

The Messenger

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



Shared Leadership: Building God's Church Together

The Church of Jesus Christ was never meant to be built by a few while others only observe. From the very beginning, God designed the Church as a living body where every member has a role, a gift, and a responsibility. At First & Wesley United Methodist Church, we are called into a season where leadership is not confined to titles, committees, or the pulpit alone, but shared among the whole people of God.

Scripture reminds us that “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). This

Rev. Frank Sarpong means leadership is not about power or position; it is about participation. When everyone offers their gifts, whether in teaching, hospitality, prayer, service, administration, encouragement, or generosity, the Church becomes stronger, healthier, and more faithful to its mission.

Leadership As Service, Not Status

In the way of Christ, leadership begins with humility. Jesus Himself said, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35). Church leadership, therefore, is not reserved for those who speak the loudest or sit in visible places. It is exercised by those who quietly show up, who listen, who care, who pray, and who are willing to serve for the sake of others.

At First & Wesley UMC, leadership is not about “the pastor’s church” or “the board’s church.” It is our church. When one person carries the load alone, the mission suffers. But when leadership is shared, burdens are lighter, ideas are richer, and ministry becomes more joyful.

Every Member A Minister

John Wesley believed deeply in the priesthood of all believers. This means that every baptized member is called into ministry. Some lead through organization and planning. Others lead through compassion and presence. Some lead by teaching children, mentoring youth, caring for the sick, maintaining the church space, or welcoming newcomers with warmth and love.

You do not need a title to lead. You lead when you see a need and respond. You lead when you pray faithfully for the church. You lead when you invite someone to worship. You lead when you encourage someone who is weary. These everyday acts of faithfulness are the heartbeat of a thriving church.

A Call To Participate

As we move forward together, First & Wesley UMC invites every member to ask: How is God calling me to participate? What gifts has God placed in my hands for this season? Participation may look like serving on a ministry team, supporting a new initiative, attending meetings faithfully, mentoring younger members, or simply being present and available.

The future of our church does not rest on one leader or a small group; it rests on a community that chooses to walk together in faith. When all participate, the Church reflects more clearly the love, unity, and power of Christ.

Moving Forward Together

Let us commit ourselves to shared leadership rooted in prayer, mutual respect, and a deep love for God and one another. Let us build a culture where everyone feels valued, needed, and empowered to serve. When we lead together, we honor Christ, strengthen our witness, and become the Church God has called First & Wesley UMC to be.

Together, let us rise not as spectators, but as partners in God's work. I call on you today to start leading. Thank you.

Rev. Frank Sarpong

Pastor, First & Wesley United Methodist Church

Ash Wednesday

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. It is a season of introspection, preparation, repentance and reflection. Let's start the Lenten journey together as we worship together on February 18th at 7:00pm.

Lectionary Readings for February 2026

February 1, 2026

[Micah 6:1-8](#), [Psalm 15](#), [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#), [Matthew 5:1-12](#)

February 8, 2026

[Isaiah 58:1-12](#), [Psalm 112:1-10](#), [1 Corinthians 2:1-16](#), [Matthew 5:13-20](#)

February 15, 2026

[Exodus 24:12-18](#), [Psalm 2](#), [2 Peter 1:16-21](#), [Matthew 17:1-9](#)

February 22, 2026

[Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7](#), [Psalm 32](#), [Romans 5:12-19](#), [Matthew 4:1-11](#)



First & Wesley United Methodist Church

February 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00a Family Worship with Communion & Birthday/Anniversary Celebration Bread & Chili orders due	2 3p-5:30p Afterschool 7p Adult Monday school	3 3p-5:30p Afterschool 6p Healing Service	4 3p-5:30p Afterschool 7p Adult Group Study	5 10a-12p "K" Café 3p-5:30p Afterschool 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	6 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program	7 4p Pick up Bread & Chili
8 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	9 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Adult Monday school	10 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Finance	11 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Adult Group Study	12 10a-12p "K" Café 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	13 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program	14 8a Men's Fellowship Breakfast (Kendall Hall) & United Women in Faith
15 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon) Socks & Underwear collection for Columbus House	16 No Afterschool 7p Adult Monday school	17 No Afterschool 7p Staff Parish	18 Ash Wednesday 3p-5:30p Afterschool 7p Ash Wednesday Service	19 10a-12p "K" Café 3p-5:30p Afterschool 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	20 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program	21 9:30a - Craft Corner 5p Agape Meal (Free) All Welcome
22 10:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	23 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7p Adult Monday school	24 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 7:30p Trustees	25 No Afterschool Program 7p Adult Group Study	26 10a-12p "K" Café 1p Prayer Shawl 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	27 3p-5:30p Afterschool Program	28

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 Meeting ID: 147691027#

Healing and Wholeness Services

You are Welcome and Needed!

Our monthly healing service is looking for people to pray for our church, and for individual members who may be in need of healing prayer. The service is very simple and informal. We sing a few songs, we read and discuss a scripture, and we anoint persons with oil, and pray for anyone who has a prayer concern or who feels the need to pray for someone they love. So, for example, if my sister in FL is going through a difficult time, I will state my concern for her and sit in for her as people pray for the concern I have lifted up. Anyone can offer a prayer for my sister, and then we end with "Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer." Then we move on to the next person who wants prayer for themselves or others. We end our service with a song and a benediction.

The reason I am asking for your help is that the more people pray together, the deeper our prayer life will become. By lifting an individual or the individual's concerns to God's throne of Grace, we can together experience amazing things happening as we put our whole trust in Jesus and in His power to heal through us and through our prayers. We also learn, in very real ways, that God answers in God's time, not in ours, and with different answers than we can imagine.

I invite you to attend our next service of Healing and Wholeness which will take place on Tuesday, February 3 at 6pm. We meet in the pastor's study, and all are welcome.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call
Pastor Cindy Dodd, 203-889-6934

First & Wesley UMC

Tuesday, February 3rd at 6pm (**New Time**)

(1st Tuesday of each month)

Branford UMC

Wednesday, January 11th at 1pm in the sanctuary

(2nd Wednesday of each month)

Hamden Plains UMC

Wednesday, February 28th at 11am in prayer room

(4th Wednesday of each month)

Sunday School



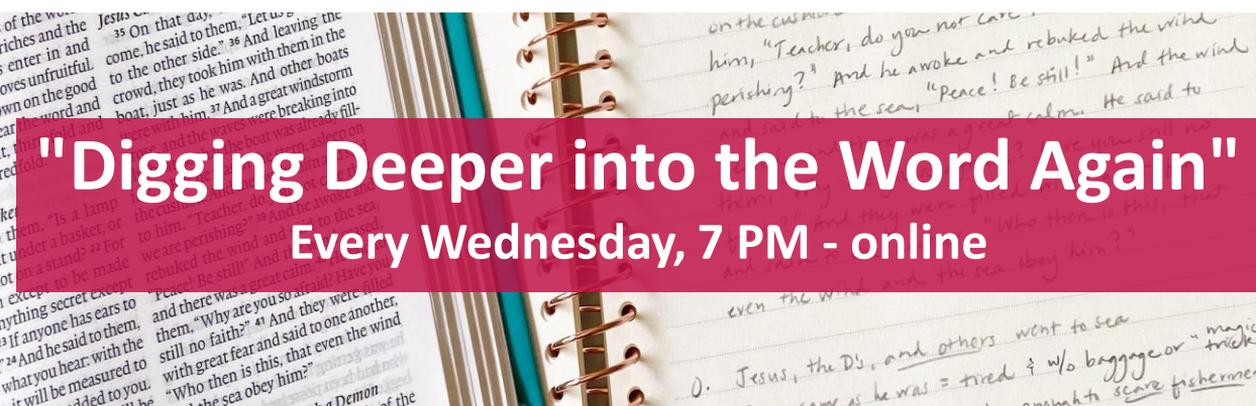
Come learn about the character of God, the work of Christ, and the means of living in right relationship to God and all people.

We meet Sunday mornings following the Children's Moment during the 10:00 service.

Our program is open to all children ages 4 and up. Our youth are invited to rotate through as helpers. On 4th Sunday of each month a Sunday school class is held for grades 6 & up. The regular class will meet at the same time in their regular location.

Please go to the church website to register your child/youth for Sunday school or ask a Sunday School teacher for a registration form.

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.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

1 Peter 4:10

Newsletter – Helen Smith (203-444-2362)

Choirs (Adult, Bell, Youth) – 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) or Christine Chan

A/V – Jian Chan (203-376-5810)

United Women in Faith

Valentine's Breakfast Gathering

Saturday, February 14 | 8:00–10:00 AM

Bring a Friend!

*"Love one another
as I have loved you."*

— John 13:34



Spiritual Nourishment

Prayer, devotion, & time in God's Word



Fellowship & Connection

Building friendships with love & laughter



Mission Awareness

Learning about caring for our world



Encouragement & Empowerment

Inspiring us to grow in faith & service



Planning & Visioning

Organizing events & outreach



Support & Care

Sharing, praying, & uplifting each other

"Let all that you do be done in love."

— 1 Corinthians 16:14

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST NEWS

February 14th, 8-10 am

Hello Men, We will be gathering for our traditional Men's Fellowship Breakfast when we have an opportunity to meet together for a delicious hot cooked breakfast, along with time to read Colossians chapter 4 in order to have a round table discussion. We start at 8am and end at 10 am.

