



Sunday Notes

November 27, 2022



Looking Towards Sunday

You are already familiar with this fact of church life; but may I mention it anyway? Advent (from Latin *adventus*, "coming") refers to the period of preparation prior to the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also in anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ.

There are lots of ways to prepare, of course — getting ready really is an inside job. For example, I recently adopted a mantra that has helped me shift into the spirit of the season of expectant longing. I can't wait to share it with you! See what I did there...?

Blessings meantime,
Rev. Fredd



Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers today are donated by The First Church Congregation in honor of our new Associate Minister, Rev. Fredd Ward.

Children and Family Ministries

The Nursery will be open at 9:45 a.m. and staffed as needed for infants and toddlers. Parents and Guardians are asked to complete the annual **Child and Youth Family Registration** for the current program year either online [HERE](#), or by completing a paper form available during worship. Please see Cindy Tolin with any questions. **We need you!** Contact Cindy Tolin or Barbara Lewis to assist in church school this fall. It takes a village!

Countdown to Christmas Advent Workshop

Sunday, December 4th at 10 a.m.

Children will make their child friendly advent wreaths in church school and will be joined by their families and church members. A few ornaments and holiday crafts will be available to make as well. Click [Here](#) for more information.

Advent Festivities at First Church

Click [Here](#) to view all the advent festivities on our website.

Upcoming Events

Did you know that Reverend Jane loves Narnia? She has read every one of The Chronicles of Narnia multiple times and even has a map of Narnia above her writing desk at home. She would love to share her Narnian passion with all of you during this Advent season. Join her **Mondays at 6:00 p.m. in the library or on Zoom starting November 28th**. The study guide, *Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season*, is available in the church library.

The FESTIVAL OF TREES is December 1st!

Don't miss the 7th West Hartford Festival of Trees on December 1st from 5-8 p.m. Bring your friends and family to view the beautifully decorated trees and to purchase raffle tickets for the chance of winning one. On December 4th, after church service, there will be another opportunity to look at the trees and purchase raffle tickets. All proceeds will be distributed to our mission partners.

GHIAA Opportunity

Wednesday, December 7th from 7 to 9 p.m. at Weaver High School in Hartford (and not at CCSU).

Please join us for an exciting in-person GHIAA gathering with GHIAA supporters from all 45 member churches and organizations, as well as invited public officials and legislators. If you would like to attend, please contact Terry Schmitt (terryschmittwh@gmail.com) or Linda Bronstein (lbronstein@irisct.org) to be registered for the program. Let's show the strength in our numbers!

The Puppets Are Coming! The Puppets Are Coming!

Sunday, December 11th at 10:00 a.m.

We've been in contact with St. Michaels Church in Litchfield, and they agreed to allow the Colossal Puppets to come to First Church for a play date! The Nativity Service with the Colossal Puppets will be held on December 11th at 10, and we need your help! Volunteers are needed for the following:

-Assembling the puppets on Tuesday, December 6th from 2 to 4 p.m.

-Puppeteers for the service on December 11th. This involves a rehearsal on Saturday, December 10th from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

- Disassembling and transporting the puppets back to St. Michaels on Monday December 12th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sign up for any of these spots [HERE](#), or speak to Jim Boratko.

Taizé Service

Taizé Services are making a comeback. Join us for our next Taizé Service on **December 11th at 5:30 p.m.** There will be 3 opportunities for you to join us for this unique worship experience on December 11th, March 26th and June 4th. Come by this service for moments of silent and musical meditation and start your week with a moment of contemplative stillness.

Live Nativity Saturday, December 17th from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Experience the sacred beauty of Christmas during a live presentation of Jesus's Nativity. A cow, a donkey, and even a camel, along with their barnyard friends, will visit First Church and help portray the scene. Free admission. Gifts of non-perishable food will be collected for the West Hartford Food Pantry.

Chorus Angelicus. Join us for this "Arts in The Center" concert!

Sunday, December 18th at 4:00 p.m. in The Meeting House and on Livestream

The award-winning children's choir, Chorus Angelicus, and their adult counterpart, Gaudeamus, present their annual concert of music for the season, paired with delightful readings with narrator, John Dankosky. Find event information [HERE](#) and on [FACEBOOK](#). Purchase tickets [HERE](#).

