

- Arts in the Center: Paul Winter Consort6
- Welcome New Members!.....3
- Lectio Divina Program, April 192
- Walk for Hunger, May 5.....4
- Book Groups.....5

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WEST HARTFORD

TIDINGS

APRIL 2018 • NEWSLETTER • WWW.WHFIRSTCHURCH.ORG • 12 SOUTH MAIN STREET, WEST HARTFORD, CT • 860-233-9605



We Shall Overcome



My Dear Friends,

I am a child of the turbulent sixties. That means, among other things, that my formative years were significantly influenced by souls the likes of whom we still long for: John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Francis Kennedy.

All three were killed by hatred and also by an assassin's bullet. Each death (in Dallas, Memphis and Los Angeles), robbed the world of vision and courage that fell to silence. America lost something of her soul and the shadows of each loss do not diminish in time.

April 4 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Dr. King's death and the magnitude of that loss haunts us still. "I may not get there with you," he said just the night before, "but we as a people will get there. I've been to the mountain-top and I've seen the promised land."

On April 4 we will be participating in a movement of remembrance and solidarity. The shorthand for the commemoration is MLK50. Church bells across the land will ring 39 times signifying the 39 years that Dr. King lived on this earth. At 7:04 p.m. (EST) churches in Memphis will lead with bells all over America following in turn.

Immediately before the tribute of bells, I have asked Jeremy Schmitt to play "We Shall Overcome" from the Carillon in our steeple; and then again, he will play after the 39 peals of reverence. Wherever you are I hope you will stop and listen; and that you will hum that melody as well.

Dr. King's biographer wrote: "In the last week of his life, Martin Luther King worried about the road ahead. His was not a sunny optimism. It was, however, an optimism of the cross. And that, finally, is what remains to us – his dream, his vision, his faith, and the power of the Resurrection."

We Shall Overcome Someday,

Geordie Campbell

Worship with us on Sundays at 10 a.m. in the main Meeting House at 12 South Main Street, West Hartford Center.

<p>April 1: Easter Sunday Sunrise Service, 6:30 a.m. "Rolling Away the Stone" Elliott Munn preaching</p> <p>Easter Celebration, 10 a.m. "My Easter Maxim" Geordie Campbell preaching</p>	<p>April 8: First Sunday in Eastertide "Friends for the Road" Elliott Munn preaching Taizé in the Chapel, 5 p.m.</p> <p>April 15: Second Sunday in Eastertide "Appearances Can Be Deceiving" Geordie Campbell preaching</p>	<p>April 22: Earth Day "Partners with God" Geordie Campbell preaching Celtic Worship in the Chapel, 5 p.m.</p> <p>April 29: Fourth Sunday in Eastertide "Thanksgiving in April" Geordie Campbell preaching</p>
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Happy Easter!
Join us for All Ages
Worships and
Easter Egg Hunt on
April 1st.



Church Family News

- We grieve with the family of **Tom Casper** who passed away on March 6th, after a long illness. He leaves his devoted wife of 35 years, Jane Stremmlau, and beloved children, Elizabeth and Toby. A service was held on March 10.
- We grieve while celebrating the life of **Marge Bishop** who passed away on March 17, surrounded by her family including children Rob and Beckie. A memorial service was held on March 24.

If you have an announcement to share, please call the office at 860-233-9605.

Lectio Divina: April 19

Lectio Divina Program: After we celebrate the glorious resurrection of Jesus on Easter, we next look toward his glorious Ascension, and finally to Pentecost (May 20), the Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. As people of faith, we often turn to the Scriptures as a form of prayer, using Lectio Divina ("divine reading") as a way to express our faith and to explore what is sacred. This contemplative practice allows us to seek the presence of the living God by listening – giving God the first word and letting that word expand through meditation. We create a safe and sacred space to read, contemplate, and share what Scripture reveals to our hearts, strengthening our relationship with God.

Please join us Thursday evening, April 19 at 7 p.m. in the JPW Library for an evening of Lectio Divina with Spiritual Director John Lamega to learn more about, and participate in, this ancient practice of prayer. John is a retired lawyer who has facilitated a Lectio Divina prayer group at his home church, St. Patrick – St. Anthony in Hartford, for eight years. He also volunteers throughout the greater Hartford region.

Are you on Facebook and Instagram?

