



Sunday Notes

July 21, 2024



Looking Towards Sunday

"Loaves & fish for 5,000. Stories of feeding of multitudes in the wilderness pose multiple problems for the critical reader and scholar."

That quote is from the book *The Acts of Jesus* by Robert W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar. The book is subtitled: *What Did Jesus Really Do?* Funk and the seventy-nine Fellows of the Seminar (a group of biblical experts) conducted an elaborate search for the authentic deeds of Jesus. I occasionally consult their findings when I'm preparing to preach because it's truly difficult to discern the truth of a text.



Sunday's conversation is concerned with a miracle story that you may have heard. It's the one about Jesus and the disciples feeding five thousand souls in a deserted place with five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:30-46). The experts theorize that the gospel describes a hypothetical event – they say that it presents too many problems for it to be plausible. Can you believe that?! I mean, I'm actually asking what you think Jesus actually did. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **Problem(s) Shared. Problem(s) Solved.**

Be blessed and be a blessing,

Rev. Fredd

Upcoming Events

Carillon Concert Series

Thursdays in July from 6 to 7 p.m.

- July 25 – John Widmann

Please bring your family, your own chairs or blanket, and your own refreshments to the lawn of the church in West Hartford Center. Concerts take place rain or shine. The sanctuary will be open for dry listening if raining. In case of severe weather, the concert will have to be cancelled. Updates after 2:00 p.m. on date of concert either on our website or our [Facebook page](#).

Sun is Shining Concert Series

Tuesdays in August from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Make yourself comfortable with your own chairs and blankets on the labyrinth, and/or have a seat on the wall surrounding the church front lawn. In the case of rain, concerts will be cancelled or postponed, and information will be posted on the website after 2 p.m. on the day of the event.

The 2024 lineup will be:

- August 6 – [Cover to Cover](#)
- August 13 – [Brown Paper Sax](#)
- August 20 – [Rock Voices](#)
- August 27 – [Still Kickin' and the Big City Horns](#)

Monday Matinees at the JPW Library

The Transformative Power of Music

July 29 at 2 p.m. in the JPW Library

[Young at Heart](#), 2007 - Running time: 1h 47m

Our last showing is a heart-warming documentary about a choir of senior citizens from New England who perform, with vigor and unabashed enthusiasm, rock and pop classics along the lines of Sonic Youth's "Schizophrenia" and Talking Heads' "Life During Wartime."

Book Group News

NEW Book Group for Students 10 and up! On August 18 at 9 a.m. Molly Bohman will be leading a discussion of Pedro Martin's *Mexikid*, an unforgettable graphic memoir about a Mexican American boy's family and their adventure-filled road trip to bring their *abuelito* back from Mexico. "Pedro has grown up hearing stories about his *abuelito* -- his legendary crime-fighting, grandfather who was once a part of the Mexican Revolution! But that doesn't mean he is excited at the news that Abuelito is coming to live with their family." (Amazon). Books are available at the JPW Library or at the Sunday Bookmobile in the Auditorium.

Awakening the Spirit book group has their summer meeting Monday, July 22, from 12 to 1:30 p.m. in the JPW Library. They're discussing *Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites Us into the Sacred* by Victoria Loorz. **Their next read** is *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, a collection of essays by Robin Wall Kimmerer. "As a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer takes us on a journey that is every bit as mythic as it is scientific, as sacred as it is historical, as clever as it is wise" (Elizabeth Gilbert). *Braiding Sweetgrass* will be available for pick-up on Monday, July 22.

Food for Thought book group will resume regular meetings on Tuesday, September 3 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Their next book is *Normal People* by Irish writer Sally Rooney. "Connell and Marianne grew up in the same small town, but the similarities end there. At school, Connell is popular and well liked, while Marianne is a loner. But when the two strike up a conversation, something life-changing begins. A nuanced story of mutual fascination and friendship, *Normal People* takes us from a first conversation to the years beyond, in the company of two people who try to stay apart but find that they can't." (Amazon review).

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!

Of Interest: Tour the *Amistad*!

