

The Messenger

**First & Wesley
United Methodist Church
89 Center Street
West Haven, Connecticut 06516
203-933-8795
January 2026**



A New Beginning in God's Faithfulness

As we stand at the threshold of 2026, we do so with hearts full of gratitude and hope. Another year has unfolded behind us marked by God's faithfulness, sustaining grace, and quiet miracles, and a new year now stretches before us, rich with promise and purpose.

The New Year is more than a change on the calendar; it is an invitation from God. An invitation to begin again. An invitation to trust more deeply. An invitation to walk forward with renewed faith, even when the road ahead is not fully clear. As Scripture reminds us, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

At First & Wesley UMC, we enter 2026 thankful for all that God has already done among us. We have worshiped together faithfully, served our neighbors compassionately, and continued to be a church that opens its doors and its heart to the community. From our ministries of care and fellowship to our outreach beyond the walls of the church, God has used each act of faithfulness, large and small, for His glory.

Yet, we believe God is not finished with us.

In 2026, we are called to move forward with renewed commitment:

- A deeper walk with Christ through prayer, worship, and the Word**
- A stronger sense of community where no one walks alone**
- A bold witness of love, justice, and mercy in our neighborhood and beyond**



Rev. Frank Sarpong

This new year invites us to examine not only what we do, but who we are becoming in Christ. It calls us to let go of fear, disappointment, and fatigue, and to embrace faith, expectation, and joy. The same God who carried us through yesterday is already present in our tomorrow.

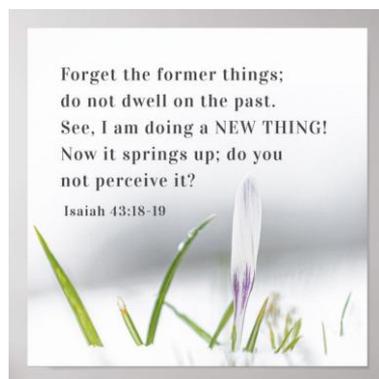
As your pastor, I invite each of you to step into 2026 with an open heart. Come expecting God to move. Come ready to serve. Come willing to grow. Together, let us continue building a church that reflects Christ's love; welcoming, compassionate, faithful, and alive in the Spirit.

May 2026 be a year of renewal, restoration, and revival for you and your family. May God grant you peace in uncertainty, strength in challenge, and joy in every season. And may First & Wesley United Methodist Church continue to be a place where lives are touched, hope is restored, and Christ is glorified.

Happy New Year, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ guide us every step of the way.

With gratitude and hope,

**Rev. Frank Sarpong
Pastor, First & Wesley United Methodist Church**



Lectionary Readings for November 2025

January 4, 2026

[Jeremiah 31:7-14](#), [Psalm 147:12-20](#), [Ephesians 1:3-14](#), [John 1:1-18](#)

January 11, 2026

[Isaiah 42:1-9](#), [Psalm 29](#), [Acts 10:34-43](#), [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

January 18, 2026

[Isaiah 49:1-7](#), [Psalm 40:1-11](#), [1 Corinthians 1:1-9](#), [John 1:29-42](#)

January 25, 2026

[Isaiah 9:1-4](#), [Psalm 27:1, 4-9](#), [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#), [Matthew 5:13-20](#)

First & Wesley United Methodist Church

December 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 10:00a Family Worship Service, Communion, Birthday/Anniversary celebration & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	5 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool 1 Program 7p Monday School	6 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 6p Healing Prayer Service	7 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Bible Study	8 10a-12p "K" Café 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	9 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program	10 8a – 10a Men's Fellowship Breakfast
11 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	12 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Monday School	13 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Finance	14 No Afterschool Program 7p Bible Study	15 10a-12p "K" Café 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	16 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Missions	17 9:30a Craft Corner 5p Agape Meal (Free) All Welcome
18 Human Relations Sunday 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	19 Martin Luther King Day 11a Safe Sanctuary Policy review No Afterschool Program 7p Monday School	20 <i>*Articles Due for the February Messenger</i> 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Church Council	21 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Bible Study	22 10a-12p "K" Café 1P Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	23 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program	24 10a Worship Meeting
25 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	26 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Monday School	27 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7:30p Trustees	28 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Bible Study	29 10a-12p "K" Café 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	30 3:30p-5:30p Afterschool Program	31

For more information go to the church website at www.firstwesleyumc.org

Zoom Link for all Worship Services and meetings!

