



Sunday Notes

March 10, 2024



Looking Towards Sunday

Loved ones:

This Sunday, FBI agent Neville Flynn (played by Samuel L. Jackson) boards a flight from Hawaii to Los Angeles, escorting a key witness to trial. While on-board, a hit man releases a crate of deadly serpents in an attempt to silence the witness. I'll say more when...wait...hang on a second.

My apologies. Please forgive the slight schedule snag.

This Sunday, the featured scripture selection is Numbers 21:4-9. The text describes a stage in the Israelites' departure from Egypt – their detour around the land of Edom on the Red Sea road. The congregation complained to Moses about the challenging conditions. The storyteller says, *"...the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died."*

Ouch! Impatience and disobedience can be deadly. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **Snakes on a Plain.**

Be blessed. Be a blessing.

Rev. Fredd

Today's Altar Flower Dedication

The altar flowers this week are donated by Paul and Bev Truebig in loving memory of Edmund Augustus Sayer, Bev's grandfather.

Call to the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Congregation

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, March 10, 2024 starting at approximately 11:15 a.m.

This meeting is called to transact the following items of business:

To consider and vote on the minutes of the Annual Meeting of First Church held on March 12, 2023.

To consider and vote on the proposed slate of Officers, Team Leaders and Team Members for First Church for the coming year.

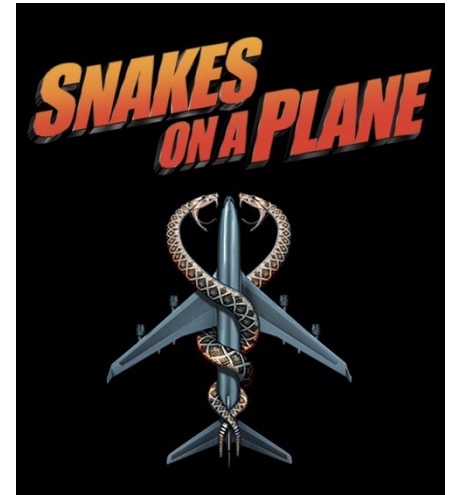
In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on February 20, 2024

Linda Bronstein, Secretary

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

- March 10 – 4th Sunday in Lent – 10 a.m. worship service
- March 12 – Open Chapel – 12 to 1 p.m. in the Chapel
- March 17 – 5th Sunday in Lent – 10 a.m. worship service followed by Soup and Sharing at 11:15 a.m.
- March 19 – Open Chapel – 5 to 6 p.m. in the Chapel
- 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 & Open Chapel from 12 to 1 p.m.
- March 31 – Easter Sunday – 10 a.m. worship service featuring a brass quintet followed by an Easter egg hunt



Upcoming Events

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!

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 to explore how the stories, sayings, and teachings of the Bible speak to us individually and collectively on our journeys of faith. No advanced preparation is necessary. All are welcome to come with open minds and hearts! No registration necessary.

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

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. Our weekly schedule will be flexible, and we hope you will find a time that is convenient. Join us to experience the sacred silence of Lent.

Tuesday, March 12 -- Noon to 1 p.m.

Tuesday, March 19 -- 5 to 6 p.m.

Friday, March 29 -- Noon to 1 p.m.

One Great Hour of Sharing, THIS Sunday, March 10

This special Lenten mission offering supports disaster and refugee/immigration and development throughout the world and the opportunity to share God's love with our neighbors. This month make your contribution through the Church Website Giving Page by clicking on One Great Hour of Sharing in the drop-down menu or Text OGHS to (860) 222-7870 or using the special pew collection envelope. The need is great and so is our calling.

Soup and Sharing: Clean Heart Conversations

March 17 at 11:15 a.m. in the Auditorium

We'll engage in guided small-group discussion based on David's desire for cleansing and a new and right spirit (Psalm 51:10). Soup (and bread) will be served! Sign-up [HERE](#) in advance or drop-in that morning.

Faith on Film - A March matinee: "Women Talking"

Wednesday, March 20 at 1 p.m. in the JPW Library.

Based on Miriam Toews novel of the same name, which itself is based on true events that occurred in an isolated Mennonite community in Bolivia. "Women Talking" follows a group of American Mennonite women who have been abused by the men in their colony. As they discover and share their experiences of oppression, and discuss the ethics of their faith, they slowly begin to imagine a world free of the horror inflicted upon them. [Watch the trailer here.](#)

JPWL Gallery Talk, *Expressing Faith on Canvas – a Form of Prayer, Reflection, and Therapy* w Aida Mansoor

Thursday, March 21 at 2:30 p.m.

The JPWL Gallery invites you to a gallery talk with Chaplain Aida Mansoor, whose calligraphy paintings are currently on exhibit. Aida is the Director of Field Education at Hartford International University. She also serves in the community and works with the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut and the Islamic Association of Greater Hartford.

Arts in the Center Series presents: Eeyou Istchee: The Music of Andrew Thomson

Friday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel. Freewill offering.

Andrew Thomson, ASCAP, (b.1988) has earned international reputation as a composer, performer, and educator, and has collaborated with a variety of organizations, ranging from the internationally acclaimed choirs of Joyful Noise, Inc. to the United States Marine Corps. Andrew began music at age four with voice and piano, adding percussion shortly thereafter. In 2006, Andrew enlisted into the U.S. Marines as a musician (and rifleman) and became the youngest member of the composition and arranging staff at the Armed Forces School of Music at age 18. Following his enlistment, Andrew earned a Bachelors of Music in composition and percussion with a minor in anthropology (Native American studies) from Ithaca College, under the primary tutelage of Gordon Stout. Andrew currently teaches percussion in northwestern Connecticut, and continues to give clinics, recitals, and masterclasses around the country.

First Church Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

Easter Sunday, March 31 Following the worship service.

All are welcome, and BYOB (Bring Your Own Basket)! Questions? See Jennifer

DO GOOD Friday - March 29 at 9:30 a.m. in the Auditorium

On Good Friday, you might have a day off from school or work, so how about taking time to honor the good work of Jesus, who shared his life and love with everyone he met? We're calling it DO GOOD Friday! Join us to make go bagged lunches and Easter/Spring cards for Loaves & Fishes; bake brownies for the lunches; and stuff eggs for our annual Easter egg hunt. All Ages are welcome to participate – and if you can't make it, please consider making a donation toward the lunches! See Jennifer for more information, or contact her at jwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org. Let's Do Good Friday on March 29!

What should GHIAA work on next? The answer will come out of small-group meetings where people are invited to share a story about an experience that happened to them or someone close to them -- something that made them think, "That's not right!" or "There ought to be a law against that!" The more people who share stories, the better chance we have of zeroing in on the most important issues that need our attention. [Click here to register](#) for one of the upcoming meetings. First Church is hosting several small-group meetings at First Church on April 14, 4:00-5:30pm, along with our partners Congregation Beth Israel and Westminster Presbyterian Church. If you can't make it on April 14, choose a session on another date, at another local GHIAA congregation. Any questions? Contact Linda Bronstein or Terry Schmitt.

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 Mondays from 12-1:30. Bring a bag lunch; beverages and desserts are provided. They are reading [*On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Growing Old*](#) by Parker Palmer. "This book is not for elders only. It was written to encourage adults of all ages to explore the way their lives are unfolding. It's...a set of meditations in prose and poetry that turn the prism on the meaning(s) of one's life, refracting new light at every turn." Tap [here](#) to join the group.

Food for Thought's next meeting is Tuesday April 2 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. (***Please note the time change!***) to discuss [*The Measure*](#) by Nikki Erlick: "Today, when you open your front door, waiting for you is a small wooden box. This box holds your fate inside: the answer to the exact number of years you will live...Imagine waking up tomorrow with the opportunity learn when you will die. Would you want to know the date, or would you prefer to remain blissfully ignorant?" (Amazon) Tap [here](#) to join this group.

