



Sunday Notes

January 31, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

What President Joe Biden has described as "the dark winter" of the coronavirus, may also be a season of prayer and renewed creativity. With our regular schedules interrupted, this is a good time for reflection and creative endeavors. I will be preaching on 1 Corinthians 8, which is a part of scripture where Paul pushes the Corinthians to go beyond simple answers to their problems -- to being alive to the creative work of the Holy Spirit. He tells them, "love builds up." My sermon title is "A Creative Epiphany." This is also a time to be living from our hearts. Plan now to join us online for worship!



Cyber Coffee Hour this Week



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!)

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](#).

Submit prayer requests [here](#).

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.

Call to Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, February 7, 2021 via Zoom following worship

Notice is hereby given that a Congregational Meeting for the First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held via Zoom on Sunday, February 7, 2021 at about 11:15 AM following the online worship service to address the following items of business:

1. To approve the minutes of the First Church Budget Meeting held on February 9, 2020.
2. To approve the minutes of the First Church Congregational Meeting held on November 29, 2020 to consider and vote on renaming Goodman Green to Unity Green.
3. To consider and vote on The First Church Annual Operating Budget for calendar year 2021.
4. In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on January 15, 2021

Charlie Goodwin

Secretary of the Church

JPW Library Programs

Curbside Service for the John P. Webster Library: Mondays from 2 to 3 pm, or by appointment. Contact us with questions or requests! By Phone: 860-232-3893. By Email: jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org. [Search our catalog.](#)

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at 12 pm via Zoom

We will discuss [Thomas Berry: A Biography](#) by Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and Andrew Angyal. 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

This week we will be discussing Luke 12:13-18:30: *The Parable of the Rich Fool*. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennifer deSimas at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Food for Thought Book Group

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

We are discussing [News of the World](#) by Paulette Jiles. Click [here](#) to join the discussion.

FUN FEBRUARY FAMILY PROGRAMS 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. Join us as Valerie shares some of her favorite stories with us. [Register Here.](#)

Storyteller Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo, February 20th, at 4 pm via Zoom

Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo is a high-energy storyteller based in San Francisco. Robert layers ancient Asian mythologies, folktales, and Asian urban legends with Asian American sensibilities, precision choreography, and lyrical word-weaving, taking his listeners on a mesmerizing ramble through new places and times.

[Register Here!](#)

Food Explorers, February 27th, at 4:30 pm via Zoom

Join Carla Sauza, Registered Dietitian from [Food Explorers](#), to make Cinnamon Sugar Knots! This yeast-free dough uses Greek yogurt to make a fluffy texture! Note: You'll need the following ingredients ahead of class: butter, sugar, baking powder, brown sugar, cinnamon, vanilla Greek yogurt, flour, salt, and optional vanilla extract. The suggested age for this program is 7+, but younger chefs can do this with an older sibling or parent. Limit: 20. [Register Here!](#)

JPWL OFFERS TWO LENTEN STUDIES IN FEBRUARY:

The Challenge of Easter: A Lenten Series with John Dominic Crossan

The JPW Library is delighted to host Irish-American theologian and former Roman Catholic priest John Dominic Crossan for two special evenings during Lent. Crossan, best known for his association with the [Jesus Seminar](#), will explore with us the historical and metaphorical meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. "Easter is about a physical event and a theological interpretation, that is, about a fact—the Execution of Jesus; and a metaphor—the Resurrection of Jesus. Metaphors are processes of seeing—and, as such, they are not literal but real because, as lived out, they create human reality—good metaphors for good and bad for bad but still and always human reality (Crossan).

Crossan's focus is on the historical Jesus as the benchmark for the entire Christian Bible. "The challenge is this," says Crossan. "If we get the history of the first century right, we will get the theology of the 21st century right (and if not, not). I am never interested in the past as merely ancient history but rather as a contemporary model and challenge." Please join us for this exciting seminar!

