



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of February 2, 2025

Sunday Worship

A few years ago, my friend encountered someone who claimed to have the ability to speak in tongues. My friend wanted an “expert” opinion about whether that person was authentically full of the Holy Spirit or just...full of it (apparently the person was a bit of a braggart about his unique talent).

I could only suggest that there is a biblical precedent for speaking in tongues -- tongues and interpretation of tongues are among the abilities mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church. In fact, the members often argued about these unusual utterances. The crux of the issue was not about the legitimacy of the gift but the priority. In other words, some members believed that speaking in tongues ranked higher than, say, healing or working miracles or prophesy. Paul addressed the conflict, in part, by evaluating every gift through the lens of love. I’ll say more when I see you.

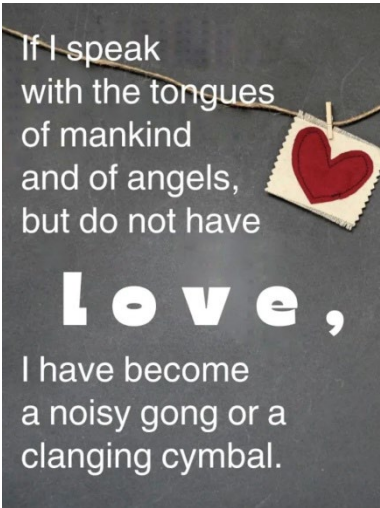
The sermon based on (1 Corinthians 13:1-13) is entitled: **What Happens Without Love.**

No matter your gifts and abilities...whoever you are...be the best of whatever you are.

Blessings,
Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

Our altar flowers are donated this week by Pam Hastings, Linda Hastings Rosania, and family in loving memory of Richard and Lorain Hastings, Richard Hastings III, Mr. and Mrs. R. Cleveland Hastings, Marcia Hastings Peck, & Charles and Lucy Jaworski.



If I speak
with the tongues
of mankind
and of angels,
but do not have

Love,
I have become
a noisy gong or a
clanging cymbal.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Call to Congregational Meeting

Notice is hereby given that a Congregational Meeting of the First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held in the Meetinghouse on Sunday, February 9 starting at approximately 11:15 a.m. to transact the following items of business:

Approve the minutes of the First Church Budget Meeting held on January 28, 2024.

Consider and vote on the First Church Annual Operating Budget for calendar year 2025.

In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on January 26, 2025

Linda Bronstein
Secretary of the Church

Opportunity Fair - This Sunday, February 2 at 11 a.m. during coffee hour

Have you ever wondered about the Inreach Team? How is it different from the Outreach Team? The Business Team seems fairly straightforward (is it?) but what does the Spirit Team do? What does GHIAA stand for?

During coffee hour on Sunday, February 2, you can ask all of your questions! Representatives from each Team and GHIAA will be happy to chat with you. If the Team’s activities seem to be a good fit for your interests, perhaps you will consider joining the Team for 2025. Welcome to a vibrant First Church!

New Member Information Session – Sunday, February 16 at 11:15 a.m. following worship

We expect to receive new members into the life of the church during the 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 2. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.



CONFIRMATION

The Confirmands Are Coming...and Going Bowling!

As previously announced, Rev. Fredd will lead a six-week expedition for high-schoolers who want to confirm their baptism. The group will meet Sunday afternoons (~90 minutes) starting February 23 through March 30.

Confirmation Sunday is scheduled for April 6.

Meanwhile, we've organized a get-to-know-you-get-together for prospective confirmands at Spare Time Windsor Locks on Sunday, February 9 at 2 p.m. Please contact the church office at 860.233.9605 to reserve a spot!



INREACH TEAM

Pizza and Game Night

Friday, February 21 at 6 p.m. in the Auditorium

The Inreach team and Faith Formation invite you to beat the winter blahs and join us for a family pizza party and game night. Bring your favorite game and join us in the auditorium on February 21. If you don't have a game, that's okay we'll have games to share! Please sign up [HERE](#) and let us know if you can make it!



OUTREACH

Harvest Meal Packing Event 2025

Saturday, March 1 from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Snow date March 8)

Join your friends and neighbors to pack meals to be sent to those in need. It is an incredible way to generate positive energy, foster pride in working together for the benefit of others and have fun! Come by yourself or with a friend and join a team to pack meals for a few hours. We'll feed you a pizza lunch for all your hard work. Recommended donation is \$10 per family. Use Cash or Venmo for your donation! [View Flyer here.](#)

Volunteers Needed

Seeking members and friends interested in supporting and/or attending this year's SOGIEcon March 21-22 Storrs, CT. We'd like to form a group who will take the lead and represent FCCC for this event. Please connect with anyone from the Outreach committee or Carol Lorenzo, ctlorenzo@comcast.net.

True Colors SOGIEcon (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression) conference is the largest LGBTQIA+ youth conference in the world. This conference brings together LGBTQIA+ youth, their peers, allies, family members, educators, social workers, clinicians, clergy and community members to educate themselves, promote connection and support the next generation of LGBTQIA+ Leaders.

