



Sunday Notes

February 28, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

I am saddened this week that we have surpassed 500,000 Americans who have lost their lives to Covid-19. The full scope of this loss is beyond imaginable, nevertheless we can hold those who are grieving in prayer. The words of Romans 4:18-25 remind us of how Abraham oriented his life on a promise. How will we do that now? I have been thinking about this prayer which encourages us to take the long view, and to orient ourselves to the Spirit's work -- when the world feels upside down:



It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

God's Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,
which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders;
ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future that is not our own. Amen.

--Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, MI, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden, Nov. 1979, adapted

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 Hour

Sunday at 11 am via Zoom

Join us this week for cyber coffee and conversation. We'll be talking about what is bringing you hope. Visitors welcome!

Join by computer [here](#), Meeting ID: 924 416 446, Password: 899935; One tap mobile +16465588656,924416446#; by phone +1 646 558 8656.

Celtic Service

Sunday, February 28th, at 5 pm

Celtic Evening Worship is a candlelit service with beautiful Celtic music, prayer, reflection and Holy Communion. All are welcome at the table. A recording of the service will be available on our website [here](#).

Upcoming Events

2020 Annual Report

Electronic copies of the 2020 Annual Report were emailed this weekend in preparation for the Annual Meeting next Sunday, March 7th. Paper copies of the report will be available for pick up starting on Monday, March 1st, at the JPWL Curbside Service from 2 to 3 pm. You can also pick up a copy at the North Door between the hours of 7:30-9:30 am and 2:30-5:30 pm and an Academy employee will have the reports at the check in station. If you arrive outside those time frames, please ring the doorbell and someone will bring a report out to you. Contact Suzanne if other arrangements need to be made at suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.

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.](#)

Lent Devotional and Calendar

The First Church and JPW Library staff are providing two materials for you to choose from (or use both!) this year to augment your Lenten practices. The first is a wonderful devotional created by the [Presbyterian Mission Agency](#) "The Way to Shalom: A Lenten Journey to Peace and Wholeness" reminds us that "Lent is not a time to wallow in worry about God's wrath...Lent is a time of reflection on how we can live a whole and full life as a child of God." Download [here](#).

The second resource is a 40-day "calendar" of practices and reflections to add or "give up" throughout your Lenten journey. You may download the Lenten Practices calendar [here](#) or our family friendly version [here](#). They are available on our website [here](#), or you may also pick up a printed version of either resource at the JPW Library Curbside Service on Mondays between 2 and 3 pm, or by appointment.

Faith on Film: *Journey of the Universe*

Monday, March 1st, from 12 to 1:30 pm

JPWL Director Jennifer deSimas will show and lead a discussion of the Emmy Award-winning film [Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth, and Human Transformation](#). Our conversation will take place within the Awakening the Spirit book group gathering. This documentary is an "inspiring reflection on the human connection to the Earth and the cosmos. Discover how the universe has evolved over billions of years and how the Earth arose with myriad life forms, including humans. Remember how we belong to the larger Earth community with a profound sense of interdependence and responsibility for the continuity of life. Hear a new story grounded in science, woven with poetic images and philosophical insights, which offers a way forward." Contact Jennifer to watch the film!

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at 12 pm via Zoom

On Monday, March 1st, we will discuss the film [Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth, and Human Transformation](#). See description above. We will finish our discussion of [Thomas Berry: A Biography](#) in early March.

Bible Study

Tuesdays from 6 to 7 pm via Zoom

This week we are discussing Romans 8:1-39 -- Life Through the Spirit. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennifer deSimas at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Lenten Book Study Featuring Amy-Jill Levine – Starts this Tuesday!

Tuesday evenings in March (3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30) at 7 pm via Zoom

Using readings and short videos from Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's [Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week](#), Rev. Amie Giguere, First Church's Acting Associate Pastor, will lead a Lenten book study. Books are available to check out or purchase (\$10) through the JPW Library's curbside service on Mondays from 2 to 3 pm or by appointment. [Click here to register.](#)

Food for Thought Book Group

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

We will discuss [The Island of the Sea Women](#) by Lisa See. Books are available now for pick-up. Please contact the library to join the discussion.

Call to the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Congregation via Zoom

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

1. To consider and vote on the minutes of the Annual Meeting of First Church held on March 8, 2020.
2. To consider and vote on the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Congregation held via Zoom on May 3, 2020 regarding several areas of church life being impacted by the newly emerging COVID-19 outbreak.
4. To consider and vote on a proposal approved by the Business Team and the Coordinating Team for expenditures of up to \$30,000 for video technology to enable live-streaming and up to \$15,000 for audio upgrades.
5. To consider and vote on the proposed slate of Officers, Team Leaders and Team Members for First Church for the coming year,
6. 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 February 14, 2021

Charlie Goodwin, Secretary of First Church

"Day of Tears"

Sunday, March 7th, at 4 pm via Zoom

In early March, 1859 Georgia plantation owner Pierce Butler sold over 450 people to cover his gambling debts, an action that would affect hundreds of lives for generations to come. The day was thereafter known as the "Day of Tears."

