



Sunday Notes

January 17, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

This weekend, the Martin Luther King, Jr holiday weekend, there are protests planned at every state capitol and in Washington DC. Mid-week I am thinking about how we hold together our faith and freedom -- the creative work that is a life of faith. The political volatility in our country right now is matched only by the staggering loss of life due to the uncontrolled pandemic. Psalm 139 invites us into reflection on God's care and attention to what matters. My sermon title is *Re-creating Freedom*.

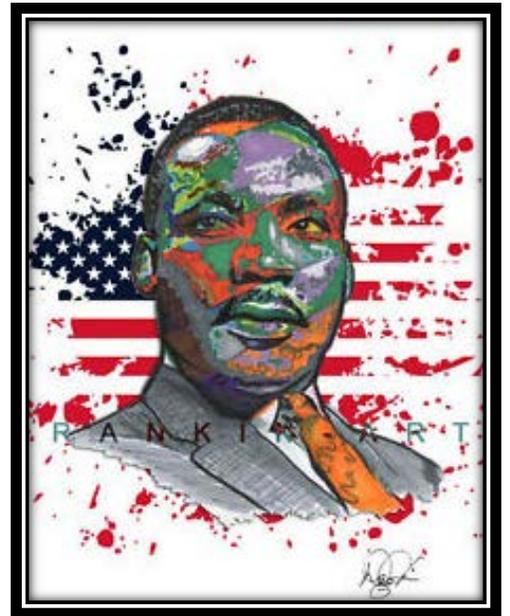
Cyber Coffee Hour this Week

We'll be discussing what are the values that you hold deeply, and how they can be conveyed to the next generations. Join us!

Living in Spirit Lecture with Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr.

Sunday, January 17th, at 5 pm via Zoom

The JPW Library is honored to announce that our 2021 *Living in Spirit* lecture is Civil Rights Activist Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. Dr. LaFayette, Chairman of both the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth, & Reconciliation, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was a colleague and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King. LaFayette and his friend, John Lewis, were among the first Freedom Riders. He will be interviewed by Adrienne Billings-Smith, founder of the Concerned Parents of Color of West Hartford. [Please register here for the webinar.](#)



The John P. Webster Library will be closed on Monday, January 18th, in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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

The church school will continue meeting on Sundays at 10 am. Our Church School lessons will continue with special "worship-at-home" opportunities for our families! Please reach out to Lauren Dube at lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org to receive a link to our virtual classroom.

Cyber Coffee and Conversation

Sundays at 11 am via Zoom

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.

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Monday, January 25th, at 12 pm via Zoom (not meeting on Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 18th)

We will discuss [Thomas Berry: A Biography](#) by Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and Andrew Angyal. "As a cultural historian, Thomas Berry (1914–2009) sought a broader perspective on humanity's relationship to the earth in order to respond to the ecological and social challenges of our times" (Amazon). Led by Minister of Spiritual Life Susan Izard. To join this discussion, contact Jennifer deSimas, JPW Library Director at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

Bible Study

Tuesdays from 6 to 7 pm via Zoom

We are currently reading the Book of Luke. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennifer deSimas at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Click [here](#) to register.

Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, February 4th, at 5:30 pm via Zoom

We are reading [News of the World](#) by Paulette Jiles: "In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction from the author of *Enemy Women* that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust" (Amazon). Books will be available this coming week for pick-up. Click [here](#) to join the discussion.

Let's Listen and Discuss

Sunday, January 31st, during Cyber Coffee Hour

The Interim Transition Team will present an overview of the recently concluded congregational survey results. This will be an opportunity for our entire First Church community to hear a summary of the survey results and begin to engage in discussion about areas where we may want to initiate further review and discussion. We can use information gleaned from the survey to spark conversation about our future. Please plan to participate – all are welcome (even if you missed filling out the survey!)



February Family Program at the JPWL! *Tell Me a Story* Featuring Storyteller Valerie Tutson

Saturday, February 13th, at 4 pm via Zoom

The JPWL has created a new program for fans of story-telling: *Tell Me a Story* makes its debut in February with Valerie Tutson, a storyteller for all ages. Her tales take listeners on dynamic voyages of dance and adventure, leaving them wondering or laughing -- or both! Valerie's repertoire includes stories and songs she learned in her travels to South Africa, her experiences in West Africa, and stories from African American history. On February 13th, Valerie will share some of her favorite creation stories with us. [Register Here](#) to join us!

Announcements

Update from the Search Committee

As we begin the new year, the Senior Pastor Search Committee, along with the Interim Workgroup, has begun to review some of the preliminary results from the congregational survey. This step is important to check for consistency between the feedback from the congregation and the expectations and values expressed in the church profile. The committee also met with our lay leaders to review the Senior Pastor compensation package which will be reflected in the proposed 2021 budget.