Register Here:

[February 18th, at 7 pm: The Execution of Jesus](#)

[February 25th, at 7 pm: The Resurrection of Jesus](#)

Lenten Book Study

Join **Rev. Amie Giguere** for a 7 pm book study Tuesday evenings in February and March (2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30). Using short videos and readings from Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's 2018 book, [Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week](#), we will explore the events of Holy Week and uncover fresh insights into the familiar stories -- specifically addressing the notion of risk-taking as a necessary act in the service of certain ethical and spiritual values. According to Levine, "Jesus' final days were full of risk. Every move he made was filled with danger and the potential for great loss or great reward, risking reputation, rejection, and his very life. The disciples took risks of their own when they left behind their homes and families, or when they anointed him with costly perfume." Levine's wry and inviting style of storytelling and analysis, coupled with her deep understanding of Jewish history and culture, provides a coherent narrative of Holy Week for seekers of all backgrounds. We hope you will be able to join us! Books will be available to check out or purchase (\$10) through the JPW Library's curbside service (Mondays, 2-3 pm) or by appointment. [Click here to register.](#)

Witness Stones for Post-Grads! The West Hartford Witness Stones Project is offering a four-week, town-wide class for adults to study the lives of specific enslaved individuals in colonial West Hartford. "Remember the people who lived in the West Division of Hartford and whose names have been lost to history. The Witness Stones West Hartford Project honors and commemorates their lives. The project has placed 21 stones in the Old Center Cemetery - and there are at least 40 more people to commemorate." For more information, or to join the class, [click here](#). See flyer [here](#).

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 draft is available here.](#) It will be 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

Linda Runs (well, really walks) for Refugees

If you saw Gladys thanking First Church for supporting refugees over the years, you know that she encouraged us to support the Run for Refugees (Jan. 30 - Feb. 14), which not only shows our refugee friends that thousands of people are cheering for them, but raises the funds to enable IRIS to keep on serving them. To chip in whatever you can, go to Linda Bronstein's fundraising page at <https://runsignup.com/irislinda>. Thank you!

The Stewardship Workgroup Update

At the time of this writing, we have gratefully received 118 pledges. Our goal is to reach the same level of contribution as last year. Overall, in 2019, 130 pledges were received. 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!

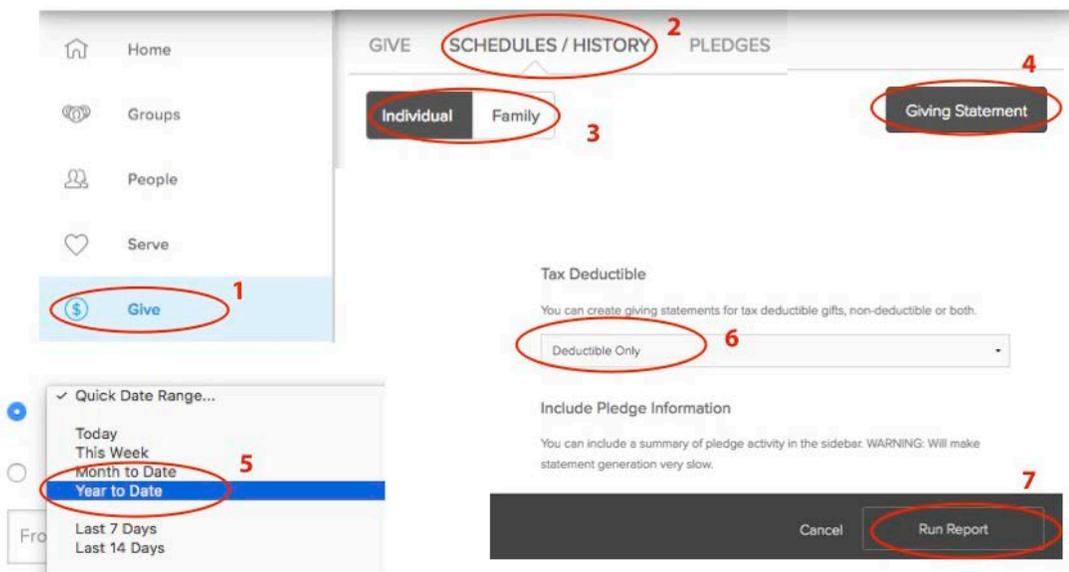
Text "GIVE" to (860) 222-7870. Choose the fund you would like to donate to and follow the text prompts. It's amazingly fast and simple! View the instructional video [here](#).

Financial Statements

Financial statements have been mailed to everyone who had not printed them directly from MyFirstChurch. To print your giving statement, 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



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 homeless. The shelter welcomes individuals from all walks of life and has space to accommodate up to 85 men, women, and children every night. 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.