



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of February 16, 2025

Sunday Worship

Stop me if you've heard this one before: A winter weather event is likely to occur this weekend -- overnight Saturday into Sunday (according to the latest StormTracker forecast at this writing). Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!

Meanwhile on planet earth...

Rev. Susan Izard is scheduled to offer the morning message this Sunday. Her sermon is entitled "**Heavenly Healing**". It's based on Luke 6:17-26 wherein crowds came to hear Jesus and to be healed by him. In the midst of a great multitude of people, Jesus spoke directly to his disciples, offering words of comfort...and challenge. Susan will say more when we see her.



As though the gift of a guest preacher isn't plenty, we'll also welcome a guest choir from just around the corner. The University of Hartford Gospel Choir will help us lift the name of Jesus!

Oh, and! I've saved the best news for last. The long-awaited congregational meeting to approve the 2025 operating budget happens in the meeting house immediately following worship!

Be blessed. Be a blessing.

Rev. Fredd

Light the Steeple

Our steeple is lit this week by Tandy & David Jarvis in loving memory of Josephine Riley Medlin and by Anonymous in loving memory of Gary Briggs.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Call to Congregational Meeting

***This meeting was rescheduled due to the weather on February 9. ***

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 16 starting at approximately 11:15 a.m. to transact the following items of business:

1. Approve the minutes of the First Church Budget Meeting held on January 28, 2024.
2. Consider and vote on the First Church Annual Operating Budget for calendar year 2025.
3. 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

New Member Information Session – Sunday, February 23 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.

Celtic Worship 2/23

First Church Chapel, 5 p.m.

You are warmly invited to join us for Celtic worship on Sunday, February 23. Celtic Christian Worship is a contemplative service that emphasizes the sacredness of all creation. It is 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 February service will be led by Janice Olson. Please contact Liz Oman-Wilfred or Jennifer deSimas with questions.



Harvest Meal Packing Event 2025

Saturday, March 8 from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (Snow date March 15) **NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**

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>

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://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/giving> (Designation>Reach Out Monthly Collection).

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

[Donate to World Central Kitchen](#)



FCAYC February Love Collection

The First Church Academy is collecting items to be donated to South Park Inn. Items needed include **Everyday Supplies**: laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, white cotton towels and face cloths. **Housewarming Baskets**: pots

and pans sets, dishes, silverware. **Retail Gift Cards**: Stop & Shop, Big Y, Target, Walmart. For more information about the South Park Inn or to see the complete list of needed items, click [HERE](#). For more info., contact Dawne Quinn at: dquinn@firstchurchacademy.org or 860-233-9605 ext. 133. Thank you for your support!

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.



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!



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!

Women's Retreat

Save the date for a relaxing and rejuvenating getaway led by yogi and spiritual guide Janice Olson. 3 p.m. Friday, May 2 through 3 p.m. Saturday, May 3 at the Guest House Retreat Center in Chester CT. Cost: \$100 per person. Sponsored by the John P. Webster Library. More details TBA!

Try something new for Lent! People often want to know what you are giving up for Lent. Instead of giving up something, why not add something to your life for Lent. Both the Adult Choir and the Handbell Choir is looking to add people to our ensembles. Don't worry that you might not have the best voice or enough experience. We want YOU to join our communities. We'll be happy for you to join us where you are. We will teach you everything you need to know to participate, and you'll have fun doing so! The choir rehearses Tuesday nights from 7:00 to 8:30, and the Bell Choir rehearses Wednesday nights from 7:00 to 8:15. Speak to Jim Boratko or Jessica Berube-Sengupta for more information.

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!

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

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

Please Note: The JPW Library will be closed Monday, February 17 in observance of President's Day.

Lenten Book Study

Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. (hybrid)

March 11, 18, 25

April 1, 8, 15

Join JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas Tuesday evenings in March and April. Using short videos and readings from Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's 2021 book, [Witness at the Cross: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday](#), we will explore the events of Holy Friday. "Levine reminds us that the story of Jesus's death is something we do not just read; we are meant to experience it. Here, she takes us by the hand and walks with us through the story, pausing alongside each of the characters to see and hear and feel how they individually experienced it, how each was affected by it. This is not just a fresh retelling of the Crucifixion narrative; it is a remarkably personal immersion and participation in the narrative. Levine breaks open new dimensions and possibilities of the story's meaning for all of us" (review). Free program; please [register here](#).

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**- does not meet 2/17 Meets Mondays from 12-1:30
- **Food for Thought** Meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 5-6:30 p.m.
- **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
Meets this Sunday February 16 For students in Grades 6-8: We meet (with snacks!) on the third Sunday of the month in the Library.

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](#) to sign up.

Yoga Classes

Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45 a.m.

First Church Chapel

Join Cynthia Wolcott for drop-in, in-person Yoga. Bring a mat and a blanket (or borrow from Cynthia). Attend as you wish; payment is accepted at the start of each class. \$20 per class - cash, Venmo, or check to Cynthia. Contact her at cjwolcott@gmail.com.

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](#).

