

# *The Messenger*

First & Wesley  
United Methodist Church  
89 Center Street  
West Haven, Connecticut 06516  
203-933-8795

***July & August 2025***



## **A New Chapter Together**

by Rev. Frank Sarpong



What a joy it is to greet you through this first newsletter message as your new pastor. I've only just begun settling in, but already I feel incredibly blessed to be among you. From the kind smiles to the warm handshakes, every moment so far has confirmed what I sensed from the beginning—that God has brought us together for a reason. I've even had a wonderful time with the Men's Fellowship already. We may not fully grasp why certain changes happen. But Scripture reminds us that God is always at work—shaping, refining, and preparing His church for a greater purpose. The appointment of a new pastor is not just a human decision; it is an opportunity to witness how God can move in unexpected and powerful ways. New beginnings therefore are sacred. They're not always easy, but they are full of possibility. As I step into this role, I do so with a heart full of gratitude and humility. I know that this church has a story—years of worship, service, and love poured into this community—and I consider it a great honor to become part of that ongoing story. We are stepping into a new chapter, not just because there's a new pastor, but because every day with God offers a fresh start. I'm reminded of the words from Philippians 1:6: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." That's a promise we can count on. I don't come with all the answers, but I do come with an open heart, a listening ear, and a deep desire to see us grow in faith, love, and unity. I want to get to know your stories—what brought you to this church, what you're passionate about, where you've seen God move in your life. In the weeks and months ahead, I'll be reaching out, visiting, praying, and learning. But more than anything, I hope we can walk this journey together—side by side, hand in hand, trusting that God is at work in ways we can't even imagine yet. Please feel free to introduce yourself, stop by the office, or invite me over for a chat. I'm here not just to serve as your pastor, but to be part of this family in every way. With hope and anticipation, Amen.



## *Lectioary Readings for June 2025*



*July 6, 2025*

[2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14](#), [Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20](#), [Galatians 5:1, 13-25](#), [Luke 9:51-62](#)

*July 13, 2025*

[Amos 7:7-17](#), [Psalm 82](#), [Colossians 1:1-14](#), [Luke 10:25-37](#)

*June 20, 2025*

[Amos 8:1-12](#), [Psalm 52](#), [Colossians 1:15-28](#), [Luke 10:38-42](#)

*June 27, 2025*

[Hosea 1:2-10](#), [Psalm 85](#), [Colossians 2:6-19](#), [Luke 11:1-13](#)

*August 3, 2025*

[Hosea 11:1-11](#), [Psalm 107:1-9, 43](#), [Colossians 3:1-11](#), [Luke 12:13-21](#)

*August 10, 2025*

[Isaiah 1:1, 10-20](#), [Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23](#), [Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16](#), [Luke 12:32-40](#)

*August 17, 2025*

[Isaiah 5:1-7](#), [Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19](#), [Hebrews 11:29-12:2](#), [Luke 12:49-56](#)

*August 24, 2025*

[Jeremiah 1:4-10](#), [Psalm 71:6](#), [Hebrews 12:18-29](#), [Luke 13:10-17](#)

*August 31, 2025*

[Jeremiah 2:4-13](#), [Psalm 81:1, 10-16](#), [Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16](#), [Luke 14:1, 7-14](#)

***Welcome, Pastor Frank and Nana!***

July 6, we welcome Pastor Frank Sarpong as our new minister and his wife, Nana Amos Sarpong, to our church. Some of you will remember that Pastor Frank was in our congregation a few years ago and left to become the pastor of the Derby Ghana United Methodist Church. He will continue that ministry and also be our pastor. We are working towards both congregations sharing the use of our building at 89 Center Street, West Haven, CT with two separate worship services by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Nana was an active member of First & Wesley UMC when Wesley UMC and First UMC joined together in 2008.

