



# Sunday Notes

June 28, 2020



## Looking towards Sunday:

This Sunday is designated Open and Affirming Sunday according to the UCC calendar. By way of a sermon, I have asked several church leaders to help me to reflect on the history, the current moment, and the future of LGBTQ+ engagement at First Church. This is called "a dialogue sermon" or a "holy conversation." We usually say that all are welcome to join us for worship... and it's meant sincerely. All are welcome. Jesus said in Matthew 10:40 "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me..." My sermon title is "Holy Welcome" -- there's a lot to the act of welcome, you learn who they are, and in learning about them, they may change you. Who are you welcoming? Who will you permit to welcome you?



**The question for the cyber coffee time at 11 am will be:** How have you been impacted by the LGBTQ+ community? Join us wherever you are on this summer Sunday! Yes, indeed, all are welcome...

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## Happening Today

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### 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!

### Summer Bible Study

Sundays at 10 am via Zoom meeting

You are invited to join the Bible Study group as they finish their exploration of the book of Genesis on July 12th and begin reading Exodus on July 19th. Led by Jim Warner. For more information, please contact Jennifer deSimas at 860-232-3893. 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.

### Virtual Coffee Hour

Please join others who will gather following morning worship for a "virtual" coffee hour via Zoom at 11 am! Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 924 416 446, Password: 899935; One tap mobile +16465588656,924416446#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

### Faith on Film: [Just Mercy](#), Today at 12:30!

The JPWL invites you a Zoom discussion of "[Just Mercy](#)" (rated PG-13) with your church community. Warner Brothers is offering the film for **free through the month of June**. Here's what to do:

- Watch *Just Mercy* for free from your cable provider, YouTube, and other platforms ([more info here](#)) by June 28.
- Join the Zoom discussion Sunday, June 28 at 12:30 p.m. Register [here](#) for the Zoom link.

*"Just Mercy" (2019) is a legal drama directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, starring Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx, that tells the true story of Walter McMillian, who, with the help of young defense attorney Bryan Stevenson, appeals his murder conviction. The film is based on Stevenson's award-winning memoir, [Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption](#).*

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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](#).

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

## 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. 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.

## (G)race Speaks

Wednesdays July 1st, 15th, and 29th at 3:30 pm

Let's do some safe travelling together this summer - virtually! The pandemic has created a new opportunity for us to visit other churches and hear other voices. We're able to get a glimpse of what is happening in communities beyond West Hartford and hear how people of faith are thinking about their circumstances. In "(G)race Speaks," we are pausing in this moment to visit and listen in to voices we would otherwise not be hearing. Erica Avena and Jennifer deSimas will put together a guided trip and invite you to join the journey. All you need to do, at your leisure, is to visit our chosen destination and then join the Zoom gathering the following Wednesday for afternoon tea at 3:30. Sign up for the discussion [HERE](#).

We will begin by visiting Senior Pastor, The Rev. Dr Otis Moss III at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Moss built his ministry on community advancement and social justice activism. We will listen to his sermon "The Cross and the Lynching Tree: A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery." You may watch the video [here](#).

## First Church READS

Monday evenings, July 6th - August 10th, from 6:30 to 8 pm via Zoom

After watching Black Lives Matter rallies and speeches on TV you may be asking "What can I do? Where do we start?" Here's one answer: the JPW Library invites you to a six-week book study of Ijeoma Oluo's [So You Want to Talk About Race](#). The book is an "offers straightforward clarity that readers of all races need to contribute to the dismantling of the racial divide" so they can move beyond talk and into action. The JPWL has the books, and they are free to use (or purchase one for \$10). They are available via JPW Library pick-up. To join this group, please [register here](#).

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## Announcements

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### Drive-By, Drop off Food Collection this Summer at First Church

June 23rd & 27th, July 28th & August 1st, August 25th and 29th, September 22nd and 26th, 10 am to 12 pm

On the 4th Tuesday and Saturday of the summer months & including September, volunteers will be at the Rotunda Entrance parking lot to collect your donations for the West Hartford Food Pantry and Loaves and Fishes Meals to Go. The need is still great; the West Hartford Food Pantry has been distributing twice as many food bags as the previous year. With the cancellation of its soup kitchen, Loaves and Fishes distributes Meals to Go to its clients on a weekly basis. [The list of items needed is on the flyer - download flyer to post at home](#). You are encouraged to stop by the church any of the 8 times this summer when volunteers will be at the church to receive the items. If you are unable to come to the church, but want to contribute, please call Jenny Clark at 860-402-4851 or Dottie Stone 860-521-0554. Thank you.

-The Outreach Team.

**The JPWL staff** is here to answer your Library needs. Contact us with questions or requests:

by Phone: 860-232-3893 (starting in July, a staff member will be working at the library every weekday)

by Email: [jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org)

### Curbside Service at the JPWL!

- [Search the JPWL Catalog](#)
- Contact us via phone or email (above) and let us know what you would like to borrow
- We will provide book recommendations or reference help, if needed
- We will contact you to set a date and time for curbside pick-up
- Books may be borrowed for three weeks. Renew or return your book (at the curb) at that time.
- To renew books online, click on "my account" in the upper right corner on the [JPWL Catalog](#) page and follow the prompts.
- No library card? No problem! We will issue you one - give us a call.

### Text Alerts

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

## June Reach Out

[Foodshare](#), [Loaves and Fishes Ministry](#), and [Town that Cares](#) continue to need your help. Monetary donations are greatly needed. You can make donations online for these organizations or send a check to the address listed for each on their websites. The church has been a strong supporter for these groups and hopes you will also be able to help them serve those in need.

## July GHIAA Meeting

In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, people of faith and conscience seek to take action. GHIAA (of which First Church is a founding member) is an organization founded on eradicating systemic racism through actions.

On June 12, 2020, GHIAA's Clergy Caucus supported Hartford residents in their demand of Hartford's Mayor, Deputy Chief of Police, and the President of the Hartford Police Union to reinstate the Civilian Police Review Board and to make the process of filing complaints against police transparent and responsive. You can find [a full reporting](#) of this action in the June 12, 2020 *Hartford Courant*.

Over the summer, we encourage you to participate in our J.P. Webster Library's **First Church READS** [book discussion group](#), and **(G)race Speaks**, a traveling sermon series led by Interim Senior Pastor Erica Avena. We are also exploring racial justice training opportunities for the fall.

In addition, your GHIAA Core Group invites you to a one-hour Zoom Meeting from **6:30 to 7:30 pm on Thursday, July 9, 2020** so we can begin together to articulate what it means for us as people of faith to understand and meaningfully confront racial injustice. Please register for this Zoom meeting [here](#) by Wednesday, July 8th. You will receive details on how to join the meeting in response to your RSVP. *We look forward to seeing you!*

## Hello Members & Friends of First Church,

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.

## Have you completed the 2020 census form?

The results of the 2020 Census will help direct billions of dollars of funding for things that our community needs, including health care, emergency response, schools and education programs, and roads and bridges. There's still time to shape the future for our community. You can complete the 2020 Census now online, by phone, or by mail. Visit <https://go.usa.gov/xdKjQ> to complete it today. If you did it already, please encourage others to do it. Thank you.