



# Sunday Notes

March 28, 2021



## Looking Towards Sunday

We gather this Sunday to begin the journey of Holy Week and remember the story of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Please join with us for virtual worship at 10 am and coffee hour at 11 am as we celebrate with palms and Hosanna's. Susan Izard is preaching. All are welcome.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## Easter Egg Hunt Starts Today

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!](#)

## Happening Today from 1 to 3 pm at First Church:

### 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](mailto:Lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org).

### Pick up Palms

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

### Easter Flower Delivery Volunteers Needed!

The Inreach Team is looking for volunteers to help deliver Easter flowers Today. If you are interested in helping, please stop by the church to pick them up, or email Nancy Ball at [shoedog1961@gmail.com](mailto:shoedog1961@gmail.com).

## Celtic Service

Sunday, March 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](#).

## Easter Donations

Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon donations can be made online [here](http://bit.ly/EasterDonations2021) (<http://bit.ly/EasterDonations2021>) until March 31st. This a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. Click [here](#) for a printable form.

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## Upcoming Events

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org).

## Lenten Book Study

Tuesday, March 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 14:1-14:23 NRSV - *Do Not Judge Another*. All are welcome. For more information, contact Jennifer deSimas at [jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org). Click [here](#) to sign up.

## Food for Thought Book Group

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

We will discuss [The Great Alone](#) by Kristin Hannah. Led by JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas. Please contact the library to borrow or purchase a book. [Click here to register](#).

## Outdoor Clean-up Day

Friday, April 23rd, at 9:30 am

In recognition of Earth Day 2021, we're going to spruce up the grounds at First Church. Bring your own lawn rakes, gloves, and tarps, and anything else you think will come in handy! Interested persons may contact Mark Swanson with questions or scheduling at 860-936-8255.

## Witness Stones April Session

The West Hartford Witness Stones Project is offering a free, four-week, town-wide class for adults (18+) to study the lives of specific enslaved individuals in colonial West Hartford. The project has placed 21 stones in the Old Center Cemetery - and there are at least 40 more people to commemorate. The class is taught by Witness Stones Project Directors Dr. Tracey Wilson, Town Historian, and Liz Devine. April sessions will meet Tuesday evenings, April 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th, from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. [Click here](#) for more information. [Click here](#) to join the class.

## The Unity Green Group Would Like to Hear from You!

The First Church Unity Green work group is working with a community team to plan a West Hartford Juneteenth celebration June 19-20, 2021. Among other events, a mural organized by [CT Murals](#) will be dedicated that weekend as well. The Unity Green work group seeks your input as to which persons, quotations, or images from West Hartford history should be considered for inclusion on the mural. The mural will depict the "messages, images, and symbols that Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for," and will also highlight local Civil Rights leaders. It will be located along the south side of the Noah Webster Library. For information, to contribute ideas, or to donate, [explore their web page](#). Please contact Barbara Lewis, Judy Schmitt, or Jennifer deSimas with questions.

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## Holy Week

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### Mundy Thursday Service

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

Pastor Erica Wimber Avena will lead a Tenebrae and Communion Service online for Mundy 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](mailto: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](mailto:Lauren.dube@whfirstchurch.org).

### SNEUCC Good Friday Service

*Crucifixion and Black Death: A Seven Last Words Service of Lament* <https://vimeo.com/526335301>

This service is an adaptation of the multi-movement work "Seven Last Words of the Unarmed" by Atlanta composer Joel Thompson. Thompson's work was first performed in 2015 by the Men's Glee Club at the University of Michigan. Thompson's was inspired by Iranian-American artist Shirin Barghi's #lastwords project, and drew from more than a dozen of Barghi's illustrations containing the dying words of unarmed black men shot and killed by police or other authority figures. Thompson then chose seven statements that aligned most closely with the classical structure of Joseph Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross."

This service maintains the traditional scriptural texts associated with the Seven Last Words and couples each with the dying words of a person who died as a result of police violence. We have substituted some of the quotes from Thompson's work with the words of women and people who have died since the work premiered in 2015.

This service is a production of the justice team at the Southern New England Conference, with participation and support by staff throughout the organization.

### 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](mailto:Jim.Boratko@whfirstchurch.org).

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## Announcements

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

Funding was approved at the March 7th 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...

### Calling all Geeks

Do people think you are a computer nerd? Do you anticipate the opportunity to get back to your gaming console to beat that next level? Do you fill your idle moments by playing games on your phone? Then have we got an opportunity for you!

First Church recently approved the installation of a state-of-the-art video system capable of livestreaming our worship services, as well as recording events such as weddings and performances. The operators of this system will be similar to producers in a master control room in a television studio. You will have the opportunity to manage 6 different cameras from a single console via a joystick controller. Several of the cameras have the ability to pan, tilt, and zoom in for the right shot.

Get in on the ground floor as we put this system together. The vendor installing the system, DNR Laboratories, will be installing the equipment over the next month. Once it is installed, they will be providing training on how to use the equipment. If this sounds like something that is exciting and interesting, let us know so you can be one of the first to learn how to operate this system.

Individuals 18 and older can sign up for this opportunity by emailing [jim.boratko@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jim.boratko@whfirstchurch.org). Individuals between 14 and 17 can sign up with permission from their parents.

### Update from the Search Committee

Good news! The Southern New England Conference (SNEC) has validated our church profile and placed our listing for a Senior Pastor on the national Ministerial Opportunities website. [Click here to see report](#). Interested candidates will be able to contact the SNEC, who will then forward their ministerial profiles to our Search Committee. We will then send our full church profile to the candidates who present the experience, qualifications and qualities that we seek. We are excited to share this news with you, as we enter the next phase of our search process! Please remember that once we begin to interview candidates, we will maintain our commitment to confidentiality for all potential candidates.

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](mailto: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](http://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](#).