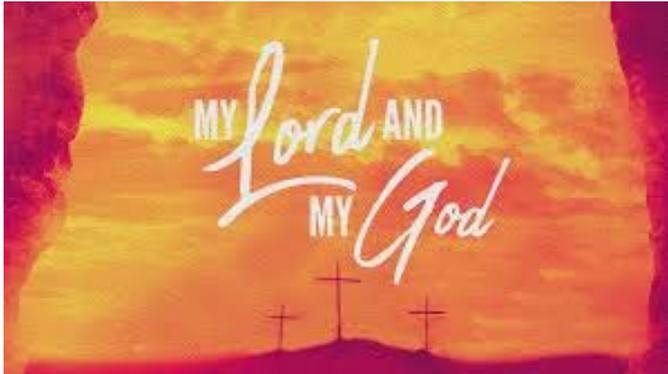




Sunday Notes

April 19, 2020



We have now entered into the liturgical season of Eastertide, also known as the Great Fifty Days, the period between Easter and Pentecost. The historical practice was to use this season to explain the mysteries of the faith to those recently added to the faithful by baptism at the Easter Vigil. Their preaching taught things the mind has difficulty comprehending. It is no surprise that the writings of John have become associated with this period. So, this Sunday's Gospel lesson comes from John 20:19-31. This is the story where "doubting Thomas" makes his appearance. We will hear about Thomas' response of faith to the living Christ coming to him unhindered by doubt and fear to

bring peace. Join us Sunday morning for worship, and the cyber coffee hour to follow!

Happening Today

Church School

Our Church School has shifted to an online platform, where our students explore our bible stories through games, videos, readings and prayer together. We have lessons on Sunday mornings at 10 am. For more information, please reach out to Lauren at lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org. Our older congregants are invited to join us by reading stories, sharing games, and just checking in!

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sundays at 10 am via Zoom meeting

We will be studying the book of Genesis. Please join us any Sunday morning that you are available. Contact Jim Warner for Zoom information at jwarneriv@hotmail.com.

Sunday Morning Cyber Coffee Hour at 11 am

Please join others who will gather following morning worship for a "virtual" coffee hour via Zoom! Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 924 416 446, Password: 899935; One tap mobile +16465588656,924416446#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

VIRTUAL Lunch & Learn at the JPWL: *Resilience - Weathering the Storm* TODAY!

Sunday, April 19th, at noon via Zoom

Don't stress out if you're feeling particularly UN-resilient these days. Resilience is not an inborn trait - but it's a simple set of characteristics that can be cultivated. In this session, Rev. Tracy Mehr-Muska, DMin, will detail these characteristics and invite you to consider areas of personal strength as well as areas for growth. She will also provide concrete, proven strategies for building your critical resilience characteristics. Reverend Tracy Mehr-Muska, DMin, is the author of [Weathering the Storm: Simple Strategies for Being Peaceful and Prepared](#), and currently serves as the Minister of Mid and Later Life at Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford. To register, click [HERE](#).

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

Church Updates

Visit our website [here](#) for up to date information on church happenings and closing information.

Contributions were made to the Organ & Carillon Reserve Fund by . .

Pam Hastings & Linda Hastings Rosania in loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. R. Cleveland Hastings;
Richard C. and Lorain Hastings Jr.; Richard C. Hastings, III; Marcia Hastings Peck; and Charles
and Lucy Jaworski



Events

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at noon via Zoom

We are reading Barbara Brown Taylor's [Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others](#). All are welcome to join us! Contact Jennifer deSimas, JPW Library Director for Zoom link at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

Parent Group

The Faith Formation workgroup will host an online parent group on Monday nights at 6 pm. This is a space to express frustrations, share creative ideas, and seek support around parenting during the pandemic. For the log-in credentials, please email Lauren at lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org.

Church School Mid-Week Check-Ins

In an attempt to foster an adaptive sense of community during a time of isolation, we will have "check-in" lessons throughout the week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 am. We've added a third check in time on Wednesdays at 6 pm for our families that cannot make morning meetings. You can use the same link to join these meetings, where students can listen to stories, play games, and talk together as a community, all lead by Lauren.