The profile will be available for review soon and then sent to the Southern New England Conference of the UCC for validation and posting. The Search Committee will then turn its attention to organizing to receive and review profiles from interested candidates.

With thanks for your continued support and prayers,
Amber, Amy, Doug, Glen, Liz, Robert, Ryan, Seth, and Suzanne

The Stewardship Workgroup will be providing updates about the 2020 Pledge Campaign. At the time of this writing, we have gratefully received 110 pledges. Our goal is to reach the same level of contribution as last year. Overall, in 2019, 130 pledges were received. Even though there wasn't a physical Consecration Sunday this year, pledging can easily be done online by going to our website at whfirstchurch.org/donate/pledge, by clicking the link in the article below, or by mail. We ask our community of faith to support the mission of the Church by giving as generously as possible.

With thanks, The Stewardship Workgroup

Pledge Online!

So far, half of the pledges have been made online! It's quick and easy, just follow this [link](#). If you would prefer to mail your pledge card and haven't received one, please contact Suzanne at suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.

Give Online

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 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.

New Way to Give with Txt2Give!

Text "GIVE" to (860) 222-7870. Choose the fund you would like to donate to and follow the text prompts. It's amazingly fast and simple! View the instructional video [here](#).

Financial Statements

Financial statements will be emailed this week. If you don't have an email listed in MyFirstChurch, look for your giving statement in the mail by the end of January. Go to MyFirstChurch [here](#), log in with your username and password, and follow these instructions:

PRINT GIVING STATEMENTS

1. Give
2. Schedules/History
3. Individual/Family
4. Giving Statement
5. Year to Date
6. Deductible Only
7. Run Report

The screenshot shows the MyFirstChurch website interface. On the left sidebar, the 'Give' button is circled in red and labeled '1'. The main navigation bar has 'SCHEDULES / HISTORY' circled in red and labeled '2'. Below it, the 'Individual' and 'Family' buttons are circled in red and labeled '3'. On the right side, the 'Giving Statement' button is circled in red and labeled '4'. In the 'Tax Deductible' section, the 'Deductible Only' dropdown menu is circled in red and labeled '6'. In the 'Quick Date Range...' dropdown menu, the 'Year to Date' option is circled in red and labeled '5'. At the bottom right, the 'Run Report' button is circled in red and labeled '7'.

You can print your giving statement at any time. You can print it for the current year or for prior years for tax purposes. Select Last Year in step 5 for your 2020 statement. If you need help logging into MyFirstChurch, contact Suzanne at 860-233-6905 x111 or at suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.

The Drive-By Drop-Off Food Drive

Saturday, February 13th, from 10 am to 12 pm at the Rotunda Entrance

Thanks for the great response this past Saturday! Three carloads of needed food items were taken this week to the West Hartford Food Pantry and Loaves and Fishes. The need is great. Donations can be left on Mondays during the JPWL curbside pick-up from 2 to 3 pm. Most needed items are canned fruit & applesauce, soup, tuna & canned meats, rice, baked beans, cold cereal, canned pasta, and other items as well.

January Reach Out – South Park Inn

South Park Inn's Emergency Shelter provides a safe, temporary residence to individuals that are literally homeless. The shelter welcomes individuals from all walks of life and has space to accommodate up to 85 men, women, and children every night. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, never closing their doors. Their emergency shelter, veterans' programs, respite, and supportive housing provide personalized support to each of the men, women and children that enter their doors. South Park Inn offers many services, including nutritious meals, personal hygiene supplies, laundry facilities, and bus passes for transportation. South Park Inn's goal is to provide a safe, temporary place to stay as individuals identify the supports and opportunities that lead to their own, long-term housing solutions. For more information or to donate: www.southparkinn.org. Thank you for your support.

The John P. Webster Library is offering CURBSIDE SERVICE Mondays from 2 to 3 pm, and by appointment. Closed on Monday, January 18th, in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Contact us with questions or requests by phone at 860-232-3893 or by email at jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

[Search the JPWL catalog](#)

Two Heart-felt Thank-you Notes from Loaves & Fishes Board Members

From Beverly Hughes:

Please pass on to your many helpers at First Church the appreciation of their continued support of Loaves and Fishes. The canned goods which you leave for us on Mondays allow us to fill weekly pantry bags which we give to our clients. The contribution of 42 dozen Christmas cookies was a truly wonderful surprise. It was a welcome addition to our holiday meal. The Board of Loaves and Fishes as well as its clients are very grateful for your generosity. Thanks for your work in coordinating this effort.

From Tom Trimble:

What can I say... your ongoing monthly donations really came to us at an ideal time, and your continuing supply of canned goods is so supportive of our clients ongoing needs, but most of all, your 42 dozen homemade Christmas cookies was the best donation EVER to our folks during the Christmas Holiday... you and your "team" are the best!! Thanks SO much for your generosity and caring for those in need. Happy Holidays!

Submit prayer requests [here](#).