



# Sunday Notes

July 28, 2024



## Looking Towards Sunday

"Loaves & fish for 5,000...the stories in John and Mark probably have a common ancestor. Indeed, all six versions of the loaves and fish probably go back to a single source, which then developed along slightly different lines."

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? If you're experiencing déjà vu as you read this, that's a good thing! Last week, we looked at the miraculously multiplied meal as recorded in Mark's gospel. I suggested that it showed us how certain 'problems' – rest, empathy, and nurture – can be solved by sharing them.



This Sunday, we'll take a second look at the same story through the lens of the Fourth Gospel (John 6:1-15). The experts theorize that this version serves as a substitute for the last supper (bread and fish rather than bread and wine), which doesn't appear elsewhere in John. Can you believe that? I mean, I'm actually asking again what you think Jesus actually did. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **Gather Up the Fragments Left Over.**

Be blessed and be a blessing,

Rev. Fredd

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## Upcoming Events

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### Cool Off in the JPWL

Did you know you can watch the livestream of the Sunday worship service on the library's giant screen every week? Join us in our air-conditioned space to watch the service while you enjoy a free coffee!

### 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!

### 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

Join us this Monday for 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."

### 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](#)

**NEW Book Group for Students 10 and up!** On August 18 at 9 a.m. Assistant Librarian 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.

### **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 [jpwllibrary@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwllibrary@whfirstchurch.org).

**Awakening the Spirit** -- Meets every Monday from 12 to 1:30 p.m.; resumes regular meetings September 9.

- September 9 – [Church of the Wild](#) by Victoria Loorz. An encore discussion!
- September 16 – No meeting
- September 23 – [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer

**Food for Thought** -- Meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 5 to 6:30; resumes regular meetings September 3.

- September 3 – [Normal People](#) by Sally Rooney
- October 1 – [Into the Thin: A Pilgrimage Walk Across Northern Spain](#) by Stephen Drew

### **Of Interest: Tour the Amistad!**

Long Wharf Pier, New Haven -- Open House Tours: Friday through 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 captives from Sierra Leone 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 the vessel is used today. More info [here](#).

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## **Announcements**

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### **Join Our Sunday School Team**



As we continue to nurture the spiritual growth of our children, we are excited to invite you to contribute your unique talents and gifts to our Sunday School team. Whether you have a passion for teaching, storytelling, arts and crafts, or simply a love for working with children, your involvement can significantly shape their faith and understanding of the world. If you're interested in joining us or would like to learn more, please contact Amanda Bethune, [faith.formation@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:faith.formation@whfirstchurch.org). We would love to hear from you!

### **Welcome Home West Hartford Seeking Used Car Donation**

If you have a used car that you are willing to donate, WHWH -- the group working to resettle an Afghan family on behalf of First Church -- would love to receive it! Family member Emran Marefat recently passed his driver's license test and having a car would increase his ability to secure employment and to help his sister, Khalida, display and sell her artwork around the state. Please contact Terry Schmitt ([terryschmittWH@gmail.com](mailto:terryschmittWH@gmail.com)) or George Stone ([george@stone-stonect.com](mailto:george@stone-stonect.com)) for more information. Thanks!

### **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 collection envelopes and more information.

### **JPWL's Lazarus Books – Where Used Books Find New Life**

Come and browse the JPW Library's used-book corner. Library discards, donated books, leftover book group books, and more – all for a freewill donation! AND we send all donations to [Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford](#), dedicated to "transforming lives through literacy by empowering adults to read, learn, work and grow."

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

- **Fiction:** [Go as a River](#) by Shelley Read.
- **Nonfiction:** [Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?](#) By John Fea.

Submit Prayer Requests at [http://bit.ly/FCprayer\\_request](http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request).

## Altar Flowers

We have begun working on the 2024-2025 altar flower schedule. If you would like to donate altar flowers, we have dates available for the upcoming calendar year, including 9/22/2024. Donating altar flowers is a nice way to honor loved ones and supports our Inreach Ministry. Each week the altar flowers are broken down into smaller arrangements and delivered.

## West Hartford Food Pantry is Very Low

The West Hartford Food Pantry is very low on stock. 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.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:Communications@whfirstchurch.org), Joy Taylor: [Communications2@whfirstchurch.org](mailto: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](mailto:Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605.