



# Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of October 6, 2024



## Sunday Worship

"Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him." Luke 24:13-16

As I mentioned during announcements last Sunday, this Sunday we're doing all of the things! First Sunday Breakfast before worship. Communion during all ages worship. Congregational Meeting immediately following worship. Blessing of the Animals at 12:30 on the front lawn. Chamber Music Concert at 3:00 p.m. in the chapel. 1, 2, 3...inhale...hold...exhale.



One of my favorite gospel stories pictures two grief-stricken believers walking together in the aftermath of Christ's crucifixion and burial. Their conversation was so captivating, so riveting they didn't notice that the risen Jesus had joined them. Every time I think about it, I want to laugh out loud. The thing that holds me back, though, is the reality that our own eyes often keep us from recognizing the nearness of God.

I don't want to say too much before I see you; but the turning point in the story happens when Jesus was at the table with the two travelers – "*he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.*" Then...they recognized him! The World Communion sermon is entitled: **Four Eyes**.

Be blessed and be a blessing!  
Rev. Fredd

## Altar Flowers

Our altar flowers are donated this week by Lynn Huntington and family in loving memory of her husband, Joel.

## Congregational Meeting

Sunday, October 6 following worship in the Meeting House. The purpose is to vote on the proposed budget for the First Church Academy for Young Children for the budget year 2024-2025.

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## Upcoming Events and Announcements

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### Coffee and Conversation - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. - NEW LOCATION!

Join Rev. Fredd and friends at Nero Kitchen on 13 South Main Street in West Hartford Center for coffee and conversation!



## Blessing of the Animals

This Sunday, October 6 at 12:30 p.m. on the front lawn  
Officiated by Rev. Fredd.

Join us for a simple service of worship to honor God's gift of creation, especially our furry companions! This event is open to people of all faiths and creatures of all kinds. Bring your pets (on a leash or crated, please!); or, if worshipping in person is not a comfortable option, bring a picture!



## FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### Join our Sunday School Team!

We are looking for Sunday School volunteers for the Infant to 5-year-old classroom. The children will listen to a story, listen to music, color, and play. There is no lesson planning involved for this age group. 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!

### Sunday School Registration

Sunday School is underway at First Church and all children are welcome to attend! Parents of children (infants through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) can register online for childcare or Sunday School by clicking [HERE](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to Amanda Bethune at [faith.formation@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:faith.formation@whfirstchurch.org).

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## WORSHIP ARTS

### Chamber Music Concert - This Sunday, October 6 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel

The Chamber Music Series is starting its second season at First Church, designed to bring great music performances to an audience in an intimate setting. The concert is free to the public. A Free Will Offering will be received at the door.

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## INREACH

### Potluck Dinner - Friday, October 18 at 6 p.m. in the Auditorium

The Inreach team invites you to join your First Church friends for a potluck dinner! Make your favorite dish and join us for an evening of good food and fellowship. There will be games for the kids and for the young at heart. We look forward to seeing you! Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

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## OUTREACH

### Hat and Mitten Collection for Covenant to Care

Now through December 31st we will be collecting new or gently worn mittens, hats, scarves, and other winter clothing for Covenant to Care! Please bring items to church and look for designated boxes for collection. Thank you!

### October Reach Out: Mental Health Connecticut

Mental Health Connecticut partners with individuals, families, and communities to create environments that support long term health and wellness. Their vision is to create a future where well-being is rooted in respect for the condition of being human. Services provided include outpatient and residential mental health support, deaf and hard of hearing services, addressing homelessness, etc. regardless of ability to pay.

To donate click [HERE](#). Or to donate online through the church, click [HERE](#).

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## SPIRIT TEAM

### Celtic Worship Begins this Month! Sunday, October 27 at 5 p.m. in the First Church Chapel

The Spirit Team and the JPW Library are delighted to share that Celtic Worship services will begin on Sunday, October 27. Services will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month thereafter, except for our December service, which will be Saturday, 12/21 at 4 p.m. Celtic worship is a candlelit service in which we share Holy Communion, hear lovely Celtic melodies, and reawaken our awareness of the sacred in all things. The October service will be led by Rev. Tom Carr. Please see Liz Oman-Wilfred or Jennifer deSimas with questions.

### **Visit the Church Library -- consider yourself invited!**

First Church's worship services are live streamed every Sunday in our bright, welcoming John P. Webster Library. Come watch while your toddler plays in our children's area or if you need a separate place to worship for health reasons. The JPW Library is open to the public -- church membership is not required. Come in, meet the staff, browse the shelves, and find your next read!

