

### **Celtic Worship Service**

Sunday, March 23, 5 p.m.

First Church Chapel

All are welcome. Our candlelit service includes lovely Irish music, prayers, and communion. Rev. Susan Izard will be preaching. Take time for stillness and reflection on the sacred in all of God's Creation. The Chapel is handicap accessible at the South Main entrance.

### **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!

### **Lenten Devotionals are here!**

"Into the Deep," the Still Speaking Writers' 2025 Lent Devotional, invites reflection on God's mysterious depths. What might find us as we go deep into God's depths this Lent? Pick up your copy of "Into the Deep" at both meeting house entrances and in the elevator hallway.

### **New! at the JPW Library**

Fiction:

[\*Good Dirt\*](#) by Charmaine Wilkerson

Nonfiction:

[\*The Tears of Things\*](#) by Richard Rohr

[\*The Migrant Chef\*](#) by Laura Tillman

[\*Praying with Jane Eyre: Reflections on Reading as a Sacred Practice\*](#) by Vanessa Zoltan

Youth & Children's Books:

[\*Dear Manny\*](#) by Nic Stone

### **The Spiritual Practice of Self-Care**

*a retreat for women*

Led by Janice Olson, Yogi and Spiritual Guide

[The Guest House Retreat Center](#), Chester CT

3 p.m. Friday, May 2 – 3 p.m. Saturday, May 3

\$100 per person

Self-care is a popular topic these days -- but what is it? More than just "me" time or a day at the spa, true self-care involves a mindset of self-compassion and acceptance of imperfection in ourselves and others. Join Janice Olson for an exploration of what self-care means to you and how you might incorporate small changes that will bring more joy and fulfillment into your life. Our time together will include self-reflection and journaling, guided group discussion, prayer and meditation, yoga for relaxation, and a creative activity. There will also be time for rest and relaxation on your own.

The fee includes overnight accommodation, meals, and materials. A list of what to bring will be sent via email prior to the retreat. In the meantime, contact Jennifer deSimas or Janice Olson if you have any questions. Space is limited. Please **register here by April 13:** [The Spiritual Practice of Self Care](#).

### **New Art Exhibit: Don Bonner, American Artist**

JPWL Gallery

March 2 – April 29

Don Bonner grew up inspired by the picturesque surroundings of Western MA; he now has a studio in Avon, CT. Don had a successful career in commercial design, including starting his own firm, Bonner & Company Creative Communications. He is passionate about telling a story on canvas, and creating it with color, lighting,

and emotion. GICLEE prints of his work are available in a variety of sizes and prices. To see more artwork and for information, purchase, etc. contact Don at [bonnerco@comcast.net](mailto:bonnerco@comcast.net). He is also on both FaceBook and Instagram.

### **Lenten Wednesdays Together**

Wednesdays at 6 p.m. (in-person)

March 12, 19, 26

April 2, 9, 16

Fellowship Room (Rm. 303)

Rev. Dr. Laurie Andersen, curator and facilitator

During the sacred season of Lent, we'll gather midweek to set aside our worldly worries and let the liturgical rhythms guide us in the Way of the Cross. Rev. Laurie Anderson invites you into a quiet prayerful space where you can share or just listen and receive (light refreshments served). Come and see where the Spirit takes us.

Rev. Anderson, along with her husband Mark Goodwin, is soon to be a new associate member of First Church. Laurie is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and holds a Doctorate in Counseling from Hebrew Union College. She is currently a Board-Certified Chaplain for Trinity Health Care. In this series Laurie will tie themes of Scripture together with deep psychological insights and wisdom gained through her years of counseling and hospice ministry. Please see Jennifer with questions.

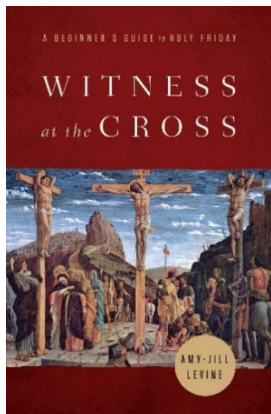
### **Lenten Book Study – NEW TIME!!**

Thursdays at 1 p.m. (hybrid)

March 13, 20, 27

April 3, 10, 17

Join JPW Library Director Jennifer deSimas Thursday afternoons in March and April for a Lenten book study. 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 takes us by the hand and walks with us through the story of Jesus's last day, 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](mailto:jpwlibrary@whfirstchurch.org).

#### ➤ **Awakening the Spirit**

Mondays from 12-1:30 p.m.

Rev. Tom Carr, Jennifer deSimas, facilitators

Current Read [Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned](#) by Brian D. McLaren

➤ **Food for Thought**

First Tuesday of the month from 5-6:30 p.m.

JPW Library Staff, facilitators

*Next Meeting: April 1*

*Under a Painted Sky* by Stacey Lee

➤ **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group**

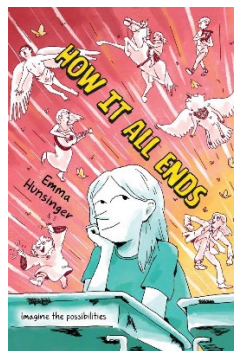
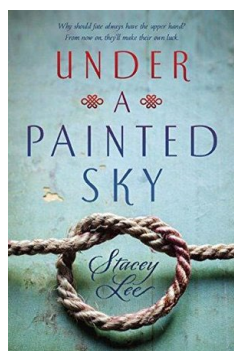
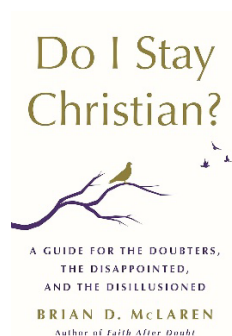
Meets on the third Sunday of each month at 10 a.m.

Facilitated by Molly Bohman, JPWL Assistant Librarian

***Next meeting: Sunday 3/16***

Students in Grades 6-8, join Molly in the Community Room (with snacks) on third Sundays of each month.

This month we're discussing [How it All Ends](#) by Emma Hunsinger.



### Faithful Fitness Classes

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

- **FitMix** with Kathi Boratko – Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. [Click here](#) to sign up.
- **Qi Gong** with Cynthia Hoag – Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Register [here](#). ***Please note – Qi Gong will meet in the Community Room throughout the month of March.***

### 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](mailto:cjwolcott@gmail.com).

### In Case You're Interested ...

***"Everyone's Grandmother": Stories of the People Who Shaped Us***

Noah Webster Library Meeting Room

Thursday, March 20, 2025

6:30pm - 8:00pm

Join the West Hartford Public Library in celebrating Gertrude Blanks through reminiscences and stories. Gertrude has been described by those who knew her as a "Hartford legend," "Mama Blanks," and "everyone's grandmother." She dedicated her life to serving the community, connecting with young people, and education through storytelling. To honor her, our speakers will share stories of people who, like Gertrude, support, nurture, and bring comfort to those around them. The program will be followed by light refreshments and conversation.

[Register here to attend.](#)