



# Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of April 6, 2025

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## Sunday Worship

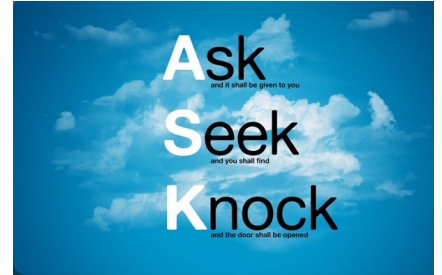
*"Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."* – Matthew 7:7-8

Last fall when Confirmation 2025 finally felt like a real possibility, I decided that we'd organize an expedition rather than offer "classes". The idea was to take a six-week sightseeing tour in stages – to give our young people glimpses of the vast landscape of Christian ideology. Our excursion included brief stops at subjects such as Bible basics, God the Creator, Jesus the Christ, baptism, communion, prayer, spirituality, sacred music, death, eternal life, and world religions.

And now that we've completed our tour, the adventure begins! This Sunday is Confirmation Sunday – a sacred celebration of the sixteen travelers who have demonstrated both willingness to walk by faith and preparedness to keep asking, searching, and knocking. I'll say more when I see you.

Be a blessing. Be the church.

Rev. Fredd



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## Altar Flowers

Our Altar Flowers this week are donated by Harold Steever in loving memory of Bonnie Steever, his mother.

## Light The Steeple

Our steeple is lit by Rayda Bouma and Eleanor Wight in memory of our brother-in-law Rev. Arthur Schoonveld.

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## Upcoming Events and Announcements

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### New Member Information Session – Sunday, April 13th 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, April 27th. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.233.9605, or via email [fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org).

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### Good Friday Worship Service Friday, April 18 at 7:00pm in the Chapel

The Service of Shadows -- or Tenebrae – is an immersive, commemorative experience featuring scripture readings, sacred music, and the gradual extinguishing of candles. After the pageantry of Palm Sunday and before the joy of Easter Sunday, there is the passion of Holy Friday.



**SPIRIT TEAM**

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## 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. **Sunday, April 6, 5-6 pm, Friday, April 18, 12-1 pm**



### **Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon 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 13. If you have any questions, please contact Bethany at [office.manager@whfirstchurch.org](mailto:office.manager@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605.

### **Easter Baskets**

Thank you to everyone who took an Easter basket to fill for Covenant to Care. Thanks to your generosity, Easter will be a little more special for 46 children! As a reminder, please return the baskets by Sunday, April 13th. - Diane & Molly

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### **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](mailto:office.manager@whfirstchurch.org) or [CLICK HERE](#)

**These dates are open: May 18, 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](#).

**All Dates in April are open!**



### **April Reach Out: South Park Inn**

Established in 1982, South Park Inn provides a range of programs and services to assist people experiencing homelessness as they transition back to permanency. The agency's goal is to provide a safe, temporary place to stay as individuals identify the supports and opportunities that will yield long-term housing solutions.

South Park Inn's emergency shelter, opened in 1984, operates 24/7/365 and provides 55 beds to men and women. South Park Inn has 15 Transitional Housing beds for Veterans, ten of which are dedicated for high-barrier Veterans exhibiting acute and/or active substance use and mental illness.

South Park Inn also operates 17 respite beds to provide people recovering from recent medical or behavioral health hospitalizations with a safe place to stay that includes staffing to monitor for complications/side effects, follow-up care, treatment compliance, and/or medication errors; case management, and rehousing support.

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

To learn more and to donate directly: <https://www.southparkinn.org/donate>

## **GHIAA joins movement to protect CT's immigrants**

In response to the federal government's increased efforts to deport immigrants -- often without any due process protections -- GHIAA is joining CT immigrant advocates in efforts to strengthen CT's 2019 Trust Act, and to raise awareness of the constitutional rights that all persons here have. GHIAA participated in a rally and press conference on March 3, and expects a public hearing to be held soon, for which we all will be invited to submit comments.

ICE has already begun to increase enforcement activity in CT, causing many immigrant families to fear going to work, going to school, obtaining health care, or participating in their faith communities. It is important for every person or organization who may have contact with ICE to know that they have the right to (a) remain silent when questioned, (b) have an attorney present during any questioning, and (c) be free of unreasonable search and seizure.

If you have questions about this, or if you want to participate in either or both parts of this new initiative, please email Linda Bronstein ([lindadiane275@gmail.com](mailto:lindadiane275@gmail.com)) or Terry Schmitt ([terryschmittwh@gmail.com](mailto:terryschmittwh@gmail.com)). Thank you!



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**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.



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## **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 game, puzzle, or book!

\*For more detailed information on library programs read the First Church Happenings Newsletter on our website. \*  
<https://whfirstchurch.org/welcome/first-church-newsletters/>

## **JPWL Seed Library Opens!**

WeHa Grows is back with a variety of flower, herb, and veggie seeds for your garden. Stop by the JPW Library during the week, or visit the Bookmobile during Coffee Hour and "seed" for yourself! Four seed packets per family, please. Thank you for your support!

## **Do Good Friday Community Event** Friday, April 18, 10am to 12pm First Church Auditorium

All are welcome! **Please bring:** A package of men's underwear (L-XXL) or a bag of laundry detergent pods. Good Friday is an ideal time to engage in acts of service and charity. This year, the Outreach Team invites you to do just that at our "Do Good" Friday community compassion event. By giving time and resources, you embody the spirit of Christ's selflessness and make a tangible difference in the lives of others. Join us to make brown-bag lunches and no-sew blankets for Mercy House in Hartford. We'll also bake brownies and create Easter cards to add to the lunch bags. AND we're stuffing plastic eggs for First Church's Easter morning Egg Hunt! Please see Carol Lorenzo or Jennifer with questions. Following this event, the Spirit Team is hosting a time of Open Chapel from 12 – 1 p.m. for those who would like a bit of respite and reflection.

## 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](#).

## 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.

Starting 4/7: [The Choice: Embrace the Possible by Dr. Edith Eva Eger](#)

*We have the capacity to hate and the capacity to love. Which one we reach for is up to us. – Edith Eger*

Eger's "mind-blowing memoir of surviving Auschwitz doesn't begin with the terrifying night when she is 16 years old and armed soldiers herd her Hungarian family into a wagon full of other Jews. Instead, we meet Dr. Eger in an El Paso therapy room in 1980, where she is treating a catatonic young man plagued by ... well, she's not sure what. Trauma, yes. But she has yet to discover its source. And when she does, it will bring her closer to her own" (*New York Times*).

- **Food for Thought**

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

Next Meeting: May 6

Food for Thought also is reading *The Choice: Embrace the Possible* by Dr. Edith Eva Eger (description above). This incredible story of hope, courage, and grace is a must-read, and we are sharing it with both of our discussion groups!

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## Ongoing Announcements

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- **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](http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request). •

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**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.

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## 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](mailto:Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605.