First Church has been growing its followers on Facebook and Instagram by spreading inspirational messages, worship notes, along with updates on events, and posts about health, wellness, and music. Check it out by searching "First Church West Hartford," and if you need some pointers, ask Amy Melvin or Joy Taylor.

DUE DATES for **SUNDAY NOTES & eNEWS:**

Submissions are due each Tuesday by noon to Suzanne:
suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.

DUE DATE for TIDINGS: The next deadline is APRIL 14th, for the MAY issue. Please send items to Joy Taylor:
joyt@westhartfordmagazine.com

Covenant to Care would like to thank everyone who donated one of the 33 Easter Baskets for our Covenant to Care children this year. We know they appreciated them!

Coordinating Team

By Julia Rosa, Moderator

At the time of this writing, it has been a scant few days since the Annual Meeting of the congregation. The team rosters for 2018 were approved and project updates were shared.

We are grateful to those returning leaders and members who will continue their service to the Church. Lisa Bugos has agreed to lead the Futures Team; Ginny Vocelli, along with Jenny Clark, will lead the Outreach Team; and Colleen Mitchell alongside Nancy Ball will share the leadership of the Inreach Team. Continuing in their leadership roles are Eleanor Wight, Dave Simpson, Laury Currier, Judy Schmitt, and me. Continuing are our Treasurer, Al Nweeia; Secretary, Charlie Goodwin; and finally, (what is the scripture: "the last shall be first") Geordie and Elliott complete the Team. Although not listed on the team rosters, the unsung heroes that make up the myriad Workgroups deserve a shout out. Thank you!

Current focus of the Coordinating Team:

- construction of the technology infrastructure, popularly referred to as the "spine"
- preparation of a signage proposal for the town; and
- painting the Meeting House.

We are hopeful that the spine will be in place by the time you read this. The Modulex Firm is assisting in preparatory signage work.

The Coordinating Team, acting on the recommendations of a Workgroup, charged to revisit desirable and feasible changes to the Meeting House, has contracted with Clohessy, Harris, and Kaiser, to spearhead coordination of changes. We anticipate that Phase I, which will require scaffolding, will occur over the summer months. This will involve painting and improvements to lighting and sound. Phase II, which would involve other work, such as carpeting, would be pending congregational approval.

The Coordinating Team will work closely with the Business Team to develop a financial plan for our initiatives. Currently, there are sufficient monies to install the spine. A new source of funding will be required to complete the signage. We have sizable monies available for painting the Meeting House but we anticipate that more will be needed. A proposal will be brought to the congregation.

The Coordinating Team appreciates the patience and support of the congregation. Nothing can be accomplished, absent of these.

With gratitude, and in peace,
Julia

In order of appearance...

KEN WEEKS grew up in West Hartford and Farmington, and now makes his home at Duncaster in Bloomfield. He is retired and has three grown children. In his leisure time, Ken enjoys watching UCONN women's basketball, sailing, canoeing and woodworking. He comes to us by transfer of membership from Emanuel Lutheran Church of Hartford. He looks forward to worshipping at First Church and to making additional friends for life. Welcome Ken!

JESSICA BERUBE has been with us for more than ten years and finally decided to join with us. Yeah! She began with us 11 seasons ago as a section leader in the Adult Choir, is our Handbell Choir Director, and has been helping out with our Taizé Services. She is also a music teacher for K-2 in Enfield. She loves all kinds of music, watching and performing in musicals, and recently took up ballroom dancing. Jessica looks forward to setting down roots with First Church as her spiritual home.

JOAN AND ROB CLAFLIN are coming back home to First Church and we are so glad! To many of us they need no introduction. They have 3 grown children (Heather, Shannon and Jeremy) and remember with love their oldest son Tyler, whose memorial service was held here in October. Rob is self-employed as a chiropractic orthopedist and Joan is a special education teacher in Avon, at Thompson Brook School. Rob enjoys biking, hiking, bowling, as well as tending to projects at their cottage. Joan enjoys boot-camp type gym, reading, biking, and bowling.

JEANNE LEWIS grew up in First Church and is reaffirming her



connection with us. She attended nursery school here, as well as church school, and was confirmed here as a teenager. She is particularly fond of Jim Boratko's concerts and leadership of the choir. She works at Harvey and Lewis Opticians. In her spare time, she enjoys her family, friends, neighbors and pets. Welcome home Jeanne!

