



Sunday Notes

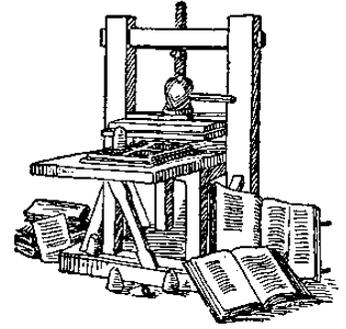
March 21, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

"I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

(Jeremiah 31:33) As we approach the end of Lent and the last months of this pandemic, we are thinking about how upside down this season of pandemic has been; and how the important things have become more obviously valuable. You will not forget what is written on your heart. You know your own truth. God's word is both timeless and timely. It is new like the Spring -- at once perennial and new. Join us in worship this Sunday!



Coming Soon'ish – In-Person and Live Streaming Worship from the Meetinghouse!

Funding was approved at the 3/7/21 Annual Meeting for live streaming audio/visual equipment for the FC sanctuary. We hope the work is completed by mid-May at which time we plan to open the doors of First Church for in-person worship (subject to CT COVID-19 guidelines in place at that time). Addition of the new live streaming capability will allow us to continue the on-line worship services that have become a mainstay of our community throughout the past year. Stay tuned for updates...

WE Want to See YOU In OUR EASTER SERVICE!

The traditional greeting on Easter morning, begins with the words: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

For the second year in a row, we would like to start our online Easter service off the same way--with a video montage of First Church members proclaiming the traditional Easter greeting.

Here's what we need you to do:

Step 1: Put on your best Spring/Easter/bright color clothes, an Easter bonnet, stand next to something that is springy, or go outside and find something in bloom and stand next to it.

Step 2: Record yourself with your smart-phone saying, 'Christ is Risen! Alleluia!' with gusto and a smile. (Important: the recording must be horizontal) Keep your recording to 5 seconds or less.

Step 3: Send it to jim.boratko@whfirstchurch.org with Alleluia! is the subject line by midnight on Thursday, April 1st.

Whole family? Yes! Kids squirming? Great! Got a pet? Include them! Make it fun. We are looking to spread Easter cheer.

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.

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.

Palms

Palm Sunday, March 28th, from 1 to 3 pm

If you would like some palms for Palm Sunday, feel free to pick them up at First Church.

Easter Flower Delivery Volunteers Needed

Palm Sunday, March 28th, from 1 to 3 pm

The InreachTeam is looking for volunteers to help deliver Easter flowers on Palm Sunday. If you are interested in helping, please stop by the church to pick them up, or email Nancy Ball at shoedog1961@gmail.com.

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.

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at 12 pm via Zoom

We will discuss [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 Izard, 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, March 23rd and 30th, 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 12:1-13:14 NRSV - *The New Life in Christ*. 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*

Thursday, March 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! Copies of the score are available to borrow. Please contact the JPW Library for details.

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. A mural organized by [CT Murals](#) will be dedicated that weekend 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.

Holy Week

Palm/Passion Sunday Worship

Sunday, March 28th, online [here](#)

Rev. Susan Izard will be preaching on Mark 11:1-11 and *Following the Way*.

Alfombra Palm Sunday

March 28, 1 pm on the Front Lawn (Rain Date: April 4th)

Decorate the front steps of the Church with painted flowers to make way for Jesus this Palm Sunday. You can pick up your palms, watch the painters and march with us as we enter into Holy Week. Work clothes are encouraged; masks are required. If you are an immunocompromised family and would like a separate time to paint, please reach out to Lauren at Lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org.

Easter Egg Hunt

Starting March 28th at 1 pm all across town

Unfold the stories of holy week with a scavenger hunt challenge. Each day there will be a clue to lead you to a location where you can learn the next part of the Holy Week story. This can be done as a hybrid activity (so bring a smartphone!) or entirely virtual. At the end of the week there will be an "Egg-celent" prize waiting for you! For the first clue and further instructions, register [here!](#)

Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 1st, online [here](#)

Pastor Erica Wimber Avena will lead a Tenebrae and Communion Service online for Maundy Thursday.

Good Friday Prayer Stations

Friday, April 2nd, in the Chapel

Prayer Stations have been designed to provide each participant with an individual, silent experience of a "Walk through Holy Week." Nine prayer stations will be set up in the Chapel. Each will engage with the last week of Jesus' life on earth in a multi-sensory way. The time at each station will depend on each individual, and will take between 30-60 minutes in total. Sign-ups will be available for household units at 30 minute intervals, so there may be a second household unit present with you, but will be distanced in the space, and all will need to wear face masks, enter and exit through the exterior door directly into the chapel to sign in, take temperature and complete the health screening. Sign up for a time [here](#). Please contact Rev. Amie with any questions amie.giguere@whfirstchurch.org.

Good Friday Service Project

Join us on the Front Lawn from 1 to 3 pm on Good Friday to assemble "Seed Bombs." These resurrection-inspired bombs will be filled with compost and native seeds to be thrown and planted in open spaces to encourage and sustain the pollinator population in West Hartford. Work clothes are encouraged; masks are required. There will be other craft projects happening at this time as well. If you are an immunocompromised family and would like a separate time to serve or supplies to do it at home, please reach out to Lauren at Lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 4th, online [here](#)

Pastor Erica Wimber Avena will lead the Easter Sunday Service online, and will be preaching on the *First Steps of the Resurrection*. This will feature an "Alleluia!" video collage from our church friends. To submit a video, reach out to Jim Bortako at Jim.Boratko@whfirstchurch.org.

Announcements

Attention Easter Bunnies!

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 (860-305-0940) or Carole (860-690-1338). 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](#).

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](#).