



Sunday Notes

November 5, 2023



Looking Towards Sunday

In the United Church of Christ, the match between pastor and congregation is made possible, in part, by virtue of an organized search and call process. It works something like online dating – both parties prepare a profile for circulation; decide whether to make contact; and, assuming it feels right to proceed, they arrange to meet in person. Then mutual faith and Fate may collaborate to orchestrate an authentic connection.

That's what happened a year ago (16-October) when I was called to First Church as Associate Pastor. At present, the Selection Committee is considering my candidacy for the settled Senior Pastor role. The committee earnestly invites your input. In fact, one of the committee members recently asked if I would consider sharing part of my pastoral profile publicly in order to describe my "journey" and provide a sense of how I'm moved by the Spirit. The hope is that sharing those things might help define my transition from Associate to Senior Pastor.

That's a fair request. I'm happy to oblige! And rather than print it on paper, I'd like to "preach" it from the pulpit on Sunday morning. The featured scripture is from the good news according to John, wherein Jesus brings Lazarus back from the brink. The reflection is entitled: **Started from the Bottom**. I'll say more when I see you.



Be blessed and be a blessing meantime,
Rev. Fredd

Today's Altar Flower Dedication

Our altar flowers this week were donated by Barbara and Courtland Lewis in loving memory of their mothers, Jean Amols and Nancy Lewis.

Light the Steeple

Our steeple this week was lit by the First Church Staff in loving memory of Barbara Lewis.

Stewardship Sunday is November 12!

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign is underway and pledge cards have been mailed out. You can bring your completed pledge card to worship on November 12 or mail it to the office beforehand. You can also make your pledge online by filling out the online pledge card [HERE](#). If you would like to view the letter from the Stewardship Team, Click [HERE](#).

Daylight Savings Time ends this weekend. Remember to set your clocks back!

Upcoming Events

Please join the Selection Committee for coffee and conversation following worship on Sunday, November 5

We'll meet in the Chapel around 11:20-11:30 a.m. and engage in an open discussion regarding the candidacy of Rev. Fredd Ward as our next settled Senior Pastor for First Church.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you. – Selection Committee members.

To view a copy of the recent mailing from our Moderator, please click [HERE](#).

Taizé Service - Sunday, November 5 at 5 p.m. in the Chapel

Join First Church West Hartford on November 5 at 5 p.m. in the Chapel for a contemplative, calming Taizé Service. This service will be Lay-Lead with moments for silent and musical meditation. Come celebrate the season of Thanksgiving and prepare for the Christmas holiday with music and mindfulness. There will be other opportunities to worship with us later in an alternative way later in the year and in early 2024!

If you are interested in joining First Church, please plan to attend an information session for prospective new members following worship on **Sunday, November 12 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, November 26**. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.

Faith on Film: A Soldier's Story - Friday, November 17 at 7 p.m. in the JPW Library

Join Rev. Fredd in the JPW Library for the film and follow-up discussion.

Toward the tail-end of WWII, a Black Army investigator travels to a remote Louisiana military base to look into the mysterious murder of a Black sergeant unit whose troops hated him for his harsh treatment. Facing an uncooperative chain of command and fearful Black troops, he must battle with deceit and prejudice to find the truth. Was the crime an act of extreme bigotry or could the killer be a soldier in the victim's own unit?

Chamber Music - Sunday, November 19 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel

The Chamber Music Series is a new series at First Church, designed to bring great music performances to an audience in an intimate setting. The ensemble features oboe, bassoon, and piano, as well as violin and cello. The concert is free to the public. A Free Will Offering will be received at the door.

Follow signs from the parking lot up the stairs, around to the front entrance of the Chapel.

Coffee and Conversation - Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

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

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! 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. The group is currently discussing [*If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*](#) by John Pavlovitz. They'll start their next book, Thich Nhat Hanh's classic [*Living Buddha, Living Christ*](#), on November 13.

Food for Thought, led by JPW Library staff, meets this Tuesday, November 7 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the JPW Library to discuss Trevor Noah's [*Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*](#). Join us if you've read it! Bring a snack or dinner; refreshments and desserts will be provided. Their next book is [*Everything Beautiful in Its Time: Seasons of Love and Loss*](#) by Jenna Bush Hagar. In this heartfelt tribute, the former first daughter and granddaughter shares moving, funny stories about her beloved grandparents and the wisdom they passed on that has shaped her life. A wonderful celebration of the enduring power of family and an exploration of the things that truly matter most (Amazon review).

Faith Formation Notes and News

Welcome, Children!

- Start your Sundays at First Church in the Meeting House/Sanctuary in the Playground or in the pew with your family. After the Message for All Ages, follow Ms. Jennifer to church school or remain in the sanctuary during worship.
- PreK – Grade 1 -- Community Room (#232), downstairs from the sanctuary
- Grades 2-5 -- Room #406.
- Infants and toddlers -- Nursery, Room #216 (parents, please inform Jennifer by the Friday before worship if you will require Nursery care)
- New Option! – watch the livestream of the service on the large screen in the church library (beneath the sanctuary).

