



Sunday Notes

August 20, 2023



Looking Towards Sunday

"Jesus Has a Bad Hair Day"

If you thought Jesus was the poster boy for good days, think again. Picture this: Jesus goes rogue and rude, brushing off a Canaanite woman pleading for her daughter. This Canaanite woman, though, she's tenacious, like a terrier with a chew toy, refusing to be silenced. Her stubborn faith finally gets Jesus to pivot - a spiritual plot twist, if you will.

Join us as we dive into this story and find out why even Jesus might sometimes need an attitude adjustment.

See you at the pulpit –where the divine meets the daily!

Rev. Jane



Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers today were donated by Brenda LaFazia in loving memory of her son, Benjamin Leeber.

With Sorrow

Ann Cobrain, a longtime member of First Church, passed away on July 25. To view the obituary, click [HERE](#).

First Church also mourns the loss of Grace Reale, who passed away on August 9. To view her obituary, click [HERE](#).

Ann Hempel, another longtime active member, passed away on August 3, and a service will be held at First Church in the coming weeks. More information to come.

Message From the Moderator

Be sure to read a message from our Moderator, Wendy Wigglesworth, on the back of this week's Sunday Notes!

Upcoming Events

Sun is Shining Concert Series

Tuesdays, August 22 and 29 at 5:30 p.m.

Join us on the Labyrinth on the church front lawn with your chairs, friends, blankets, and picnic! In the case of rain or severe weather the concerts will either be postponed or canceled. A decision will be posted on our website or our Facebook page after 2:00 p.m. on the day of the show. Click [HERE](#) to see the list of performers.

Book Group News

Both book discussion groups are on summer break.

Awakening the Spirit will resume meeting Monday, September 11 from 12 to 1:30 p.m.

Food for Thought will restart on Tuesday, October 3 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Southern New England United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) 2023 Justice Summit – *Trans and Nonbinary Belonging in the Church*

Saturday, October 7 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Old South Church, Boston, MA - *Hybrid event*

The SNEUCC 2023 Justice Summit will center on trans and nonbinary belonging in the church. This full-day event will include worship and preaching, workshops, relationship-building, and connection. Workshop options will include an introductory session for people who have had little exposure to the experiences of trans and nonbinary people; sessions for trans and nonbinary people; and cisgender people who have begun to engage in the work of fostering trans belonging. This is a hybrid event, with options for in-person or online participation.

For more information and to register, [follow this link](#).

Announcements

Covenant to Care

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Covenant to Care annual Backpack Drive for our sponsored children! The filled backpacks must be returned to the church by 8/20. If you have any questions please contact Maryanne at maryricbarry@gmail.com or Diane at dmboman@comcast.net. Thank you for your support!

Eblast Update

Every Friday morning First Church sends an email to members and friends with *FIRST CHURCH HAPPENINGS*. If you do not see this every week in your email and want to add your name to the email list, please alert the office staff, Sarah sarah.kopp@whfirstchurch.org or Linda FCWHAdmin2@whfirstchurch.org, or call and you will be put in the loop! You can also subscribe directly from our website by clicking [HERE](#). *HAPPENINGS* announces the upcoming Sunday sermon, important church news, and events that you won't want to miss.

Save First Church Steeple Going Strong with Publicity & Give Aways!

Donations continue to come in and we are very grateful for the support. We have August prize packages to benefit the fundraiser! For every five dollars donated, you can take a chance at winning a gift package. You pick the package you want to bid on!

GIFT PACKAGE "A"

Arugula Bistro (\$25)
bartaco (dinner for 2)
Cinépolis (4 passes/ 4 popcorns)
Elbow Room (\$30)
Kilwin's (\$25)
Mecha Noodle Bar (\$50)
Relax the Back (\$75)
The Next Chapter (\$50)
Zohara Mediterranean Kitchen (\$50)

GIFT PACKAGE "B"

Cafe Sofia (\$25)
Crate & Barrel (\$50)
Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar (\$50)
Larsen Ace Hardware (2 water bottles and a tea towel \$57)
Mecha Noodle Bar (\$50)
Place 2 Be (\$20)
Sparrow Pizza (dinner for 2)

Participate during the Sun is Shining concerts, or during fellowship on Sundays. Winners will be drawn after the last concert and will be contacted by phone, so no need to be present to win. Thank you to all of our local neighbors who donated to our prize packages!

Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation

When schools close for the summer, food insecurity among families with children rises. Please continue to make donations throughout the summer and include items such as juice boxes and granola bars. Also needed are: canned fruit/applesauce, pasta & sauce, soup, shelf stable milk (32 oz. containers), tuna & chicken, baked beans, rice (1 lb. packages), and peanut butter (16-18 oz. jars).

Browse the Used Book Corner!

The JPW Library has recently added several items to the Lazarus Used Book Corner (located beneath the Narthex)! New additions include DVDs such as the classic *Jane Eyre*, and *Joyful Noise*, starring Dolly Parton. Several audiobooks have been added as well, and we always have a good supply of used books. Items are \$.50 - \$1.00! Come check it out! We're here every Sunday morning, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

First Church Operations Plan for Emergencies

First Church is in the process of developing an Emergency Operations Plan. Training has begun for staff and will continue through the fall. A Safety Response Team will be formed and there will be opportunities for the congregation to be involved. More information will be coming soon!