Rev. Frank Sarpong or Pastor Frank as he wants to be called, is a dynamic and purpose-driven pastor, thoughtful leader and community advocate whose ministry is in compassion, transformation and inclusivity. His calling is centered on helping people experience the grace of God in practical ways, while equipping them to live with purpose, integrity and faith.

## SUMMER NEWS

Please note as you look at the calendar, that several of our ongoing ministries are pausing for July and August. This includes, Adult “Monday” School, Children’s Sunday School Craft Corner, Healing Prayer Circle, Wednesday Bible Study, Men’s Fellowship Breakfast and Prayer Shawl Ministry,

The Koinonia Café (K-Café) WILL continue to meet every Thursday morning and the Free Community Meal WILL be every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday during the summer and throughout the year!



### First & Wesley United Methodist Church July 2025



		Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 10a–12p “K” Café	4	5 9a VBS Decorating – Part 1
6 10:00a Family Worship Service , Communion, Birthday/Anniversary celebration	7	8 7p Finance	9	10 10a–12p “K” Café  6p VBS meeting – in person	11	12 9a VBS Decorating – Part 2
13 10:00a Family Worship Service  5:30p VBS	14  5:30p VBS	15  5:30p VBS	16  5:30p VBS	17 10a–12p “K” Café  5:30p VBS	18  VBS Clean-up	19 5p Community Meal (Free) All Welcome
20 10:00a Family Worship Service & VBS Celebration	21	22	23	24 10a–12p “K” Café	25	26
27 10:00a Family Worship Service	28	29 7:30p Trustees	30	31		



# First & Wesley United Methodist Church

## August 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
<b>3</b> 10:00a Family Worship Service, Communion, Birthday/Anniversary celebration	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 10a–12p “K” Café	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 10:00a Family Worship Service	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7p Finance	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 10a–12p “K” Café	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 5p Community Meal (Free) All Welcome
<b>17</b> 10:00a Family Worship Service	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> *Articles Due for the September Messenger	<b>21</b> 10a–12p “K” Café  7p Missions & Outreach	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 10a Worship Committee
<b>24</b> 10:00a Family Worship Service	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 10a–12p “K” Café  6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10:00a Family Worship Service						

For more information go to the church website at [www.firstwesleyumc.org](http://www.firstwesleyumc.org)

## *Children's Sunday, Celebration of Graduates and Baptism*

Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> was our Children's Day, a Recognition of Graduates, Recognition of Teachers, and the baptism of Jason Hillman, Norma Giannattasio's grandson!

Our graduates are

Elementary School - Nia Flippin, Ryan Abekah

Middle School - Jayden Abekah and Eileen Choi

High School - Connor Bunnell (Grandson of James and Sharon Ewen), Noah Scrofani, (Cindy Dodd's great nephew)

College - Cecilia Amos graduated from Wesleyan University, Arlyn Memmott graduated from Marist College, Julia Werle graduated from Oxford Academy of Hair Design's esthetician program

Thank you to all of our Sunday School teachers who are dedicated to serving by teaching our children. A special thank you to Gail Bartozzi, our Sunday School superintendent, who organizes this!

### *MONTHLY HEALING SERVICES*

*Thank you to all who have attended our healing circles over the past 2 1/2 years. Our purpose is to make our church and our members and those we love stronger and healthier in body, mind and spirit. God encourages us to create "Houses of Prayer" as when Jesus tells his disciples in Mark 11:17, "Is it not written, (referencing a text from the book of Isaiah) "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?" I feel that this is one way to do it.*

*Our healing services will be pausing for the summer and will be starting again in the fall--our next 1st & Wesley service will be Tuesday, September 2 at 7pm.*

*Our prayer times are casual, but with a structure which includes scripture and discussion as well as singing and praying and reflection. The service lasts about an hour. I hope, if you have not attended, you will make time to attend a service, not only because you or someone you love may be in need of prayer, but also so you can be a part of someone else's healing as we pray for one another. James 5:14 reminds us: Is any among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. God has encouraged us to pray for one another, and when we pray together, we pray in a very powerful way.*

*If the time or day does not work for you, there are two other opportunities to attend a service-- The last Wed of the month, beginning September 24, we meet at Hamden Plains United Methodist Church, 15 Church Street, Hamden, at 11AM--PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME--MOVED FROM 1PM TO 11AM. Time and place for the 3rd service in our Co-operative Parish is still being decided upon. When the details are worked out, we will send out a notice of time and place.*

*It is my honor to serve our church and our co-operative parish in this way.*

*Pastor Cindy Dodd  
Retired United Methodist Elder*

## *TEA PARTY*

“No, “Dave Smith remarked, “those crystal sugar and creamer sets haven't been used for at least 20 years—maybe a lot more!” Dave was talking about the transformation of Kendall Hall on Sunday, June 8th for the Surprise Tea Party to honor Jeeyeon, Serene, and Eileen Choi for their three years of unselfish and generous service to the church.

From 4-6pm, almost 50 women and girls from ages 6-89 dined on cucumber sandwiches, scones, deviled eggs, lemon squares, and cream puffs (and a whole lot more!). There was clotted cream and raspberry jam and lemon curd for the scones— both sweet and savory. A frozen fruit ring and rainbow sherbet floated in the punch bowl. And of course there was tea! Dozens of packets were available to each participant, who brought her own teacup and saucer. Cream and sugar? Honey? Lemon slices? Whatever your fancy! Donated teapots adorned each table to create a delightful reminder of an older and gentler time of our mothers and grandmothers.

We played Tea Party Bingo with prizes of (what else?!) tea boxes and large chocolate bars.

Soft classical music filled the hall as the guests of honor opened three matching teacup charms of sterling silver and porcelain as well as an Asian tea set for the family. All guests also got to take home a little teacup charm memento fashioned by Mary Rolfe.

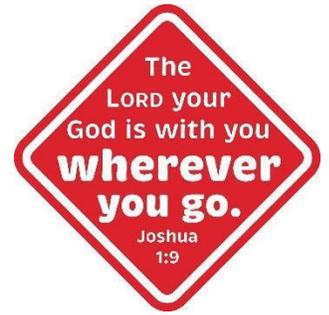
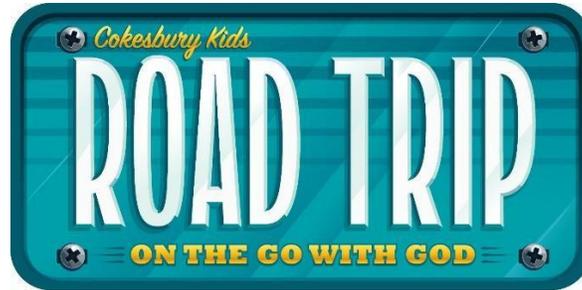
The celebration began with a heartfelt blessing by Cindy Dodd followed by a litany of all the many and myriad ways these three remarkable females had helped and participated in F&W service for the last three years. From Sunday School to after-school to agape dinners, lay reading, adult and bell choirs, and “ninja dishwashing” by Jeeyeon (!), the Choi women have played a vital and integral role in the functioning of the Church since the day they arrived. Jeeyeon's ability to make every parishioner feel listened to and loved was especially noteworthy.

It does take a village to pull off a surprise of this magnitude. Special thanks go to Hanna W., Peggy J., Shirley P., Carmela Q., Marcy M., Amanda M., Shelby P., Mary R., Helen S., and Cindy D.--not to mention Josh, Jimmy, Jim, and Dave when we needed them (despite our mantra of “No Boys Allowed!”). And yes, thank you, Pastor, for keeping our secret and getting your three in dresses and down the church stairs without telling them why! Thank you to all for your unselfish and generous help to bid a fond and heartfelt thank you and farewell to Jeeyeon, Serene, and Eileen.

With much love,  
Gail Pells  
Tea Party Chair



## VBS 2025



We are less than 2 weeks away from our 2025 Vacation Bible School kickoff! VBS begins Sunday July 13<sup>th</sup> and runs through Thursday July 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm.

### Spread the Word

Please help us to spread the word! We currently have 14 children signed up. If you know of a place to hang a “VBS Family Letter” to help bring attention to our amazing program, please grab one from the VBS table in Fellowship Hall or download a digital copy. There are postcards too, please feel free to grab a few and pass them out!

### Volunteers Needed

**Thank you to everyone who signed up to volunteer!** We currently have volunteers for all areas, however having a few backups would be great. Let me know if you would like to be a backup volunteer.

Area	Leader	Helper
Bible Stories	Gail B.	Kel Young
Music	Chris C.	Cindy
Science	Angel	Chris L.
Recreation	Serene	Abe
Crafts	Leanne	Chelsea
Snacks	Peggy	Mary R.
Video / Sound	Helen Smith	
Photographer	Jian	
Registration / Check In	Marcy	
Puppeteer	Cindy	
Assembly Leader	Chris C.	
Group A Chaperone	Amanda	Dolores
Group B	Diane	Eileen

**Dinner** – Dave will need many helpers to prepare and serve dinner (4:00 – 6:00), anytime availability you can offer is greatly appreciated.

**Walkers** – We need back up volunteers to walk the children from one station to another (6:00-8:30).

**Please contact Marcy to sign up or visit our VBS table.**

## Supplies Needed

We are asking for monetary donations this year to help purchase supplies. Thank you to everyone who has already donated, every penny helps!

If you prefer to donate items, they are listed below. Please see Marcy or place them on the VBS table in Fellowship Hall. We will continue to update the list as more supplies are needed or as they are donated.

Items	Food
Maps	Caesar Suddenly Salads (8 Boxes)
Blue Streamers	Spaghetti Sauce (5 - 45oz Jars)
Yellow Frog Tape (4 rolls)	Mac & Cheese (10 Boxes)
Black Garden Bed / Landscape Fabric (3-40ft rolls)	Mayonnaise (2 Large Squeeze Bottles)
Magnet	Knorr Alfredo Noodles (10 Packages)
5 Billiard Balls	Chicken (4 - 10oz Cans)
Clean 16oz Soda Bottle	Fruit Cups (30)
Soccer Ball	Powder Punch (2 Large Containers / Lemonade & Fruit Punch)
Paper Drinking Cups	
Cotton Twine	
String	
Foam Core Board	
Potassium Permanganate (Pot Perm)	
Glycerin	
Masking Tape	
Clothespins	
Paint Pens (White & Yellow)	

If you have any items you think would be good to help decorate our road trip theme, please feel free to let us know.

## Important Dates

**Safe Sanctuary Training** – If you were not at the June 29<sup>th</sup> training, please contact Helen Smith to arrange a time to get this done.

**July 5<sup>th</sup> - Decorating Day 1 @9:00am** (earlier the better as it Fourth of July weekend).

**July 9<sup>th</sup> – VBS meeting – @6:00 pm - In person**

**July 12<sup>th</sup> - Decorating Day 2 @9:00am**



## MISSION & OUTREACH



**THANK YOU to everyone who donated packages of diapers and/or cash for our diaper drive. Because of your generosity, we will be donating 1,976 infant diapers, 50 adult diapers, and two packages of adult absorbent pads as well as a check for \$100 to the West Haven Diaper Bank.**

We will be having an ambitious goal-oriented couple of Mission fundraisers during the summer months starting in July and running through the end of August. The great news is you can pick one or the other or both fundraisers to donate. One fundraiser is for WHEAT and the other is for DonorsChoose. The fundraiser for WHEAT will raise money to go toward buying meals for families in need. The money will be given to WHEAT to buy what is most in need. DonorsChoose is a United States-based nonprofit organization that allows individuals to donate directly to public school classroom projects. We will pick a West Haven based project to donate.