Sunday Bible Study – Please Note the Time Change!

Meets Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:45 a.m.

Join Rev. Tom Carr each Sunday before worship for an in-depth look at the Bible. *All are welcome!*

World Fellowship Room (Room 303). No Charge – Sponsored by the JPW Library

Announcements

Thank you!

A big thank you to Dany Carrier, our custodian, for meticulously repainting our parking lot lines! Nice job Dany!

Thanksgiving Baskets

Our food collection for Thanksgiving baskets is here! If you would like to help, please bring in a food item, using the following guide:

If your last name begins with...you'll bring:

A-D: Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Spanish Food (i.e. Goya Products)

E-H: Rice and potatoes

I-L: Breakfast cereals and juice boxes

M-P: Canned fruits and vegetables

Q-T: Bread and roll mix; stuffing mix

U-Z: Juice, tea and coffee

Please bring items to church and place them in a Food for Friends barrel by November 19th. We will use these items to fill the baskets. We will also be collecting Stop and Shop gift cards, which each family will receive along with their basket of food items. We are looking for volunteers to fill and organize the baskets on November 19th after worship.

If you can help out or have any questions please contact Maryanne Barry at maryricbarry@gmail.com or Diane Bohman at dmbohman@comcast.net Thank you! Maryanne and Diane

Festival of Trees - Planning for the Eighth West Hartford Festival of Trees is underway!

Please consider donating a decorated tree or if you have an affiliation with a business/organization, please ask if they might consider donating a tree or gift card. The Festival of Trees event takes place during West Hartford's annual Holiday Stroll, on November 30. Register your tree on the church website [HERE](#). You will get a chance to volunteer that week with Festival set-up, to work during the event, and to assist with clean up and tree distribution afterwards.

Thank you! The F.O.T. Committee.

Light The Steeple in honor of Loved One

The "Light the Steeple" campaign is a way to dedicate a week of the lighting of the steeple to a loved one. Similar to making a flower donation we will 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](#).

Covenant to Care Hat & Mitten Drive

The Annual Hat and Mitten Drive is underway and will continue through the end of the year. Please bring new or gently worn mittens, hats, scarves, and other winter clothing for children through our Covenant to Care partners.

Marked boxes will be available in the Narthex and outside the auditorium to collect your donations. Any new or used winter outerwear or clothing in good condition is welcome.

Google Review

Do you like First Church? Would you take a minute and write a review? We like stars, so give us 5 if you really like us. Even better, write a comment too. Click here: <https://g.page/r/CSKC8GKwjZ8EEBo/review>. Thank you in advance!

Five Wishes Booklets Available at the JPW Library

Five Wishes is a living will in which you consider your personal, emotional, and spiritual needs as well as your medical wishes. It is an easy-to-use complete form developed with help from the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging. Once it is filled out and properly signed it is valid in most states, including CT. Five Wishes helps you begin the necessary conversations about your end-of-life care with your loved ones. The booklets are available for free at the JPW Library. More information, and the option to purchase a digital version of the document, is available at fivewishes.org.

Job Posting – Assistant Director of Worship Arts for our music program

This position will work as an assistant to our Director of Worship Arts, learning the aspects of church music leadership as an apprentice. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to experience leading church music by participating in our church choir during the year. One Sunday a month, they will have the opportunity to lead a worship service by playing service music, accompanying hymns, preparing the choir, and conducting the choir during worship. The Assistant Director will also have the opportunity to learn the nuts and bolts of the behind-the-scenes aspects of being music director to include service planning, budget tracking and preparation, and maintaining the music library. This is a part time, 12-month position, amounting to approximately 20 hours/month. For more information visit: <https://www.whfirstchurch.org/job-listings>.

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

November Reach Out: Hands on Hartford

Hands On Hartford is a social service nonprofit organization that serves Hartford's most economically challenged residents in the areas of food, housing, and health. Founded in 1969 as Center City Churches, the agency has had a longstanding commitment to providing respectful, comprehensive services with help from volunteers and community partnerships. Hands on Hartford MANNA Food and Neighborhood Services program provides direct relief to thousands of Hartford neighbors each month. Through Gather55, the Community Pantry, and the Backpack Nutrition Program for children, they provide meals and groceries to individuals and families facing food insecurity. MANNA also provides vital support through community connections, referrals, security deposit & utility assistance, basic health screening, nutrition education and employment & education expense assistance. For more information: <https://handsonhartford.org/> or call 860-728-3201. To donate online thru the church, click [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at: <https://handsonhartford.org/>. Thank you for your support!

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. Lots of members are asking about taking photos at church events and wondering how to share them and to avoid confusion, 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 and Linda.

- Sarah Kopp, Office Manager, sarah.kopp@whfirstchurch.org
- Linda Clark, Office Manager, FCWHAdmin2@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

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.

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

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