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first church

WEST HARTFORD

TIDINGS

NOV. 2021 • NEWSLETTER • WWW.WHFIRSTCHURCH.ORG • 12 SOUTH MAIN STREET, WEST HARTFORD, CT • 860-233-9605



Resilience and Gratitude



Resilience is the theme for our season of generosity, also known as our stewardship campaign. One of the secrets of resilience is gratitude. In fact, I think that gratitude is a powerful antidote to difficult life circumstances. I recently came across a sermon "Gratitude – the Secret of Life" preached Sunday, November 20, 1904 at St. Nicolai's Church in Strasbourg, France by humanitarian and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. Albert Schweitzer. On that day 117 years ago, Dr. Schweitzer said, "The greatest thing is to give thanks for everything." Another excerpt: "Those who thank God much are the truly wealthy. ..." And: "To pray means to first give thanks."

More than a century later, Anne Lamott wrote my favorite book about prayer: *Help, Thanks, Wow*. In it she writes, "Thanks' is the short form of the original prayer I used to say in gratitude for any unexpected grace in my life, 'Thankyouthankyouthankyou.' As I grew spiritually, the prayer became the more formal 'thank you,' and now, from the wrinkly peaks of maturity, it is simply 'Thanks.'" Another excerpt, "Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into be-

havior. It almost always makes you willing to be of service, which is where the joy resides. It means you are willing to stop being such a jerk. When you are aware of all that has been given to you, in your lifetime and in the past few days, it is hard not to be humbled, and pleased to give back."

Both Schweitzer and Lamott speak of gratitude, or giving thanks, as a form of prayer. They also each speak of how being thankful, even in the midst of challenge and difficulty, has the power to transform our attitude and actions! There is always something for which to be grateful, and it is a spiritual practice.

I was challenged some time ago to practice gratitude intentionally throughout the day. I set the alarm on my phone to sound 5 times each day. When I hear it, I pause and name something for which I'm grateful in that moment. It really has been a game changer in my life. I invite you to join me in practicing gratitude this month, and hope that the practice will continue beyond Nov. 25.

Gratefully yours,

Amie Rev. Amie Giguere, Acting Associate Pastor

Worship in the Meeting House with us live (or live-stream) at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Watch on YouTube anytime (see instructions, p. 7)

<p>November 7 <i>Consecration Sunday:</i> Michael Newheart preaching "The Widow's Mite" (Mark 12:38-44)</p>	<p>November 14 Amie Giguere preaching "Provoke Love and Good Deeds" (Mark 13:1-8)</p>	<p>November 21 <i>Reign of Christ, Thanksgiving Sunday:</i> Michael Newheart preaching "A Wise Reign" (John 18:33-37)</p>	<p>November 28 <i>First Sunday of Advent:</i> Michael Newheart preaching "Sign of Things to Come" (Luke 21:25-36)</p>
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Church Family News

■ Dylan Ryder White was born October 19, to Michael and his wife, Rachael White. Grandparents Ralph and Joanne White are very happy to welcome her to the world!

■ Former First Church senior pastor **The Rev. Sidney P. Lovett** died on October 5, 2021 at age 93. Rev. Lovett served as senior pastor from 1976 to 1986. We've learned the celebration of his life will take place on Sunday, November 21, 2021 at 2 p.m. in Plymouth, NH at The Barn on the Pemi, 341 Daniel Webster Hwy. (Portrait of Rev. Lovett is part of a collection managed by the First Church Archives group.)



■ Our thoughts and prayers are with **Rayda Bouma** and **Eleanor Wight** on the passing of Rayda's sister **Esther Nawyn** on October 11, 2021.

■ You may submit your prayer requests to our pastors online at any time: http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request

If you have an announcement to share, please call the office at 860-233-9605, x111.



DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST CHURCH,

We chose the theme of **RESILIENCE** to characterize this year's Season of Giving. This term has a few meanings. Using Webster's dictionary, we embrace the definition as the "ability to bounce back, capacity to recover, adapting in the face of adversity..."