Both fundraisers will be envelope-based. You will pick an envelope that has a label on the front with the denomination you choose and circle the fundraiser you would like to donate to (WHEAT or DonorsChoose). You can then place the envelope in the collection plate each week. You will find the envelopes starting this Sunday 6/29 in Fellowship Hall with additional information on each fundraiser. We will also be keeping track each week so you can visually see how close we are to meeting our goal (\$500 for WHEAT and \$500 for DonorsChoose). If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Jenny Werle 203-430-7116.



The Community Cookout will be held on 9/6 from 12-2 (No Rain Date). Please come enjoy some great food, great fun with great company!!!! There will be hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, drinks, freeze pops and games!!!



### July Birthdays

- 1 - Sam Werle
- 4 - Leah Burbridge  
Melissa Simone  
Robert Hunter IV
- 7 - Elaine Smith Schrag
- 9 - Art Yost  
Laura Skipper Hindermyer
- 10 - Dominic Moscato  
Judy Jennette
- 12 - Joe DelFranco
- 14 - Richard Pyrdol
- 15 - Kim (Lentini) Moscato  
Jacki McKim
- 17 - Vicki Soule
- 18 - Peggy Spagone
- 20 - Demari Foster
- 27 - Josephine Dondorful-Amos  
Dorothy Codner
- 29 - Cynthia Dodd
- 30 - Richard Wetmore

### July Anniversaries

- 15 - Gail and Al Bartozzi
- 20 - Raymond and Jodi Memmott
- 26 - Jian & Christine Chan

If you do not see your birthday or anniversary listed, please let the church office know so we can update our list and make sure you are not missed.

*Also, please send information re any name changes, address changes, marriages, births, deaths, etc., to the Church Office, or by Email to: [firstwesleyumc@gmail.com](mailto:firstwesleyumc@gmail.com)*

### *Being Alone in the Church*

For those of you who need to go into the church, do not forget to sign in each time you enter the church. If you are going to be working in the church alone, please make sure someone knows you are there and let them know when you leave.

### August Birthdays

- 2 - Lisa Kiesinger  
Evan Corbin
- 3 - Joan Sablone
- 8 - Kimberly Geiger
- 11 - Geoffrey Danz
- 13 - Derek Baker  
Michele Gertsch
- 14 - Tricia Spagone  
Ryan Abekah
- 15 - Tara Rapuano (Lentini)  
Laura Marshall
- 16 - Marcelyn Danz
- 22 - Jim Stuhlman
- 24 - Gail Bartozzi
- 25 - Michele Caron
- 26 - Edith Mulligan
- 28 - Helen Smith
- 31 - Robert Skipper  
Brooke Moscato

