



Sunday Notes

July 19, 2020



The comet NEOWISE is visible in the night sky right now and for another month or so, but it will not return for another 6,800 years -- a long time! This Sunday we are looking at Romans 8:12-25, scriptures which address the legacy of slavery and the degradation of the environment. Issues we live with today, in new ways certainly, but we struggle with all over again. In his letter to the Romans, Paul encourages us to live in hope. What shape is your hope taking? How do you maintain hope even in the midst of futility? How can we encourage one another? Join us this week in worship as we are encouraged to hope, for the long haul!



Erica

Next Sunday, July 26th during the cyber coffee time, we will hear from the Director of First Church Academy for Young Children, Dawne Quinn, about what is happening with their programs and community during these COVID-19 conditions. All are welcome!

Happening Today

Summer Bible Study

Sundays at 10 am via Zoom meeting

You are invited to join the Bible Study group as they begin reading Exodus. Led by Jim Warner, the group meets via Zoom Sunday mornings at 10 am. For more information, please contact Jennifer deSimas at 860-232-3893.

Cyber Coffee and Conversation

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. 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 and Mid-Week Check-Ins

We will take a break the remainder of July and resume again on Tuesday, August 4th at 10 am.

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

Text Alerts

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

Outdoor Carillon Concert Series

Thursday evenings in July (weather permitting) from 6 to 7 pm on the Front Lawn

Bring a chair or blanket AND your own refreshments to the lawn of the church. We ask family groups to space out 6 feet apart to practice social distancing. Our concert lineup: 7/23 - Paul Butler, 7/30 - Jon Lehrer.

First Church READS

Mondays through 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

Wednesday, July 29th, at 3:30 pm via Zoom

We've created some great memories Zoom-travelling together this summer. The pandemic has created this new opportunity for us to "visit" other churches and hear other voices, and through "(G)race Speaks" we've gotten a glimpse of what is happening in communities beyond West Hartford and we've heard how people of faith are thinking about their circumstances. Our final destination is Wednesday, July 29: Goldsboro, North Carolina. We're visiting the Rev. Dr. William Barber II at Greenleaf Christian Church to hear his Sunday, July 12 sermon: "[Let God Open Your Eyes" Matthew 9:27-31](#)". This worship service is very much in the style of the historically Black church.

Rev. Barber is the president and senior lecturer of [Repairers of the Breach](#). An author, preacher, and professor of public theology and activism, he is the chief architect of the "[Forward Together Moral Movement](#)" and the [Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](#). Watch Rev. Barber's sermon prior to the meeting and join the Zoom gathering Wednesday, July 29th at 3:30 pm. Sign up for the discussion [HERE](#).

Men's Fellowship

Tuesday, July 21st, at 9 am, via Zoom

Join the men of First Church for a time of sharing, lively discussion, and supporting one another and our church. We usually meet each month in the JP Webster Library for coffee and an occasional guest speaker, but because of the pandemic, we will meet via Zoom. For more information or the Zoom link to the July meeting, contact Joseph Tobin at 860-916-1923 or jmtobin@gmail.com.

Sun Is Shining Series

Coming to a Screen Near You in August!

The Sun Is Shining Series in August on Tuesday nights has become a tradition in the last few years. We are happy to announce that it will continue this year, although it will not be held outdoors on the labyrinth. Instead, we will be livestreaming the event from our Facebook page on Tuesday nights at 5 pm. Tentative line up: 8/4 - Ed Fast and Congabop, 8/11 - 1974, 8/18 - Dan Liparini Jazz Group, 8/25 - Still Kicking and the Big City Horns. Please watch for precise details, updates and changes on our website and Facebook pages in August.

Announcements

Covenant to Care

The backpacks are coming...the backpacks are coming! It's hard to believe we are thinking about back-to-school already! This year we need to fill 32 backpacks for our Covenant to Care children. Come to the church on either July 28th or August 1st to pick up your backpack to fill (outside the Rotunda) between 10 am and 12 pm. There will be age/grade appropriate suggestion cards included with each backpack. Backpacks are due back to church (again, outside the Rotunda) on August 22nd. If you are not available on one (or both) of these dates, Janice or Carole will be happy to drop one off to you or pick it up when you have it ready (before the 22nd). Your support is greatly appreciated!! You can reach Janice Carter Hall at 860-305-0940 or Carole Carter at 860-690-1338.

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.

JPWL staff is here to answer your Library needs. One family recently borrowed 28 books, which we were happy to select for them, based on their requests! Contact us with questions or requests by phone at 860-232-3893 (although the building is closed, JPWL staff are at the library every weekday) or by email at 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.

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.