WHY DID WE CHOOSE THIS THEME?

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all of our lives. We have suffered a variety of losses, including the loss of loved ones and friends. The pandemic continues on and has changed our way of life: work, play, family, school, and of course, church.

Back in March 2020, we quickly knew the balance of the year was going to be tough. However, with the roll-out of vaccines late that year, we felt optimistic going into 2021. The year 2021 has continued to bring challenges along with starts and stops. But we still have optimism and resilience. We will get through this!

WE NOW ASK YOU TO CONSIDER YOUR PLEDGE FOR NEXT YEAR.

As we await the call of a new settled senior pastor we need to show we can do this, and show our **RESILIENCE!**

During worship in October, we heard members tell us what the church means to them. Spoken, or not, we all have our testimonials. They may be private and personal but we ask that you consider those deeply as you make your pledge. The work of the church relies on the generous financial contributions of our members and friends.

CONSECRATION SUNDAY: NOV. 7

By now you should have received a brochure in the mail with a pledge card. Three ways to pledge:

- Be present on Sunday, November 7th for Consecration Sunday
- Make your pledge online www.whfirstchurch.org
- Mail in your pledge card

However you manage to make your pledge this year, we thank you for doing so! Your generosity sustains the good work of our church and its congregants.

With gratitude on behalf of the Business Team,
Jeff Mitchell and Dave Simpson



The West Hartford Houses of Worship Tour

Sunday, November 14, 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.

First Church is honored to be a part of the 2021 Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society's annual house tour. Six sites will be open to the public for a curated tour that includes architectural features of the buildings and the history of the buildings and congregations. Advance tickets are \$30; \$25 for museum members. Tickets will be available for purchase the day of the event for \$35 at First Church and at St. John's Episcopal Church.

Get more information and tickets here:
<https://bit.ly/WHhousesofworshiptour>

"From the Moderator" will be back!

Our "From the Moderator" column will return next month. Our condolences are with Eleanor and Rayda on the passing of Rayda's sister Esther.

DUE DATE for TIDINGS: The next deadline is **NOVEMBER 14th**, for the **DECEMBER** issue. Please send items to Joy Taylor: joy.taylor@whfirstchurch.org
DUE DATES for SUNDAY NOTES & eNEWS: Submissions are due each Tuesday by noon to Suzanne: suzanne.nardi@whfirstchurch.org.



Introducing the Worship Technology Workgroup

The Worship Technology Workgroup, a new workgroup under the Spirit Team, is charged with envisioning solutions, researching technology and articulating proposals that will enhance the worship experiences. This group will create a forward-looking vision of how worship will be planned, staged and executed for both in person and online participants. Workgroup members will be tasked with such issues as what the role of video projection is in our worship; how we can make worship more interactive with technology; how can we be more interactive with livestream participants; how can we leverage text messaging and other communication platforms; as well as other issues that may arise.

Two of the tasks that will be addressed initially will be 1) to visit other churches to see how they are using technology for worship, and 2) to address the placement of the screen currently being uti-



Kelly Munroe, Ryan Mannix, Terry Schmitt, Jessica Berube, Beverli Christensen, Paul Truebig.

lized for presentations and information.

Members of the Workgroup include Jessica Berube, Beverli Christensen, Court Lewis, Ryan Mannix, Kelly Munroe, Liz Oman-Wilfrid, Terry Schmitt, and Paul Truebig with Jim Boratko and Jennifer deSimas as advisors. If you have any questions, please see one of us. We are looking forward to enhancing our worship for all who participate whether in person or online.

Trombone Choir Returns for Thanksgiving Sunday

It's been a long while since the Trombone Choir played for one of our services. Due to the pandemic, this group has been only able to convene virtually. But that will change for this Thanksgiving Service on November 21.

