



Sunday Notes

April 14, 2024



Looking Towards Sunday

"All we have to believe is our senses: the tools we use to perceive the world, our sight, our touch, our memory. If they lie to us, then nothing can be trusted."

— Neil Gaiman

Loved ones:

Speaking of back-to-back blessings, we will celebrate the sacrament of baptism two Sundays in a row – consecutive championships...et hem...I mean, consecutive christenings. The first little fellow is flying all the way from the United Kingdom to worship with us. Which means that First Church has become an international community of faith. Unofficially, of course. But, also...yes!

The featured scripture reading on the third Sunday of Easter is another appearance story (Luke 24:36b-48). The biblical writer testifies that Jesus stood among the eleven disciples and that they were terrified -- they thought that they were seeing a ghost. Jesus asked them: "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" As I mentioned last week, Thomas the Twin was not unique in his disbelief.

The writer goes on to describe a sensory Easter experience. As far as I can tell, Jesus offered the disciples evidence of the Resurrection by appealing to their ability to see, touch, hear, smell and taste. I'll say more Sunday morning. The sermon is entitled: **Five Senses Inform Your Faith**.

Be blessed. Be a blessing.

Rev. Fredd



Upcoming Events

If you are interested in joining First Church, please plan to attend an information session for prospective new members following worship **This Sunday, April 14 at 11:15 a.m.** We expect to receive new members into the life of the church during the 10 a.m. worship service on **Sunday, April 28**. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.

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, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**, 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.

Middle Schoolers! Students in grades 6-8 are invited to meet in Room 407 on **April 21** for a new class that focuses on storytelling and conversation about biblical events and people. Why do we remember these stories? What do they mean to us, today? The class meets once or twice per month; we're hoping to meet more often as we go along. There will be snacks! So bring your morning beverage, your open heart, and yourself upstairs after the Message for All Ages.

Chamber Music Concert Series

Sunday, April 28 from 3 to 4 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. The concert is free to the public. A free will offering will be received at the door.

Walk Against Hunger

Walk with or donate to the First Church West Hartford Striders in the annual Connecticut Foodshare Walk Against Hunger **Saturday, May 4** at Dunkin Park, Hartford. Start by going here: <https://ctfoodshare.org>, click on "Register today!" at top of page and choose "Register" or "Donate Now" and enter "First Church West Hartford Striders". Details to follow regarding carpooling, etc. Your donations will help Connecticut Foodshare raise awareness of the problem of hunger in the community.

Celebrating Moms & MOMs (Models of Motherliness): A Luncheon & Tea

For Moms and "Like a Moms"

Saturday, May 11 from 12 to 2 p.m. in the Auditorium, Cost: \$30 per person

Enjoy some downtime with us Saturday, May 11! Savor a little time off and enjoy a catered meal with a heavenly selection of desserts! Listen to the singular jazz sounds of Sandy Lindop and enjoy conversation with other moms and caregivers.

Our speaker will be Janice Olson, certified Spiritual Director and founder of Conscious Contact, a space for women to explore their spiritual life to find personal meaning and direction. Gluten-free and vegetarian options are available.

[Register here](#). See Nina Lawrence or Jennifer with questions.

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!

New Class! Exploring Truth in the Great Biblical Myths: Genesis 1-11

Sunday mornings, April 7 through June 2 from 9 to 9:45 a.m. - World Friendship Room (#303)

Do you wonder what's behind the stories we find in the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis? What were – and are! - the truths the storytellers wanted us to understand? Did God really create the Earth in seven days? From the two Creation stories, to Adam and Eve, to Cain and Abel, to Noah and his ark, to the Tower of Babel, these ancient myths compel us to ask questions and reflect on their meanings for our individual and collective lives. Join us to explore these eternally relevant stories on nine Sunday mornings before worship. Our conversations will be led by Rev. Tom Carr. See Jennifer with questions.

Book Group News

The church's John P. Webster Library coordinates and sponsors two book groups that meet regularly 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 jpwlbrary@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. They are reading [On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Growing Old](#) by Parker Palmer. Tap [here](#) to join the group.

Food for Thought is reading [The Guncle](#) by Steven Rowley. "To the outside world, Patrick O'Hara is a former sitcom star. But to Maisie and Grant, his brother's kids, he's Gay Uncle Patrick (GUP, for short). He *adores* Maisie and Grant! But in terms of caretaking and relating to two children, no matter how adorable, Patrick is overwhelmed. When tragedy strikes and Patrick finds himself taking on the role of primary guardian, he has no idea what to expect, despite having a set of 'Guncle Rules' ready to go. Quickly realizing that parenting--even if temporary--isn't solved with treats and jokes, Patrick's eyes are opened to a new sense of responsibility, and the realization that, sometimes, even being larger than life means you're unfailingly human. *The Guncle* is a moving tribute to the power of love, patience, and family in even the most trying of times" (Amazon.com). [Tap here](#) to join this group.

Announcements

THANK YOU, everyone who was able to participate in Do Good Friday. We:

- Made 90 bagged lunches (ham sandwich, homemade cookies, applesauce, juice) in 30 minutes for Loaves & Fishes!
- Created cards to include in each lunch bag.
- Baked five batches of brownies for Loaves and Fishes to use as needed.
- Made a "no-sew" fleece blanket in less than an hour by just eight people!
- Stuffed over 300+ plastic eggs for the Easter morning egg hunt, which was enjoyed by over 30 children from throughout the community.

Warms the heart, doesn't it?  Thank you for your time and support! —Jennifer

WeHa Grows, the JPWL Seed Library, is ready for spring!

Thanks to generous seed donations from the UConn Master Gardener Program and Ocean State Job Lot, we have a variety of flower, fruit, herb, and vegetable seeds for your gardens. Stop by the JPW Library or the Sunday Bookmobile and "seed" for yourself! Do you need some tips about starting plants from seed? Check out [How to Start Seeds Indoors: The Complete Guide](#) from The Spruce.com.

Altar Flower Donations Needed!

Sponsoring altar flowers is a meaningful way to honor or remember loved ones and is also part of our Inreach ministry.

We have the following spring and summer dates available: 5/26, 7/7, 7/21, 7/28, 8/18, and 8/25. Please contact the church office for details at 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.

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.

April Reach Out: Journey Home

Journey Home has spent more than a decade committed to ending chronic homelessness in the Greater Hartford region. They have been able in less than two years to match 72% of those experiencing chronic homelessness to housing, which means they have been housed or will be housed very soon.

A Hand Up, a program of Journey Home, works to support those who are currently transitioning from homelessness to housing by connecting them to donations of household goods and furniture. Together they are filling a huge gap because clients are often moving into housing after experiencing homelessness with nothing but what they can carry on their back. Yet, many people have excess furniture and household items in their homes without a place to put them other than the landfills. Together with your support they will be able to end homelessness. Thank you for your support!

For more information: Journey Home, 255 Main Street 2nd floor, Hartford Ct 06106

Tel: 860-808-0336, website <https://journeyhomect.org/>.

To donate online thru the church: [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at: <https://journeyhomect.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.

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 - 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. and Friday, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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