



## Edwards Forum with Robert Sirico

WE ARE EXCITED to host **Rev. Robert Sirico**, president of the Acton Institute, in the Meetinghouse on the evenings of Friday and Saturday, **October 12 and 13**, as part of our **Jonathan Edwards Forum** series. The Acton Institute is an international organization cofounded by Fr. Sirico “for the study of religion and liberty” and is based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Fr. Sirico will speak on two topics, one each evening at 7:00 p.m. His first talk, on October

12, will be on the foundations of political and economic freedom; and in his second talk, October 13, he will focus on dealing with poverty. Fr. Sirico is widely respected and published, as well as prominent in national media. More about him can be found on page 2, and his full profile is provided at [firstchurch.org/JEF](http://firstchurch.org/JEF).

Plan to be with us both evenings. There is no admission charge; a freewill offering will be accepted. *CONTINUED ON PAGE 2*

**THE NIGHTS ARE GETTING COOLER.** The leaves are beginning to turn. Fall is upon us with all of its beauty—and there is no better place to live in the fall than in New England.

At First Church we are seeing transformation. I am seeing God at work with all of His beauty. This October will be special,

and our upcoming preaching and teaching series are a huge part of that.

### Treasure

**THE OTHER DAY** I received a letter in the mail. In the letter was a credit card and I was told I had a credit line of 10,000 dollars. They then counted all the ways I could spend it.

All of us have been given those offers. We have all felt the pull of a culture that calls us to spend, spend, spend. We are bombarded with messages about how we are to use our money, or how to take on debt, or how we are to invest.

The question that I think is important for us is—what does the Bible say about these subjects? Most of us know what the Bible says about giving. What does it say about debt and savings? How are we to view credit cards? Do these things connect at all with being disciples?

This October’s brief preaching series, entitled **Treasure**, will look at the practical ways we are to use money.

### Yoke

**ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9** [originally scheduled for October 10], I will begin a new series entitled **Yoke**, looking at how we are to be disciples. *Yoke* was the teaching of a rabbi. When Jesus said to us that He wants us to take on His yoke, He was referring to His understanding of how we are to live.

This series will be different than other series I have taught. We will use the Gospel of Mark to ask ourselves some questions: *How did Jesus make disciples? What did He model to His disciples? How did He live out His mission?*

My hope is that through this guided discussion all of us will be transformed to look like Jesus and live in His Kingdom.

—**Pastor Deryk**



## October Sermon Series

*Please see Pastor Deryk’s series introduction at right.*

**OCTOBER 7**

### Ownership

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

**OCTOBER 14**

### Generous Giving

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

**OCTOBER 21**

### The Slavery of Debt

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: Proverbs 22:6-9

**OCTOBER 28**

### Building Treasure

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: Luke 12:13-21

# Jonathan Edwards Forum with Robert Sirico CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The full titles of his talks are *The Moral Adventure of the Free Society* (Friday evening) and *Welfare and Class Warfare: Why Helping the Poor Demands a Moral Framework* (Saturday evening).

## About the Rev. Robert A. Sirico

As president of the Acton Institute, Robert A. Sirico speaks widely at colleges, universities and business organizations. His writings on religious, political, economic, and social matters are published in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, the *London Financial Times*, the *Washington Times*, *National Review*, and others.

Father Sirico is frequently called upon by members of the broadcast media for statements regarding economics, civil

rights, and a variety of issues of religious concern, and has provided insightful commentary for CNN, ABC, the BBC, National Public Radio, and CBS's *60 Minutes*, among others.

In 1999, Fr. Sirico was awarded an honorary doctorate in Christian Ethics from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, and in 2001, Universidad Francisco Marroquin awarded him an honorary doctorate in Social Sciences.

Fr. Sirico's pastoral ministry has included a chaplaincy to AIDS patients at the National Institutes of Health and the recent founding of a new community, St. Philip Neri House in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Acton Institute maintains a vigorous editorial outreach, especially through Fr. Sirico. The Acton website—[acton.org](http://acton.org)—has an archive of many of his essays and reviews.

