



Sunday Notes

March 14, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

Grace came down! This image is of the WR Grace Building in Manhattan built in 1974. On this foggy day, it looks like "Grace" has slid down the building to street level -- a joyous message for those who have imagination and eyes to see it. Ephesians 2:8 says: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...* As I think about Sunday's worship centered on this text, I am wondering about how we are identifying what is valuable especially in this season of pandemic and recovery. How are we surprised by the appearance of grace/forgiveness/love?



Turn your clocks forward/Spring forward this Saturday night as Daylight Savings Time begins! And join us at 11 am for cyber coffee and conversation to discuss the themes of this Sunday's worship service.

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

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.

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!

Community wide event! *Interfaith One Year Anniversary Commemoration*

Sunday, March 14th, at 4 pm via Zoom

Please join us as we gather to remember, honor, and reflect on the past year. Our world is forever changed. Let us mark this one-year anniversary together with many faiths but shared hopes. Participants include town officials, local community clergy, and representatives from the Muslim community. We hope you will join us. Advance registration required; limit of 500 participants. [Please register here](#).

Taizé Service

Sunday, March 14th, at 5 pm

This contemplative service of song, scripture and quiet meditation is a wonderful opportunity for reflection and opening our hearts to the presence of The Holy One. All are welcome. You can find a video of our Taize service on our website [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Easter Donations

Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon donations can be made online [here](http://bit.ly/EasterDonations2021) (<http://bit.ly/EasterDonations2021>). This a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. Click [here](#) for a printable form.

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

Lent Devotional and Calendar

The First Church and JPW Library staff are providing a Lenten devotional and a 40-day calendar. They are available on our website [here](#), or you may pick up a printed version of either resource at the JPW Library Curbside Service on Mondays between 2 and 3 pm, or by appointment.

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at 12 pm via Zoom

This week we will begin our discussion of [Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic-And Beyond](#) by Matthew Fox. "Julian of Norwich lived through the dreadful bubonic plague that killed close to 50% of Europeans. Being an anchoress, she 'sheltered in place' and developed a deep wisdom that she shared in her book, *Showings*, which was the first book in English by a woman. A theologian way ahead of her time, Julian develops a feminist understanding of God as mother at the heart of nature's goodness. Fox shares her teachings in this powerful and timely and inspiring book." Led by Susan Izzard, Minister of Spiritual Life. Please contact the library to borrow or purchase (\$10) a book, or to join the discussion: jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

Lenten Book Study

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

Rev. Amie Giguere is leading a Lenten book study using readings and short videos from Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's [Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week](#). Pastor Amie enhances the study with break-out sessions and meditative practices – a truly interactive, virtual conversation! We hope you will join us. Books are available to check out or purchase for \$10 through the JPW Library's curbside service on Mondays from 2 to 3 pm or by appointment. [Click here to register](#).

Bible Study

Wednesdays from 6 to 7 pm via Zoom

This week we are discussing Romans 10:14-11:36 NRSV - *But how are they to call on one in whom*. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennifer deSimas at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Click [here](#) to sign up.

New Music Study Program for Lent! *Between the Notes*

Thursdays, March 18th and 25th, at 7 pm via Zoom

Understanding the stories behind great musical works and how they are constructed can provide a deeper awareness and appreciation of the music that enriches our lives. In *Between the Notes*, Jim Boratko, Director of Worship Arts at First Church, will take us behind the music and explain why certain pieces have such an impact on us. Join him for a deeper understanding of the *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré. Jim will explore the background of the piece, the composer, and the creative elements Fauré employed that makes this work stand out among the greatest sacred choral works of all time. [Register here](#) to join this unique new event!

Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, April 8th, at 5:30 pm via Zoom

We will discuss [The Great Alone](#) by Kristin Hannah. "In this unforgettable portrait of human frailty and resilience, Hannah explores the modern American pioneer and the spirit of a vanishing Alaska. Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed man. He makes an impulsive decision to move his family to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. His daughter Leni, 13, dares to hope that a new land will lead to a better future for her family. Alaska soon seems to be the answer to their prayers, but as winter approaches and darkness descends, Ernt's fragile mental state deteriorates and the family begins to fracture. *The Great Alone* is a daring, beautiful, stay-up-all-night story about love and loss, the fight for survival, and the wildness that lives in both man and nature." Led by JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas. [Click here to register](#).

The Unity Green Work Group is working with a community team to plan a West Hartford Juneteenth celebration June 19-20, 2021. Among many other events being planned for that weekend, a completed mural organized by [CT Murals](#) will be dedicated as part of the MLK Racial Equity Mural Tour in Connecticut. The mural depicts the "messages, images, and symbols that Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for, along with highlighting other local and national Civil Rights leaders. The mural will be an expansive work of art along the south side of the Noah Webster Library located in the heart of Blueback Square." CT Murals is seeking your input as to which persons, quotations, or images throughout West Hartford's history should be considered for inclusion on the mural. For more information, to contribute your ideas, or to donate to the completion of the mural, [explore their web page](#). If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Lewis, Judy Schmitt, or Jennifer deSimas.

Announcements

Attention Easter Bunnies!

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. Please call Janice Carter Hall (860-305-0940) or Carole Carter (860-690-1338) 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!

Update from the Search Committee

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 Give

1. Give by Text: Text *GIVE* to (860) 222-7870. Click [here](#) to watch a demo video
2. Give Online: Visit our website at <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/donate/give>
3. Give by Mail: Mail checks to First Church, 12 S. Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107
4. Give Gifts of Securities: Contact local Financial Advisor Sue Banville at Edward Jones in West Hartford at 860-521-2119.

Pledge 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.

March Reach Out: The Bridge Family Center

The mission of the Bridge is "to foster the courage and strength in children and families to meet life's challenges and build fulfilling lives." Whether in schools, counseling centers, family resource centers, or shelters, children, adults, and families in Greater Hartford can access the support they need, when they need it—and can expect to be met with care, respect, and optimism. The Bridge offers counseling for anxiety, stress, depression, substance abuse, divorce, and other life issues. They provide residential services to homeless youth and teens, parenting support, and social development for children at their centers. For more information or to donate to the Bridge Family Center, go to bridgefamilycenter.org or call 860-521-8035.

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.

Suitcase and Bicycle Donations

Cleaning Out Your Attic or Garage? The Outreach Team will be collecting gently used small suitcases and bicycles on April 10th for two organizations: Ct. Cycling Advancement Program and Ädelbrook. Thank you!

Submit prayer requests [here](#).