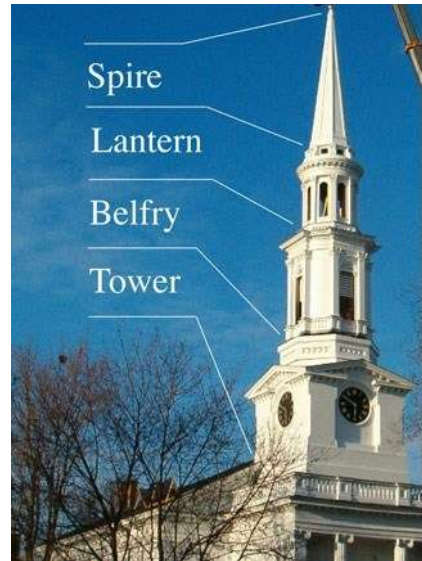
Mary Crittenden

At the “Lawnchair Chat” last fall, Lisa asked, “Why were churches like ours built so far off the ground?” Our church building was erected in 1846 without a basement, as were many Congregational Church buildings of the period. Typically, these were white buildings with steeples. We will consider not only the answer to that question but also the reasons for a few additional features of the iconic New England White Churches.

The Puritans of Plymouth and the Separatists of the Massachusetts Bay Colonies wanted to “purify” their religious practices. They chose plain structures, often elevated a few feet off the ground. This, coupled with a tall steeple, symbolized their heavenly aspirations. The white steepled churches were visible for long distances. They typically were about five miles apart, as longer distances made attendance difficult in the days of traveling on foot or by horse. Our Church had a shed to protect the horses that brought people to church.

The steeples were often topped by a weathervane, a kind of anemoscope used for telling the direction of the wind. This practice was rooted in British and Dutch traditions. They were often handcrafted copper with gilded designs that were symbolic of Biblical stories. Typical weathervanes include a Rooster (symbolizing Peter’s denial), Banners/flags, Fish (symbolizing Christ as a “fisher of men”), Angel Gabriel, popular during the revival of 1830-1840, and arrows/directions.

The church served the community as a source of information. Not only does the weathervane tell the direction of the wind, but also contains the bell that called people to worship and was used to communicate emergencies in the community. Some bells, like ours, have a tolling arm that sounds a bong different from the sound of a



ringing bell. A tolling bell served as a final farewell at a funeral. Some churches added clocks to their bell towers, such as is found on the church in Scantic.

Oh, one thing more about our steeple. This building did not have a spire for more than a hundred years. We had a bell tower like the one at Wapping church. We did not have a spire nor a lantern. The belfry and tower were not separate sections, but were built as one section. The Wapping Church was like our building in another way. Originally, the sanctuary had two aisles; now it has one center aisle and two more, each at the end of the pews by the sanctuary's side walls.

Church building interiors were plain, having no ornamentation, statues, or stained-glass windows. Oops! That doesn't sound quite like our church. When considering putting in the stained-glass windows, there were members opposed. They argued that we might as well become Roman Catholics. Speaking of Catholic Church, their sanctuaries: they have kneelers, we have footstools.

Now on to the reason for buildings being a few feet off the ground. The buildings were typically on either high foundations or stone piers. This allowed air circulation to protect the wooden structures from rot, fungus, and moisture damage caused by the climate with its snowy, harsh, and humid weather. The elevation helped manage snow accumulation and water runoff during winter and wet seasons. In this way, the distance above the ground helped to preserve the building.

### *Music Committee*

Jean Jackson and Lisa Horsfield



The swell manual on the organ has recovered from the cold, dry temperatures we all experienced in the previous month. Jean is happy to report that no service call was needed.

In December, the humidifier under the sanctuary piano was dislodged, requiring a service call to put it back in place. This happened at a time when several groups used the church at various times during the day. Jean asked that everyone be aware of where folks are in the building to avoid this from happening in the future.

## *Missions Committee*

Nancy Stearns

On April 18th, from 10-2, the Missions Committee will be sponsoring a work session to make drawstring bags as part of personal hygiene kits for the Days for Girls project. Our local group usually ships the kits to an area in Guyana, South America, along the Rupununi River, where there is a severe lack of electricity and running water. Water from the river must be boiled for human consumption. The Days for Girls personal hygiene kits allow the girls to stay in school, as they do not have access to disposable hygiene products. All are welcome to help with this project. Please see Donna Fletcher if you have any questions.



At a recent Vision Forward meeting, the Committee was asked about the types of household donations accepted by the organizations we work with and where furniture can be donated. Below is some basic information:

The Cornerstone Foundation in Rockville accepts clothing, housewares, linens, tools, small appliances, small electronics, toys, and books. They accept some small furniture items, but please check with them first for approval. They also accept Halloween costumes and items for their Prom Boutique.

Manchester Area Conference of Churches accepts clothing and small household goods, including small appliances, linens, toys and books. They do not accept furniture.

Habitat for Humanity "Habitat ReStores" accept furniture, appliances, housewares, and building materials. Pickup can be arranged.



Many volunteers teamed up to make tie-fleece blankets for SWPD cruisers, providing comfort for children in need.



*Missions Make a Difference!*



## *Diaconate*

Terry Belknap



The Deacons have been very busy working with Pastor Dean to plan the Lenten activities and services. Hope to see you all at our Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter services.

We are also working with Jean Jackson and Carrie Morse on updating the Membership Listing. If you have not been active in the life of the church within the last 5 years, you may be getting a letter asking if you would like to stay a member of the church. We need to have an accurate count of members for so many reasons.

## *Memorial Bulletin Project*

Carrie Morse



When we lose someone dear to us, the smallest details of planning can often feel the most daunting for the family. In an effort to make that time a little easier, I'm starting a project to help us pre-plan the personal touches of our memorial service bulletin.

Whether it's a favorite scripture, a poem that speaks to you, a quote, a specific hymn, or even a cherished photo, having these preferences on file can be a wonderful gift to your loved ones. After a very positive response from a few folks I have asked, I've created a simple form you can fill out to be kept in a secure folder here at the church. I also have sample bulletins available if you'd like to see some examples for ideas and inspiration.

My hours are normally Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM, if you would like to stop by to look at some samples and pick up a form. Let me know when you might stop in so that I can have things ready for you. Please note that I will be out of the office April 14-21, returning on April 22.

**\*\*Members:** Updated Church Directories (blue) are here! Please grab one on Sunday, or please contact me if you need a copy sent to you.

## *Church Family News*



Pam Michaud 04/06  
James Belknap 04/07  
Lynda Jones 04/07  
Rachel Anderson 04/15  
Donna Woolam 04/16

Jacob Charette 04/20  
Lilly Morse 04/20  
Caty Ventura 04/22  
Justin Clark 04/23  
Colin Neary 04/25  
Megan McClellan 04/26



The Addington Family  
The Belknap Family  
Joyce Coon  
The Charette Family  
Doris Burgdorf  
Della Mitchell  
Iva Burnham

Bob Woodward  
The McIntosh Family  
The Anderson Family  
The Sharp Family  
The Senger Family  
The Starr Family



## *Church Office Hours*

Hours are normally Tuesday – Friday, 9 am – 2 pm.

## *Newsletter Deadline*

The next newsletter issue will be published in **May 2026**. Please send your submissions **and photos** to the church office by **April 17<sup>th</sup>** for inclusion: [firstchurchsw@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchsw@gmail.com) ~ Thank you!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTH WINDSOR

United Church of Christ

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TO: