



# Sunday Notes

February 4, 2024



## Looking Towards Sunday

"Whoever you are, you are human. Wherever you are, you live in the world, which is just waiting for you to notice the holiness in it. So welcome to your own priesthood, practiced at the altar of your own life. The good news is that you have everything you need to begin." -- Barbara Brown Taylor from An Altar in the World

Loved ones:

On Sunday, the Hot Cat Jazz Band returns to First Church to add some swing to that worshipful thing we do. If you've heard these cats before, you know what I'm talking about. If you don't know, come and behold!

Last time we were together, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, and he cast out an unclean spirit. Everybody was amazed by his authoritative ability to give directions to demons. This week, we'll pick up where we left off. "As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John... [and Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law...and they brought to Jesus bunches of believers who needed help. And Jesus cured many and cast out more demons.]" Amazing!

In the morning, the Savior stole away to a secluded spot to save his own spirit. Which is equally amazing! The sermon studies that strategy. It's called "An Unpopulated Place for Prayer". I'll say more when I see you.

Blessings meantime,

Rev. Fredd

## Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers this week were donated by Pam Hastings, Linda Hastings Rosania, and family in loving memory of Richard and Lorain Hastings, Richard Hastings III, Mr. and Mrs. R. Cleveland Hastings, Marcia Hastings Peck, & Charles and Lucy Jaworski.

## Please join us for the following Lenten activities at First Church:

- February 13 - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium
- February 14 - Ash Wednesday Service at 6 p.m. in the Chapel
- February 18 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent - 10 a.m. worship service
- February 20 - Open Chapel - 5 to 6 p.m. in the Chapel
- February 25 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent - 10 a.m. worship service
- March 3 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent - 10 a.m. worship service with Communion
- March 10 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent - 10 a.m. worship service
- March 17 - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent - 10 a.m. worship service followed by Soup and Sharing at 11:15 a.m.
- March 24 - Palm Sunday - 10 a.m. worship service with music and palm fronds
- March 29 - Good Friday - 6 p.m. service in the Meeting House & Sandwich Making at 9 a.m. in the auditorium.
- March 31 - Easter Sunday - 10 a.m. worship service featuring a brass quintet

\*Continue reading Sunday Notes or click [HERE](#) for more information and detailed descriptions of upcoming events.

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## 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 – This Sunday!**

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's new lady is a life-size plastic woman. On the advice of a doctor, his family and the rest of the community go along with his delusion. Rated PG-13; watch trailer [here](#).

### **Mission Trip Plans Are Underway!**

Informational Meeting Sunday, February 11 at noon in the JPW Library

Jennifer is planning a mission trip to Rhode Island to work with [Incredible Days](#), a service planning organization that partners with the Southern New England United Church of Christ (SNEUCC). The details are still being worked out, but we're planning to stay at the [Irons Homestead](#), and we'll volunteer in soup kitchens and homeless shelters in [Greater Providence](#). The trip is scheduled for Friday (afternoon), April 19 – Sunday, April 21. Students age 12 and up, and any interested adults, are welcome to attend an informational meeting Sunday, February 11 at noon in the JPW Library.

### **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.

### **Introducing "OPEN CHAPEL": sacred space for quiet reflection and prayer**

Beginning on Tuesday, February 20, the Spirit Team will offer an alternative way to experience Lent. We are calling it "Open Chapel." Although it will take place in our chapel, it is not a typical worship service. There is no sermon or singing, or even talking, although you may hear a whisper or soft music now and then. Simply put, Open Chapel offers a still and quiet place for silent reflection and prayer.

Open Chapel was inspired by the need for stillness amid the tumult of our world and the demands of our daily lives. Open Chapel welcomes you to come in to sit quietly for just a little while or for the whole hour. You may choose to leave a written prayer request in our prayer basket or pick up a Lenten card on which to reflect.

Join us on February 20 between 5:00 - 6:00 PM to experience the sacred silence of Lent.

Information on future dates to follow.

## 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](mailto: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.

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## Announcements

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### FCAYC February Love Collection

The First Church Academy is collecting items to be donated to South Park Inn. Items needed include **Everyday Supplies**: laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, white cotton towels and face cloths. **Housewarming Baskets**: pots and pans sets, dishes, silverware. **Retail Gift Cards**: Stop & Shop, Big Y, Target, Walmart. For more information about the South Park Inn or to see the complete list of needed items, click [HERE](#). For more info., contact Dawne Quinn at: [dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org](mailto:dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org) or 860-233-9605 ext. 133. Thank you for your support!

**Do you have a talent for working with children?** Do you love arts and crafts? The Faith Formation Work Group is looking for help in our church school. Hours are 9 to 12 every Sunday (September through June 16), plus prep time during the week. See Jennifer if interested or email her at [jpwwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org).

### 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](mailto:amander14@gmail.com).

### 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

*JPWL Gallery, through February 11*

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.

### Community Update

The Town of West Hartford will hold a project update meeting on West Hartford Center streetscape improvements on Wednesday, February 7 from 8:30 to 10 a.m., at the Town Hall Auditorium, 50 South Main St. This meeting is for abutting business owners, business managers, and interested members of the public to review design options for improvements to LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue as a result of feedback from previous meetings.

For information about the West Hartford Center Streetscape Improvements, email [WHCenterPlan@westhartfordct.gov](mailto:WHCenterPlan@westhartfordct.gov) or [DuaneM@westhartfordct.gov](mailto:DuaneM@westhartfordct.gov).

### 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](http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request).

## February Reach Out: South Park Inn

South Park Inn's Emergency Shelter provides a safe, temporary residence to individuals that are literally homeless. The shelter welcomes individuals from all walks of life and has space to accommodate up to 85 men, women, and children every night. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, never closing their doors.

Their emergency shelter, veterans' programs, respite, and supportive housing provide personalized support to each of the men, women, and children that enter their doors. South Park Inn offers many services, including nutritious meals, personal hygiene supplies, laundry facilities, and bus passes for transportation. South Park Inn's goal is to provide a safe, temporary place to stay as individuals identify the support and opportunities that lead to their own long-term housing solutions.

For more information: [www.southparkinn.org](http://www.southparkinn.org). To donate on line thru the church: [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at: [www.southparkinn.org](http://www.southparkinn.org). Thank you for your support!

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

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:Communications@whfirstchurch.org)
- Joy Taylor, Communications, [Communications2@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:Communications2@whfirstchurch.org)

**Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Contact:** [general.mail@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:general.mail@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605