The trombone was one of the earliest instruments used in Christian worship. Not only did they play in the range of today's music, but they had instruments capable of playing in the trumpet range. So it is with joy that we can bring them back as part of our service.

We will need to have them play in a different configuration from what we are familiar with to accommodate COVID restrictions, and



they will need to use a cloth bell cover to prohibit the projection of aerosols from playing, but we will enjoy the sound that they can produce.

The Trombone Choir, 12 trombonists from across the area, will be featured in several pieces during the service and accompany us on the hymns. Be sure to join us in worship on November 21!

First Church Knitting Group Changes its Name to Creative Crafters

In February 2019 the First Church knitting group was started with the intention of bringing individuals together to knit or crochet Twiddlemuffs for dementia residents of local memory care facilities. During this period, we have donated many Twiddlemuffs, lap blankets, shawls, bed quilts, hats, mittens, and scarfs. We want to continue with these projects, but also incorporate other craft projects that will fulfill church and community needs. We meet every Friday in the church Youth Room from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Please come join us any time. Feel free to call or email Nancy Ball with any questions: 860-232-5036, or shoedog1961@gmail.com

Search Committee is Active!

October was an active month for the Senior Pastor Search Committee. We met several times to discuss new ministerial profiles, make decisions and conduct interviews, including site visits. Our work together has been energizing and hopeful.

We continue in our discernment on behalf of the congregation and will provide monthly updates on our progress. We will be able to share more details with you once we have concluded our work. Thank you, as always, for your continued patience and trust.

Amber Rottman, Amy Melvin, Glen MacLeod, Liz Oman-Wilfrid, Ryan Mannix, Robert Schunder, and Suzanne Carnes, chairperson

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Rev. Dr. Michael W. Newheart, Bridge Pastor

Rev. Amie Stuart Giguere, Acting Associate Pastor

James Boratko, Director of Music Arts

Lauren Dube, Student Minister for Children and Family Ministries

Dawne Quinn, FCAFYC Director

Suzanne Nardi, Office Manager

Lisa Reed, Business Manager

Jennifer deSimas, JPWL Director

Church Office: 860-233-9605 • Fax: 860-232-8183



J.P. Webster Library: 860-232-3893

First Church Academy for Young Children: 860-232-2106

12 South Main St., West Hartford, CT 06107 • www.whfirstchurch.org



Wreaths will be donated in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one. The wreaths cost \$25.00 and will be hung on the doors of First Church during the season of Advent. The deadline is **Thursday,**

December 16th.

Please Place Order Online at <https://bit.ly/ChristmasDonations2021>

If paying by check, please fill out this form and make checks payable to First Church with "Wreath" on the memo line.

Given by: _____

Dedication ("in honor/loving memory of..."): _____

Daytime telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Poinsettias

Poinsettias are available for \$18.00 per plant. The deadline for placing orders is **Thursday, December 16th.**

Please Place Order Online at <https://bit.ly/ChristmasDonations2021>

____ This poinsettia will be used to brighten the holiday for another.

____ I/we will take this poinsettia after the 10:00 am service on Dec. 22nd.

____ Delivery available if needed.

If paying by check, please fill out this form and make checks payable to First Church with "Poinsettia" on the memo line.

Given by: _____

Dedication ("in honor/loving memory of..."): _____

Email address: _____



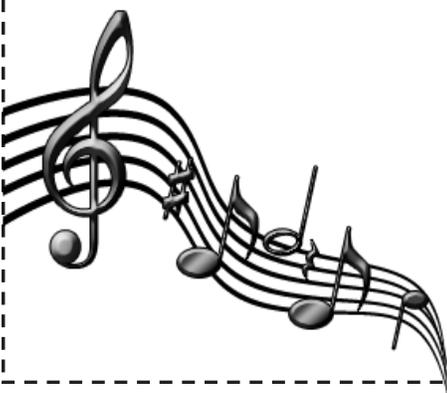
Anyone wishing to donate to the **Organ & Carillon Reserve Fund** may do so by **ordering online at <https://bit.ly/ChristmasDonations2021>**, or by filling out and returning this form to the Church office with your donation. If you wish to have your donation listed in the Sunday bulletin, please make your contribution by **Thursday, December 16th.**

Given by: _____

Dedication ("in honor/loving memory of..."): _____

Daytime telephone: _____

Email Address: _____



Please make checks payable to First Church with "Carillon" on the memo line.

