



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of March 16, 2025

Sunday Worship

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" -- Psalm 27:1-8

Sunday's scripture reading features selected verses from Psalm 27. The writer of that sacred song had a very clear idea about God's identity: "God is my salvation. God is my stronghold." The text of Sunday's offertory anthem written by Paul Gerhardt, based on the psalm, says something similar:

"I fully am persuaded, and joyfully declare,
I'm never left unaided, my Father hears my prayer.
His comforts never fail me, He stands at my right hand;
When tempests fierce assail me, they're calm at his command."



Having a well-defined idea about God's character and nature takes a long, long time. Having confidence in God's presence and power is one of the marks of mature faith. Meanwhile, what if you're a brand-new believer or just beginning to believe again? Sunday's sermon may well speak to your situation. I'll say more when I see you.

It's entitled **Seeking from Scratch: God is _____**.

Be a blessing. Be the church.

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

Our Altar Flowers this week are donated by Wyrot and Fred Ward in loving memory of Wyrot's sister, Beulah Pace Smith

Light The Steeple

Our steeple is lit by Amazing Grace Foundation in loving memory of Grace Livingston Miller, and by Amazing Grace Foundation in honor of Rev Fredd, the coolest reverend ever.



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 19, 5-6 pm
Wednesday, March 26, 12-1 pm

Sunday, April 6, 5-6 pm
Friday, April 18, 12-1 pm

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.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

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 Meeting House

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.



Harvest Pack Event Follow Up

The Outreach Team hosted a Harvest Pack event Saturday March 8. We successfully packed 10,626 meals to be shipped to Kentucky where floods have severely impacted the region. We want to thank the many volunteers who supported this fun team event. We had helpers as young as age 3 up to age 93! We are grateful for everyone's time and efforts to make this such a successful event!

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 needs empty coffee cans for flower arrangements!

Altar Flower Donations

Donating altar flowers is a meaningful way to honor loved ones and is part of our Inreach ministry. Each week the altar flowers are broken down into smaller arrangements and delivered to members of the congregation. We have many weeks available in the new year. If you would like to donate, please reach out to Bethany in the church office at 860-233-9605 or office.manager@whfirstchurch.org.

These dates are open: May 18, June 8, and July 6, 13, and 20, 2025.

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](#).

Easter Donations

This is a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one! Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon donations can be made online [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) for a printable form and return it to the church office with your payment. If you wish to have your donation listed in the Sunday Bulletin, please make your donation by Sunday, April 15. If you have any questions, please contact Bethany at office.manager@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.

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.

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).

Johnny's Jog will impact traffic on **Sunday, March 23rd** during church service. South Main St will be closed between Burr St and Memorial Rd. Troutbrook and Farmington Ave will not be impacted by closures. Enter Parking Lot from Farmington Ave entrance. Isham Garage is accessible via Farmington Ave to Raymond Rd to Isham Rd to Rear Garage Entrance. [MAP](#)

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.

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!

*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. 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.

Lenten Book Study – NEW TIME!!

Thursdays at 1 p.m. (hybrid)

March 13, 20, 27

April 3, 10, 17

Free program; please [register here](#).

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](#)

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: THIS Sunday 3/16

Faithful Fitness Classes

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. (3/26 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.