



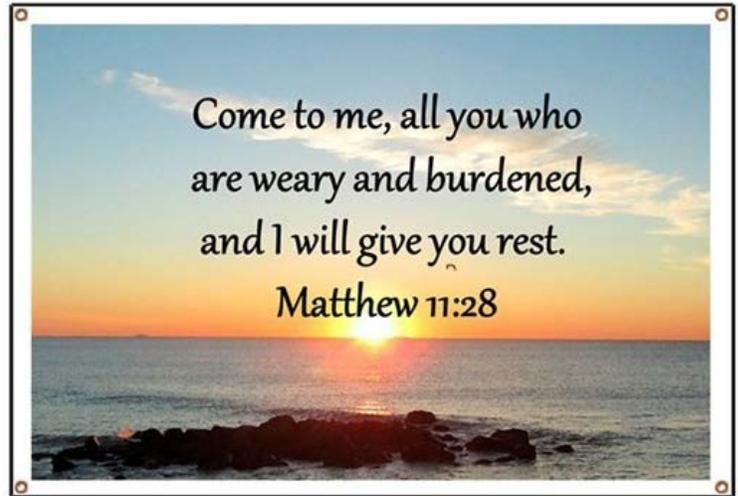
Sunday Notes

July 5, 2020



On this 4th of July weekend, this message of rest from one's burdens is a welcome one. This verse from Matthew's gospel is preceded by some pretty strong words from Jesus which creates a certain tension. We hope you will worship with us virtually to discover what Jesus' message is all about.

Then, you are invited to join our virtual time of coffee and conversation, live on Zoom at 11 am. Of course, you need to bring your own coffee. You are also invited to gather your own communion elements and join us at 11:30 am as we come together to share the Lord's supper. Anything you have in your home will do, and Jesus will do the rest!



Happening Today

Cyber Coffee, Conversation and Communion

Sundays at 11 am via Zoom meeting

Join us for reflections on the Sunday morning worship themes, check-in, and discussion. Make your own coffee or tea and drink it where you are. We will start communion at 11:30 am. Visitors welcome! Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 924 416 446, Password: 899935; One tap mobile +16465588656,924416446#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

Upcoming Events

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](#).

Church School – Not meeting on July 5th

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. 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 – NOT meeting on July 5th

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.

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.

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

Text Alerts

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

First Church READS

Mondays, July 6th - August 10th, at 7 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: Join Jennifer deSimas for a six-week Zoom book study of Ijeoma Oluo's [So You Want to Talk About Race](#). Oluo "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. Pick up your book - they are free to use (or purchase one for \$10) at the JPW Library pick-up Monday afternoons or by appointment. To join this group, please [register here](#).

(G)race Speaks

Wednesdays, July 15th and 29th at 3:30 pm via Zoom

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 pm. Sign up for the discussion [HERE](#).

Our next stop is Riverside Church in New York City to hear Rev. Dr. Jacqueline J. Lewis's sermon, "[In the Matter of Black Lives](#)." Rev. Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan. She is also President and Co-Founder of The Middle Project, which trains ethical leaders for a more just society.

Announcements

The Senior Pastor Search Committee

The search committee was commissioned by the congregation on May 24th, had its first meeting on May 26th and has met weekly through the month of June. All meetings use the Zoom teleconferencing platform during this time of pandemic. The members of the Senior Pastor Search Committee are: Suzanne Carnes (chair), Doug Everts, Seth Holmes, Glen MacLeod, Ryan Mannix, Amy Melvin, Liz Oman, Amber Rottman, and Robert Schunder.

We have focused on getting acquainted and getting organized, taking time to hear each other's' faith journeys and orienting ourselves to the Search and Call Process of the United Church of Christ. We met with our Regional Minister, Tamara Moreland in late June. In the coming months, we will focus on gathering information and reflecting on the three essential questions posed in the Local Church Profile: Who are we? Who is our neighbor? and Who is God Calling us to Become? The Local Church Profile is the document that will represent our congregation to potential candidates. Monthly updates on the work of the Senior Pastor Search Committee will appear in Tidings.

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

July 28th, August 1st, 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 times listed 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 at 860-521-0554. Thank you.

Curbside Service at the JPWL! *It's "a thing" – and lots of folks are using it!*

- [Search the JPWL Catalog](#)
- Contact us via phone or email (below) 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.

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

July Reach Out - Hands On Hartford

Hands On Hartford is a social service nonprofit organization that serves Hartford's neediest residents in the areas of food, housing, and health. Founded in 1969 as Center City Churches, the agency has had a longstanding commitment to providing respectful, comprehensive services with help from volunteers and community partnerships.

Hands on Hartford MANNA Food and Neighborhood Services program provides direct relief to thousands of Hartford neighbors each month. Through Community Meals, Community Pantry and the Backpack Nutrition Program for children, they provide meals and groceries to individuals and families facing food insecurity. MANNA also provides vital support through community connections, referrals, security deposit & utility assistance, basic health screening, nutrition education and employment & education expense assistance. For more information or to donate: info@handsonhartford.org or call 860-728-3201. Thank you for your support.

July GHIAA Meeting – Please join us!

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.

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. **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 hope to see you there!***

Other GHIAA Updates: 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.

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.