Announcements

Dear Friends,

After weeks of prayerful reflection, I realize that I am called to return full-time to the ministries of the John P. Webster Library. Thus, I am writing to let you know that I will be stepping back from my position as Director of Faith Formation, effective April 8. It is my hope and intention to work with the Faith Formation Work Group to make this a smooth transition, and to continue building a vibrant family ministry at First Church.

It has been a true joy to work with our community's families and children; I cherish many tender moments from the past several months! I want to express my gratitude to the Faith Formation Work Group, the Coordinating Team, and the families of First Church for your steadfast support and encouragement. I look forward to what we will next accomplish together! In Peace, Jennifer deSimas

WELCOME CHILDREN & CARE-GIVERS!

Start your Sundays at First Church in the Meeting House/Sanctuary Playground or together in the pews. After the Message for All Ages, children should follow Ms. Jennifer to church school or stay with their parents during worship.

- PreK – Grade 1 – Room 404. Teachers will lead students to the Auditorium after Sunday School.
- Grades 2-5 – Room 406. Students will be dismissed to the Auditorium after Sunday School.

Care-givers, you may also watch the livestream of the service on the large screen in the church library (beneath the sanctuary), which also has a beautiful children's reading/play area! Join us for coffee afterwards!

New Class for Grade 6 and Up - Starts this Sunday, March 10 in Room 407

Michael Protos is leading a new class for junior high and high school students. They will meet twice a month on the 4th floor. On weeks when there is no class meeting, students are invited to the PreK-Grade 1 class to assist with reading, crafts, and games. See Michael or Jennifer with questions.

Easter Baskets For Our Covenant to Care Children

It is almost Easter and that means Easter Baskets. Please consider signing up to donate a filled Easter basket. We will provide the basket, filler/grass, cellophane bag, and bow. You need to fill the basket with the suggested items from the list we will provide. Sign-ups will start March 3. Please return filled baskets by Palm Sunday, March 24.

For any questions, please contact Maryanne Barry at (860-593-7248 or maryricbarry@gmail.com) or Diane Bohman at (860-490-5908 or dmbohman@comcast.net).

Easter Donations

This is a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one! Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon donations can be made online [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) for a printable form and return it to the church office with your payment. If you wish to have your donation listed in the Sunday Bulletin, please make your donation by Sunday, March 24. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah at sarah.kopp@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.

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.

Lenten Devotionals

Lenten Devotionals are available at the entrances to the Meeting House and in the Rotunda entrance hallway. This year's devotional "Bent" was written by the Still-Speaking Writers Group of the United Church of Christ. *"Jesus modeled flexibility: hardship and persecution bent but didn't break him. Change and challenge strengthened his ministry. Impossible situations yielded to healing and release."* You may also access a daily devotional from the United Church of Christ [here](#).

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.

March Reach Out: My Sisters' Place

Every day, throughout the Greater Hartford area, there are hundreds of people who have found themselves homeless due to domestic violence, eviction, unemployment, or mental illness – the overwhelming majority often women and children. My Sisters' Place mission is committed to ending homelessness by empowering women, families, and others in Greater Hartford to achieve independence and stability in their community by providing housing and supportive services. My Sisters' Place provides a comprehensive array of outreach and services that is unmatched by any other organization in the Hartford, Connecticut region. From safe housing and education to employment and empowerment, My Sister Place provides real, life-changing benefits to clients.

For more information please visit: [My Sisters' Place, Inc. \(sistersplacect.org\)](http://sistersplacect.org) or call 860-895-6629.

To donate on line thru the church, click [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at: [My Sisters' Place, Inc. \(sistersplacect.org\)](http://sistersplacect.org).

Thank you for your support.

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).

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