# Women's Retreat 2013

APRIL 5-7 • HERITAGE HOTEL, SOUTHBURY • SPECIAL PAYMENT PLAN



**ARE YOU READY** for a time of strengthening and refreshing? Do you want to hang out with friends, grow deeper in your faith, laugh, rejoice, swim, eat lots of good food that you didn't have to prepare yourself,

and let Jesus minister to your soul? Do you want to make new friendships and catch up on your old ones? If you said yes to any of the above, then our **Women's Retreat** is the place for you.

Thanks to overwhelming demand, once again we are holding the Women's Retreat at the luxurious **Heritage Hotel**, in Southbury, Connecticut. Known as one of the premier Connecticut hotels, the Heritage Spa and Conference Center is located in the Litchfield Hills area, about 50 minutes from First Church. Our retreat will start on **Friday evening, April 5**, and end on **Sunday,**

**April 7.** Our rate for double occupancy both nights, including two breakfasts and one lunch, is \$246.

In order to help facilitate your attendance, we would like to offer a **retreat payment plan**. You can make **six payments of \$41 from October through March**. Please make your checks out to First Church of Christ, with "Women's Retreat" on the memo line (if you forget this, your check will just go into the general budget).

**As a special discount** for those who finish making their payments by February, the cost of the retreat for two nights (double occupancy) will be \$239. Also, some partial scholarships are available for First Church members.

This year, our speaker will be **Pamela Palagyi**, talented Bible teacher, author and pastor. Having once heard Pam speak already, I am thrilled to experience her incredible wisdom and spiritual depth once again.

We hope to see many of you at the retreat next spring. If you have questions, please email me at [tessa@firstchurch.org](mailto:tessa@firstchurch.org).

## Job Seekers Boot Camp

Empower your job search with this free three-part series led by two top professionals in our midst—**John Madigan** and **John Brubaker**—on **Tuesdays** from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in the Fireside Room: **October 2, Reconnect with Your Success** (accomplishments, resume, cover letter); **October 16, The Marketing Plan** (networking, job postings, recruiters, social media, direct mail); and **October 30, The Job Interview** (types, preparation, rehearsal, how to shine).

For materials and audio files from the previous (spring) session, along with a flyer on the upcoming October session, please visit [firstchurch.org/jobseekers](http://firstchurch.org/jobseekers). To register, or if you have questions, email or call **Eileen**

**Murray** at [care@firstchurch.org](mailto:care@firstchurch.org) or 860.529.1575, x210. All job seekers are welcome.

## Freedom from Debt Class

Many of us struggle with the burden of financial debt. A practical and compelling two-part video series from Willow Creek—**Freed-Up from Debt: How to Get Out and Stay Out**—will be offered in Conference Room 1 on the **Wednesdays of October 10 and 17**, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., facilitated by **Anton Hertle** and **Steve Soderberg**.

You will receive a biblical perspective and a practical, seven-step strategy for getting out of debt and staying out, or for helping a friend or relative achieve those goals. There is a \$10 fee for materials (\$15 for two).

Seating is limited! Free childcare is available. Please register as soon as possible, through **Marilyn** at 860.529.1575, x213.

## First Church Buildings Closed on Fridays

Because the closing of our buildings on Fridays during the summer proved so successful in streamlining our day-to-day work and activities as well as saving on utilities, we are continuing that practice indefinitely.

The receptionist will still be here until noon on Fridays to answer calls, and off-hours there are always options for leaving phone messages (and an emergency number is also given as part of the church's message) on our main line, 860.529.1575.

## Seniors' Luncheon with Cindy McDowell

Join us in Keith Jones Hall on **Wednesday, Oct. 24, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** for a time of worship, fellowship, an inspiring program—and a tasty luncheon catered by John's Café and Catering of Middletown, at a cost of \$8/person (chicken marsala, roasted potatoes, glazed carrots, a house salad, and a delicious dessert).

Cindy's topic, **Harvest: Bearing Fruit in Our Autumn Years**, springs from Psalm 92:14: *They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.* Every season of life has meaning and purpose as we depend on God's strength and encouragement. Join us in discovering ways to enjoy the autumn and pass along gratitude and grace. Our guest speaker, **Cindy McDowell**, has



been a First Church member for 21 years and enjoys ministry as a speaker and the author of ten books (available at the luncheon). Visit her website and blog at **www.EncouragingWords.net**.

You won't want to miss this exceptional luncheon and program!

Please sign up with **Kathy Rodriguez** at 860.301.6263 or by email at [k.rodriguez@comcast.net](mailto:k.rodriguez@comcast.net), and send

your check for \$8 (payable to First Church, noting "Seniors' Luncheon") to **Marilyn Danielson** at First Church, or drop it off.

## Will You Spend Two Hours to Help Feed Starving Children?

We invite you to join us in being a part of the world hunger solution through the **Feed My Starving Children** MobilePack event on **November 1, 2 or 3**. Choose any date and time, or find out what slot(s) are being suggested for First Church people who would like to serve together (see Joyce's contact info, below).

**Feed My Starving Children** is a non-profit Christian organization committed to feeding God's children who are hungry in body and spirit. The approach is simple: children and adults hand-pack meals specifically formulated for malnourished children, and then the meals are shipped to nearly 70 countries around the world. Each meal costs only 22 cents. This project takes place in Berlin, Connecticut.

For more information, see the table in the Wells Fellowship Area on any Sunday through October 28, or call **Joyce McNamara** at 860.436.2923.



Last year, 21 of our Deacons and spouses helped at the Berlin FMSC packing event. We hope many of our members will take part this year and help to give hungry kids a chance.

## Concerts 2012-13

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9** ❖ 4 and 7 PM

### Christmas Concert

*Gloria* by John Rutter • *Christmas Day* by Gustav Holst  
Carols, including *O Holy Night*

*Gloria in Excelsis Deo* by Daniel Pinkham

First Church choirs, soloists, brass, percussion, organ

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 27** ❖ 4 PM

### Super Bell XXI Concert

The five handbell choirs of First Church of Christ  
David Harris, Guest Director

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24** ❖ 4 PM

### A Concert of Spirituals

Legacy of Spirituals Choir • G. Ingrid Faniel, Director  
Affiliated with Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, Hartford  
Choirs of First Church of Christ • David Spicer, Director

**FRIDAY, MARCH 29** ❖ 7 PM

### Good Friday Memorial Concert

*The Passion According to Saint Mark* by J. S. Bach  
Orchestra, soloists and choirs, directed by David Spicer

**SUNDAY, APRIL 21** ❖ 4 PM

### Festival of Hymns combined with The King of Instruments Organ Concert

Hymns of our faith, selected by those in attendance  
First Church's Austin pipe organ, IV/62, Opus 2403  
David Spicer, Organist

**SUNDAY, JUNE 9** ❖ 7 PM

### ASOF Winners' Concert

Winners of the 2012 Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival

**SUNDAY, JUNE 23** ❖ 4 PM at Wethersfield High School

### The Raleigh Ringers

Internationally acclaimed handbell choir (see RR.org)  
David Harris, Director

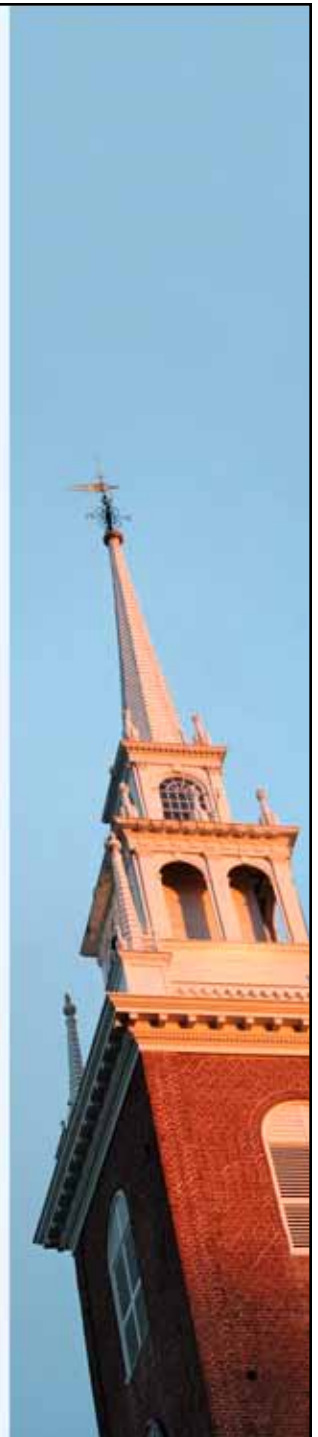
*All concerts are open to the public.*

*There is no admission charge; a free-will offering is received.*

*Childcare is available for age 8 and under, except June 23.*

*A reception will follow, except March 29 and June 23.*

First  Church  
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD





**KIDS SERVING KIDS** — The mission project for this year's Vacation Bible Camp participants was for the children to bring their pennies, nickels, dimes, etc., to be used for purchasing needed mosquito nets for at-risk children living in Mali, a country in Western Africa. Malaria is a deadly mosquito-borne disease,

and we learned that every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria. Our children's hearts were deeply moved! A total of \$693.89 was brought in during the five days of VBC (held July 23-27) which will purchase 115 nets. The children also wrote **friendship cards** to send to the children who receive the mosquito nets.

## Worship/Communion Teaching for Families

In preparation for Communion Sunday, November 4, Children's Ministries is offering a **class for families** who wish to learn about the Sacrament of Holy Communion as well as skills to help elementary-age children engage more fully in our worship services. **Parents and their children** in first grade and older are invited to attend the class, led by **Marcia McCann** and **Pastor Todd**, on **Wednesday, October 10**, from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m., in the Chapel.

## Midweek High School Activities [firstchurch.org/highschool](http://firstchurch.org/highschool)

**THE WAY** — 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. — Youth Room

This is a time for high school students and adult leaders to come together and celebrate what Jesus is doing in our lives as we follow Him together. We have a ton of fun playing together and encouraging one another to grow deeper with Jesus.

**BROMANS** — 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 6:45 to 8:15 p.m. — Pastor Todd's house

All high school guys are invited to meet up at 159 Nott Street in Wethersfield. We spend time together eating, playing, and challenging each other to pursue our relationship with Jesus. Bring along \$3.00 to help cover the cost of snacks.

**REIGN** — 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. — Lisa Peery's house

All high school girls are invited to meet up at the home of Lisa Peery. For directions, contact the Youth Ministry office. At Reign, we share a meal and focus together on growing in our relationship with Jesus.



Overnight rain cleared up, leaving a perfect day for our Saturday (September 15) tag sale to raise funds for much-needed new mattresses for the South Park Inn homeless shelter in Hartford.

This event was organized by our Deacons, led by Brian Mace. \$1672.21 was raised, which enabled us to purchase 15 mattresses (for \$1680). ECIN Industries, the manufacturer, donated 10 additional mattresses, for a total of 25 as a result of this project!

The tag sale was exciting, fun, blessed, and richly rewarding. For details, go to [firstchurch.org/tagsale](http://firstchurch.org/tagsale), where you will also find a link to a page of photos.

## Who Would Be Great as Deacon or Board Member?

Our **Nominating Committee** is seeking nominations for **Deacon** and certain **Church Board** positions, with a deadline of **October 24**. Prayerfully consider which First Church member(s) to nominate for the positions needed and send the name(s) with your description of their pertinent qualities, by email—[nominating@firstchurch.org](mailto:nominating@firstchurch.org)—or by completing the form next to the

marked Wells Area submission box, which is also found at [firstchurch.org/nominating](http://firstchurch.org/nominating).

## Items Needed for the Wethersfield Food Bank

*One in every six children in this country goes to bed hungry!*

The **Wethersfield Food Bank** is requesting donations of nonperishable food items to benefit many in dire need. Pick up a few during your next trip to the grocery store and place them in the marked **white**

**wooden box** in our Wells Fellowship Area. Current needs include canned chili, tuna, baked beans, granola bars, canned meats (turkey, chicken), bottled juices (100%), dry cereals, peanut butter, jelly, pasta sauce, and instant potatoes or rice.