STUART LEWIS prefers to be called Stu. He joined First Church in 1962 and fondly remembers the tenure of John Webster as pastor. We delight in welcoming him home again, as he reaffirms his membership! He has a special interest in New England history. Stu claims to "dabble in all, but master of none!" He lives in a castle and relishes the stories it holds. His beloved Janice ("Jinx"), wife of 58 years, passed away in October; her memorial service was held in our Meeting House. His family business, now in the care of his son, is Harvey and Lewis Opticians. Stu is Jeanne's father.

DAVE UNSWORTH comes to us singing! He is a weekly contributor to the Adult Choir. He also serves on the Music Workgroup and the Spirit Team. In his spare time, he enjoys gardening, baking and some football. He looks forward to being a part of the First Church family. He is retired and lives in Cromwell.

TOM GRUBER and **ELAINE WIDMER** have been worshipping with us for a few years and come to us by transfer from Asylum Hill Congregational Church. Tom is retired after 40 years at Aetna and Travelers. They recently moved to Avon, but lived in West Hartford before that. Elaine is also retired and enjoys hobbies that include photography, gardening, and antiques. She is an active volunteer at the CT Horticultural Society and a master gardener. Tom volunteers at the New Britain Museum of American Art.

SETH HOLMES is an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Hartford and a Practicing Architect. He has an impressive church background including roots in Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist gardens, as well as a wider spiritual family that includes Buddhism – he and his wife Julie were married in a Christian/Buddhist wedding. They both take delight in their son Hudson, who is quite an inquisitive participant in our children's sermon! As for spare time: downhill and backcountry skiing, cycling, ice skating, hiking, camping and hockey all top the list!

RYAN MANNIX has been attending worship with us since 2016. He was attracted by First Church's beauty and location. He grew up in Granby where he was active at both Pilgrim Covenant and South Congregational Church. He recently purchased a home in West Hartford. Ryan is a Mechanical Engineer at Pratt and Whitney. In his spare time, he enjoys basketball, soccer, and lacrosse. He also loves helping Elliott out with our H.S. Youth Group and was a chaperone/leader on our mission trip to New Orleans last summer.



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Living in Spirit • Committed to Service • Open to All

Rev. Dr. Geordie Campbell, Senior Pastor
Rev. Elliott Munn, Associate Pastor
Rev. Susan Izard, Minister of Spiritual Life
Dawne Quinn, Minister of Faith Formation
James Boratko, Music Director
Suzanne Nardi, Office Manager
Lisa Reed, Business Manager
Tim Cowles, Building Superintendent

phone: 860-233-9605 fax: 860-232-8183

J.P. Webster Library 860-232-3893

First Church Academy for Young Children 860-232-2106

12 South Main St., West Hartford, CT 06107 • www.whfirstchurch.org



860-232-3893 • www.whfirstchurch.org (click JPWL link)

LIBRARY HOURS: Sunday 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday & Saturday – Closed

If you need assistance outside of these hours, please call us at 860-232-3893

Jennifer deSimas, Library Director: jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org

Karla Grafton, Assistant Librarian: jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org

For general inquiries: jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org

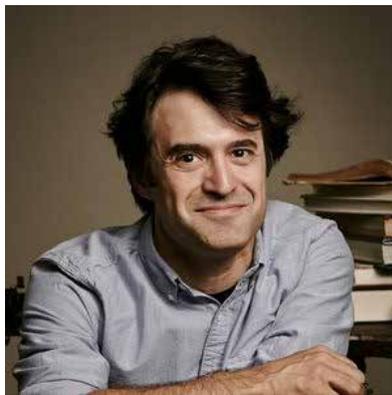
Coming this Spring:

April 29, 11:30 a.m.: Senior Speakers Series, Gayle Kataja from CT Community of Care will join us to discuss Senior Nutrition. The lecture will be held in the JPWL and will include a light lunch. Please join us – and invite a friend!

May 3, 7 p.m.: An Evening with Mark Oppenheimer: "Four Litte Jewesses: Writing About Religion as a Father of Four."

Co-Sponsored by JPW Library and Congregation Beth Israel.

Mark Oppenheimer is an accomplished author, professor, and podcast host. He penned the *New York Times* "Beliefs" column from 2010-2016, and his work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Christian Century*, *Harper's* and *Playboy*. He hosts the weekly Jewish-culture podcast "Unorthodox" and regularly teaches at Yale University. In this event, Oppenheimer promises to share the trials and joys of raising children in the faith with his trademark humor and wit.



