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Living in Spirit • Committed to Service • Open to All



first church

WEST HARTFORD

TIDINGS

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

Grace and Peace



"Grace to you and peace from God the Creator and Jesus the Messiah"
 (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3, my translation)



Paul opens each of his letters with this greeting, which he adapts from the standard greeting of his day. I offer it to you as a summary of what my service as Bridge Senior Pastor is about.

First, my ministry is about **grace**. I think of the hymn "Amazing Grace:" "'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." Yes, grace will lead us home, home to God, where we belong. Last month we celebrated Homecoming Sunday. We come home to God--whether there is a settled pastor or not, whether we have a bridge pastor, an associate pastor, or merely a "pasture." Grace has brought us to this point and will lead us home.

Second, my ministry is about **peace**. I think of the various aspects of peace: inner peace, peace among people, peace among groups, peace among nations, *peace with God* (which happens to be the title of a 1953 Billy Graham book). I'm thinking about the Master of Arts students in International Peacebuild-

ing who were with us Sunday, Sept 19. I'm reminded of a line by twentieth-century peace activist A. J. Muste: "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." (A 2015 book about Muste is entitled *American Gandhi*.) Peace is the way to prepare for a new chapter in the church's history. Peace is the way to prepare for God's coming in this bridge period. Peace is the way to love God with all your heart and soul and mind – and your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:33). Peace is the way.

Paul often closes his letters with a reference to **grace** and **peace**. For example, at the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul says, "Finally, friends, rejoice. Make things right, listen to me: agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you . . . The grace of the Master Jesus the Messiah, the love of God, and the participation in Spirit be with all of you" (2 Cor 13:11, 13, my translation).

In this bridge period, may we dwell in the grace and peace of God.

Michael

Rev. Dr. Michael Newheart
 Bridge Senior Pastor

Worship in the Meeting House with us live (or livestream) at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Watch on YouTube anytime. (Go to p. 5 for more details).

OCTOBER 3 World Communion Sunday "Enfolding Love" (Mark 10:2-16) Michael Newheart preaching	OCTOBER 10 "What Must I Do?" (Mark 10:17-31) Michael Newheart preaching	OCTOBER 17 "Great Service" (Mark 10:35-45) Amie Giguere preaching	OCTOBER 24 "Take Heart" (Mark 10:46-52) Michael Newheart preaching	OCTOBER 31 Halloween All Ages Worship (see p. 6) "Wherever You Go" (Mark 12:28-34) Lauren Dube preaching
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Save the date: We will dedicate our pledges as a community on Sunday, November 7, 2021.

Church Family News

■ **Nathan Mitchell**, who grew up in this church, was married to **Emily Vincent** on Saturday, September 18, 2021. His parents are **Jeff and Colleen Mitchell**, and siblings are **Abigail Mitchell** and **Olivia Mitchell**. Pastor Emeritus **Rev. Dr. Geordie Campbell** officiated.

■ Daughter of our former Associate Pastor **Elliot Munn** and his wife **Elizabeth Gleich**, **Lydia Gleich Munn** made her entrance into the world on Friday, Sept. 17 at 8:01 p.m. She was 8 lb. 2 oz.

■ 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.

Live Music: Henrique Eisenmann, Oct. 16

The Arts in the Center Series returns with a unique event on Saturday, October 16, at 7 p.m.

This concert will be our first hybrid concert offering; attend either in person in the Meeting House or online via our livestream!

Born in São Paulo, Brazil, **Henrique Eisenmann** has always been intrigued with the idea of translating different musical sonorities to the piano. Eisenmann focuses on unique collaborations with artists from all different fields: dancers, poets, and actors. Among his latest releases, the 2017 album "The Free Poetics of Henrique Eisenmann" (Red Piano Records) has drawn unanimous praise from critics across the world.

Eisenmann has performed in numerous international jazz festivals and has worked with dozens of outstanding musicians such as Gunther Schuller, Luciana Souza, Paul Winter, George Garzone, Matti Caspi and Tom Zé. His doctoral thesis explored the idea of free improvisation as an international phenomenon. Henrique is a faculty member at The Juilliard School (NYC) and the New England Conservatory in Boston. Check out his music at www.henriquepiano.com.