Your **monetary donations** are also greatly appreciated, in the form of a check payable to First Church of Christ, with the memo "Wethersfield Food Bank." Call **Howard Page**, at 860.563.3275, with questions or suggestions. Thank you!

# Life Groups

## Formerly Known as 'Growth Groups'

**FOR MANY YEARS**, we have been blessed in our congregation with the ministry of small groups. We have been referring to them as Growth Groups, since one of our values at First Church is to grow in our faith.

More than ever, we have come to realize the vital role of small groups in fulfilling our mission and vision. Profound life transformation cannot occur in isolation; it requires a healing community that touches every aspect of the soul. Such a community would be safe, welcoming, loving, and accepting. It would go beyond imparting knowledge, though that would certainly be important.

We have to learn the Scriptures together and grow in our spiritual formation. We also have to encourage one another to live up to biblical expectations by holding one another accountable.

We have to actively show the compassion of Christ to the needy, both locally and globally. We have to share the Gospel with others. We have to know how to pray the power of God into each other's lives. And we have to have a multiplication heart: our groups need to grow and birth other groups.

If that's what a small group looks like, then it concerns a person's whole life, not just a portion of it. Our minds, emotions, bodies, time, and central passion belong to God. And our communities need to demonstrate this wholeness.

As a result, we are changing the name of our small groups from Growth Groups to **Life Groups**.

We hope, going forward, that many of us will have the transformative experience of belonging to such a group.

---

# Churchwide Worship and Prayer

**FOR SOME TIME NOW**, we have been feeling a call to release more prayer and worship in our midst and to seek God's face together as a church community. We believe the Lord wishes to bless us in unique ways, and we know that only in uniting as a family of faith can we enter those deeper blessings.

Would you join us in an opportunity to worship God together through music and prayer? Both **David Spicer** and **Bryan Minerly** will join us for these beautiful opportunities (in the Meeting-house). We hope that you would consider making this a priority over other activities, and even ministries. Here are some dates:

**Wednesday, October 3 .....6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, November 7 .....9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 5 .....6:30 to 8:00 p.m.**

*From the Servant Leadership Team*

---

## Considering Church Membership?

People join First Church from diverse faith backgrounds, but all find here a caring, accepting, faith-filled atmosphere. Why not take this step of faith, make a commitment to Jesus, and join our family of faith?

The upcoming **New Members class** is set for **Sunday, October 21**, from 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., including a light lunch. Childcare is provided. Class time is re-

laxed and welcoming. The next date for joining is **Sunday, December 9**. Let us know of your interest by a notation in the Friendship Register on any Sunday morning, or call **Marilyn** at 860.529.1575, x213.

## Nursery School 'Wooden Toy' Shopping Week!

**The Wooden Toy**, located at 1275 Si-las Deane Highway in Wethersfield, offers a shopping time, **November 1-7**, for First

for special or everyday items for the children in your life. What better fun is there than shopping in a great toy store! Thank you so much for supporting our school!

## Help Build a Home in the Dominican Republic

Short-term mission groups have already built four homes, and we would like to help finish (or start) another. Would you help to complete our group of ten volunteers?

The trip will be **November 15-20** and will cost about \$1,100 per person, which includes housing, meals and travel expenses. If you feel led to join us, please call or email **Paul Breglio** at 860.563.1659 or pbreglio@crestmechanical.com.

**Our first of three meetings** is planned for **Wednesday, October 3**, at 6:30 p.m. in the Murphy Conference Room. Anyone interested in hearing more about this life-changing project is warmly invited to attend the meeting. Also, for details and construction photo, see [firstchurch.org/house](http://firstchurch.org/house).



### When you or a loved one is hospitalized, we would love to stop in.

First Church Care Team members visit Hartford and Saint Francis Hospitals on a regular basis.

Let **Saint Francis Hospital** know that your affiliation is **First Church of Christ, Wethersfield, Congregational, H85 affiliation**. Or at **Hartford Hospital**, register with **C24 affiliation**.

Or call **860.529.1575, ext. 210**, to let us know when and where you will be in the hospital.

