



Living in Spirit • Committed to Service • Open to All

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 23, 2025
10 o'clock

First Church of Christ Congregational
12 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 233-9605
www.whfirstchurch.org

Rev. Fredd Ward, Senior Pastor
Jim Boratko, Director of Worship Arts
Amanda Bethune, Director of Faith Formation

To Give Online: <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give>
Or Give by Text: Text GIVE to (860) 222-7870.

PRELUDES *By the Waters of Babylon* Sigfrid Karg-Elert
An Wasserflussen Babylon Johann Pachelbel

WELCOME

†CALL TO WORSHIP Ray Epps

One: Come, people of God, to the one in whom we trust.

All: Praise God, who delivers us and rescues us!

One: Hope in God, who has created you.

All: We are willing to be changed by the one who knows us completely.

One: Come, people of God, to embrace the mysteries of our faith.

All: Praise God, whose love empowers us!

†HYMN 274 [*I Love Your Church, O God*](#) ST. THOMAS

†OPENING PRAYER

God of love, encounter us in this hour, that we may grow in wisdom and willingness. Disturb our certainty so we will be open to new insights. Upset our priorities to make more room for faith, hope, and love. Open our hearts to people we have forgotten or failed to welcome into our midst. Perfect among us a childlike trust that allows us to follow where your love leads us. We pray to Jesus' name. Amen.

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES Amanda Bethune

ANTHEM *I Will Lift My Eyes* Craig Courtney
 The First Church Choir

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

SCRIPTURE READING [1 John 4:16 \(NT p. 292\)](#) [1 Corinthians 13:4-8a \(NT p. 213\)](#)

†RESPONSE (HYMN 261) [*Sweet, Sweet Spirit*](#) SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord; there are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

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† Please stand in body or spirit as you are able.

SERMON *God is Love* Mary Hanson

HYMN 540 [*O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*](#) ST. MARGARET

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

God has called the church to be a change agent. Such a task requires a complete commitment to love. The gifts we present symbolize our fullest faithful response.

OFFERTORY *The Holy City* Stephen Adams
 The First Church Choir

†DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
 Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.
 Amen.**

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, we dare to enlist all our efforts toward the realization of your realm. Where there is injustice, we would champion those who are marginalized and misunderstood. May these offerings invite and include and inspire others by the power of your love. Amen

†HYMN 517 [*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*](#) BEECHER

BENEDICTION AND RESPONSE [*Blest Be the Tie That Binds*](#) DENNIS

POSTLUDE *Allegro, from the Concerto in F, No. 13* G. F. Handel
(The Cuckoo and the Nightengale)

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments following the service!