TICKETS:

- To view the concert online: \$10.
- To attend in-person: \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors/students with a valid student ID

Seating for the in-person event is limited to 100 people. Masks and social distancing protocols are required of all attendees. Purchase tickets at www.whfirstchurch.org. Or type in this shortcut: https://bit.ly/Henrique_E_tickets



Tickets:
www.whfirstchurch.org

Hopeful Times/Anxious Times

From the Moderator

As I sit to write this column and look at only the past month here at First Church hopeful and anxious are the two words to describe my mindset, and I suspect these words are true for others, including our staff, congregation, members, and friends.

That's not to say that sometimes I'm joyful, sometimes quietly jubilant, and sometimes sad and sometimes worried. We need be gentle with one another now, try to focus on the positives and look at all we have accomplished and continue to accomplish.

Just in the past month of September – we have welcomed Rev. Dr. Michael Newheart as our Bridge Senior Pastor, we began our new church year with Homecoming Sunday (including ice cream!), we've begun in-person Church School on Sundays, and we welcomed and had an opportunity to share food and conversation with students from Hartford Seminary's Master of Arts in International Peacebuilding program, the choir and handbells are back, in full voice - so many things to celebrate! Additionally, on Sunday, September 26 we will commission Rev. Dr. Newheart as Bridge Senior Pastor and vote on a balanced budget for First Church Academy for Young Children.

For all the wonderful events here at First Church and other joys in our lives we continue to have the COVID pandemic loom over us. What we thought would be an end in sight this year has now been impacted by the surge of the Delta variant. At First Church we are continuing our masking protocols: all staff, visitors, and the congregation on Sunday morning are expected to wear masks, outdoors being an exception. We are especially aware of protecting our children under 12 and those who are immuno-compromised. On Sundays we limit in-person hospitality time to lemonade and cookies in the narthex and encourage people to gather outdoors either on the front steps or the labyrinth. However, the pandemic persists, if not as badly here in Connecticut but still throughout our country and throughout the world.

Along with weather crisis', recovery from the physical and financial impacts of COVID still affect our schools, workplaces, and our church. As we see the close of 2021 ahead, we pray that 2022 will bring healing and hopefulness to all. Until then, I will think of my father – and old-time New Englander and a man of few words. As a child whenever I whined about the "hopelessness" of some chore (usually weeding the garden) he would say:

"Don't look ahead to see how much more there is to do, look back and see how much you've accomplished." For me, those are good words for October 2021.

Faithfully,
-Eleanor Wight, Moderator



DUE DATE for TIDINGS: The next deadline is OCTOBER 14th, for the NOVEMBER 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.

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 sanctuary 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.



Annual Hat and Mitten Drive

NEWS FROM THE COVENANT TO CARE TEAM:

It's Mitten Time!

The Annual Hat and Mitten Drive begins 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. Any new or used winter outerwear or clothing in good condition is welcome.

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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

Search Committee is Planning Site Visits!

During September, the Senior Pastor Search Committee continued with profile reviews, interviews, and reference checks. We plan to add site visits to our activities soon to observe how key candidates lead worship in person.

Now that schools are back in session, we have made slight adjustments to our meeting schedule. One of our members, Robert Schunder, has returned to campus at Bryant University and continues to be connected with us by email and weekly Zoom video conferences.

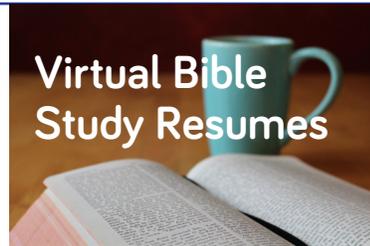
Doug Evarts resigned from our committee in late August. We are grateful to Doug for his valuable contributions to our process over the past 15 months.

We continue in our discernment on behalf of the congregation and will provide regular updates to you on our progress. Thank you for your continued patience and trust.