This month will be a little different. Women will be gathering upstairs in Fellowship Hall for their own breakfast. This may require some planning ahead as parking may be a challenge. If you are able to park on the street somewhere this will save parking spaces for visitors. If possible, please consider organizing a carpool.

It will be helpful to have a volunteer parking attendant and someone on hand to operate the elevator. If you can help in this area please text Kel Youngs-the MFB host at 203-506-8407.

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!



COMMUNICATIONS

We would like to make sure that everyone receives information that is send out by the church via either e-mail, snail mail or text.

E-mail - If you do not receive an e-mail from the church at least once a week, please check your spam/junk folder. If it is there, move it to your inbox. If it is not there, please contact Helen Smith, 203-444-2362 to see if we can get that working again!

Phone - Also, please update your cell phone number. We are working on getting a voluntary text program up and running, so if you would like to receive a text from the church and NOT get all the pings when people respond, that is the goal.

Snail Mail – if you have moved recently, please update your address – Helen Smith 203-444-2362



MISSION & OUTREACH

Sock and Underwear Collection



As you probably are aware each year we partner with Columbus House Inc. in New Haven by providing much needed socks and underwear.

Columbus House provides housing and care for people experiencing homelessness. Let us be exceptionally intentional about our collection this year. These items will be worn by another human in need. Begin to pray over what you have purchased asking God to be a particular blessing to that individual. Ask God to let His presence and love be known by the recipient and that they will receive help and comfort to support them in their life challenges.

As is our tradition, we will have an opportunity as a congregation to ask God to add a blessing to our gifts. Please partner with us in this endeavor. Due to the snow storms we have missed some opportunity to announce the collection.



DENTAL CARE KITS



Chris Latham offered a suggestion that the Missions and Outreach Committee thought would be a great idea. It is time for many of us to visit our dentist for our annual check in and cleaning. **Since many of us use an electric toothbrush, please consider donating the dental care kit that you receive from the dentist.** There will be a collection point in Fellowship Hall where you can drop your dental kit. Also, it wouldn't hurt to ask your provider to throw in a few extra kits.



Socks & Underwear Drive

From now to Feb. 15th

Drop-off at First & Wesley

Tuesday 12-3pm

Thursday 10-3pm

Sunday 10am-1pm

or

for cash donations specify “socks” in memo line or for online giving, scan QR code and select ‘other’



Fellowship



Every Thursday – **Koinonia Café**, 10am-12pm

Please note: If you would like to help Judy Jennette with the cafe, please contact her.

Every 3rd Saturday – **FREE Community meal**, 5pm followed by games.

Volunteers always welcome – contact Judy Jennette, 203-619-4974 or Dave Smith, 203-415-6092

Prayer Shawl Ministry



Our Prayer Shawl group will be meeting Thursday, 1:00 pm February 26th. We will meet at Edith Mulligan's home Edith's telephone number is 203-821-7533 for directions.

If you can not come to a meeting you can do what some call “Knitting on the Go.” Your prayers are no less effective if you're knitting in your dentist's waiting room than a designated knitting place. Being in a quiet or meditative space is not always practical or conducive to completing a shawl, especially when a knitter has little spare time. Are prayers or intentions any less effective if they are offered on the run? Absolutely not! Prayer shawl making can be taken along with you anywhere. In fact, it may add a bit of spirit to an otherwise ordinary setting. We have one member who knits in church. God is listening no matter where you are.

Our shawls are in the Church Office. Please contact Edith Mulligan 203-821-7533 or Sharon Ewen 203-464-1995 if you would like to pick one up. These shawls are given to the sick and shut ins.

Anyone wishing to join is more than welcome to come. The more the merrier. If you can't knit and want to contribute money for yarn please get in touch with Edith Mulligan.



Stuffed Bread and Chili fundraiser Scan to order

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.)

Please use QR code or text Helen Smith at 203-444-2362 with your order!

February Birthdays

- 1 - John Paul Thompson
- 5 - Jeremy Soule
- 6 - Callie DeGenaro
- 7 - Linda Kopec
James Ewen
- 10 - Andy Whitley
- 11 - Ruth Kreyoh
- 15 - Sofia Bobko
- 17 - Stephen Baker
Gregory Baker
- 18 - Ashton Danz
- 21 - Catherine Bartozzi
- 22 - Edward Sperry
- 23 - Brett Dzikas
Karl Kiesinger
- 25 - John Bobko
- 26 - Jason Jerrell
- 27 - Ashley Hulse

February Anniversaries

- 17 - Lori and Paul Franson
- 21 - Florence and Joseph Dzikas

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.

Contact Gail if you would like a card sent to someone or have questions about the group. You can call the church office or e-mail Gail at gbartozzi@yahoo.com We meet on the third Saturday of the month from 9:30 - 10:30.



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. FYI – in 2025, we collected \$510.65 – THANK YOU!



The Messenger

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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 February 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!