



# Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of November 17, 2024

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## Sunday Worship

What does it mean to be a steward of our lives? Is "stewardship" just one of those "churchy" kind of words we drag out one season each year and then forget about? I hope not, because I think stewardship is about all our lives, all the time.

Rev. Fredd asked me to preach this Sunday because, through the Business Team at our church, I've been one of many people working on this year's pledging effort. This Sunday is one significant part of the effort -- the occasion when we gather our pledges in worship and accept them as the blessing that they are.

But, just as with this year's theme "Cooking up a Community" I hope we can expand our thinking about being good stewards. I'll have a story about that to share. It involves my mother and deer. And it's about being good stewards, too.

See you in church!  
Terry



## Altar Flowers

Our altar flowers are donated this week by Cindy and Dallas Dodge in loving memory of their mothers, Ingrid Engstrom and Terry Dodge.

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## Upcoming Events and Announcements

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### Of Interest

This Sunday, November 17 at 11 a.m. in Blue Back Square there will be an LGBTQIA+ rally organized by PFLAG. For more information, click [HERE](#). Please be aware that there may be increased traffic following the worship service.



## CONFIRMATION

### The Confirmands Are Coming...and Going Bowling!

Sunday, December 8 at 2 p.m.

We're excited to announce that Rev. Fredd will lead a six-week expedition for high-schoolers who want to confirm their baptism. The group will meet on Sunday afternoons starting February 23 through March 30. Confirmation Sunday is scheduled for April 6. Details are forthcoming. Meanwhile, we've organized a get-to-know-you gathering for prospective confirmands at Spare Time Windsor Locks on Sunday, December 8 at 2 p.m.

Contact Rachel Tenney 516-906-2840 or Michelle Killion 860-256-9763.



## WORSHIP ARTS

### Chamber Music Concert

This 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.

### **Invitation to Celebrate**

Has it been a year? Yes, it has! On December 3, 2023, the Congregation of First Church unanimously called Rev. Fredd Ward to serve as the settled Senior Pastor. With grace, humility, and joy, Fredd accepted the call. Since then, the "match" we found together has flourished. Please plan to join in the celebration of this first year by attending worship on December 1, followed by what other: cake!

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### **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 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!

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### **Thanksgiving Baskets**

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our Thanksgiving food collection!

If you haven't already, and would like to help, please bring in any of the following items:

- Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Spanish Food (i.e. Goya Products)
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Juice, tea and coffee
- Rice and potatoes
- Breakfast cereals and juice boxes

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. 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](mailto:dmbohman@comcast.net) or Molly Bohman at [jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org)

### **Festival of Trees**

Volunteers are needed for the Festival of Trees! Sell tickets, bake cookies, greet visitors, or direct folks through the church building. Sunday, December 1, volunteer to help set up the Festival after church. Thursday and Saturday, December 5 and 7, volunteer to help during festival hours. Sunday, December 8, volunteers will be needed to break down the Festival and call the winners of the trees. Please [click here](#) (click NEXT to see all jobs) or find us at our table during coffee hour. See Eleanor Wight, Amy Melvin or Ginny Vocelli with questions. Thank you!

## 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](mailto: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.

## Share A Gift Tree for Our Covenant to Care Children

'Tis the season to share Christmas joy! Take a tag from the tree in the auditorium starting November 24 and bring the unwrapped gift to the church by December 15. Thank you for helping our Covenant to Care children have a Merry Christmas! For any questions, please contact Diane Bohman at [dmbohman@comcast.net](mailto:dmbohman@comcast.net) or Molly Bohman at [jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org).

## 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](#).



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](mailto: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](http://firstchurchacademy.org), or reach out to Director, Dawne Quinn [@dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org](mailto:@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.



## 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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### Live-Streamed Worship in the Church Library!

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 also open Monday -Thursday 9-5. Everyone is welcome -- church membership is not required! Come in and find your next read!

### 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

### 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.

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](#).

## Of Interest: CCIU *Love Thy Neighbor* Dinner

Monday, November 18 at 5:30 p.m.

You're invited! Join the CT Council for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) for their annual *Love Thy Neighbor* Dinner, where they'll be celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well as recognizing the service of past and present Board members. Guest speaker will be Professor Frank Harris, Chair, Dept. of Journalism, SCSU, and former columnist for the Hartford *Courant*. Register at [ccfiu.org](http://ccfiu.org).

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## Ongoing Announcements

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**Our 2024 Stewardship Campaign** is underway. You can bring your completed pledge card to worship or mail it to the office. You can also make your pledge online by filling out the online pledge card [HERE](#). Thank you!

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