



Sunday Notes

April 28, 2024



Looking Towards Sunday

"The story of the golden calf is about the human tendency to believe that human-made [objects] can resolve our fear, anxiety...despair, and hopelessness. The calf was supposed to be a conduit of grace. But God's work of shalom is about people [serving] on God's behalf, so God can do mighty works through them." – C. Andrew Doyle

Loved ones:

As previously announced, Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree will offer the sermon this Sunday in belated recognition of Earth Day. The biblical basis for the sermon is the story of the golden calf (Exodus 32:1-6). When I asked her to tell me about her topic, she said: "I'll be addressing the global climate crisis through the lens of our devotion to the things we have created and the depths we go to avoid recognizing the truth -- the [false] realities we create to protect that devotion." She'll say more soon enough.



Though Rev. Davida is familiar to many folks at First Church, here's a brief bio: She grew up in Connecticut and at Silver Lake Camp where she experienced her call to ministry before anyone had told her "girls can't be ministers". Educated at Andover Newton Theological School, she served in campus ministries in greater Hartford; founded the Prudence Crandall Center in New Britain 50 years ago; served as parish pastor; and then spent 23 years as a Conference Minister (14 years in the Connecticut Conference). Presently, she lives at Seabury and works full time on issues of climate and democracy through leadership in Third Act Connecticut.

Also...we'll receive nine new members into the life of the church. Come and see!

Be blessed. Be a blessing.

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

Our altar flowers this week were donated by Carolyn Lind in loving memory of Peter Lind.

Light the Steeple

Our steeple this week was lit by Lisa Carl in loving memory of her mother, Maryett Chapin Carl.

~ And~

Our steeple was lit in loving memory of Peter C. Grassilli by Nancy Grassilli and his daughters, Lora and Amy.

Upcoming Events

Reception of New Members – This Sunday, April 28

We will receive new members into the life of the church during the 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, April 28. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email at fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.

Chamber Music Concert Series

This 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.

Faithful Planning - 2nd Session

May 1st: The second session of the Faithful Planning program is scheduled for next Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. Dr. Kevin Baran, the Hospice Director for Mclean Home, will provide information regarding hospice and palliative care options and the importance for families to know the desires and wishes of their elder relatives. You can also learn more about "DNR." You are welcome to attend this session or the other remaining sessions:

May 8th: Attorney Rebecca Hajosy will provide an update regarding recent law changes and legal matters, along with what should be included in your Estate Planning.

May 15th: Chris Molloy the Funeral Director from Molloy Funeral Home will provide information regarding how a funeral is planned along with what input is necessary as well as how much advance planning can or should be done.

Rescheduled – Gallery Talk

Expressing Faith on Canvas – a Form of Prayer, Reflection, and Therapy with artist Aida Mansoor

Thursday, May 2 at 1 p.m.

The JPWL Gallery invites you to our rescheduled gallery talk with Chaplain Aida Mansoor, whose calligraphy paintings are 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.

Please Note: There will be NO FIRST SUNDAY BREAKFAST in May.

The merry cooks and servers will be in the Walk Against Hunger on May 4, so they will need a Sabbath rest.

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.

World Labyrinth Day

Every year, on the first Saturday of May, people all over the globe participate in World Labyrinth Day. The First Church labyrinth is built into the front lawn at 12 South Main Street and is based on the classic eleven-circuit labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, France – a labyrinth which has been in use for over 800 years. Although the labyrinth was designed with only one path that leads to the center, recent restorative efforts to clear overgrown grass have revealed a few breaks in the pathway. Nevertheless, you are invited to walk the labyrinth at a time of your choosing on World Labyrinth Day.

Come Anytime, But Please Be Quiet

Labyrinth walking is an ancient practice that has been used by many different faiths for spiritual contemplation and prayer. The relaxation and the beauty of the practice is that the path will lead you in and out, so while at first glance it may appear to be a "maze," there is no puzzle to solve as you walk. Trust the path.

Reflect, Breathe, Walk, Repeat.

Labyrinth walking is meant to give you time for reflection or prayer, and it reminds you to be in the moment and pay attention to your breath and footsteps. There is no right or wrong way to do this, although it is always practiced in silence. The amount of time spent walking inward, finding peace in the center, and journeying outward is very personal and may be different each time you experience a labyrinth walk.

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

[Registration](#) is underway for this special event in honor of all moms and "Models of Motherliness!" Enjoy some downtime and a catered meal with a heavenly selection of desserts! Musician Sandy Lindop will entertain us with an assortment of classic jazz standards and modern tunes. Janice Olson, certified Spiritual Director and founder of [Conscious Contact](#), will offer us directed discussion time and hands-on activities. Gluten-free and vegetarian options are available. [Register here](#). See Nina Lawrence or Jennifer with questions.

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

Sunday mornings thru June 2 in the 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? Join us to explore these eternally relevant questions! 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 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. This Monday, they finish discussing Parker Palmer's *On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Growing Old*. Their next book is Henri Nouwen's classic meditation, [The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming](#). "A chance encounter with a reproduction of Rembrandt's 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' catapulted Nouwen on a spiritual adventure. Here he shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation of the chain of events that enabled him to redefine and claim his vocation late in his life" (Amazon). Tap [here](#) to join the group.
- Food for Thought will discuss [The Guncle](#) by Steven Rowley on Tuesday, May 7. [Tap here](#) to join this group.

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!

Announcements

High School Seniors: The Frank Roswell Fuller Scholarship Fund is now accepting applications for 2024-25.

The Fuller Scholarship is a renewable grant administered by Trinity College in cooperation with Bank of America. It was established by Hartford native Frank Roswell Fuller (1873-1957), who had a long and successful career in the brokerage business. Mr. Fuller wanted to help "needy, deserving" students to obtain the education that he had not been able to enjoy himself. In order to meet the eligibility requirements for a Fuller Scholarship you must be:

1. Able to demonstrate financial need (determined by filing the FAFSA).
2. Currently in your senior year at a high school located within Hartford County.
3. Maintaining an average of 70 or better (or its equivalent).
4. A member of the UCC/Congregational Church and "professed to be of the Congregational faith".
5. Planning to attend a fully accredited four-year college as a candidate for a baccalaureate degree.

[Click here](#) for more information, and to apply.

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!

What's new at the John P. Webster Library?

We have many new books on the shelves. Come in and see for yourself! We are open 9-12 Sundays, and 9-5 Monday – Thursday. Here's a peek at some recent acquisitions.

- [The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy](#) by Jim Wallis
- [James](#) by Percival Everett
- [The Cat Man of Aleppo](#) by Karim Shamsi-Basha and Irene Latham. Illustrated by Yuko Shimizu
- [God's Big Picture Bible Storybook: 140 Connecting Bible Stories of God's Faithful Promises](#) by N. T. Wright. Illustrated by Helena Perez Garcia

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.

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](#).

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.

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](https://bit.ly/FCprayer_request) or you can donate directly at: <https://journeyhomect.org/>

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

Four Ways to Give (besides Sunday Morning Offertory)

1. **Give by Text:** Text "GIVE" to (860) 222-7870. Choose the fund you would like to donate to and follow the text prompts to enter your credit or debit card and follow all instructions. It's amazingly fast and simple!
2. **Give Online:** To make an online donation with your credit or debit card, click DONATE in menu, type amount and choose the designation from drop-down. To set up recurring payments, or to use ACH, login to "My First Church Login" and select GIVE and follow prompts.
3. **Give by Mail:** Checks can be mailed to First Church West Hartford: 12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107. Please indicate the fund, of your choice, in the memo line of your check.
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 the 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. and Friday, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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