News from the First Church Academy for Young Children

The 2021-2022 program year at the Academy began August 30th and is off to an incredible start! Our fully enrolled program of six classrooms is currently serving infants, toddlers, twos, and preK 3-4. The Academy was blessed to apply for and receive federal Childcare Stabilization Funding which is being used to improve the Academy on multiple levels. The funding came in the form of a one-time grant. This grant is allowing us to make improvements to our facility, enhance teaching through professional development and classroom materials, provide Covid safety equipment and resources to address the mental health of our staff and children working and learning through a pandemic. Our classrooms have never looked better, and our teachers are equipped to provide the high-quality care and teaching that our children deserve. Please reach out if you'd like to see firsthand these improvements. We love to show-off!

Our registration for the 2022-2023 program year will kick off for in-house families on November 1st. On November 16th, we will open registration for any remaining spots to the community at large. At this time, we have over 100 families on our wait-list and are anticipating a very busy registration period.

The Academy has recently embarked on a website upgrade. We were inspired by the recent upgrade to The First Church West Hartford website. We are hopeful that in a few months, we will have a modern, dynamic, website that will provide anyone looking for childcare the important information about the Academy they need!

I've saved the best news for last...during the last 18 months of operation during a pandemic, the Academy has been pursuing their NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) re-accreditation. Our accreditation is up for renewal every 5 years and requires us to submit extensive doc-



umentation as evidence of our best practices. Thanks to the hard work of our staff and Nicole Cook, our NAEYC Coordinator, we submitted 3 portfolios to the national office in Washington DC for review. These portfolios require 80% to pass and ours were approved with an overall portfolio pass rate of 96%! We have received provisional accreditation and look forward to our site visit in 2022.

Virtual Bible Study

Pastor Michael Newheart is leading a virtual Bible study class Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Please register to receive the Zoom link. Participants will reflect on each week's sermon and engage in deeper understanding of the Scripture. <https://bit.ly/FCBibleStudy>

Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, and the God Who Sees PANEL DISCUSSION



Aida Mansoor



Rabbi Andi Fliegel



Rev. Dr. Barbara Headley

November 4, 2021 7 p.m. – Virtual Event

*Three local faith leaders reflect on Abraham's stories:
How do we retell the stories in our own faiths?
What does the Hagar's say to us today?*

Register: https://bit.ly/abraham_event

For more information please call the library (860) 232-3893



12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT • whfirstchurch.org





**JOHN P. WEBSTER
LIBRARY**
Resources for Faith & Life

Contact us!

Jennifer deSimas, Library Director: jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org

Karla Grafton, Assistant Librarian: jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org

General Inquiries: jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org Phone: 860-232-3893

Explore our catalog online! www.jpwebster.biblio.org/eg/opac/home

We are open!
Stop in and see us
We have plenty of new books
fiction, biographies, children's, and
more!
Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

ABRAHAM: Out of One, Many

Through November 16

Mandell JCC, West Hartford

We are very excited to partner with the Mandell Jewish Community Center and others (Hartford International University for Religion & Peace, the Episcopal Diocese, Congregation Beth Israel, and the CT Center for Interreligious Understanding) to bring this extraordinary exhibit to Greater Hartford. *ABRAHAM: Out of One, Many* began in Rome, Italy, and this engagement will be the final stop of its two-year world tour. "Three religions; three artists; one prophet. Each artist has created paintings that focus on specific themes from Abraham's life that can guide our world today in living harmoniously, interpreting these themes for our contemporary context."

