



Here, Alive & Serving

When a pastor considers accepting a call at a new church, lots of questions go through their mind. Is this where God wants me? Will the church be a good fit? Will my skill sets meet the needs of the congregation? Are they willing to consider new ideas and embrace change? Are they genuinely interested in the church as active participation, or do they see church as a spectator sport? And my biggest question, do they laugh together?



After interviewing with the search committee, I trusted that the answers to these questions would be "yes." The members of the committee had immediately impressed me as thoughtful, faithful, and kind. They also had a refreshing sense of humor. By the end of our interviews, I called a colleague and said, "I think I have fallen in love with these people." My colleague laughed and said, "Be careful. Just because the Search Committee is wonderful, it doesn't mean the rest of the congregation is."

But guess what? You are. You are every bit as wonderful as the Search Committee let me think. I have fallen in love with all of you.

In my first weeks, I have laughed with the knitting ladies, made plans with the staff, shared ideas and dreams with Reverend Amie. I have met with many of you, and we have engaged in long and introspective conversations.

I have begun to wrestle with a few big questions and take assessment of some of your immediate needs.

I know that I am following remarkable and highly effective leaders. Your previous pastor, Geordie Campbell, was an exceptional pastor. Further, this church has a long history of activity as a social justice church and it is a church that says to the community, we are here and alive and serving God.

Although the history of this church is both humbling and inspiring, the future is perhaps even more humbling and inspiring. You and I are called into ministry in an unprecedented time. We are faced with the task of both rebuilding and re-envisioning while at the same time, maintaining cherished pre-Covid traditions and ways of being.

It is my observation that you have admirably met every change and setback from the pandemic with optimism, careful practices, and abiding faith. As your pastor, I want to encourage and empower you to continue to dream big. With God's help, First Church will carry on bringing the Good News to a world desperately in need of good news.

And we will do it together.
Blessings,

Reverend Jane

Senior Pastor Rev. Jane Willan

Worship with us!

Live (or livestream) at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Watch on YouTube anytime.



ABOVE: Coffee and Conversation (with Clergy) takes place most Tuesdays at 10 a.m., Hartford Baking Co. in W.H. Center. PHOTO: AMIE GIGUERE



LEFT: Amy Melvin at the sewing machine, with teacher Jan Baker and Ginny Vocelli watching. More from this Days for Girls "field trip" on page 3. PHOTO: JOY TAYLOR

We Want Selfies & Photos!

Please send photos of yourself at church, in choir practice, making coffee, reading, serving the community, walking the labyrinth... you get the idea. Photos might show up here and/or on social media! Text with your name(s) to Joy: 860-841-6631

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Church Family News

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

■ A joyful word from **Geordie Campbell** our Pastor Emeritus! "Pam and I are over the moon to share the news that **Wilder Charles Campbell** (pictured) was born to **Karen and Meredith Campbell** on February 20th at 1 p.m. in Concord, MA.



■ **Peter C. Grassilli** died on February 23, 2022, after a long battle with cardiac disease. Our prayers are with his wife Nancy. They celebrated their 57th anniversary in November.

■ **Harry Lawrence Ackerman** father of Jennifer deSimas, died on February 25, 2022. Our prayers are with his daughter Jennifer and her family.

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

New Tidings Publication Schedule

As part of a cost savings plan, as well as an awareness of the redundancy and saturation of communications and information via eblasts or eNews, Sunday Notes, social media, etc., we will consolidate a few more issues of Tidings this year for a total of nine issues (down from eleven). Here's an overview of the publication calendar, subject to change:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ January – single issue | ■ September – single issue |
| ■ February – single issue | ■ October – single issue |
| ■ March – single issue | ■ November – single issue |
| ■ April/May – combined issue | ■ December – single issue |
| ■ June/July/August – combined issue | |

DUE DATE for TIDINGS: The next deadline is **MARCH 14th**, for the **COMBINED APRIL/MAY** 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.

YOGA

Join us for Yoga in person or on Zoom. Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 9:15 a.m. Please contact Nancy Murray at 860-280-8083 or nancy@deepeacect.com for more information!

New Director Search!

We're Seeking a New Director of Children and Family Ministries! The search has begun to find someone with an innovative spirit to engage with our children and their families! This is a part-time position, 20-25 hours per week, 48 weeks per year.

Search Committee: Michael Protos (Chair), Barbara Lewis, Ryan Mannix, Colleen Mitchell, Michelle Gara, and Rev. Amie Giguere.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 2nd, at 6:30 p.m.

Let us join together to celebrate Ash Wednesday at Saint Patrick – Saint Anthony Church in Hartford. Following the service, anyone who wishes can join in for a dinner together at Agave Grill.