Food for Thought Book Group

Every other Thursday, at 5:30 pm, starting on April 16th via Zoom

We will discuss our current book, [The Lager Queen of Minnesota](#) by J. Ryan Stradal. "A novel of family, Midwestern values, hard work, fate, and the secrets of making a world-class beer" (Amazon). To join the discussion, contact Jennifer deSimas, JPW Library Director, at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

Spiritual Writing Group

Wednesdays, April 22nd to May 27th, at 10 am via Zoom web-conference

Jennifer deSimas is offering a spiritual writing group. If you find joy and release through writing, join us. If writing brings you closer to understanding and loving God, join us. It doesn't matter if you haven't written in years. If you are yearning for a writing community, you are welcome to join us. Members will hear/read prompts, then spend time responding in writing. Those who want to share are welcome to do so. This group is not for critique or to improve writing skills -- although the latter will happen as you continue. This group is for engaging in writing as a spiritual practice in knowing and hearing the Holy. If interested, please contact Jennifer at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. To register, click [HERE](#).

VIRTUAL JPWL Lunch & Learn: *The Accidental Beekeeper*

Sunday, April 26th, at noon via Zoom

In honor of the 50th Anniversary of the first Earth Day, the JPWL is pleased to present Carla Marina Marchese, the "Accidental Beekeeper." Marchese fell in love with bees 10 years ago during a tour of a neighbor's honeybee hives. Surprised to find that allowing the docile honey bees to crawl across her hands instilled a serene tranquility and comfort, she decided to quit her job and become a beekeeper. She built her own hives, purchased bees, and began to harvest honey. She eventually opened her own business. Today, Red Bee Honey sells artisanal honey and honey-related products to shops and restaurants all over the country. To register, click [HERE](#). Marchese's books and honey products are available at [Red Bee Honey](#).

Call to Special Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, May 3rd, via Zoom at 11:30 am (Zoom link included at a later date)

In light of the continuing impact of the coronavirus pandemic on First Church, including the First Church Academy for Young Children, notice is hereby given that an online Special Congregational Meeting of the members of First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held via Zoom on Sunday, May 3, 2020 following the morning online worship service, with the meeting to start at 11:30 AM to act on the following items of business:

1. To consider and vote on a proposal from the Coordinating Team and the Business Team that the Congregation authorize an additional withdrawal from the General Endowment Funds of First Church to meet the fiscal needs of First Church, including the First Church Academy for Young Children, through the month of June, 2020. [Note: The amount of the anticipated withdrawal may be up to \$200,000 and will depend in part on the success of the application submitted in early April by First Church to the federal Paycheck Protection Program, a component of the federal CARES Act.]
2. In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on April 16, 2020

Charlie Goodwin, Secretary of the Church

VIRTUAL JPWL Lunch & Learn: *Scams -- Learn the Facts*

Sunday, May 3rd, at noon via Zoom

A Zoom-cast of the AARP's "Fraud Watch Network: Con-Artist Playbook," led by a live presenter. Take a look at the psychology behind ID theft, fraud, and scams through actual footage of scammers. Learn ways to protect your information or update your security profile. Followed by time for Q&A. 1 hour. To register, click [HERE](#).

VIRTUAL JPWL Lunch & Learn: *Family Caregivers*

Sunday, May 17th, at noon via Zoom

Caring for a loved one can be one of the most challenging things you'll ever do. Learn the specific tools for navigating and connecting with available services, gain an understanding of care options and costs, and stay informed on the legislative issues impacting seniors and family caregivers. 1 hour. To register, click [HERE](#).

Announcements

Caring Ministry Program

The InReach team has recruited a group of 14 people who are making phone calls to members of our congregation to check in with them during this time apart. These conversations provide much-needed connection for many. We hope that if you or someone you know in the congregation would like to have a "phone buddy," please let Pastor Amie know at amie.giguere@whfirstchurch.org.

Try the new JPWL Curbside Pickup!

Are you running out of things to read? The JPW Library can help! We're starting a curbside pickup service for patrons during the pandemic.

Here's how it works:

- Search our collection online [here](#).
- Email us the title and author of the item(s) at jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org.
- We are also happy to provide book recommendations and basic reference services. Just send your query to the above email address and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.
- Due dates will be approximately one week after we reopen. However, items can also be returned on curbside pickup days.

If you don't have email, you can call the library at 860-232-3893, but please be aware that we are not actually present in the library and are only checking phone messages once per day.

Currently, a pick up time of Monday afternoons from about 4:30 to 5:30 pm is planned, but we will adjust this as necessary. Just drive up to the rotunda entrance and the materials will be brought to your car. We can place them in your trunk or through an open car window.

Stay safe and happy reading!