(exceptions – SPR, CNLD,)

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/147691027>

Call-in: [1-646-876-9923](tel:1-646-876-9923) Meeting ID: [147691027#](https://zoom.us/j/147691027)

Sunday School



Grow in Faith with Us

Together, we're learning what it means to know God's character, understand the work of Christ, and live faithfully in relationship with God and one another.

Join us Sunday mornings right after the Children's Moment during the 10:00 AM service. We'd love to have you with us!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY*

"Digging Deeper into the Word Again"

Every Wednesday, 7 PM - online

- ▶ Do you have any questions about the Sunday Service sermons?
- ▶ Have you experienced something or have a story that connects with those sermons?
- ▶ Do you want to explore the texts, themes, or theology used in the Sunday Service?

If so, you're invited to join our Wednesday Bible Study!

This will be a time to dive deeper into the Scriptures preached in the previous Sunday's service.

Havens/Shoreline Parish Healing and Wholeness Services

First & Wesley UMC
Tuesday, January 6th at 6pm (New Time)
(1st Tuesday of each month)

Branford UMC
Wednesday, January 14th at 1pm in the sanctuary
(2nd Wednesday of each month)

Hamden Plains UMC – will meet on January 28th
(4th Wednesday of each month)

Services are led by Rev. Cindy Dodd, retired UM minister.
All are welcome! Questions? Call Pastor Dodd at 203 889-6934

Fellowship

Every Thursday – **Koinonia Café**, 10am-12pm
Please note: If you would like to help Judy Jennette with the cafe, please contact her.



FREE Community meal followed by games.
Every 3rd Saturday of each month – 5pm
Volunteers always welcome – see Dave Smith or Judy Jennette.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INVITATION

Join us for Fellowship, Food, and Encouragement

Men and young men, you are warmly invited to join us for a nutritious, hot, home-cooked breakfast on Saturday, Jan 19th. We typically begin our morning at 8am gathered around the coffeepot, with breakfast served soon after. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect, enjoy good food, and start the weekend with encouragement and fellowship.

This month, we will be reviewing Colossians, chapter 2 and engaging in a group discussion centered around it's message. Thomas McMillan will deliver an encouraging talk, likely challenging to become more equipped and stronger as Christian men.

Our group usually averages about 20 men, each in different places on their faith journey. We represent about 6 different denominations, as well as men with no church affiliation at all – everyone is welcome. Whether you are a regular attendee, a first-timer, or just considering, please know that you are invited and valued.

Can't make it this month? We meet every second Saturday of the month – feel free to join us in the future.

This is a BYOB event...Bring Your Own Bible!



MISSION & OUTREACH

Free Santa's Breakfast

Thank you to all who helped make this community breakfast a success. We served about 70 people and had a great time!



Prayer Shawl Ministry

“Happy New Year”

*We will resume January 22, 2026 at 1PM
in person at the home of Edith Mulligan*

65 Messina Drive, Apt A761, East Haven, CT

Prayer shawls are in the Church Office if someone needs one.

Be sure to sign your name and the person it will go to.

You can also contact;

Edith Mulligan – (203) 821-7533 or Sharon Ewen (203) 464-1995

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others”

1 Peter 4:10

Below are a few ways that would be great if people could volunteer to do. If something isn't listed, but you can think of something, please let Pastor Frank know!

For more information, please contact the person listed

Newsletter – Helen Smith (203-444-2362)

Bell choir – Christine Chan (203-927-4679)

Adult choir – Christine Chan (203-927-4679)

Youth choir – Christine Chan (203-927-4679)

Sunday School teacher – Gail Bartozzi (203-934-3106)

Counters for Collections – David Smith (203-415-6092)

After School helpers – Peggy Jerrell (203-641-0929)

Community Dinners - David Smith (203-415-6092)

Usher/Greeter – Jacki McKim (203-430-5897)

A/V – Jian Chan (203-376-5810)

January Birthdays

- 1 - Neil Thomas
Macie Franson
Frank Osei-Sarpong
- 3 - Emma Franson
- 7 - Christine Latham
Walter Clinton
- 10 - Paul Franson
Israel Young
- 14 - Lauren Simone
- 16 - Melissa Santamauro
Marissa deNicolo
Julianna deNicolo
Emmanuel Henoun
- 24 - Jen Werle
Gail Pells
- 27 - Eleanna Ormazabal
- 28 - Nalia Nevin
- 30 - Elizabeth (Liz) Levy

January Anniversaries

- 9 - Walter and Myrna Clinton

PLEASE NOTE: 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor, Rev. Frank Sarpong
860-938-1845 (phone or text))
franksarpong@nyac-umc.com
Layleader, Mary Rolfe
475-988-7666 (phone or text)
mary.kate527@icloud.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.