A Conversation With Jan Baker

Days for Girls Simsbury

Chapter Coordinator

November 7,

4 p.m. Virtual event



What if you had to miss school or work because you did not have proper menstrual supplies? How many days per year would you lose in education and wages simply because you got your period? What if no one ever taught you about menstruation, or worse: if menstrual taboos and myths made you feel ashamed of your body? This is the situation for more than 500 million women, girls and menstruators worldwide. It's called Period Poverty (Days for Girls website).

Days for Girls "believes in a world where periods are never a problem." The organization's goal is to "advance menstrual equity, health, dignity, and opportunity" worldwide by combining menstrual health solutions and education with social entrepreneurs and volunteers. Please join us as Jan Baker, DFG Simsbury Chapter Coordinator, tells us more about the program. REGISTER HERE:

www.whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/182/responses/new

You are invited to donate 100% cotton quilt fabrics to DFG at the event. The group especially needs red fabrics with bright or dark

colors in florals and geometrics or other designs. Please, no fabrics with patterns of people, animals, or faces; no solid colors; no patterns such as military prints that might be offensive. Please bring your donations to the JPWL by Sunday, November 21.

The Nativity Narratives: A Deeper Look

with Amy-Jill Levine and John Dominic Crossan

Sundays, December 5 and 12, 5 p.m. Virtual events

We are delighted that Dr. Amy-Jill Levine and Dr. John Dominic Crossan will be with us over two Sunday evenings during Advent to discuss the beloved Nativity stories from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The two renowned scholars will share fuller viewpoints and observations as well as anecdotes from their own lives and research.



Dr. Amy-Jill Levine and Dr. John Dominic Crossan

Amy-Jill Levine is Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion & Peace, and University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies Emerita, Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies Emerita, and Professor of New Testament Studies Emerita at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of numerous books, and she is the co-editor of the Jewish Annotated New Testament.

John Dominic Crossan is an Irish-American biblical scholar with two-year post-doctoral diplomas in exegesis from Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute and in archeology from Jerusalem's École Biblique. He has been a mendicant friar and a catholic priest, a Co-Chair of the Jesus Seminar, and a President of the Society of Biblical Literature. His focus, whether scholarly or popular, whether in books, videos, or lectures, is on the historical Jesus as the norm and criterion for the entire Christian Bible. Crossan's method is to situate biblical texts within the reconstructed matrix of their own genre and purpose, their own time and place, and to hear them accurately for then before accepting or rejecting them for now.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/CrossanandLevine>

Let's Deck the Halls! Mini-Festival of Trees For Festive Fun!

The Outreach Team has decided to produce a "mini-festival" of trees! Whether you have donated a decorated tree before, or just thought about it, this is your perfect chance to put your talents to work! This will be different than past festivals in that it is about decorating only (not auctioning the trees).

Trees may be themed, and/or adorned with sparkling decora-

tions. We've identified 12 places around the church building that would be perfect for 4-foot trees. Let's deck the halls together, and decorate the Meeting House too! Join us Saturday, November 27, at 10 a.m. Contact Inreach co-chairs, Nancy Ball and Carol Lenig, or Outreach co-chairs, Ginny Vocelli and Jenny Clark, if you would like to help deck the halls, or decorate a mini-tree.



NEWS FROM THE COVENANT TO CARE TEAM:

It's Mitten Time!

The Annual Hat and Mitten Drive began October 1st and will continue through the end of the year. Marked boxes will be available in the Narthex and outside the auditorium to collect your donations. If you continue to worship from home, we will be happy to pick up your donations from you. Any new or used winter outerwear or clothing in good condition is welcome.

Thanksgiving Collection

Our food collection for Thanksgiving baskets is here! Beginning November 1st, there will be marked buckets in the Narthex for your food donations. We will also be collecting for the Baskets on November 13th from 10-12 in the parking lot outside the Rotunda if you would prefer to drop off your food donations. We would also be happy to pick up donations from you.