July 15 through 28 at Long Wharf Pier, New Haven

Open House Tours: Sunday, July 21; and Friday-Sunday, July 26- 28, Noon to 4 p.m. each day

Discovering Amistad is offering free tours of the *Amistad* ship, a replica of the schooner that Mende captives took control of as they sailed away from Sierra Leone in 1839. Learn from the education team about how the ship was built, the story of the Amistad Rebellion, and how they use the vessel today. More info [here](#).

Announcements

Giving Statements

Year-to-date giving statements are available in the narthex. Please pick up and review your statement. Should you have any questions, please contact the office staff at (860) 233-9605.

How's Your Garden Growing?

Don't forget to harvest some seeds for WeHa Grows, the JPWL's Seed Library! You can obtain seeds from spent flowers, and ripe veggies or fruit. Contact the library for more information.

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

HANOC Snack Donations

The Outreach Team will be collecting non-perishable snacks for the Hillcrest Area Neighborhood Outreach Center (HANOC) through August. Needed snacks include but are not limited to, juice boxes, small packages of fishy crackers and cheese its, granola bars, dried fruit, popcorn, etc. One of the blue food pantry bins outside the auditorium will be marked and designated for these snacks. HANOC helps families with limited economic means to become more financially independent and integrated into the schools and community by coordinating resources to help meet their needs.

West Hartford Food Pantry is Very Low

The West Hartford Food Pantry is very low on stock and has put out an urgent call for food donations. Please drop off donations in the marked blue bins outside the auditorium and around the building. Specific needs include: baked beans, canned fruit/applesauce, pasta and sauce, cold cereal, canned chicken and tuna, 1 lb. packages of rice, 16-18 oz sized peanut butter, soup, macaroni and cheese. Food donations can also be dropped off at the town hall lobby, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 to 4:30 p.m.

My Sisters' Place

Every year, the For the Love of Children program at My Sisters' Place holds a Back-to-School picnic, which includes providing more than 70 school aged children served by My Sisters' Place with the necessities for school. Items they receive include backpacks, pens and pencils, notebooks, sneakers, school uniforms, and more. Best way to help is to go to our wish list: [Click here for Amazon wish list](#). We are asking for purchases to be made by Friday, July 26. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Annette Scheidecker, Director of Development, at (860)808-2044.

JPWL Suggestions for Summer Reading (All titles are available at the JPWL)

Fiction:

- [To Be Young, Privileged and Woke](#) by Adrienne L. Billings-Smith (Equity Coordinator, Town of West Hartford!)
- [The Glassmaker](#) by Tracy Chevalier

Nonfiction:

- [From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life](#) by Arthur C. Brooks
- [How to Keep House While Drowning: A Gentle Approach to Cleaning and Organizing](#) by KC Davis

July Reach Out: The United Church of Christ Musicians Association, Inc. (UCCMA)

The United Church of Christ Musicians Association, Inc. (UCCMA) is a non-profit, national organization with a membership made up of musicians, clergy, and interested laity in the United Church of Christ and beyond. They are a grassroots, independent organization run entirely by volunteers and supported by members. Their mission is to inspire, educate, and nurture those who minister through music and the arts. [UCCMA \(wildapricot.org\)](http://UCCMA(wildapricot.org))

The UCCMA national conference was held at the First Congregational Church in Greenwich, CT on July 10-13. As part of that conference, Jim Boratko, Greg Wilfrid, and Liz Oman-Wilfrid presented a breakout session on alternative worship service ideas. Included in that presentation were sample 15-minute services of the types they have presented at First Church: Taize, Celtic, Labyrinth Walks, and Jazz. It was the most popular session at the conference, with 41 participants registered to join them.

To donate online through the church, click [HERE](#) or you can donate directly at [UCCMA \(wildapricot.org\)](http://UCCMA(wildapricot.org)).

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](#).

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 keep in mind that this is a public page.

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, printed pieces, and Social Media additions or changes** can be sent to Amy and Joy anytime.
Amy Melvin: Communications@whfirstchurch.org, Joy Taylor: Communications2@whfirstchurch.org

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday, 9 a.m. to Noon.

Contact: Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.