Save First Church Steeple

You may have heard that our First Church steeple needs repair and perhaps you have been wondering what is happening. The Business Team is on it! The steeple has been inspected and the encouraging news is that the foundational structure is sound. With that said, it is still a



big job. The work needing to be done involves repair of trim and decorative elements prior to painting. Recent drone photos show the damage from the elements. Even from the ground, you can see that the steeple certainly needs some TLC. This will require that scaffolding be erected, likely for several months.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is being sent out to potential contractors, and preliminary and informal estimates for the job indicate that it will cost up to \$400,000. Options for covering the expense include use of existing capital reserve funds, a church-wide fund drive, an appeal to the community perhaps through a Go-Fund-Me crowdfunding type campaign, application for a historic structures grant through the state, and a one-time draw on the endowment. Certainly a combination of two or more of these options will be needed to cover the cost. The good news is we already have interest from people willing to donate to this project.

Our special thanks to the Building & Grounds committee, for their efforts investigating the situation with the steeple and researching potential solutions. We will continue to keep everyone informed.

-Jeff Mitchell & Dave Simpson, Business Team Co-chairs

Call to the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Notice is hereby given that a Congregational Meeting of the First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held as a hybrid meeting in the Meeting House and via Zoom on Sunday, March 13, 2022 starting at approximately 11:15 a.m. This meeting is called to transact the following items of business:

1. To consider and vote on the minutes of the Annual Meeting of First Church held on March 7, 2021.
2. To consider and vote on the proposed slate of Officers, Team Leaders and Team Members for First Church for the coming year
3. In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on February 27, 2022 by Linda Bronstein, Secretary, First Church West Hartford.

Days for Girls Field Trip



Jennifer, Doey, Cathy, Amy, Joy, and Ginny spent a few hours on Saturday February 19, 2022 helping the crew of volunteers at Simsbury United Methodist which hosts a local chapter of **Days For Girls**. The activities included an overview of the organization and



then Amy says "we got to work cutting, ironing, serging edges, sewing, button pressing, and more!"

The national organization of Days for Girls has reached more than 2.4 million girls worldwide with menstrual health solutions and education.

menstrual health solutions and education.

Keep an eye out for monthly opportunities to lend a hand! Next chance to help out is March 26, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



TOP: Jan Baker, Ginny Vocelli, Amy Melvin, Doey Barnett, Cathy Mieczkowski, and Jennifer deSimas. MIDDLE: Doey Barnett at cutting station. BOTTOM: Joy Taylor at snap station.

Lots of Love at The Academy!

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to the Academy's Love Collection of toiletries and other wish list items. We collected a record number of donations this year and South Park Inn was so grateful to receive boxes filled to the brim!

Winter at the Academy means an exploration of snow, ice, and arctic animals. Our kids love playing with ice and snow. When it's too cold for our infants and toddlers to be outside, we just bring the snow right inside to the sensory table! Nobody misses an opportunity to explore. Our classrooms have also been buzzing with activities centered around what it means to be a friend and how we can show love to others. Here are some ideas expressed by our preK 3 children:

What is love?

- Hugging and kissing your mom and dad



- Snuggling
- Giving people things they need
- Sharing
- Switching teams so people won't be alone
- Asking people if they want a lollipop
- Cooking with my family
- Giving people hugs
- Giving people high fives!

So many of you have kindly expressed your concern about how the Academy is doing through the pandemic. While we were not able to completely dodge the Omicron variant of Covid-19, we have remained open and operating successfully. We remain diligent with our mitigation strategies of cleaning, air circulation, and masking. I am fortunate to work with families and a staff who continually support all that I need to do to keep our children safe and healthy!

-Dawne Quinn, FCAFYC Director

Attention all Easter Bunnies!!



Please come to the Auditorium after church starting March 20, 2022 if you would like to take an Easter Basket to fill for one of our Covenant to Care children. Age appropriate suggestions will be included with each basket. If you are still worshipping from home, we are happy to drop one off to you. Baskets will be due by April 10th!

Hope to see you there!

Janice (860-305-0940)

Carole (860-690-1338)

Living in Spirit
Committed to Service
Open to All

first church
WEST HARTFORD

PASTORAL STAFF:

Rev. Jane Willan, Senior Pastor
Rev. Amie Giguere, Acting Assoc. Pastor

WORSHIP STAFF:

James Boratko, Director of Worship Arts
Jessica Berube, Handbell Director

JPW LIBRARY STAFF:

Jennifer deSimas, Library Director
Karla Grafton, Assistant Librarian

FCAFYC* STAFF:

Dawne Quinn, FCAFYC Director

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Lisa Reed, Business Manager
Suzanne Nardi, Office Manager
Mark Swanson, Building Superintendent
Sarah Kopp, Administrative Assistant

Church Office: 860-233-9605

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

FCAFYC*: 860-232-2106

12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107

www.whfirstchurch.org



*First Church Academy for Young Children



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

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! <https://jpwebster.biblio.org/eg/opac/home>

Staff Hours:
 Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Curbside Services
 2 to 3 p.m. on Mondays or
 by appointment.