Job Posting – Assistant Director of Worship Arts

Do you enjoy making music? Have you ever considered a side career as a music director of a church? First Church is looking to fill an Assistant Director of Worship Arts for our music program. This position will work as an assistant to our Director of Worship Arts, learning the aspects of church music leadership as an apprentice. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to experience leading church music by participating in our church choir during the year. One Sunday a month, they will have the opportunity to lead a worship service by playing service music, accompanying hymns, preparing the choir, and conducting the choir during worship. The Assistant Director will also have the opportunity to learn the nuts and bolts of the behind-the-scenes aspects of being music director to include service planning, budget tracking and preparation, and maintaining the music library. This is a part time, 12-month position, amounting to approximately 20 hours/month. For more information visit: <https://www.whfirstchurch.org/job-listings>.

Altar Flower Donations Needed!

Sponsoring altar flowers is a meaningful way to honor or remember loved ones and is also part of our In-reach ministry. **We have dates available for 2023-2024**, including these 2023 dates: 11/26 & 12/3. Please contact the church office for details at general.mail@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605. Please note, the price of a seasonal altar flower arrangement has increased to \$90.

August Reach Out: Knox Hartford

Knox uses horticulture as a catalyst for community engagement. They forge partnerships between residents, businesses, and government, providing leadership to build greener, stronger, healthier and more beautiful neighborhoods in Hartford. Programs include community gardens, environmental education, urban gardening, and green job apprenticeships. "The vision of KNOX is a capital city revitalized by horticulture and urban reforestation through the individual and collective efforts of its residents, businesses and government; a city where every neighborhood has an active community garden and where all residents feel the impact of these gardens on their own individual lives; a city where residents share a strong sense of pride, place, and connection to each other."

For more information: Knox Hartford Inc. 75 Laurel Street, Hartford, CT 06106 Tel:860-951-7694.

Donate online thru the church [HERE](#), or you can donate directly to: [About Us – KNOX \(knoxhartford.org\)](http://www.knoxhartford.org).

Thank you for your support!

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

Family News!

We now have a family news page on our website: [click here](#). Family news will be shared when it is submitted to [Amy Melvin](#) or [Joy Taylor](#). 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).

Spreading Your News

The Communications Team is made up of members of our Outreach Ministry, and the church Office Administrators.

Sunday Notes/Happenings submissions are due by noon on Tuesdays to Sarah and Linda.

- Sarah Kopp, Office Manager, sarah.kopp@whfirstchurch.org
- Linda Clark, Office Manager, FCWHAdmin2@whfirstchurch.org

Website, flyer, and Social Media additions or changes can be sent to Amy and Joy anytime.

- Amy Melvin, Communications, Communications@whfirstchurch.org
- Joy Taylor, Communications, Communications2@whfirstchurch.org

Four 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 through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

Behind the Scenes

Worship service with Rev Jane and Rev Fredd provides us our spiritual fulfillment. Our moments of meditation, of prayer, of communal singing, of lessons from scripture and sermons, and simply coming together as the church family we are once a week.

But what happens Sunday afternoon to the following Sunday morning? The behind the scenes work to keep our church, our faith, our spirit soaring is what I want to celebrate with you today.

Since becoming your Moderator, I have been proud to witness incredible work by so many. The Steeple repair would not be possible without the strong guidance of our building and grounds team. The Save the Steeple fundraising group, quite simply, has worked magic. We have a workgroup dedicating serious effort to determine if our Academy for Young Children should become a separate business entity from our church. A search committee is working towards finding a new Director of Faith Formation.

We have office staff who steadily provide the administrative backbone required to keep the church operations afloat. A dynamic library duo, a supremely talented musical director, an incredibly dedicated academy director, twin media masters. The list goes on and on and on.

When I joined First Church over twenty years ago, I had no intention of becoming involved in any major activity of the church. But then I was asked to teach Sunday School, and I said yes. I co-taught with other parents who subsequently became close friends. My two children forged life-time friendships during these early years. I began to know these children, eventually mentoring them as they became confirmands, and guiding them during their teen years in the youth group. These children are now young adults, and I consider them my friends.

I was asked to be a Deacon and I said yes. I learned more intimately how to support our pastors and our worship service. I learned about the sacraments as I prepared and served communion. I felt privileged to participate in such a meaningful way. I challenged myself to stand at the pulpit and read scripture to my church family. I was afraid, but I did it. But mostly... I made more friends.

I was the first leader of the Spirit Team when we moved into this team structure in 2015. I helped to define and motivate the team and to form three pivotal workgroups housed in Spirit: Deacons, Faith Formation and Music and Arts. These were years of gaining an even greater understanding of the meaning of our By-Laws and of our church structure.

I was asked to co-lead the high school youth group during my son's high school years. This experience became one of the most important ways for me to bond with him and would not have happened if I didn't say yes.

Have I said no? Many times! I am aware of my limitations and my time constraints and those are important for each and every one of us. But when I say yes, I am rewarded in a thousand different ways I never imagined possible.

So finally when asked to serve as Vice Moderator....well, I said YES! So here I am, faithfully and prayerfully guiding First Church to the best of my ability. I continue to be blessed with the mentorship and guidance of great leaders before me.

As we stroll through the hazy days of summer, I urge you to consider how you can become part of the Behind the Scenes work of First Church. On Homecoming Sunday, September 10, learn more about the opportunities that exist within our teams of Spirit, Business, Outreach and Inreach. Or give me a buzz and I'll tell you more about them myself. What might you say YES to in the fall?

Yours in spirit and peace,

Wendy Wigglesworth, Moderator