



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of April 27, 2025

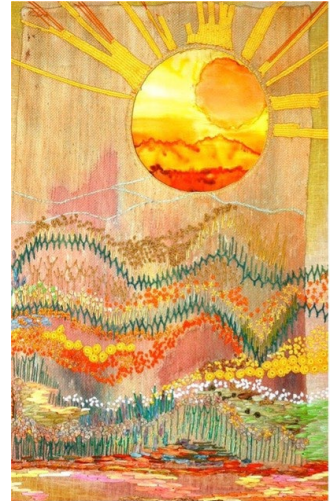


Sunday Worship

Easter Sunday is among the most important of celebrations at the heart of Christian faith. We all feel it. Glad faces are plentiful. We garner our best energies and alleluias. We hear the greatest story ever told in word and music, with brass and lilies. And in some mystical way our hearts are buoyed from the tensions of the days that we find ourselves living.

But the Easter season is far more than a single day. We call it Eastertide. I love that word! And we are invited into a sequence of seven Sundays to reflect on the wonders of it all. Eastertide takes us from the mystery and miracle of the day of resurrection and stretches us all the way to Pentecost (June 8 this year) which is also its own day and season.

My all-time favorite story of Eastertide happened eight days after Easter morning. Jesus' disciple Thomas was trying to sort out the tension between doubt on the one hand and faith on the other. Some have called him Doubting Thomas for wanting some answers to the questions that were bubbling in his heart. I think that's a bit harsh. I am more of the mind that Thomas simply wanted a first-hand faith of his own that was not a hand-me-down. We'll consider more about this on Sunday.



Looking so forward to seeing you all!

Geordie

Altar Flowers

Our Altar Flowers are donated by **Carolyn Lind** in loving memory of **Peter Lind**.

Light The Steeple

Our Steeple is lit by **Nancy Grasilli** in loving memory of Peter **Grasilli**.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Let's Make Lunches! Every month as part of our Outreach mission, we make 80 sandwiches and fill lunch bags for folks in the Asylum Hill neighborhood with "very low food security."

- After Sunday worship in the Auditorium
- Half-hour activity for all ages
- Lunch bag contents includes: sandwich, chips, apple, and homemade cookies

Upcoming dates: **TODAY April 27**, May 25, June 22, July 27, Aug 24 <https://whfirstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/>

A Celtic Service of Healing, April 27, TODAY 5 pm, First Church Chapel

Join us for an evening of gentle healing and reflection. Whether you're facing emotional, physical, relational, or spiritual challenges—or if painful memories continue to trouble you—this service will help to help restore your spirit. We also hold in prayer those in our lives who need healing, particularly when they cannot or do not ask for help themselves. Prayer cards will be available for you as you enter. The service features soft candlelight, the laying on of hands, and compassionate prayer, all led by Rev. Tom Carr.

For any questions, please reach out to Liz Oman-Wilfred or Jennifer deSimas.

Friday, May 2nd, 7:30m, Rock Voices Concert in the Meeting House. Purchase Tickets at www.ROCKVOICES.com

Saturday, May 3rd is World Labyrinth Day! Let's "Walk as One at 1:00" for Peace! Join us for a Global Labyrinth Walk on the labyrinth and connect with others around the world who are doing the same. Learn about labyrinths and enjoy refreshing lemonade and fellowship. Finger labyrinths will be available for those with limited mobility. Saturday, May 3, 1:00 PM – 2:00 p.m. outside on the First Church Labyrinth.

Sunday, May 4th the UHART Gospel Choir will be singing at our service!

Jubilee Recognition - Sunday, May 4th

With Rev. Fredd's support and guidance, Inreach is planning a Jubilee Recognition during morning worship on Sunday, May 4th. We will be acknowledging those among us who have served and supported First Church for 50 or more years! All are invited to participate in the service, and to stay afterwards for a light lunch in the auditorium.



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 or [CLICK HERE](#)

These dates are open: May 18, July 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>

What would we do in the unlikely event that ICE agents came to our door and asked to search First Church?

GHIAA has urged each of its member congregations to have plans in place, just in case. The First Church Coordinating Team adopted a policy statement at its April meeting which lays the groundwork for such plans. If you'd like to read a copy of that statement, you can pick one up at the church office or call the office and have one mailed to you. More specific instructions will soon be provided to church staff, ushers, etc. Our policy is to comply with any lawful request for access to our premises or our records, but to verify the lawfulness of any such request before complying. In this way, we can make sure that our rights -- and the rights of any visitors -- to free exercise of religion and to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure are respected.



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!

Days for Girls Workshop

Saturday, May 17, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Simsbury United Methodist Church

[Days for Girls](#) provides menstrual supply kits of all-washable, easy-to-care-for materials for women in low-income areas around the world. Volunteers cut fabric, and sew, serge, press, and pack kits. All ages and abilities are welcome!

Contact Doey Barnett for more information: dbarnett109@att.net.

West Hartford 250 Committee Forming

The United States of America turns 250 in 2026! States and towns across the nation are planning to celebrate. A *West Hartford 250 Committee* is being established to guide how our town can participate in the festivities.

The *West Hartford 250 Committee* is inviting individuals from the First Church community to join them in planning the event. You can peruse the various volunteer needs [here](#). To find out more about the effort, please contact Carol Lorenzo or Jennifer deSimas.

JPW Library South Sidewalk Initiative

The JPW Library and the Buildings & Grounds Team are exploring the possibility of restoring easy access to the church and JPWL by constructing a sidewalk from in front the sanctuary to the church's south entrance. Historically, FCC members used the south entrance for access to JPWL, the choir room, and the sanctuary. At the time, the Town of West Hartford provided a public sidewalk and stairs that made the entrance very accessible. Expansion and renovation of the Noah Webster Library next door during 2006 through 2008 resulted in the removal of the Town's sidewalk and the construction of a fence blocking all access from Main St. Our hope is that by rebuilding the sidewalk on our property we can restore visibility and access to our church library and open First Church's doors to a wider community! Feel free to contact Jennifer with any questions about the project.

Do-Good Friday Wrap-up

Thank you to all who were able to attend our Do-Good Friday community compassion event last Friday. We packed 100 lunches, including homemade Easter cards, plastic egg, and fruit cups. We also baked brownies, stuffed plastic eggs for the church's annual Easter egg hunt, and made four ["no-sew" blankets](#)!

In the JPWL Gallery Art Exhibit: Don Bonner, American Artist Through April 29

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. He is also on both FaceBook and Instagram.

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.

- [*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
A “mind-blowing memoir of surviving Auschwitz” (*New York Times*).
- **Food for Thought**
[*The Choice: Embrace the Possible* by Dr. Edith Eva Eger](#) 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!
- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group** Meets on the Third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m.
Next Meeting May 18 [*Uprooted: A Memoir About What Happens When Your Family Moves Back* by Ruth Chan.](#) 1993: When Ruth’s parents decide to move back to Hong Kong from Toronto, she can’t help but focus on the negatives. Not only will she leave her school and friends behind, but she has unpleasant memories of Hong Kong, and she barely speaks Cantonese. A great story about how courage, perseverance, and time help ease big changes.

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.

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.

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. 9:30am-3pm. **Contact:** Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.