Church Nursery School families and friends (all of us!). For every purchase you make during that week, our school will receive **20%** of their profit. Please **mention**, and ask others to mention, the First Church of Christ Nursery School at checkout. **The Wooden Toy** (near Office Depot) is a little treasure trove

## Early Deadline for Operation Christmas Child This Year!

The time is *now* to think about Operation Christmas Child, a unique opportunity for you to share Christ's love with a child in need in a distant land—by packing a simple shoe box with items you select and purchase for him or her.

Our 2012 campaign takes place **from now through October 14**. Please stop by the table in the Wells Area on Sundays to learn more about this wonderful program, and visit [firstchurch.org/occ](http://firstchurch.org/occ).

## First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD  
CONGREGATIONAL

860.529.1575 • Fax: 860.721.7861  
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109  
Website: [www.firstchurch.org](http://www.firstchurch.org)  
Email: [info@firstchurch.org](mailto:info@firstchurch.org)

### Sunday Worship Times

Traditional Services in the Meetinghouse:  
8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service  
in Keith Jones Hall: 10:30 a.m.

### First Church on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage](http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage)

### Dial-A-Message: 860.529.1785

Uplifting Messages  
Provided by Caring Ministries

### What will you leave behind?

Please remember First Church in your will.

**e-GIVING** reduces paperwork and helps keep track of your yearly pledge. For info about contributing electronically via a monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account, call the Finance Office, 860.529.1575, x218.

Atessa M. Afshar ..... Associate Minister  
Wayne E. Luman ..... Director of Caring Ministries  
Marcia J. McCann ..... Dir. of Children's Ministries  
T. Michael McDowell ..... Associate Minister  
Donald W. Morgan ..... Minister Emeritus  
Deryk P. Richenbourg ..... Senior Minister  
David C. Spicer ..... Minister of Music & the Arts  
Todd E. Willard ..... Associate Minister

### OUR MISSION

*We are a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples.*

### SPIRE DEADLINE

Material for the November issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on 10/31/12, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Fri., October 19, at [daveg@firstchurch.org](mailto:daveg@firstchurch.org) or 860.529.1575, x225.

**DATED MATERIAL**  
Mailed Sept. 26, 2012

PERIODICAL  
POSTAGE PAID  
at Hartford,  
Connecticut

*The Spire* (USPS 441-830) is published monthly, except July and August, by The First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, 250 Main Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

**POSTMASTER** — Send address changes to: *The Spire*, 250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1893



**WILLARDS EVERYWHERE!** — Over 200 people enjoyed the wonderful food, fellowship and activities at our Rally Sunday picnic, held on September 9. The photo above is by Jamie Tinker, showing our monster truck

bounce house full of Willards, with Pastor Todd's arm positioned to form a perfect red cross behind him! Enjoy picnic photos taken from the viewpoint of a 7-year-old, Mark Royce, at [firstchurch.org/picnicphotos](http://firstchurch.org/picnicphotos).

## Video on Stewardship Produced by Anton Hertle

A five-minute video, *Introduction to Stewardship*, is available for viewing on the First Church website. Discover an exciting "big picture" vision of effective Christian stewardship, based on biblical principles, in a recent talk given by **Anton Hertle**, at [firstchurch.org/stewardship](http://firstchurch.org/stewardship).

## Singles in Service

**Singles!** Are you interested in taking action to help serve the needs of those in our community who are in need? Have you always wanted to make a difference? We are just starting to go on monthly service projects, on **Sunday afternoons**. Please visit [firstchurch.org/SIS](http://firstchurch.org/SIS) or call **Dori Sargent** at 860.559.7737.

## Travel to Israel in the Spring With Gordon College!

Walk where Jesus walked, and experience Holy Land sites in ways you never imagined.

**Judy Franzen** is coordinating this extraordinary travel opportunity. For details, contact her at 860.563.4590 or [jpfranzen@yahoo.com](mailto:jpfranzen@yahoo.com), and be sure to visit [firstchurch.org/travel](http://firstchurch.org/travel).

## First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD

### Family Circle of Care

Caring Ministries Assistant **Eileen Murray**  
860.529.1575, ext. 210

Director of Caring Ministries **Wayne Luman**  
860.529.1575, ext. 203