### August Anniversaries

- 2 - Amador & Emily Maldonado
- 8 - Dorothy & Gord Codner

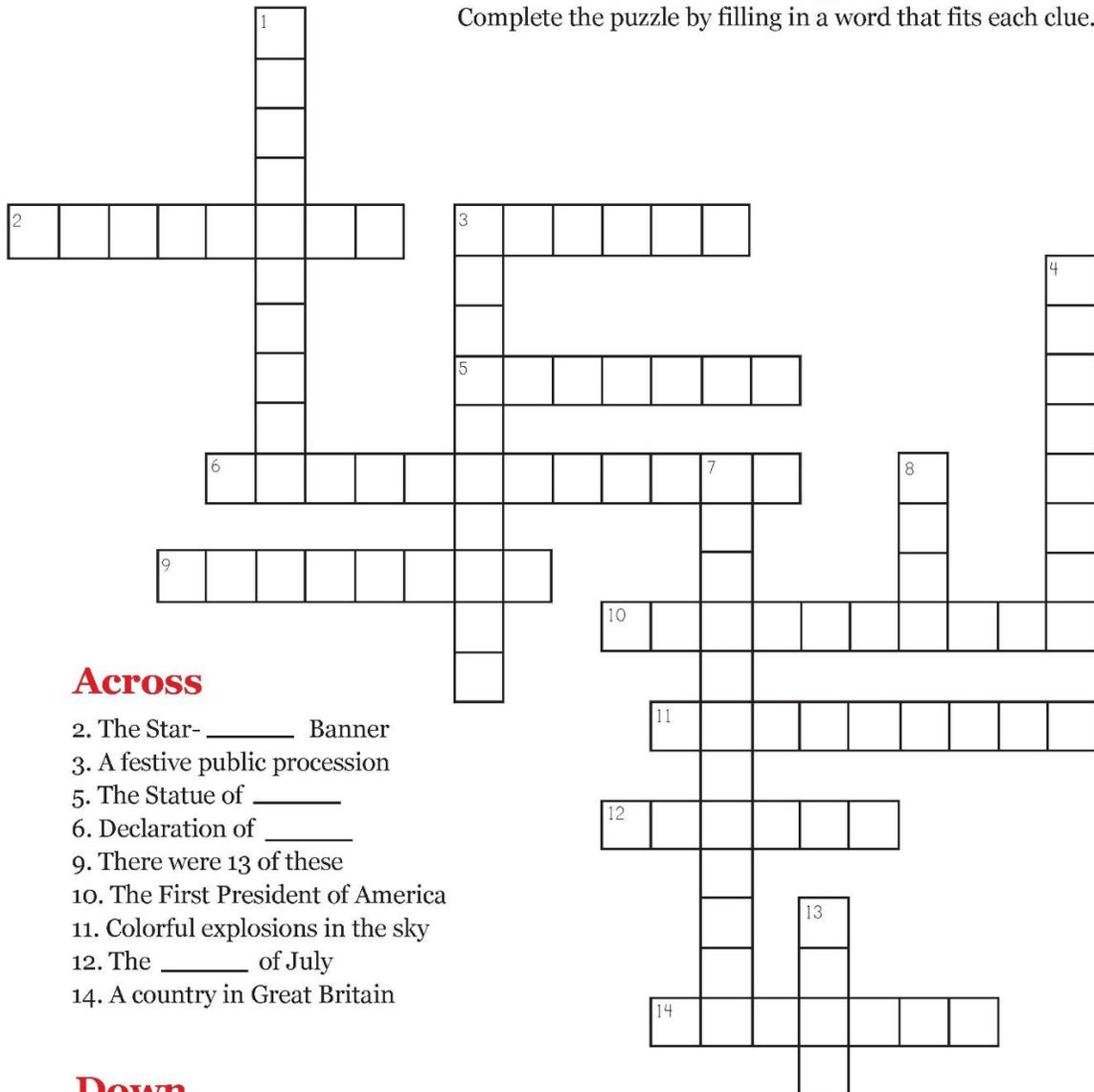


### *Native American Coin Collection*

We continue to collect pennies for the Native American Ministries. We would like to send many thanks to our Church Family for helping us to continue with this Ministry.

# Fourth of July Crossword

Complete the puzzle by filling in a word that fits each clue.



## Across

2. The Star- \_\_\_\_\_ Banner
3. A festive public procession
5. The Statue of \_\_\_\_\_
6. Declaration of \_\_\_\_\_
9. There were 13 of these
10. The First President of America
11. Colorful explosions in the sky
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ of July
14. A country in Great Britain

## Down

1. The war against the British was called the American \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Made the famous Midnight Ride
4. A Citizen of the USA
7. Document that begins with "We the People"
8. Historic item sewn by Betsy Ross
13. America's birth month



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Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/firstwesleyumc](http://www.facebook.com/firstwesleyumc).

Pastor Frank Sarpong

“Sunday Worship Time: 10:00am”

The July/August Newsletter

# STRONGER TOGETHER



“We can do all things  
through Christ who strengthens us.”  
(Philippians 4:13)

IN-PERSON & ONLINE SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 10:00 AM

**COME JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY!**