New Books!*

•**At the Broken Places: A Mother and Trans Son Pick Up the Pieces** by Mary Collins and Donald Collins. In this collaborative memoir, a mother and her transgender son recount wrestling with their differences.

•**Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut** by Derrick Barnes (Author) and Gordon C. James (Illustrator). A rhythmic, read-aloud celebration of the self-esteem, confidence, and swagger.

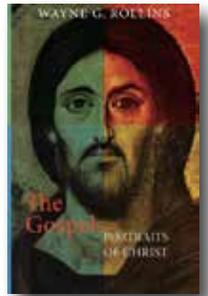
•**Educated: A Memoir** by Tara Westover, is a coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers.

•**The Heart is a Shifting Sea** by Elizabeth Flock. Flock introduces three couples whose relationships illuminate sweeping cultural shifts in India in dramatic ways to present a layered and fascinating mosaic of the challenges and promise of matrimony.

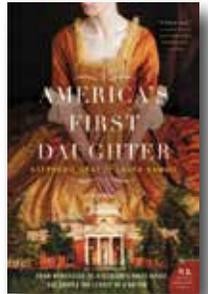
Book Groups

All are welcome to join us as you are able.

Awakening the Spirit. First Church's Minister of Spiritual Life, Rev. Susan Izard, leads this group, which meets Mondays at noon. Please bring your lunch; beverages and dessert are provided. In April, we will finish Diarmuid O'Murchu's *Inclusivity: A Gospel Mandate* and begin reading *The Gospels: Portraits of Christ* by Wayne Rollins. "Far from being carbon copies of one another," Rollins asserts, "the Gospels represent four individual approaches to God, to the world, to humankind, and above all to the one they call Jesus the Christ." Rollins "examines how each Gospel writer, heeding the patterns and rhythms of his own mind, portrays Jesus in the setting of his own world" (back cover).



Food for Thought a monthly book group, will meet Thursday, May 24 to discuss *America's First Daughter* by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie. "A richly researched novel that draws from thousands of letters and original sources to tell the fascinating story of Thomas Jefferson's eldest daughter, Martha 'Patsy' Jefferson Randolph. The novel explores family and social history, and brings to life the colorful cast of characters who conceived of our new nation. A must read" (amazon.com). This book group is led by JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas. Bring your dinner; beverages and dessert are provided.



The **Parent Book Group** will be meeting on the following Tuesdays: April 3, April 17, and May 1 to discuss *The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving* by psychologist Lisa Miller. "Dr. Miller opens up a pivotal discussion about the need for spiritual exploration and education (during childhood) ... This is about all of us, what makes us human – our spiritual understanding, expression, and development, supported and nurtured by families, schools, and communities to give us the capacity to live vibrant, full lives. The lessons in the book...are a lifeline for all parents, teachers, mentors, (showing how) a spiritual approach, however personal, helps children develop an inner core that will support them as they navigate the inevitable (changes) of life and acts as a protection against risky behaviors and depression" (amazon.com review) *The Spiritual Child* is available in the JPW Library.

New Movie!*

Gifted. Frank Adler is a single man raising a child prodigy – his seven-year-old niece Mary – in a coastal town in Florida. His plans for a normal school life for her are foiled when her mathematical abilities are noticed by Frank's formidable mother, whose plans for her granddaughter threaten to separate Frank and Mary.

*Reviews excerpted from amazon.com

The Church School News

Dawne Quinn, Minister of Faith Formation, dawne.quinn@whfirstchurch.org.

- The 3s and 4s begin their spring curriculum and will be exploring lessons on The Empty Tomb, The Lost Sheep and Coin, and The Sower
- Kindergarten through 5th grade begin the rotation "Woman at the Well." 6th-8th graders are welcome to join us on the 4th floor as partners in learning!

April Calendar

- April 1st, **Easter Sunday**, families worship together, Egg Hunt
- April 8th, **All Ages Worship**, Communion Sunday, no Church school
- April 15th -29th, "Woman at the Well" rotation K-8th
- May 6th, **All Ages Worship**, Communion Sunday, no Church school

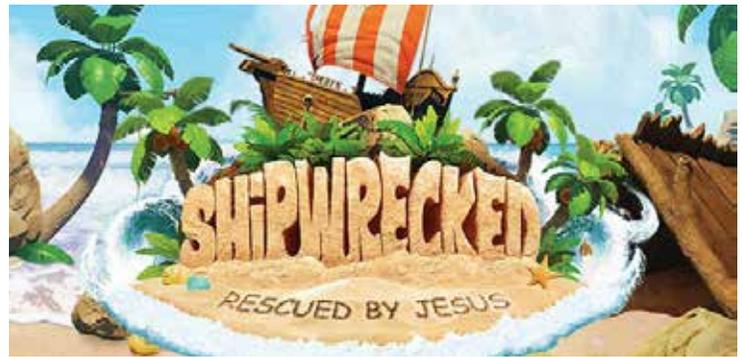
Happy Easter!