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

Pastor Michael Newheart will be leading a Bible study this fall on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The class begins on October 19, and will follow the lectionary (a prepared list of Scripture readings / lessons for each

Virtual Bible Study Resumes



Sunday; a lectionary helps to guide our understanding throughout the liturgical year), allowing participants to reflect on the week's sermon and engage in deeper understanding of the history or events surrounding the Biblical passages. We hope you will join us! Register here to receive the Zoom link and updates about the group. <https://bit.ly/FCBibleStudy>



**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!

Here at First Church, we are intentional about creating a place where people feel welcome and affirmed just as they are. We live by the United Church of Christ assertion – *No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here* – which our pastors declare every Sunday morning from the pulpit. We pray that we will live up to this statement and that anyone who walks through the door finds a safe place to explore and live out their faith. A luncheon held in September for a cohort of students pursuing a Master's degree in International Peace Building was a testament to this congregation's open hospitality. The students were received with warm smiles and good food. Plans were made to continue the friendship by assisting the group with transportation and even invitations for Thanksgiving.

This month the John P. Webster Library is offering two unique opportunities to help us reflect on the ideas of diversity and welcome, and to learn more about our sisters and brothers in God's vast family.

ABRAHAM: Out of One, Many

October 5 – November 16

Mandell JCC, West Hartford

We are very excited to partner with the Mandell Jewish Community Center and others (Hartford Seminary, 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."

Author Kaitlin Curtice: Sacredly Created and Wholly Loved

October 21, 7 p.m. Virtual event

As a child, Indigenous storyteller and poet Kaitlin Curtice (Potawatomi Nation) and her family practiced Christianity. As a millennial and a parent, she writes on the intersection of Indigenous spirituality, decolonization within the church, and faith in everyday life.

Curtice's 2020 book, *NATIVE: Identity, Belonging and Rediscovering God*, won the Foreword INDIES 2020 Book of the Year



Award (SILVER Winner for Religion) and the 2021 Midwest Book Award (Silver Winner for Religion/Philosophy). It addresses identity, soul-searching, and being on the never-ending journey of finding ourselves and finding God.

Curtice often explores how reconnecting with her Native identity both informs and challenges her faith. She appeals to her Christian brothers and sisters to lead the way to peace and reconciliation by first acknowledging our deep, ancient connection to the natural world, and to love the planet as we love ourselves. In doing so, she says, we can find sacred peace with all of creation.

We are thrilled to host Curtice on October 21 at 7 p.m. to discuss her book and share her reflections. I hope you will join us. Please REGISTER HERE: https://bit.ly/Kaitlin_talk

A Conversation With Jan Baker

Days for Girls Simsbury
Chapter Coordinator

November 7, 4 p.m. Virtual event (Please note the date change)

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 November Sunday, November 21.



Photo courtesy of The 401EKKA Healing Hands Foundation

Both Book Groups to Read *Native* by Kaitlin Curtice, [see page 5](#)



Food Collection and Thank You!

Drive by Drop off (DBDO!) Food Collection will continue on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Remember your neighbors during your food shopping. Next date: October 9, 10-12. Volunteers from the Outreach Team will be on hand to take your contributions, which will be shared with the West Hartford Food Pantry and Loaves & Fishes' Meals To-Go program. The West Hartford Food Pantry is especially low on SOUP! Also cold cereal, fruit/applesauce, tuna, and canned pasta are needed. Thank you for your generosity.

Donations for Afghanistan Refugees. Thank you for your quick response for the need for donations for refugees from Afghanistan who are being assisted by IRIS (Integrated Refugee Immigration Service). A carload of items was delivered to IRIS the very next week after the call and included a dozen twin set sheets, 15 comforters and blankets, 8 boxes of kitchen trash bags and several large pots and other kitchen items. The collection continued through September. Thank you for your response and wonderful support.



Take a Minute for Feedback

The First Church Communications Team (part of Outreach) is working to update and refine the ways we keep in touch and how we share information. Please help us out by answering the following survey via our own Church Community Builder (CCB).

