



Sunday Notes

January 28, 2024



Looking Towards Sunday

Grace and peace:

Two weeks ago, Dr. King answered a perplexing question. The disciples posed the perplexing question upon realizing their inability to cure a boy who had been seized by a demon (Matthew 17:14-20). They asked Jesus privately: "Why couldn't we cast it out?" Jesus said the problem was lack of faith. Martin went a step further by suggesting that the disciples had been attempting to do by themselves what could be done only when they allowed God to work through them. That's the WHY part of the answer.

This Sunday, I'm inviting you to consider the HOW part of the answer. The gospel according to Mark tells us that early in Jesus' ministry, people were astounded by his teaching ability... "for he taught them as one having [authentic] authority, and not as the [supposed scholars]." In fact, he healed a man with an unclean spirit by commanding it to come out. I believe we're capable of the same sort of miracle.



When I see you, I'll say more about how to exorcize...oops, I mean exercise your authority. The sermon (based on Mark 1:21-28) is entitled: **Tell God About Your Demons...And...Tell Your Demons About God.**

Love you muchly,

Rev. Fredd

Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers this week were donated by Dottie and George Stone, Jr. in loving memory of George Stone, Sr.

Call to a Congregational Meeting

Sunday January 28, 2024

Notice is hereby given that a Congregational Meeting of the First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held in the Meetinghouse on Sunday, January 28, 2024, starting at 11:15 am to transact the following items of business:

1. Approve the minutes of the First Church Budget Meeting held on January 29, 2023.
2. Consider and vote on the First Church Annual Operating Budget for calendar year 2024.
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 January 14, 2024

Linda Bronstein, Secretary of the Church

Upcoming Events

Sunday Bible Study

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 to stop by!

Coffee and Conversation - Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

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

First Sunday Breakfast

February 4 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Church Breakfast is Baaack! Enjoy a smorgasbord of fruit, hot breakfast casseroles, bacon or sausage, bagels, pastries, and more – plus coffee, juice & tea. Yummy gluten-free options, too. All are welcome! Sponsored by the JPW Library and the Outreach Team.

Faith on Film: *Lars and the Real Girl*- *The search for true love begins outside the box.*

Friday, February 9 at 7 p.m. in the JPWL -- Just in time for Valentine's Day, a movie about love!

Extremely shy, Lars finds it impossible to make friends or socialize. His brother and sister-in-law are worried about him, so when he announces that he has a girlfriend he met online, they are overjoyed. But Lars' new lady is a life-size plastic woman. On the advice of a doctor (Patricia Clarkson), his family and the rest of the community go along with his delusion. Starring Ryan Gosling, Paul Schneider, and Emily Mortimer. Rated PG-13; watch trailer [HERE](#).

Save the Date! *Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper*

Tuesday, February 13 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium

Join the Faith Formation Work Group and the Inreach Team to celebrate Shrove Tuesday with a fun evening of pancakes, games, and music!

Shrove Tuesday – also called Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras – is the day immediately preceding Ash Wednesday, or the beginning of Lent. Traditionally on Shrove Tuesday, Christians would use up all the fat and oil in their homes in preparation for 40 days of Lenten fasting. "Shrove," derived from *shrive* (to absolve or pardon) refers to the confession of sins as they prepared for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, we mark the date with pancakes, sausages, and goofiness before heading into the contemplative six weeks before Easter.

So, wear your wackiest outfits, put on your beaded necklaces, eat pancakes, and goof off with us! For planning purposes, [please RSVP](#) by Monday, February 12.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, February 14 at 6 p.m. in the Chapel

Please join us for this sacred service, as we begin the season of Lent with the imposition of ashes.

Chamber Music Concert

Sunday, February 18 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel

This program is designed to bring great music performances to an audience in an intimate setting. Each presentation offers a variety of musicians, often including flute, oboe, piano, and others. Thank you to our Director of Music and Arts Jim Boratko for coordinating this opportunity. The concert is free. A free will offering will be received at the door.

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 to either group! 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 on Mondays from 12 to 1:30 p.m. Bring a bag lunch; beverages and desserts are provided. The group is currently reading Amy-Jill Levine's [The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings](#).
- **Food for Thought's** next meeting is February 6 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. to discuss [Lady Tan's Circle of Women](#) by Lisa See, a captivating historical fiction novel set in Ming dynasty China.

Announcements

You can watch the livestream of the worship service in the JPW Library every Sunday morning! Come, have a coffee, and relax in our beautiful church library. We also have a fun play area (with books of course) for toddlers!

Acolytes

Church acolytes play an important role in our Sunday services. Children will be lighting the candles before worship as well as putting the candles out to conclude the service. This can be a meaningful way for our children to serve their faith community. If your child is interested in helping out, please see or email Amanda Bethune at amander14@gmail.com.

If you would like to make your 2024 pledge online, you can do so by filling out the online pledge card [HERE](#).

Souper Bowl Sunday!

Help your neighbor and have fun with Super Bowl 58! Donate cans of soup now and until February 11, the day of the Super Bowl. Our goal is 250 cans of soup to be distributed to the Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen and West Hartford Food Pantry. Leave your donations in the blue buckets & the Outreach Team will take to the pantries. When teams are determined, you may make a financial donation on behalf of your team. Funds will be given to the food pantries. No expired food please. Vegetarian soups are appreciated. Thank you! The Outreach Team

And That's a Wrap: The Handiwork of Nancy McClelland Ball

The JPWL Gallery currently has an exhibit of our own Nancy Ball's vibrant, hand-knitted shawls and scarves. Nancy, a self-declared "compulsive knitter," chose over 30 of her amazing creations for the display, which runs through February 11.

Reimbursement Requests - Church expenses that need to be reimbursed can be sent to ap@whfirstchurch.org.

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. We 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](#).

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

January Reach Out: Fern Street Food Ministry

"The mission of the Fern Street Food Ministry is to alleviate hunger in our community. They strive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those experiencing food insecurity, to significantly improve their access to healthy food and to serve all in the spirit of love, honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every person." Their programs include The Foodshare truck every other Monday; a community kitchen every other Monday to provide a free hot breakfast; they deliver sandwiches weekly to the House of Bread; they provide backpacks weekly filled with food to students who need weekend food support during the school year. They also run a Food Pantry on the third Saturday of every month to provide non-perishables, fresh produce, frozen meat, and dairy to qualified recipients.

To donate online thru the church, click [HERE](#). Click donate button and choose "Reach Out Monthly Collection" from drop down. You can read more and donate directly at: <https://westhartforduu.org/fern-street-food-ministry/>.

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.

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, so 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 - sarah.kopp@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

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Contact:** general.mail@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605