



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of March 9, 2025

Sunday Worship

"Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets."

– Luke 5:1-2

So begins Luke's version of the story of Jesus calling Simon Peter and James and John while they were busy at work. I have a feeling that you're familiar with the fact that they ultimately left their nets to follow Jesus in direct response to a miraculous catch of fish. According to the account, Simon was amazed and also afraid (you could hardly blame him). Jesus assured Simon: *"from now on you will be catching people."*



This Sunday, we'll recover the worship service that was suspended for snow-related reasons back on February 9th. We'll hear the Savior's ancient challenge echoing across the age. We, like the first disciples, are called to always be casting out nets for the sake of the gospel. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon (based on Luke 5:1-11) is entitled: **ABC's**.

By the way. Sunday. The **HOT CAT JAZZ BAND** is back. Again! Amen!

Be blessed. Be a blessing.

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

Our Altar Flowers this week are donated by Paul and Bev Truebig in loving memory of Dr. and Mrs. Edmund A. Sayer, Bev's grandparents.

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](#).

Try something new for Lent! Instead of giving something up for Lent, why not try adding a spiritual element to your Lenten journey by singing with the choir through Easter or learning to play with the Handbell Choir. No experience is necessary! We will teach you everything you need to know. See Jim Boratko or Jessica Berube-Sengupta for more information.

Chamber Music Concert Sunday, March 16 at 3pm in the Chapel

The Chamber Music Series is in its' second season at First Church, designed to bring great music 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

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, March 9, 2025**, starting at approximately 11:15 AM.

This meeting is called to transact the following items of business:

- To consider and vote on the minutes of the Annual Meeting of First Church held on March 10, 2024.
- To consider and vote on the proposed slate of Officers, Team Leaders and Team Members for First Church for the coming year.

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

Notice given on February 23, 2025

Linda Bronstein, Secretary



March Reach Out: Mercy Housing and Shelter

Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation provides housing assistance and supportive services to persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Mercy offers permanent supportive housing programs across Hartford, Tolland and Middlesex Counties. We combine rental assistance and supportive services for homeless persons with very low incomes, serious and persistent conditions including, but not limited to, substance use disorder, HIV/AIDS, mental health challenges or co-occurring disabilities. We support hundreds of people in Connecticut establish permanent housing annually. The goal of supportive housing is to help clients be successful in housing and give them a place to call "Home". Our Community Supportive Housing offers services and supports designed to assist residents in recognizing their value, nurture self-esteem and attain emotional and economic stability. Mercy works to empower its clients to become independent, so they may live and work with dignity and respect. Mercy welcomes and serves all in need in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, who founded the organization in 1983. Mercy's Core Values: Respect, Compassion and Responsibility!

To learn more and donate please use the links provided or donate in church (**note Mercy Housing on your envelope**) or online thru the church: <https://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/giving>

To learn more and donate directly visit <https://mercyhousingct.org/donate/>



Nancy Ball is in need of empty coffee cans for flower arrangements!



SPIRIT TEAM

Open Chapel

The Spirit Team is pleased to once again offer Open Chapel during Lent. This is an opportunity to rest and quietly reflect in the sacred space of the First Church Chapel. You are welcome to drop by for any part of the hour. We hope that you will find peace.

Wednesday, March 12, 12-1 pm

Wednesday, March 19, 5-6 pm

Wednesday, March 26, 12-1 pm

Sunday, April 6, 5-6 pm

Friday, April 18, 12-1 pm

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 create a safe space to welcome feelings of worry and prayers of any kind and let the liturgical rhythms guide us in the Way of the Cross. Rev. Laurie Andersen invites you into a quiet prayerful space where you can share or just listen and receive (light refreshments served).



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!

*For more detailed information on programs read the First Church Happenings Newsletter on our website. *

<https://whfirstchurch.org/welcome/first-church-newsletters/>

Lenten Devotionals are here!

"Into the Deep," the Still Speaking Writers' 2025 Lent Devotional, invites reflection on God's mysterious depths. "God inhabits the depths of life, love, loss, ecstasy, and pain, God dwells in the profundities of prayer, in sighs too deep for words. God loves the deep" (Mary Luti). What courage, what faith, what reckoning, what wonder 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.

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

Register here by April 13: [The Spiritual Practice of Self Care](#)

Lenten Book Study – NEW TIME!!

Thursdays at 1 p.m. (hybrid)

March 13, 20, 27

April 3, 10, 17

Free program; please [register 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.

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

Mondays from 12-1:30 p.m.

Food for Thought

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

Next Meeting: April 1

Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group

Third Sunday of each month at 10am

Next meeting: Sunday 3/16

New Art Exhibit: Don Bonner, American Artist

JPWL Gallery

March 2 – April

Don Bonner grew up inspired by the picturesque surroundings in Western Massachusetts and he now lives in central Connecticut. He attended the Paier School of Art outside New Haven. Don is passionate about telling a story on canvas, and creating it with color, lighting, and emotion. His studio is in Avon, Connecticut. GICLEE prints available in a variety of sizes and prices. To see more artwork and for information, purchase, etc. contact Don at bonnerco@comcast.net. He is also on FaceBook and Instagram.

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. (3/12 and 3/26 9:00-10:15 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.

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!

●**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.

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

Four Ways to Give

1. Sunday Morning Offertory

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. – Fri. 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. **Contact:** Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.