At the Church Library Art Gallery

"O Come Let Us Adore Him:" In keeping with the Advent-Christmas season, the next exhibit for the Church Library Gallery will feature First Church members' and friends' crèche and nativity scenes. If you would like to share your family's nativity scene, please bring it to the JPW Library by November 27th. It will be kept safe and secure until it is returned to you. This exhibit will run through January 8th, but if need your nativity set back for Christmas, let Jennifer know and we'll make that happen!

BOOK GROUP NEWS

Awakening the Spirit book group is reading [The Great Work](#) by Thomas Berry. Join the discussion – Mondays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Zoom option available.

Food for Thought book group meets Tuesday, December 6th at 5:30 p.m. to discuss [Carnegie's Maid](#) by Marie Benedict. Zoom option available. Call Jennifer or Molly with questions: 860-232-3893.

Announcements

During the time of Thanksgiving, I thank God for the love and caring shown to me by members and staff of First Church when my husband Joel died in April. I will never forget being sustained and uplifted during this time of sorrow and loss. Many kindnesses, hugs, and offers of help told me that I was not alone. God indeed was with me, and so was my church family. Thank you all! Lynn Huntington

Wreath, Poinsettia and Organ & Carillon Donations

Wreaths will adorn the doors of First Church during the season of Advent. Poinsettias can be used to brighten the holiday for another, taken home after worship on December 18th, or delivered to your doorstep if needed. Donations can also be made to the Organ & Carillon Reserve Fund. Online orders and donations can be made [HERE](#) or you can print a form [HERE](#) to mail in with your payment. All donations must be received by Monday, December 12th.

Advent Devotionals! The Church Library is offering two Advent devotionals this year:

- *Daily Guideposts: 25 Devotions for Advent.* Experience God's great love in a new personal way with these meditations drawn from *Daily Guideposts*. Rekindle the hope of the Christmas season through Scripture verses, personal stories, and prayers to help you apply the day's messages.
- *The Dawn Chorus: An Advent Devotional on the Wonders of Birds.* Songbirds know a thing or two about singing into darkness: in the wee hours of the morning, before the sun appears over the horizon, they begin a great symphony that scientists call the "dawn chorus." Advent is the church's dawn chorus. Each week in Advent, walk through the season's days of hope, peace, joy, and love, singing into shadows and looking to the light. Each devotion includes a candlelight service, bird-related fun facts, a handful of ideas for service activities, and a simple bird ornament to hang on your tree or around the house. A devotional designed for families of all shapes and sizes.

Covenant to Care Share a Gift Tree

Please look for the Share-A-Gift Christmas Tree in the Auditorium beginning on November 27th! Please take a tag, buy a gift for the child designated, and bring the unwrapped gift to the office or the auditorium (during coffee hour) by December 18th. Gifts will be given to our two Covenant to Care social workers for the children they work with. If you are still worshiping from home and would like to participate, please call Janice Carter Hall at 860-305-0940 or Carole Carter at 860-690-1338 and we will drop a tag off to you.

Covenant to Care Needs

One of the Social Workers whose clients we support has shared that she has clients in need of 2 bureaus and 2 bed frames (one queen size and one twin size). If you have any of these items you would like to donate, please call Janice Carter Hall at 860-305-0940. Thank-you!

Hats & Mittens Drive

The Annual Hat and Mitten Drive begins October 16th 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.

Hartford IRIS Volunteers Needed Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) is pleased to announce that their Hartford office is up and running. Now, as they resettle more people in the Greater Hartford area and expand their programs, their need for volunteers has grown. Since Welcome Home West Hartford's (WHWH) refugee families are more established, volunteers who may be interested in this work are free to reach out to the Hartford IRIS office to assist newer arrivals. Contact First Church WHWH Coordinator Terry Schmitt or Linda Bronstein for more information.