Join Director Laurie Maria Cabral and the "Day of Tears" cast for a public, one-time performance of "Day of Tears."

Sponsored by the JPW Library. This is a free community event, open to all. Please be advised that strong language and allusions to violence are present in the performance and may not be suitable for certain audiences, including young children. [Please register here.](#)

Jolly Beggars Concert

Sunday, March 14th, at 3 pm on our YouTube Channel

The Jolly Beggars return to the Arts in the Center series! You may know members of the band from their musical contributions to First Church's monthly Celtic worship services - now come see the full band! The Jolly Beggars have been performing their arrangements of traditional Celtic folk music around the northeast since 2009 and have released four albums together, most recently in November 2018. Get your St. Patrick's week started off right with The Jolly Beggars! The easiest way to find us on YouTube is to go to whfirstchurch.org, and click on the YouTube logo at the top right. Enjoy!

Announcements

Attention Easter Bunnies!

This continues to be a year of firsts! Although we are still meeting virtually, we will be working with our social workers to provide Easter Baskets for our Covenant to Care children who depend on us to brighten and make their Easter Day a happy occasion. Easter Baskets will be available outside the Rotunda on March 6th, from 10 am to 12 pm for church members to pick up and sign out. If this time is not convenient for you, please call Janice Carter Hall (860-305-0940) or Carole Carter (860-690-1338) beginning March 1st, to arrange pick up or drop off of a basket to you. The Covenant to Care Committee will provide the Easter Basket, Easter grass, an age-appropriate suggestion list and a clear cellophane bag to put around the basket for each child.

Easter Baskets are due back no later than March 27th. Feel free to drop them off Mondays outside the rotunda from 2 to 3 pm during the curbside service for the JPW Library, or call/text Janice or Carole for pick-up. For the children and their families, we thank-you very much for making this endeavor successful!

Drive by Drop Off Food Collection

Saturday, March 6th, from 10 am to 12 pm at the Rotunda

This is a change of date and is done to facilitate the pick-up of Covenant to Care Easter Baskets. Drop off food items and pick up your Easter basket. February's contribution filled 4 trunk loads for WH Food Pantry and Loaves and Fishes plus 900 cookies for Valentine's Day! Thank you!

Cardboard Paper Towel Tubes Needed

The Academy is in need of your cardboard paper towel tubes. The preK 3 and preK 4 are in the midst of a dinosaur unit and are constructing an 8 ft. dinosaur skeleton. If you can help our budding paleontologists, tubes can be brought to the North Entrance check in table between 7:30 am-9:00 am or from 2:30 pm -5:30 pm, Monday-Friday. You may also call Dawne Quinn @ 860-232-2106. Thanks!

Update from the Search Committee

After a few adjustments suggested by members of the congregation, the Senior Pastor Search Committee has sent the draft of our church profile to the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ for review and validation. In this case, "validation" will signify that the church is in good standing with the conference, that the information on our ministerial history is complete, and that the financial information is presented thoroughly. Once this process is finalized, the Senior Pastor position at First Church will be posted on the national UCC website. As we enter the next phase of our work, the Search Committee will continue preparations to receive and review profiles from interested candidates. [Click here to see report.](#)

With thanks for your continued support and prayers,
Suzanne Carnes, Doug Evarts, Seth Holmes, Glen MacLeod, Ryan Mannix, Amy Melvin, Liz Oman-Wilfrid, Amber Rottman, and Robert Schunder



4 Ways to Donate

- **Text to Give**
Scan this or text "Give" to
(860) 222-7870
- **In Person**
- **Online**
whfirstchurch.org
- **By Mail**
12 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107

Giving is Easy!

You may have started to see notices and e-mails about our "4 ways to give" campaign. We're spreading the word that among other ways, it's very easy to give gifts of stocks and securities to First Church. For more information on how to give gifts of securities, simply reach out to our appointed, local Financial Advisor Sue Banville at Edward Jones in West Hartford at: 860-521-2119.

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.

February Reach Out: My Sisters' Place

My Sisters' Place mission is committed to ending homelessness by empowering women, families, and others in Greater Hartford to achieve independence and stability in their community by providing housing and supportive services. For more information or to donate: My Sisters' Place, Inc. at sistersplacect.org or call 860-895-6629. Thank you for your support!

Suitcase and Bicycle Donations

Cleaning Out Your Attic or Garage? We Can Help! Remember the Outreach Team this winter if you decide to tackle the clutter in your attic or garage. We will be collecting gently used small suitcases and bicycles on April 10th for two organizations: Ct. Cycling Advancement Program and Ädelbrook. Thank you!

One Great Hour of Sharing Will Support Texas and Other Groups

For over 70 years, OGHs has provided churches of many denominations around the world the opportunity to help our neighbors in need. This special Lenten mission offering supports disaster and refugee/immigration and development throughout the world and the opportunity to share God's love with our neighbors. You can make your contribution through the church website by clicking on the *Giving* tab and selecting on *One Great Hour of Sharing*. Or, Text OGHs to (860)222-7870. The need is great and so is our calling.

Submit prayer requests [here](#).