### **FaithNet Program: Suicide Awareness & Prevention – This Sunday!**

Sunday, October 6 at 4 p.m. (3:30 sign in; program starts promptly at 4) at [Westminster Presbyterian Church](#)

Free event, dinner catered by Bricco's Italian Restaurant

The JPWL is partnering with Westminster Presbyterian Church to develop a FaithNet\* with other faith communities in West Hartford to address mental health issues among teens in particular. The goal is to promote mental health awareness and provide resources for people and families living with and recovering from mental illness. Our first event is a Community Conversation on Suicide Awareness and Prevention, with speakers from the Institute for Living. And watch for more FaithNet\* news in the coming months! Please see Jennifer with questions.

### **In the JPWL Gallery – *Visual Whimsy: The Art of Thomas McCabe* -- ends today**

The JPWL is delighted to present the work of local artist Thomas McCabe. McCabe cites his time spent as a chef and cook among his influences, along with Henri Matisse, Archie Comics, Talking Heads, Seinfeld, and 1960s Disney movies. His fans are young and old alike. Stop by during library hours to see this lively collection!

### **JPWL and HIU Announce 4th Annual Interfaith Art Exhibition**

"Holy City – A Spiritual Pilgrimage" by Brian Whelan, October 15 – November 22

Opening Reception Tuesday, October 15 from 7–7:30 p.m. followed by Q&A with the artist

Immerse yourself in the diversity of Whelan's inspiring art as we reflect on the spiritual essence of our shared humanity.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience the power of art to transcend boundaries and foster understanding! Free registration, along with a schedule of related events [here](#). To join a carpool to HIU for the Opening Reception, please speak to Jennifer.

### **In Conversation with Stephen Drew - Author of *Into the Thin: A Pilgrimage Walk Across Northern Spain***

Tuesday, October 29 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the First Church Auditorium. [Please register here](#).

Experience an evening on the [Camino de Santiago](#) through stories and photographs as Stephen Drew, author of [Into the Thin, A Pilgrimage Walk Across Northern Spain](#), explores the outer - and inner - act of pilgrimage. Drew's story centers on the weeks he spent on the Camino, and the year of loss and tragedy that preceded being called to the walk, as well as some thoughts on the high art of pilgrimage. Presented in partnership with the Hartford International University of Religion and Peace in coordination with the exhibit "Holy City" by Brian Whelan, October 15-November 22 at HIU.

### **FREE Fitness Classes -- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Spirit!**

Mark your calendars to attend a free JPWL Faithful Fitness class. Each class provides an opportunity for meditation/silence as well as movement. Perfect attendance is not required! – it's ok to miss a couple classes! More information is available on each class's registration page:

- FitMix with Kathi Boratko -- Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m. through October 29 [Register here](#).
- ChiGong with Cynthia Hoag -- Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. through October 31. [Register here](#).
- Chair Yoga with Janice Olson -- Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. through October 31. [Register here](#).

### **Women's Pre-Holiday Retreat**

Ladies, you are invited to join Janice Olson for a rejuvenating pre-holiday weekend retreat on the serene Connecticut shoreline, a weekend designed to nourish your spirit and help you create a personalized self-care plan for the coming holiday season and beyond. Through a blend of group gatherings, creative activities, solitude for reflection, and one-on-one spiritual guidance, you'll find the space to recharge and refocus. The retreat will equip you with strategies for making self-care a priority, tools for implementing these practices with accountability, and a personalized self-care kit to take home—plus tidings of comfort and joy to carry into the holidays and new year! For more information and to register, visit [Conscious Contact](#). Scholarship funds are available through the JPW Library; see Jennifer with questions.

### Book Group News:

The 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 at [jpwlibrary@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwlibrary@whfirstchurch.org).

- **Awakening the Spirit**, *Meets every Monday from 12-1:30 p.m.*

We're currently discussing [\*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants\*](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer

- **Food for Thought**, *Meets on first Tuesdays of the month from 5-6:30 p.m.*

Nov. 5 – [\*LuLa Dean's Little Library of Banned Books\*](#) by Kirsten Miller

Lula Dean has embarked on mission to rid the public libraries of all "inappropriate" books. To replace the "pornographic" books she's challenged at the public library, she starts her own lending library in front of her home: a cute wooden hutch with neat rows of "worthy" literature. But one of Lula's neighbors sneaks in by night and secretly fills Lula's little library with banned books wrapped in "wholesome" dust jackets. An engrossing satire about a small town; an homage to the power of books, and the importance of speaking up.

### 6th-8th Graders — This One's for You!

The JPW Library has created a new book group for students in Grades 6-8. We will meet on the third Sunday of each month in the Library. With snacks! Our first meeting is October 20 for an encore discussion of [\*Mexikid\*](#), by Pedro Martin. Some of you read this one over the summer but couldn't make the discussion; others weren't able to pick up the book in time. So, let's get started! We have extra copies of the book -- pick up yours today! Questions? See Molly or Jennifer.

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## Ongoing Announcements

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### West Hartford Food Pantry

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 - Friday, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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

### 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.

**Office Hours:** Mon. – Thurs. 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. and Fri. 9 a.m. - Noon.

**Contact:** [Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605.