



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of November 10, 2024

Sunday Worship

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help." – Psalm 146:1-3

I assume that money matters to you – how you spend, save, and/or invest. I wonder, though, if the motto imprinted on your money matters to you. Does it ring true? Where does your help and hope come from?



Sunday's sermon (based on Psalm 146) is entitled "In God We Trust". It's a stress-less reflection about stewardship, citizenship, and discipleship. I'll say more when I see you.

Lead with love!

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

Our altar flowers are donated this week by Gwen and Richard Jeffries in loving memory of their daughter, Jane Jeffries.

Light the Steeple

Our steeple is lit this week by Gwen and Richard Jeffries in loving memory of their daughter, Jane Jeffries.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Our 2024 Stewardship Campaign is underway, and pledge cards have been mailed out. You can bring your completed pledge card to worship on **November 17** or mail it to the office beforehand. You can also make your pledge online by filling out the online pledge card [HERE](#). Thank you!



MEMBERSHIP

If you are interested in joining First Church, please plan to attend an information session for prospective new members following worship **This Sunday, November 10 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 24**. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860-233-9605, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.



WORSHIP ARTS

Chamber Music Concert

Sunday, November 17 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel

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



Celtic Service

Sunday, November 24 at 5 p.m. in the Chapel

Celtic Christian Worship is a contemplative liturgical tradition that invites everyone to experience the sacredness of all creation. It's a sensory journey that combines ancient rituals with the enduring message of Christianity, creating a space for deep connection and reflection. In this tradition, you'll find a path to encounter the divine in the beauty of the everyday through prayer, poetry, music, and shared silence. Our November service will be led by Rev. Tom Carr. Contact Liz Oman-Wilfred or Jennifer deSimas with questions.



AED Installation at First Church

Thanks to the concern and coordination of the Inreach Team and generosity of the Coordinating Team, First Church has obtained 3 AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) for the Church. With the assistance of the West Hartford Emergency Preparedness Team, we will be placing the equipment in the most appropriate locations and then scheduling training. Look for more on this training in the coming weeks.

Deck the Meeting House

Saturday, November 30 from 9 -11 a.m.

Let's kick off the holiday season together at First Church as we decorate our beloved Meeting House for Advent and Christmas. Come hang the garlands, set up the trees, and get out the candles! No registration necessary – just come and be with us!



Thanksgiving Baskets

Our food collection for Thanksgiving baskets is here! Please bring items to church and place them in a Food for Friends barrel by November 24. We will use these items to fill the baskets. 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: Bread and roll mix, stuffing mix
- E-H: Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Spanish Food (i.e. Goya Products)
- I-L: Canned fruits and vegetables
- M-P: Juice, tea, and coffee
- Q-T: Rice and potatoes
- U-Z: Breakfast cereals and juice boxes

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 24 after worship.

If you can help out or have any questions please contact Diane Bohman at dmbohman@comcast.net or Molly Bohman at jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org.

It's Time to Sign Up for the GHIAA Campaign Kick-off!

Thursday, November 21 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Weaver High School (415 Granby St., Hartford)

You -- and your friends and neighbors -- are invited to participate in this exciting event and be part of showing the breadth and strength of support there is for GHIAA's efforts.

Sign up by texting or emailing Linda Bronstein (860-977-8931, lindadiane275@gmail.com). Mention if you want to carpool to the event. Talk to Linda or Terry Schmitt if you have questions. GHIAA's areas of focus in the coming months will be Housing Affordability, Fiscal Policy Reform, and Combating Religious and Racial Hate.

Festival of Trees, Will You Donate a Tree?

Just in time to make the holidays festive, we are thrilled to announce the 9th Annual West Hartford Festival of Trees which will be held on Thursday, December 5 from 5 - 8 p.m. during the Holiday Stroll, and we'll have Saturday hours this year from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. on December 7.

You can be part of it! Just donate an artificial, decorated tree and/or a Gift Card. Reserve your tree's space by Friday, November 15! Complete the online registration form: [Register Tree Here](#) (please use separate form for each tree).

Printable Registration: Open and print form [HERE](#) and mail it in.

Tree drop-off and set up is 12–2:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 1. Contact us for special arrangements.

You may also choose to donate a gift card to be added to one of our "Gift Card Presents" which are gift-wrapped boxes filled with a variety of gift cards as part of the fundraiser. Questions, please contact Eleanor Wight, ejwight@comcast.net.

Festival of Trees - Volunteer

Sell tickets, bake cookies, greet visitors, or direct folks through the church building during the Festival of Trees! Sunday, December 1, we'll need volunteers to help set up the Festival after church. Sunday, December 8, volunteers will be needed to break down the Festival and call the winners of the trees. If you would like to volunteer at the FOT, please [click here](#) (click NEXT to see all jobs), or find us at our table during coffee hour. Please see Eleanor Wight or Amy Melvin with questions. Thank you!

