



Sunday Notes

May 10, 2020



Even as we begin to hear about states re-opening and our own Governor Lamont anticipating how things will unfold here in Connecticut after May 20th... the future remains unclear. As we take our initial, tentative steps into an unknown future, John's Gospel lesson for this Sunday has words of wisdom and good news for us. Be sure to join our virtual worship to hear it!

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 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.

Zoom Instructions

Many of our upcoming events are happening online with the Zoom platform. For **instructions on how to join a Zoom meeting**, click [here](#).

For those hosting meetings, here is information on [Host Controls](#) and [Running a Meeting and Screen Share](#).

Events

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sundays at 10 am via Zoom meeting (not meeting on May 10th)

We will be studying the book of Genesis. Please join us any Sunday morning that you are available. Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 740 403 746, Password: 694795; One tap mobile +16465588656, 740403746#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

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](#). Please 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.

Spiritual Writing Group

Wednesdays, May 13th to May 27th, at 10 am via Zoom

This group is for engaging in writing as a spiritual practice, not for critique or to improve writing skills -- although the latter will happen as you continue. Each week we will read short pieces from diverse authors and genres and respond in writing. Participants are not required to share their work. If you would like to experiment with a new spiritual practice, or if you find joy and release through writing, join us, it doesn't matter if you haven't written in years -- if you yearn for a writing community, you are welcome. If interested, please contact Jennifer at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. To register, click [HERE](#).

Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, May 14th, at 5:30 pm via Zoom

We will discuss our current book [Evvie Drake Starts Over](#) by Linda Holmes. To join the discussion, email Jennifer deSimas, JPW Library Director, at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

JPWL ZOOM-Cast Lunch & Learn: *Family Caregivers*

Sunday, May 17th, at noon via Zoom

This deeper-dive conversation is designed specifically for family caregivers, who are the backbone of our health care system. Support is essential to make sure their loved ones can live safely and independently at home. Caring for a loved one could be one of the hardest things you will 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, includes Q&A. To register, click [HERE](#).

Announcements

Gov Lamont has recommended the use of this website, <https://get.howwefeel.org/share>, to report how we are feeling (it can also be downloaded as an app to your phone). Although Covid testing is essential and currently far below where it should be had the federal response been adequate, symptom reporting may be helpful at the state level in identifying any new "hotspots" that pop up. The reporting is anonymous and easy (even for a retired orthopedic surgeon . . . not known for following directions well). Please consider using it daily. Be safe & healthy, Court Lewis

If you enjoyed the JPW Library's presentation of Marina Marchese's talk on bee-keeping, you will also enjoy her memoir, [Honeybee: Lessons from an Accidental Beekeeper](#). The JPWL has several signed copies of the book available to purchase for \$10. Please contact the library at jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

Virtual communion

We have a brief service of communion available [here](#). You will need to provide your own bread or cracker, and cup (beverage of your choice) to be blessed. Since this is a recorded service, you can make use of it at any time and/or share it with friends and loved ones.

Virtual Photos

Please share photos of you and your family including pets, as you are watching church services on-line. We will use them in Social Media posts and to have for future slide shows and any other church publishing. Send them as jpeg's to Amy Melvin at: amybmelvin@gmail.com.

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.

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

Dear Friends,

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our food drive. Collectively we were able to donate close to 100 full bags of food to the West Hartford Food Pantry. In a week's time, so many of you came out and donated your time, food, and money to support our community. After loading up our minivan over the weekend, we dropped off all of the food at the town hall. The staff were very appreciative of our donation and surprised that it had only taken a week to collect so much. My Mom says "we are very blessed to be a part of a community that is so generous and compassionate." To the right are some pictures from the week.

Thank you for making this food drive a success,
Jackson, Joey, and Jeffrey



JPW Library Now Has Curbside Service!

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 at 5:00 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!

Hello Members & Friends of First Church,

The renewal of Easter season and Spring has arrived in the flowering trees and shrubs around First Church, even though we are not there in the Center to appreciate them! However, as a community of the faithful, sheltering in our places, First Church is also blossoming – Sunday morning online worship and a virtual Zoom coffee-hour providing socializing among many dozens of attendees; Taizé and Celtic worship also online – as well as book groups, bible study, and children's activities Sunday's and weekdays. Additionally, programming from the JPW Library has provided insights into bee keeping and caregiver information and support; plus, additional programs and services – such as curbside book pickup!

As we continue to be physically apart from one another, we know that the work of First Church continues on – most especially at this time of so much need in our communities. Both the Inreach and Outreach teams are at no loss for people, places, and organizations to support. To keep all these "gardens" tended we ask that you continue to stay current in sending your gifts and pledges. Online giving instructions are below, or you can always use the US Postal Service!

Please note, your donation can be designated for a particular fund, such as the Pastor's Discretionary Fund – used by our clergy to provide for the immediate needs of members and friends, or Music & Fine Arts – among other options. Your donation can also be designated as a non-pledge donation which is gratefully used to support the needs of our community presence as well as building and staffing necessities. Thank you so much for whatever way you have, and will continue, to contribute!

Blessings,

Eleanor Wight & the Stewardship workgroup

Online Giving!

Making monetary contributions to First Church is quick and easy! For peace of mind you can even sign up for auto pay! Visit our website at <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/donate/give> and click on the blue Donate Online button. Watch the 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.

Church Updates

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

May Reach Out: Foodshare, Loaves and Fishes Ministries, and Town that Cares

During this uncertain time the three 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.

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.

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