- Lastly, we are also collecting \$25 Stop and Shop gift cards.
- If you would like to help, please use the following guide. (Find the first letter of your last name to see the suggested donation):
- A-D: Juice, tea and coffee
- E-H: Gravy and cranberry sauce, Spanish food (ie Goya products)
- I-L: Rice and potatoes
- M-P: Breakfast cereals and juice boxes
- Q-T: Canned fruits and vegetables
- U-Z: Bread and roll mix; stuffing mix.

Please call **Janice** at 860-305-0940 or **Carole** at 860-690-1338 if you have any questions or need us to pick up your contributions.



file photo

Yoga for All Levels

Yoga classes have been continuing on Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 7 and Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 9:15. In addition, we are excited to announce that in person yoga has returned to the church on Tuesdays and Wednesdays! Please contact Nancy Murray at nancy@deepeacect.com for more information.

Are Your Ears Ringing?

Our Whitechapel Handbell Choir is back in full swing! We have a smaller amount of ringers again this year in order to remain socially distant. Did you know that handbell ringing is considered a pretty safe activity? We all have our own assigned bells that we do not share, we wear masks, and we spread out. Plus, we get to make wonderful, melodious music together!

Sound interesting? Come give it a try! We are currently looking for people 12 and older that would like to try their hand at ringing. No experience required! We can teach you everything you need to know! No need to commit to joining the choir either.

The Handbell choir rehearses every Wednesday night in the Meeting House 7:15-8:15 p.m. We typically ring on the second Sunday of every month from September through June.

Feel free to just come to one rehearsal to try it out, or come to a few and then ring with us during a service!

If interested, please email the Handbell Choir Director, Jessica Berube, at jessicaberubesings@gmail.com.

Greystone Church Stained Glass Window Returns

After spending eight weeks in a restoration facility, the Greystone Church stained glass window has returned home! The window, ca. 1882, was rescued from a devastating 1942 fire, and has hung in the John P. Webster Library for many years. Last spring Jennifer noticed it was bending out of its frame, and the lead appeared to be crumbling.

Called a "kite" because of its shape, the window was in much better condition than originally thought, and needed only minor repairs to the lead. The artisans at Stained Glass Resources in Hampden, MA thoroughly cleaned it, and repaired the loose or brittle lead. A new, mahogany frame ensures that our kite is safely supported for display for many years to come.



Brief Instructions for Viewing Livestream Services

On Sunday mornings, a few minutes before 10 a.m., go to our YouTube channel on your computer's usual web browser, or on your smart TV, just find the YouTube app and look for First Church, West Hartford. You should see our video for the current Sunday service first in our content. After the service ends, the video will be available to view again and again!





first church
WEST HARTFORD

12 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107



NOVEMBER REACH OUT:

APK Charities seeks to raise awareness and support for our active, retired, wounded and fallen warriors and their families and to provide financial aid and material assistance to charitable organizations and causes.

It's not too late to join the Virtual APK 5k! Registration will be open until November 6, 2021. From Saturday, October 30 through Saturday, November 6, 2021, people from around CT and across the US will run, walk and ruck with us on their time, at their pace, and in their location. Thank you for your support of the members of our Armed Forces.



For more information or to donate to please visit:
<https://www.apkcharities.org>

Church School in Full Swing!

Church school is in full swing, and we've been meeting on the 4th floor. There are five classrooms, including a new 6th and 7th grade class, and the nursery and preschoolers! Don't worry if you've missed the start of the academic year, you may join any time.

Please register your children for church school at the link (or QR code).

www.whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/171/responses/new

The church school is always looking for new volunteers who are excited to teach our children. If you would like to volunteer, please fill out this form to start the application process:

www.whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/51/responses/new



Crafters at work!
See page 3



Academy
"Scientists!"
See page 5