



Sunday Notes

May 2, 2021



Looking Towards Sunday

This week's theme for worship is "Abide with Me" from John 15:1-8. We'll reflect on the last "I am" statement from Jesus' final discourse with his disciples: "I am the true vine." Jesus' invitation to abide in him is an invitation to relationship! With that relationship comes love, growth and life itself! Join us for worship, as we spend time abiding in the true vine.



Celebrate Mothers in online worship! Second anniversary version! (We enjoyed seeing your photos so much in 2020 that we're doing it again.)

We would like to offer a special prayer and blessing for mothers. Here is how you can contribute:

Step 1: Choose a vintage photo, or take a new photo of any mother you would like to honor this year.

Step 2: Send it in an email to jim.boratko@whfirstchurch.org with "Mother's Day" as the subject line by midnight on Thursday, May 6th. Identify who is in the photo and your relationship.

Step 3: Watch the service on Sunday, May 9th and give thanks for the work of Mothers near and far.

This is a great opportunity to reveal the faces of the Mothers who have made a difference in our lives and to lift up and encourage mothers of all kinds.

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

During coffee hour today at 11 am we will have the opportunity to meet Hartford Seminary President Joel Lohr, and to hear from Master of Arts in International Peacebuilding "MAP" Program Director Phoebe Milliken, and ask questions." MAP students will each join a local congregation of their own choosing. This helps the student get to know the Greater Hartford area, and helps the congregation learn about the resources of Hartford Seminary. Right now we are raising funds to support these students through their year at Hartford Seminary. Come August we will be welcoming them to campus and helping them get to know the surrounding community.

Hartford Seminary's Masters of Arts in International Peacebuilding is a one-year professional master's degree which develops students' capacity to build vibrant, healthy inter-and-intra-religious relationships. Students will develop interreligious literacy and acquire constructive conflict intervention skills through a combination of service learning, traditional courses, experiential courses, and project-based learning. The MAP student cohort will be in residence at Hartford Seminary for an academic year where they will study the history and theology of the Abrahamic faiths, peace and violence in scripture, religious leadership, project planning, mediation, trauma awareness, and restorative practices. Our accepted student cohort hails from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Germany, Greece, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia and the United States. They are remarkable individuals, and we are privileged to be able to help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to help their home communities.

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

Awakening the Spirit Book Group

Mondays at 12 pm via Zoom

We are starting Frederick Buechner's [The Remarkable Ordinary: How to Stop, Look, and Listen to Life](#). The acclaimed theologian reflects on how both art and faith teach us to pay attention to the remarkableness right in front of us, to watch for the greatness in the ordinary, to use our imaginations to see the greatness in others and to love them well. Led by Minister of Spiritual Life Rev. Susan Izard. Please contact the JPW Library to borrow or purchase a book (\$10), or to join the discussion. Curbside service is Mondays from 2 to 3 pm or by appointment.

Bible Study

Tuesdays from 6 to 7 pm via Zoom

We are studying the book of Psalms. Please join us! All are welcome. For more info, contact Jennifer deSimas at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Click [here](#) to sign up.

Food for Thought Book Group

Thursday, May 6th, at 5:30 pm via Zoom

We will discuss Louise Erlich's [The Night Watchman](#). "Based on the extraordinary life of the author's grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington, D.C., this powerful novel explores themes of love and death with lightness and gravity and unfolds with the elegant prose, sly humor, and depth of feeling of a master craftsman." Led by JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas. Join the discussion! Books are available at the JPW Library Mondays from 2 to 3 pm or by appointment: jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org.

Next date for Drive-By Drop-Off Food Program: Saturday, May 15th, 10 am to 2pm in the Church Parking Lot

Celebrate Susan with the Jolly Beggars

On Sunday, May 23rd, from 5 to 6:30 pm on the Labyrinth

Join us for a concert with The Jolly Beggars Celtic band. Please join in listening to great music and celebrating Rev. Susan Izzard's 26-year ministry as a part of First Church staff! There'll be music and socializing (to the extent possible per COVID-19 regulations in place at that time). All are welcome!! Bring your lawn chair and mask! If it rains, we will gather socially distanced in the Meeting House.

Juneteenth Update

June 19-20, 2021

First Church's Unity Green work group has been meeting regularly with a community team to plan West Hartford's Juneteenth celebration. A community picnic, mural unveiling, performances by local artists and students are among the events scheduled. On Sunday, June 20th, Rev. Erica's sermon will reflect on 1812 sermon by Rev. Nathan Perkins, "The National Sins and National Punishment, in the Recently Declared War" and we will hold a special dedication of Unity Green after worship. Please save the date -- join the celebration! Contact Barbara Lewis, Judy Schmitt, or Jennifer deSimas with questions.

Announcements

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.

Seed Library Needs Your Help!

WeHa Grows, the Seed Library located at the JPW Library, is open and offering seeds through the library's curbside services. We also need to restock our seed supply, so when you are out purchasing seeds for your garden, please consider picking up an extra packet for WeHa Grows. And if you'd like to help with seed sorting, repacking, labeling, and storing – a great project for middle or high school students – let us know! We need your help. Please contact Jennifer at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org to find out more.

Update from the Search Committee

The Senior Pastor Search Committee has begun the process of reading and reviewing Ministerial Profiles of candidates who have inquired about the position here at First Church. New profiles continue to arrive, and we expect that this will continue for some time. During this period of discussion and discernment, we ask that you remember that we are bound to confidentiality on all matters relating to the candidates and where we are in our process. Please be patient; our work will take time. When we are ready, we will offer a full report to the congregation.

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

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](#).

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.

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

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. Individuals between 14 and 17 can sign up with permission from their parents.

May Reach Out: Community Partners in Action

Community Partners in Action mission focuses on behavioral change and advocates for criminal justice reform. Their employment, basic needs, reentry, and recovery services work together to reduce recidivism, enhance public safety, and inform policy – all at a fraction of the cost of prison. Statewide, they serve thousands of men, women, and youth each year. Their programs help participants learn to think differently and to make better choices. The programs help participants to address their personal and basic needs as they prepare to become employable, re-engage in their education and stabilize their families. They also grow by giving back to their communities. For more information or to donate: <https://cpa-ct.org/our-work>. Community Partners in Action, 110 Bartholomew Avenue, Suite 3010, Hartford, CT 06106.

Submit prayer requests [here](#)

The Academy Garden Needs Your Help!

This month, our children will be transplanting seedlings that were started in their classrooms. Before we can get these veggies in the ground, our soil needs some help. We've weeded and tilled but definitely need some good soil to add to the plot. If anyone has any bags of planting soil they could donate, we'd be so appreciative. All of our classes have been learning not only about the life-cycle of plants but about the value of having good insects visit our garden like the praying mantis, aphids, and bumblebees. All of us at the Academy have been learning about "The Marigold Effect." A marigold is someone who protects you, helps you thrive, and encourages your growth-similar to what marigolds in a garden do for vegetables and other plants. It is important to recognize the marigolds in our life! We'd like to plant protective marigolds in our garden and would welcome a flat of colorful marigolds! If you have any items you'd like to donate to the First Church Academy Garden, contact Dawne Quinn, Education Director at 860-232-2106. Thank you for helping us continue to bloom!