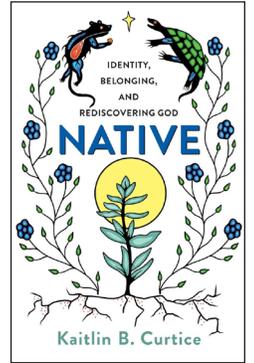
<https://bit.ly/FCCommunicationSurvey>

Thank you!
Amy Melvin, Joy Taylor, and
Jennifer deSimas



Both Book Groups to Read *Native* by Kaitlin Curtice

In October, both Awakening the Spirit and Food for Thought will read *NATIVE: Identity, Belonging and Rediscovering God*, by Kaitlin Curtice, our October 21st speaker. If you have been thinking about joining one of our book groups, this would be an ideal time to give it a try. As a younger voice in the world of Christian memoir, Curtice stands out for her clear, elegant prose. In *Native*, she "draws on her personal journey, poetry, imagery, and stories of the Potawatomi people to address themes at the forefront of today's discussions of faith and culture in a positive and constructive way. She encourages us to embrace our own origins and to share and listen to each other's stories so we can build a more inclusive and diverse future. Each of our stories matters for the church to be truly whole" (indiebound.org). This book is sure to start some engaging conversations about community, faith, and how we live out the Great Commandment.



Awakening the Spirit will continue meeting Mondays at 1 - 2:30 p.m. Food for Thought will meet October 28, 5:30-7 p.m., to discuss the book (please note the date change! Also, no meeting in November). All are welcome to join the conversation with either group.

All meetings will be available virtually for those who wish to "Zoom" in.

Books are available to check out at the JPW Library. This is a FREE program. Please contact Jennifer at jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org for more information.



Yoga Has Gone Hybrid

The classes are Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 9:15 a.m. Participants now have the option to continue on Zoom, or to join in person, in the Chapel. We enjoy connecting with conversation before and after class. The class itself is appropriate for all levels. Contact Nancy Murray at nancy@deepeacect.com or 860-521-8186 to get the links or if you have any questions!

Brief Instructions for Viewing Livestream Services

On Sunday mornings around 10 a.m., go to our YouTube channel (link: First Church, West Hartford - YouTube). You should see our video for this Sunday's service first in our content. While the service is streaming live, you will be able to chat with others. After the service ends, the video will be available to view again!





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WEST HARTFORD

12 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107



OCTOBER REACH OUT:

“Freshplace is an innovative client-choice/fresh food/case management food pantry. Freshplace at Chrysalis Center serves up to 100 families living in the poorest neighborhoods in the North End of Hartford. Freshplace’s mission is to build long-term food security and self-sufficiency by providing individuals with access to fresh and nutritional foods and case management services to address both the immediate need of hunger and the root causes of food insecurity – poverty. After reaching their individualized goals, Freshplace members have a better chance of eliminating hunger in their household and increasing their family’s economic self-sufficiency.”



Freshplace
Nourishing our Community

Freshplace provide at-risk families with fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products in addition to pantry staples. Clients are guided in making selections that accommodate their health, cultural, religious, and familial needs. There are also comprehensive intake and referral services, increasing access to food stamps, health and crisis intervention programs, public assistance, and educational services.

For more information or to donate: Chrysalis Center, Inc. – Freshplace, find them online or mail check to: 255 Homestead Avenue, Hartford, CT 06132. Thank you for your support

Church School in Full Swing!

Church School: After an eighteen month hiatus Church school is back in full swing, and we’ve been meeting on the 4th floor. There are five classrooms ready for a great Church School year, including a new 6th and 7th grade class, and the nursery and preschoolers! Please register your children for church school at the link (or scan the 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 express your interest, so that we can start our screening and training process: www.whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/51/responses/new

Hallelujah Halloween: What happens when Halloween and Sunday morning worship combine? A spooky and fun morning full of treats, games and all ages worship! Join us at 10 a.m. on October 31st in your Halloween costumes for a fun all ages worship followed by games and a costume parade on the front lawn. Afterwards, there will be a trunk-or-treat event that all are welcome to participate in. If you are interested in being a trunk decorator and host, please fill out this form! www.whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/190/responses/new