Did you know...

You can find gently used books year-round at **Lazarus Books**, the JPWL's own used bookstore. Located beneath the narthex (front entrance to the meeting house), Lazarus Books is where used books find new life – and where you can find your next great read! Non-fiction, fiction, children's, and adults' books for \$2 or less. Come take a look! All funds received are donated to Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford.

JPWL Teams Up with Hartford Healthcare for Youth Mental Health

This March and April we're partnering with Hartford Healthcare to present a series of events for parents, caregivers, and others interested in youth mental health issues. Please share this event information with family, friends, and colleagues. These virtual programs will be recorded, and recordings will be shared with registrants. Free unless otherwise noted. Events include:



✓ Youth Sports Betting & Gambling Addictions

Thursday, March 10, 7-8:30 p.m. FREE

Legal online sports betting websites have been operating for over two decades, but with the launch of mobile betting and the repeal of a federal ban on sports betting, youth gambling addiction has skyrocketed. Learn more about youth gambling as well as the warning signs of gambling addiction in this online seminar. Registration link: <https://bit.ly/YouthAddictions>

✓ Video Gaming, Screen Habits, & Youth Mental Health

Thursday, March 24, 7-8:30 p.m. FREE

Learn how video gaming and other screen habits impact the physical and mental health of our children, for good and for ill. Registration link: <https://bit.ly/YouthMentalHealth1>

✓ Youth Mental Health First Aid

Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. \$20; limited enrollment

A half-day virtual workshop for friends and caregivers over 18. Learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help. Registration link: <https://bit.ly/YMHFA2>

✓ Youth Suicide Prevention

Coming in April. Date and time TBD.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT BOOK GROUP, led by JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas, meets at 5:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. Our next meeting is April 7 to discuss **The Book of Longings** by Sue Monk Kidd. "A beautifully written, fictional account of 'what

if.' What if we knew what happened during the time of Jesus' life that is not recorded in the Gospels? What if that time revealed he had a wife? What if that wife had a bold, revolutionary spirit completely in contradiction with what was typically expected for women at the time?" (Amazon reader review) Another compelling novel from the author of *The Secret Life of Bees*. Books are available at the JPW Library. Contact Jennifer to join the discussion.



A Few New Favorites!

FOR ADULTS:

■ **How to Do the Work: Recognize Your Patterns, Heal from Your Past, and Create Your Self**, by Dr. Nicole LePera

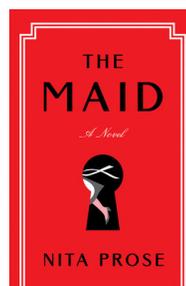
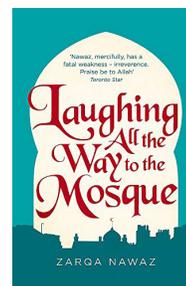
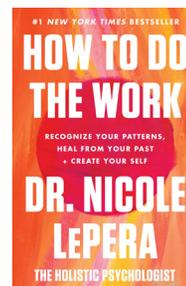
"An informed and eye-opening guide made for those who may have dabbled in mindfulness and self-help but wish to take a step further and meet their inner child. LePera's words are gentle but weighty, as she proves to be knowledgeable, open-minded and skillful in her expertise" (FlauraWellness.com).

■ **Laughing All the Way to the Mosque: The Misadventures of a Muslim Woman**, by Zarqa Nawaz

"Nawaz writes about her life as a Canadian Muslim woman of Pakistani origin, addressing serious social issues -- suspicion of Muslims after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, gender relations in Islam, the struggle to fit in as an immigrant child -- but always deftly balancing obvious commitments to her religion, her country, and her family with an irreverent approach to the status quo." Source: Publisher's Weekly

■ **The Maid**, by Nita Prose

Molly Gray is not like everyone else. She struggles with social skills and misreads the intentions of others. Her gran used to interpret the world for her, codifying it into simple rules. But Molly's orderly life is upended the day she enters the suite of the infamous and wealthy Charles Black, only to find it in a state of disarray and Mr. Black himself dead in his bed. A mystery and a heartwarming journey of the spirit, *The Maid* explores what it means to be the same as everyone else and yet entirely different.



