



# Sunday Notes

May 17, 2020



This pandemic is changing our community and our world. How is your perspective changing? Which voices are important to you at this time? I have been grateful for the excellent support and leadership of the United Church of Christ among others. This week we are departing from our previous planning to bring you some special worship elements from the United Church of Christ Council of Conference Ministers. I am particularly pleased to welcome as "virtual guest preachers" our three Bridge Conference Ministers from the Southern New England Conference: The Reverends Kent Siladi, Marilyn Kendrix and Don Remmick, who offer a message in "trialogue" - words of comfort and hope from the perspective of the wider church in this pandemic season. "Things change. God doesn't." Join us!

## **We'd like to see you in (virtual) worship!**

Sunday, May 24th, is Memorial Day Sunday. As a tribute to the veterans who have served and since passed, we would love to include images of veterans of your family members and dear friends whose memory you are marking this year. We will combine your submissions into a video montage to accompany a prayer of thanksgiving for their lives and service.

Three easy steps:

1. Locate a photo of the deceased veteran you want to pay tribute to this year.
2. If it is a physical photo either scan it or take a picture of it with your phone.
3. Send it in an email identifying who is in the picture to [Jim.boratto@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:Jim.boratto@whfirstchurch.org) by Thursday, May 21st at midnight with the subject line Memorial Day Sunday.

We'll "see" you in worship!

Blessings,

Erica

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## **Happening Today**

### **Church School**

Our Church School is available in 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](mailto: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. Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 740 403 746, Password: 694795; One tap mobile +16465588656, 740403746#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

### **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.

### **Taizé Service**

This contemplative service of song, scripture and quiet meditation is a wonderful opportunity for reflection and opening our hearts to the presence of The Holy One. All are welcome. A video of the service will be posted on our website [here](#) on Sunday afternoon.

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

### Today at noon!

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. Presentation is one hour long, and includes Q&A. To register, click [HERE](#).

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## Events

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### Zoom Instructions

Many of our 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](#).

### 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](mailto:jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org).

### Parent Group

The Faith Formation workgroup will host an online parent group on Monday nights at 7:30 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](mailto: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 20th and 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](mailto:jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org). To register, click [HERE](#).

### Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, May 28th, 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](mailto:jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org).

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## Announcements

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### Church Updates

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

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:amie.giguere@whfirstchurch.org).

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

### **JPW Library Now Has Curbside Service!**

Learn more about it [here](#).

### **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.

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

During this uncertain time these three organizations need your help! Monetary donations are greatly needed and will keep you protected from going out in public. You can make donations online for these organizations or send a check to the address listed for each on their website. The church has been a strong supporter for these groups and hopes you will also be able to help them serve those in need. Click here for information on [Foodshare](#), [Loaves and Fishes Ministry](#), and [Town that Cares](#).