Craft Corner

Card Ministry

Reaching Out with Care

Our **Card Ministry** creates and sends *Get Well* and *Thinking of You* cards to those who could use a little extra encouragement or support. If you know someone who would appreciate a card, or if you have questions about the group, please contact Gail.

You can call the church office or email her at

gbartozzi@yahoo.com.

We will resume on Saturday, January 17th, **9:30 to 10:30 AM** to make cards together. All are welcome to join us!



Native American Coin Collection

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

Church Council meeting

Tuesday, January 20th at 7pm on Zoom

We will meet to discuss our upcoming ministries. If you are a voting member on the Church Council, you will be receiving the agenda by Jan. 4th for this meeting on the 20th.

From the Finance Committee

Thank you to all who have submitted a pledge for 2026. This helps our finance committee plan our missions and ministries for the upcoming year. Your generosity is very much appreciated!

Thank you to all who ordered Gift Cards through our Holiday fundraiser. We made a profit of \$634. Also, thank you to those who purchase ShopRite and Stop & Shop gift cards throughout the year for that ongoing fundraiser. We made about \$500 last year with no additional cost to you!



Stuffed Bread and Chili fundraiser

Our next fundraiser will be our Stuffed Bread & Chili. Thanks to Shelby Poe we will have the same baker making our scrumptious breads. Dave will be making his Famous Chili. Please see the order form in this newsletter for more information. **Orders are due by February 1, 2025.** Pickup will be on February 7, 2025, (the Super Bowl is on Sunday February 8th.)

Stay warm and stay tuned for more Finance Corner reports!



Stuffed Bread & Chili Fundraiser



- First & Wesley United Methodist Church
89 Center Street, West Haven, CT 06516
203.933.8795 / www.firstwesleyumc.org

Preorder by Feb. 1, Pick-up Feb. 7, 4-5pm

Call/text order 203-444-2362 E-mail fundraiser@firstwesleyumc.org
online order: www.firstwesleyumc.org/breadfundraiser

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Stuffed Bread - \$15 each

(number)

- ___ Broccoli Plain
- ___ Broccoli & Mozzarella
- ___ Broccoli, Sausage & Mozzarella
- ___ Spinach Plain
- ___ Spinach & Mozzarella
- ___ Spinach, Sausage & Mozzarella

(number)

- ___ Buffalo Chicken
- ___ Chicken Parmesan
- ___ Eggplant Parmesan
- ___ Meatball & Mozzarella
- ___ Pepperoni & Mozzarella
- ___ Sausage, Peppers & Mozzarella

(number)

___ Chili - \$11 each (16 oz.)

TOTAL: _____

Please pay at pick-up by cash, check or credit card at church on Feb. 7th, 4-5pm
(please make checks out to FWUMC with "bread fundraiser" in the memo line)



CIVIL RIGHTS WORD FIND

During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, many people organized to fight against unfair treatment and racial inequality.

DIRECTIONS:

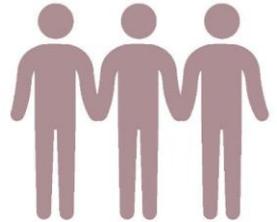
Listed below are some key words related to the civil rights movement. Find and circle or highlight them in the puzzle.

WORD BANK:

boycott
equality
integrate
march
peace
protest
rights
segregate



B	P	R	O	T	E	S	T	Q
O	V	I	U	F	Q	E	J	I
Y	M	G	V	M	U	G	B	N
C	P	H	M	Y	A	R	M	T
O	E	T	W	R	L	E	C	E
T	A	S	O	X	I	G	D	G
T	C	I	E	N	T	A	V	R
B	E	Y	U	I	Y	T	Y	A
Y	S	B	O	E	L	E	O	T
M	A	R	C	H	C	S	I	E





The Messenger

First & Wesley United Methodist Church

89 Center Street, West Haven, CT 06516

Phone (203) 933-8795

www.firstwesleyumc.org

Email: firstwesleyumc@gmail.com

Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/firstwesleyumc.

Pastor Frank Sarpong

“Sunday Worship Time: 10:00am”

The January 2026 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!