First Church Christmas celebrations through the years -- Stop by the Archives display board in the corridor between the Choir Room and the church library to see some photographs of Advent and Christmas at First Church from the 1960s to present day. Take special note of Mr. and Mrs. Santa (Dick and Dottie Hoff), and try to identify the actual infants portraying the Holy Child. While you are there stop by the library for cup of joe and a cozy read.

Church Library Seed Library

As you put your gardens to bed this fall, please keep *WeHa Grows!*, the Church Library Seed Library, in mind. The donations of locally grown seeds are what sustains our seed library. After allowing a portion of your plants to go to seed, place the seeds in a sealed paper envelope with your name and the plant name, variety, and year of harvest written on it. Try to donate only the seeds that you are confident were not cross-pollinate; please do not return seeds produced by anything grown from hybrid seeds. Drop off your seeds during JPW Library hours. Thank you for donating! Learn more about WeHa Grows! on [our webpage](#).

Volunteers Needed 2-3 hours per month to organize and maintain *WeHa Grows!*, the church library's seed library. This is a great opportunity for Scouts and others to earn volunteer hours. Learn more about *WeHa Grows!* on [our webpage](#).

Do you have a family member who is experiencing challenges trying to live independently? Come browse the newly revised First Church Senior Resource Manual (SRM), now available at the JPW Library. The SRM is the brainchild of Julia Rosa, who faithfully worked to compile resources on nutrition, transportation, spirituality, downsizing, and more for aging members and friends in Greater Hartford. The SRM is also available on the [Church Library page](#).

Diaper Drive at The Methodist Church

During the months of November & December, 2022, the West Hartford United Methodist Church will be having a Diaper Drive supporting the local Food Pantry. Diapers of all sizes are needed, especially sizes 4,5,6 and Pull-ups. In addition to diapers, wipes, feminine hygiene items, and toiletries in general will be collected in the bin by the front door. Pick up an item or two while you are shopping to help our neighbors in need. The church is located at 1358 New Britain Ave, West Hartford (it's the pumpkin church). Corner of Berkshire Rd, 1 block east of Corbins Corner and Westfarms Mall.
The Outreach Team

Altar Flower Donations Needed!

Sponsoring altar flowers is a meaningful way to honor or remember loved ones, and is also part of our Inreach ministry. Following each Sunday service, a volunteer takes the altar flower arrangement and makes smaller arrangements from it to deliver to church members celebrating birthdays, recuperating from illness or surgery, or for other occasions. Please consider donating. We still have many dates available to donate in 2023.

November 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. CPA serves thousands of men, women, and youth each year. The 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: <https://cpa-ct.org/> Community Partners in Action, 110 Bartholomew Avenue, Suite 3010, Hartford, CT 06106. To donate on line thru the church: <https://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give/> or you can donate directly at <https://cpa-ct.org/>. Thank you for your support!

Family News!

The "Family News" section of the now retired TIDINGS was one of everyone's favorite parts. Well, guess what? We now have a family news page on our website. Family news will be shared when it is submitted to [Amy Melvin](#) or [Joy Taylor](#). Common topics include: Weddings, Births, Graduations, Baptisms, Deaths, Reunions, Moves, other milestones, or just people together! Send your photo(s) with caption(s) any time! We may edit content to fit. Check it out under the Inreach Menu! (Please note, this is a public page. In other words, it is not password protected).

Submit Prayer Requests at http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request.

Spreading Your News

The Communications Team is made up of members of our Outreach Ministry, and the church Office Administrators. When you have photos, event notices, and information to be shared publicly, please send it to the email addresses below by Tuesday at noon to be included in the appropriate places.

Sarah Kopp, Office Manager, sarah.kopp@whfirstchurch.org

Linda Clark, Office Manager, FCWHAdmin2@whfirstchurch.org

Amy Melvin, Communications, Communications@whfirstchurch.org

Joy Taylor, Communications, Communications2@whfirstchurch.org

4 Ways to Give

1. **Give by Text:** Text GIVE to (860) 222-7870. **You can now donate using ACH!** If you have already used Txt2Give, text update to change payment type from credit card to ACH.
2. **Give Online:** Visit our website at <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/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.

Office Hours: Monday thru Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Contact: general.mail@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605