FOR CHILDREN:

■ **Mel Fell**, written and illustrated by Corey R. Tabor

An innovative and charming tale about a plucky little bird. Sometimes, you might fall down, down, down, before you learn to fly up, up, up! A Caldecott Honor Book and ALA Notable Book of the Year.

Opportunities for Outreach In Our Community

Spotlight on:

HANDS ON HARTFORD

Hands On Hartford is a social service nonprofit organization that serves Hartford's neediest residents in the areas of food, housing, and health. Founded in 1969 as Center City Churches, the agency has had a longstanding commitment to providing respectful, comprehensive services with help from volunteers and community partnerships.

Hands on Hartford MANNA Food and Neighborhood Services program provides direct relief to thousands of Hartford neighbors each month. Through Community Meals, Community Pantry and the Backpack Nutrition Program for children, they provide meals and groceries to individuals and families facing food insecurity.

MANNA also provides vital support through community connections, referrals, security deposit & utility assistance, basic health screening, nutrition education and employment & education expense assistance. For more information: info@handsonhartford.org or call 860-728-3201



To donate online thru the church: <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give> or you can donate directly at: info@handsonhartford.org

One Great Hour of Sharing.

A collection will be taken for the One Great Hour of Sharing on March 27. For over

70 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing 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 at <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give>. Click the blue Donate Online button and choose the One Great Hour of Sharing designation. Or, Text OGHS to (860)222-7870. The need is great and so is our calling.



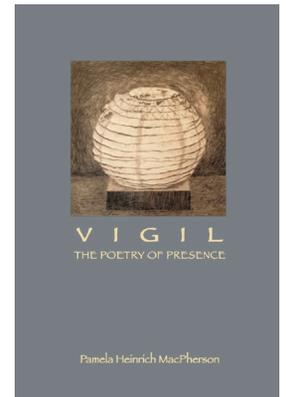
Thank you for your continued support.

Taizé Service Coming in April. Details to come!



VIGIL: The Poetry of Presence Sunday, March 27, 2022 • 7 p.m. via Zoom

Pamela H. MacPherson reflects on her years of dedicated care for the dying in her hospice work and end-of-life care with the VNA in her book *Vigil: The Poetry of Presence*. Pamela's poems from her many hours at the bedsides of people in their last hours are "rich, engaging and deeply heartfelt. Her work beautifully encapsulates the indispensable role of volunteers sitting vigil" (testimonial).



Copies of the book
will be available

Registration link:

<https://bit.ly/VigilWithPam>

Pamela will be reading poems from her personal journal, wrapping each in related story. From her experiences at the bedside of the dying, she will share what she has learned about how to be fully present to another during such a sacred time, as well as how to compassionately support others by holding space for them.

Join us via Zoom for this unique poetry reading and time of sharing.



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WEST HARTFORD

12 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107



Saturday, March 5, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Hybrid Event – In-person and Livestreamed

The Arts in the Center Series at First Church is hosting a Songwriters' Showcase on Saturday, March 5, at 7 p.m. This concert will be a hybrid concert – people will be able to attend either in person in the Meeting House or online.

Join three local songwriters (Jeffrey Boratko, Gracie Day, and Robert C. Fullerton) as they tell the stories behind their songs, share their writing practices, and sing their music.

Tickets for the in-person event are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors/students with a valid student ID, and \$10 to view the concert online. Seating for the in-person event is limited to 100 people. Purchase tickets at <https://bit.ly/songshowcase>

Weekly Bible Study at 6 on Tuesdays

Pastor Jane is leading virtual Bible study classes every Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. Participants will reflect on the coming week's Scripture passages and explore the history and events surrounding them for a deeper appreciation and understanding of the text. All are welcome! Please register at <https://bit.ly/FCBibleStudy> to receive the Zoom link and attend.

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship provides an important opportunity that helps hold us together as members of the same church, as part of our greater community, and as individuals. Furthermore, when so many struggle with fear, frustration, and anger because of the pandemic, the Fellowship provides a chance for men to share something in a place that is both safe and confidential. The Fellowship also provides an opportunity to remind each of us of our faith journey and how much our church and our faith help ground us to face our daily challenges and unexpected joys.

Please consider joining us on the third Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m. in the Community Room next to the JPWebster Library either in person or by Zoom. Our next meeting will be on March 16. Coffee is available, and occasionally we have a guest speaker. Our new senior pastor, the Rev. Jane Willan will be our invited guest at our April meeting. If you have a question/comment please contact Joseph Tobin at 860-916-1923 or by email at jmtobin@gmail.com.