For more information please go to: <https://www.healthcollective.org/true-colors-lgbtq-conference>

GHIAA

A Big Thank You to all of you who contributed in 2024 toward First Church's commitment to support GHIAA financially. We reached our goal of \$2500 in donations (which together with \$2500 from the Outreach Team make up our \$5000 annual commitment to GHIAA). Not only that, but we surpassed our goal, giving us a few hundred dollars to carry over and use as a head start on our 2025 commitment!

The CT legislative session began on Jan. 8, which means that the next few months will be busy ones. GHIAA will be focusing on affordable housing, and on freeing up funds in the state budget to meet a wide range of human needs. There will be opportunities to express support of or opposition to specific bills, both by contacting our own legislators and by testifying or writing letters to legislative committees. If you'd like to be kept up to date as those opportunities arise, send an email to Linda Bronstein (lindadiane275@gmail.com), or talk to Linda or Terry Schmitt at coffee hour.

Thank you again!

February Reach Out: Support California Wildfire first responders and impacted families

Fueled by powerful winds and dry conditions, wildfires erupted on January 7 and roared across the Los Angeles area, killing at least 28 people. Over 200,000 people were under evacuation orders as crews tried to battle back the fires. The fires have destroyed entire neighborhoods and blocks, leaving an unknown number of people homeless. The insured losses from the fires may exceed \$20 billion, and total economic losses could reach \$50 billion!

First Church Outreach team responding to the need has chosen to donate to the UCC's California Wildfire 2025 appeal and The World Central Kitchen to support first responders and families impacted by wildfires in the Los Angeles area.

To learn more and donate please use the links provided, or donate in church (note UCC or WCK on your envelope) or online through the church: <https://www.firstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/mission-partners/>.

[California Wildfires 2025 - United Church of Christ](#)

[Donate to World Central Kitchen](#)



Watch 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 through Thursday from 9-5. Everyone is welcome -- church membership is not required! Come in and find your next read!

Please Note: First Sunday Breakfasts will pause for February and for March so that our volunteers may also pause during this busy time. We'll get back to breakfasting together on April 6!

Book Group News

The John P. Webster Library coordinates and sponsors three 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. - Rev. Tom Carr, facilitator

Join us as we discuss Brian D. McLaren's [Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned](#). McLaren publicly addresses the powerful question that many people—including pastors, priests, and other religious leaders—are asking in private.

- **Food for Thought**

Meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 5-6:30 p.m. - JPW Library Staff, facilitators

Next Meeting: This Tuesday, February 4

We will be discussing [Samba of Survival: My Light Within](#) by Maria Leda Souza Hogan. A vivid account of life on the margins of Brazilian society, and the author's unpredictable dance in order to survive: *A samba of survival*.

- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group**

Meets on the third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m. - Facilitated by Molly Bohman, JPWL Assistant Librarian

Next Meeting: February 16

For students in Grades 6-8: We meet (with snacks!) on the third Sunday of the month in the Library. Join us to discuss *The Moth Keeper* by K. O'Neill. Anya has taken on the responsibility of Moth Keeper for the night village, shepherding the lunar moths her people rely on to sustain the annual blooming of a flower necessary to their night-dwelling ways. However, she grows weary from her strenuous duties and, feeling a pull to experience life in the daylight, decides to visit the sunlit day world. When she glimpses the one thing that could destroy what she's meant to protect, her village and the lunar moths are left to deal with the consequences. K. O'Neill brings to life a beautifully illustrated fantasy with lush, gorgeous art and intricate world-building (Amazon.com).

Yoga Classes

Wednesdays from 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. in the First Church Chapel

Join Cynthia Wolcott for drop-in, in-person Yoga. Bring a mat and a blanket (Cynthia has extras you may borrow). Attend as you wish; payment is accepted at the start of each class: \$20 per class - cash, Venmo, or check to Cynthia Wolcott.

Contact Cynthia at cjwolcott@gmail.com.

Faithful Fitness Classes Continue

The JPW Library invites you to attend free Faithful Fitness classes! Both classes provide an opportunity for meditation as well as movement. Perfect attendance is not required! More information is available on each class's registration page.

- **Qi Gong with Cynthia Hoag** -- Thursdays from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Register [here](#).
- **FitMix with Kathi Boratko** -- Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. [Click here](#) for class information and registration.

In Case You're Interested ...

For the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Congregational Library & Archives presents *Religion of Revolution: Congregational Voices on Liberty*. This new digital exhibition highlights the stories of New England Congregationalists through important and rarely seen print works of the period as well as church records, letters, and sermon literature from the CLA's collections and the New England's *Hidden Histories* project. The exhibit can be accessed only through their [website](#). Fascinating reading for fans of early American history!

Ongoing Announcements

Coffee and Conversation

Join Rev. Fredd and friends at Nero Kitchen at 13 South Main Street in West Hartford Center on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. for coffee and conversation!

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!

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.

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

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](#).

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. Please keep in mind that this is a public page.

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

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.

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.