



Sunday Notes

November 12, 2023



Looking Towards Sunday

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps." – Matthew 25: 1-4

I was happy to hear that the congregational conversation with the Selection Committee was fruitful and, moreover, peaceful. That spirit matters more than the specifics. Having said that, several people who were present on Sunday lovingly relayed the reality that some folks are worried about workload weariness – might the pastor get too worn down before too long? Thank you for thinking about that ever-present possibility! I have the same concern for you!



Blessedly, our Savior knew something about that subject – the parable of the ten bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13) provides some counsel about being prepared – having a sufficient supply of oil -- so that your lamp light doesn't go out. The sermon is entitled: *F.U.E.L.: Anti Burnout Suggestions*. I'll say more when I see you.

Meanwhile, please be reminded that Stewardship Sunday is near/now at hand. Bring your pledge card Sunday morning; or fill it out and send it beforehand; or make your commitment online. Give a little bit of your love, trusting that your sacred promise supplies strength to others and supports the church's work! We'll dedicate our pledges during worship. Can't! Wait!

Be blessed. Be a blessing.
Rev. Fredd

Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers this week were donated by Yvonne and Lou Tafuto in loving memory of George H. Durivage, loving father, and Navy Veteran of World War II.

Light the Steeple

Our steeple this week was lit by the deSimas Family in honor of Catherine and Gerry deSimas.

Online Pledge Form

If you would like to make your pledge online, you can do so by filling out the online pledge card [HERE](#).

Upcoming Events

If you are interested in joining First Church, please plan to attend an information session for prospective new members following worship on **Sunday, November 12 at 11:15 a.m.** in the World Fellowship Room. We expect to receive new members into the life of the church during the 10 a.m. worship service on **Sunday, November 26**. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.

Faith on Film: A Soldier's Story - Friday, November 17 at 7 p.m. in the JPW Library

Join Rev. Fredd in the JPW Library for the film and follow-up discussion.

Toward the tail-end of WWII, a Black Army investigator travels to a remote Louisiana military base to look into the mysterious murder of a Black sergeant unit whose troops hated him for his harsh treatment. Facing an uncooperative chain of command and fearful Black troops, he must battle with deceit and prejudice to find the truth. Was the crime an act of extreme bigotry or could the killer be a soldier in the victim's own unit?

Chamber Music - Sunday, November 19 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel

The Chamber Music Series is a new series at First Church, designed to bring great music performances to an audience in an intimate setting. The ensemble features oboe, bassoon, and piano, as well as violin and cello. The concert is free to the public. A Free Will Offering will be received at the door.

Follow signs from the parking lot up the stairs, around to the front entrance of the Chapel.

Deck the Meeting House – Saturday, November 25 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Help First Church kick off the holidays by decorating the Meeting House! Join us in setting up candles, garland, and trees as we prepare for the holiday season. Thank you!

Coffee and Conversation - Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Join Rev. Fredd at the Hartford Baking Company in West Hartford Center for coffee and conversation!

Book Group News:

The church's John P. Webster Library coordinates and sponsors two regular book groups that meet in the library. Copies of the books are provided for participants. New members are always welcome! For more information, please contact Jennifer or Molly at 860-232-3893 or jpwlibrary@whfirstchurch.org.

Awakening the Spirit, led by Rev. Tom Carr, meets Mondays from 12 to 1:30 p.m. Bring a bag lunch; beverages and desserts are provided. The group is starting their next book, Thich Nhat Hanh's classic [*Living Buddha, Living Christ*](#) (20th anniversary edition) November 13. If the Buddha and Jesus were to meet on the road today, what would each think of the other's spiritual views and practices? Hanh brings to Christianity an appreciation of its beauty that could be conveyed only by an outsider. In lucid, meditative prose, he explores the crossroads of compassion and holiness at which the two traditions meet, and he reawakens our understanding of both.

Food for Thought's next meeting is December 5 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. to discuss [*Everything Beautiful in Its Time: Seasons of Love and Loss*](#) by Jenna Bush Hagar. In this heartfelt tribute, the former first daughter and granddaughter shares moving, funny stories about her beloved grandparents and the wisdom they passed on that has shaped her life. A wonderful celebration of the enduring power of family and an exploration of the things that truly matter most (Amazon review).

Faith Formation Notes and News

Welcome, Children!

- Start your Sundays at First Church in the Meeting House/Sanctuary in the Playground or in the pew with your family. After the Message for All Ages, follow Ms. Jennifer to church school or remain in the sanctuary during worship.
- PreK - Grade 1 -- Community Room (#232), downstairs from the sanctuary
- Grades 2 - 5 -- Room #406
- Infants and toddlers -- Nursery, Room #216 (parents, please inform Jennifer by the Friday before worship if you will require Nursery care)
- New Option! -- watch the livestream of the service on the large screen in the church library (beneath the sanctuary).