Join us for All Ages Worship and Easter Egg Hunt! Easter is April 1st. Families will worship together at 10 a.m. and are invited to join our annual Easter Egg Hunt afterwards. Toddlers through 5th graders are invited to the front lawn to hunt for eggs filled with sweet treats! Bring your baskets!

FOODSHARE

The Annual Foodshare Walk Against Hunger will be held on Saturday, May 5 in a new setting: Dunkin' Donuts Park in Hartford (home of the Hartford Yard Goats)! Our church will sponsor a walking group known as the "First Church Striders" and we encourage all ages to join in on this fun-filled, family-friendly event.

We will be signing up walkers and collecting donations at coffee hour on Sundays in April for this important cause. Also, the 4th Sunday "Reach Out" offering will go to this cause. Walkers and donors can also sign up online at FoodshareWalk.org and register under our First Church Striders group. Please contact Deb Wilson at debitfbb@gmail.com or 860-306-2623 with any questions related to this fundraiser. This event is always filled with spirit, smiles, and camaraderie, so please come join us!



Vacation Bible School Summer 2018: Shipwrecked – Rescued by Jesus Registration is open!

First Church is excited to offer a week-long vacation Bible school experience for children entering Kindergarten through 5th grade. Camp will run July 9th-13th. Middle school students, 6th-8th graders, are invited to join us as Crew Leaders. High school students, grades 9th-12th are invited to join us as Station Leaders.

Registration is open, and information can be found on our church website, whfirstchurch.org

Middle and High School Youth Group Gatherings

in the Youth Room, with Elliot Munn, Associate Pastor
MSYG: April 15: Signs of Spring Scavenger Hunt, 4-5:30 p.m.
HSYG: April 15: College Care Packages, 4-5:30 p.m.

Let's have a ball at First Church Academy Summer Camps!

The Academy offers five consecutive two-week camps beginning on June 19th until August 24th for children under 3 and pre-schoolers.

Each camp has an exciting theme and includes sports, such as Drew McElroy's Max Lax, and wonderful gardening opportunities in our large Academy Garden!

Themes this year: Make a Splash, Friends and Neighbors, Farm to Table, Stepping Out and Summer Block Party.

Camps are run by an experienced teaching staff. Please call the First Church Academy office: 860-232-2106



Scout News

Troop 12 spent their Feb 23 -25 weekend at Camp Workcoeman. Upgraded to a cabin instead of their traditional tent camping. Although it was a rainy weekend, they hiked and worked on orienteering skills.

Troop 12 Boy Scouts meet weekly on Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at First Church; we welcome all boys 11 to 17 years old. You may contact Scoutmaster Fred Brown at fredbrown3@aol.com for more information.





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West Hartford, CT 06107



Paul Winter Consort

SAT. • APRIL 21

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MyFirstChurch - Launching Phase 1

We are excited to announce the opening of our new online community, MyFirstChurch! This is a place to connect with other church members, be involved in groups, sign up for events, and much more!

Phase 1 – April 2nd. We are inviting families with children to join our online community first. This will give parents the opportunity to update their family profile with accurate up-to-date information and set their privacy settings. Children under the age of 14 are hidden from the general users in the system (only those with a background check and safety certification can access children's information for the purpose of running church school programs). We will be sending out an email inviting you to join MyFirstChurch. Follow the link in the email you receive to create a user ID and password. Feel free to explore the system to find out what it can do for you!

Phase 2 – May 1st. We will invite the rest of the congregation to join the system by email in May. Follow the link in the email to create a user ID and password. We will have group training sessions and articles in Sunday Notes and Tidings with helpful tips along the way.

Please watch this instructional video explaining how to update your profile, communication, and privacy settings: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/159083491>.

If you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to be unlisted in the system, please contact Suzanne at suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.

We look forward to doing church in a new way with you!

Sincerely,

Suzanne, Dawne, and Elliott