Dear Members & Friends of First Church,

With the lights off and the heat turned low, it may seem that little is happening at church - nothing could be farther from the truth.

Sunday worship, Celtic Service and Taize Service are all well "attended" on-line (including non-members who need spiritual support these days). Add Sunday Morning Bible Study and Monday book group, and even more folks joined church activities this week. Lauren Dube is not only doing Sunday programming for the kids but has set up wonderful activity/check in programs mid-week as well. In short, there's a lot going on.

As we are not going to be physically together for some weeks, which for many of us is our "cue" to give, it is important that we stay current in sending our gifts and pledges, whether through the website or via snail mail. Beyond continuing our many ways of "being church", the Outreach Team will be providing our support to the organizations in our community which are more important than ever as so many people face a daunting time even to house and feed their families.

Thanks so much for staying current in your donations and even, if you can, supporting First Church ahead of schedule!

Blessings,

Eleanor Wight & the Stewardship workgroup

Can't make it to church? Give Online!

Making monetary contributions to First Church is quick and easy! Visit our website at <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/donate/give> and click on the blue *Donate Online* button. Click [here](#) and select Give (log in if you know your username and password, but you don't have to sign in to give). Watch this video for detailed instructions on [How to Give](#). Checks can be mailed to the church at 12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107.

Text Alerts

Sign up today to receive [text alerts](#) for quick dissemination of church information, updates and reminders.

How to Sew a Face Mask

A tutorial on how to make your own fabric face mask from common household materials:
<https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-make-face-mask-coronavirus.html?smid=em-share>

April Reach Out: Foodshare

Foodshare is changing what it means to be a food bank. Founded in 1982, Foodshare is the regional food bank serving Connecticut's Hartford and Tolland counties, where 118,000 people struggle with hunger. In partnership with the food industry, donors, community leaders and volunteers, Foodshare works to maximize access to nutritious food and other resources that support food security. With food assistance as their cornerstone, Foodshare will continue this work for as long as there are people in need.

But hunger is bigger than food. Hunger is one piece of a patchwork of social issues and it needs solutions that deal with all sides of the causes and consequences. Collecting and distributing nearly 12 million meals worth of food each year through a network of partner programs gives Foodshare a stark understanding of the everyday realities of food insecurity. Foodshare collaborates with anti-hunger organizations, policy makers and the community to build effective solutions to end hunger. For more information, visit www.foodshare.org, or 860-286-9999. Thank you for your support.

Neighbors in Need

During this uncertain time the two organizations listed below need your help, Monetary donations are greatly needed and will keep you protected from going out in public. You can make donations online for either organization or send a check to the address listed for each. The church has been a strong supporter for both groups and hopes you will also be able to help them serve those in need.

Loaves and Fishes Ministries

Loaves and Fishes runs a food kitchen to supply food to people in need. Due to the COVID-19 they have been forced to close the dining room. To try and make sure that the people who depend upon Loaves and Fishes have food, they have created an alternative means to feed their clients in the meantime. Staff are creating full pantry bags with canned goods with an emphasis on the "ready-to-eat" food so that even those who don't have stoves handy can take advantage of them. These will be handed out every Monday for all who come to our door during the normal lunchtime service hours. On March 16th they handed out over 70 large pantry bags as well as the same number of lunch bags with sandwiches and snacks and drinks. They will do the same thing again every Monday until they can reopen. To donate please go to their website [here](#), or send a check made out to Loaves and Fishes Ministries, 646 Prospect Ave., Hartford, CT 06105.

Town That Cares

The Town That Cares is a special fund administered by the Town of West Hartford Social Services Department. The fund assists residents experiencing a crisis situation including food insecurity. You may wish to indicate in the check memo "West Hartford Food Pantry." To donate please go to their website [here](#). You may also send a check payable to *The Town That Cares* mailed to: West Hartford Social Services, 50 S Main Street, Rm 306, West Hartford, CT 06107

Beware of Email and Online Scams

During this time of sheltering in place, many of us rely on our digital connections. Computer hygiene is very important during this pandemic time. We remind you to be suspicious of all emails during this time, and consider if any email could possibly be a "phishing expedition" (scam). Do not click on embedded links in any email; think twice, pause, and consider if the email is truly from an authentic and trusted source. Scammers are getting very good at replicating major brand logos. Be especially careful of email coming from Erica, check to make sure the email address is erica.avena@whfirstchurch.org, if not, delete immediately. Don't buy any online gift cards if asked to do so by email. Please be very careful digitally, as well as personally.