Sunday Bible Study – New Meeting Time!

Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:45 a.m. in the World Fellowship Room (Room #303)

Join Rev. Tom Carr each Sunday before worship for an in-depth look at the Bible. *All are welcome!*

Announcements

First Church Academy for Young Children 2024-2025 Registration

Registration for the 24-25 program year is here! First Church Academy for Young Children will accept applications from our currently enrolled families and church members beginning **November 15th**. The downloadable application and instructions for registration can be found on our website www.firstchurchacademy.org. Registration for the broader community will begin on December 1st.

If you have any questions, please contact Dawne Quinn, Director at dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org.

Festival of Trees

The Festival of Trees is just a few weeks away. If you would like to volunteer the night of the festival (Nov. 30) please click [HERE](#). You may sell tickets, bake cookies, greet visitors, or help people find the auditorium. On Sunday Nov. 26, after church, we need volunteers to help set up the Festival. On December 3, volunteers will be needed to call raffle winners and break down the Festival. Thank you!

Thanksgiving Baskets

Our food collection for Thanksgiving baskets is here! If you would like to help, please bring in a food item, using the following guide:

If your last name begins with...you'll bring:

A-D: Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Spanish Food (i.e. Goya Products)

E-H: Rice and potatoes

I-L: Breakfast cereals and juice boxes

M-P: Canned fruits and vegetables

Q-T: Bread and roll mix; stuffing mix

U-Z: Juice, tea and coffee

Please bring items to church and place them in a Food for Friends barrel by November 19th. We will use these items to fill the baskets. We will also be collecting Stop and Shop gift cards, which each family will receive along with their basket of food items. We are looking for volunteers to fill and organize the baskets on November 19th after worship.

If you can help out or have any questions please contact Maryanne Barry at maryricbarry@gmail.com or Diane Bohman at dmbohman@comcast.net Thank you! Maryanne and Diane

Light The Steeple in Honor of a Loved One

For a \$25 donation, you are invited to "Light the Steeple" for one week in honor of a loved one. Similar to making a flower donation we will ask that you pick a date at least one week in advance of the desired week, and all donors will be acknowledged in our weekly *Happenings*. Please note more than one donor can fall on any given week. Donations will be added to the Save the Steeple fund. Click "Light The Steeple for a loved one" found on the "Save the First Church Steeple" web page or [click here](#).

Covenant to Care Hat & Mitten Drive

The Annual Hat and Mitten Drive is underway and will continue through the end of the year. Please bring new or gently worn mittens, hats, scarves, and other winter clothing for children through our Covenant to Care partners. Marked boxes will be available in the Narthex and outside the auditorium to collect your donations. Any new or used winter outerwear or clothing in good condition is welcome.

Diaper Collection a Success

Wow, wow, wow. What an incredible job! Thank you very much! This comes from the Bridge Family Center, the recipient of our October Diaper Drive. Over 2,500 diapers of all sizes and almost as many wipes were donated by First Church members. The diapers will be distributed to parents in the Bridge's Family Resource Center at Charter Oak International Academy, West Hartford, and the Mosaic Center in Hartford. Thank you for your generosity! The Outreach Team.

Five Wishes Booklets Available at the JPW Library

Five Wishes is a living will in which you consider your personal, emotional, and spiritual needs as well as your medical wishes. It is an easy-to-use complete form developed with help from the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging. Once it is filled out and properly signed it is valid in most states, including CT. Five Wishes helps you begin the necessary conversations about your end-of-life care with your loved ones. The booklets are available for free at the JPW Library. More information, and the option to purchase a digital version of the document, is available at fivewishes.org.

Job Posting – 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>.

Google Review

Do you like First Church? Would you take a minute and write a review? We like stars, so give us 5 if you really like us. Even better, write a comment too. Click here: <https://g.page/r/CSKC8GKwjZ8EEBo/review>. Thank you in advance!

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

November Reach Out: Hands on Hartford

Hands On Hartford is a social service nonprofit organization that serves Hartford's most economically challenged 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 Gather55, the 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: <https://handsonhartford.org/> or call 860-728-3201. To donate online thru the church, click [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at: <https://handsonhartford.org/>. Thank you for your support!

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).

Taking Photos in Church and Sharing Policy

Taking photos and documenting life events is commonplace now and more and more common in church settings. Lots of members are asking about taking photos at church events and wondering how to share them and to avoid confusion, we came up with some guidelines. Most important: be sure phone is in silent mode and skip solo selfies when tagging church events! Laminated copies of guidelines are at each entrance to the Sanctuary and at the auditorium entrance, or [view policy here](#) or go to website>Photo Gallery page. Thank you, Amy and Joy.

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