Hat and Mitten Collection for Covenant to Care -- and Sock Collection for The House of Bread

Now through December 31, we will be collecting new or gently worn mittens, hats, scarves, and other winter clothing for Covenant to Care! We will also be collecting NEW socks for The House of Bread. Please bring items to the church and look for designated boxes for collection. Thank you!

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.

- [Gather55 restaurant](#) pay as you can philosophy.
- [MANNA Community Pantry](#), and the Backpack Nutrition Program for children provide meals and groceries to individuals and families facing food insecurity.
- [Day Program and Neighborhood Services team](#) provides community connections, referrals, security deposit & utility assistance, basic health screening, nutrition education, and employment & education expense assistance.
- [Homeless Outreach Team](#) connects unsheltered individuals in the Hartford area to services, shelter, and housing.
- [HOH Housing](#) provides individuals and families with safe and affordable housing, supportive services, and individualized housing case management.
- [Licensed Shared Use Kitchen](#) enables start-up and small food businesses and entrepreneurs to scale up their operations before they are able to afford their own commercial kitchens.

To learn more or donate online: <https://handsonhartford.org>. Or to donate online through the church, click [HERE](#).



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. 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 8th 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.



FIRST CHURCH ACADEMY
for YOUNG CHILDREN
Nurturing the growth of the whole child.

First Church Academy - Substitute Teachers

Do you enjoy working with children? First Church Academy for Young Children is looking for substitute teachers. The Academy serves children six-weeks to five years old and is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Coverage is needed for all classrooms and for a variety of shifts. We can work with you! If you are interested in learning more, contact Dawne Quinn, Education Director at dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org. Click [HERE](#) to view the job description.

Registration for the 2025-2026 Program Year is Open

In-house family and First Church member priority registration is open now and runs through November 15. First Church Academy provides care for children 6 weeks to 5 years old in a loving, nurturing, play-based environment. We are a licensed and nationally accredited program open Monday - Friday 7:30 am until 5:30 pm. If you would like more information about our offerings, please visit our website, firstchurchacademy.org, or reach out to Director, Dawne Quinn @dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org

Applications can be found on our website and submitted via email or dropped off directly at the Academy. Registration will open to the community on December 2.



Visit the Church Library – We're Open 9-12 Sundays!

First Church's worship services are live streamed every Sunday in our bright, comfortable 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 any other reason. The JPW Library is open to the public -- church membership is not required. Come in and find your next read!

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.

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

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.

Next Meeting on December 3 – [*God, Grace, and Horses: Life Lessons from the Saddle*](#) by Laurie Brock.

Brock shares the experiences of love, grief, humility, joy, and deep wisdom that she discovers day to day with horses. From barely-there trails in the Grand Tetons to muddy fields in the Kentucky Bluegrass, God is revealed in the simple ways of these magnificent creatures. For anyone feeling doubtful, distracted, or anxious in these challenging times, Laurie brings us back to center, reminding us to breathe, get back on the saddle, and move beyond the familiar into the freedom of something new.

- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group** - November 17 at 10 a.m. in the JPW Library

A book group especially for students in Grades 6-8! We meet (with snacks!) on the third Sunday of the month in the library. Bring a friend! Our next meeting is November 17 to discuss [*We Are Big Time*](#) a new graphic novel by Hena Khan and Safiya Zerrougui. "Aliya is new to Wisconsin, and everything feels different than Florida. The Islamic school is bigger, the city is colder, and her new basketball team is...well, they stink. And while their new coach really understands basketball, she doesn't know much about being Muslim. As they strengthen their skills on the court, Aliya and the Peace Academy team discover that it takes more than talent to be great – it's teamwork and self-confidence that defines true success." Questions? See Molly at the Book Mobile or in the JPW Library.

Interfaith Art Exhibition

"Holy City – A Spiritual Pilgrimage" by Brian Whelan -- Through November 22 at HIU

The JPW Library has partnered with Hartford International University, as well as other local faith organizations, to present "Holy City" by Irish artist Brian Whelan at HIU. "Holy City" depicts Whelan's "vision of unity amongst the three Abrahamic faiths." Check out the schedule of related events that will be hosted by participating communities [HERE](#).

GOAT* Bible Study!

Starts November 17 - Sundays from 9-9:45 a.m. in the Friendship Room (305)

Join Rev. Tom Carr on November 17 and each Sunday afterwards for a deep dive into scripture! Explore historical contexts, find out who was duped (and by whom), or find out how and where the Gospels echo the ancient Hebrew Bible. "Tom's engaging style and knowledge of scripture have really helped me understand the Bible's ongoing story and meaning in our own lives" (participant).

*Greatest Of All Time

Ongoing Announcements

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

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

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

Altar Flowers

If you would like to donate altar flowers, we have weeks available for 2024-2025, including December 1.

West Hartford Food Pantry

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.

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 or 860-233-9605.