



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of May 11, 2025



Sunday Worship

*"You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows."*

– Psalm 23:5

One of my recent preaching pastimes is to use a single verse of scripture as the source for the sermon. This Sunday, we'll look again (and anew) at David's description of the divine shepherd, specifically the image of a loving God who pours oil on our heads to soothe and sanctify us. The twist is that God's blessings are often disguised as vexations. I'll say more when I see you. The message is entitled: **What's Annoying Can Also Be Anointing.**

Faith. Fully.

Rev. Fredd



Altar Flowers

Our Altar Flowers are donated by **Barbara Laurain and David Simpson** in loving memory of **Kristine M. Simpson.**



Upcoming Events and Announcements

Glow in the Dark Bingo Night

May 30th from 6:00-7:30

Please join us for an exciting evening of fun, laughter, and friendly competition! Gather your friends and family of all ages for a night filled with glowing Bingo fun! Everyone is welcome to join in on the excitement. Pizza will be provided as well as glow-in-the-dark accessories. [REGISTER ONLINE](#)

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: May 25, June 22, July 27, Aug 24 <https://whfirstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/>



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 May are open!



May 2025 Reach Out Interval House

Founded in 1977, Interval House is the largest agency in the state of Connecticut dedicated to ending domestic violence. From its inception in the basement of a Hartford church by women who wanted to help those who were suffering in silence, Interval House has long been committed to empowering its clients, providing a nurturing and encouraging environment for victims to heal and acquire the tools to move on.

The hotline and Safe House provide a lifeline to those in urgent need of safety, and Interval House's advocates provide guidance for clients facing legal and financial obstacles as a result of leaving a violent home. Interval House's robust network of partnerships connects clients with community resources aimed at helping them pursue higher education, start careers and live productive, self-sufficient lives in safety.

Connecticut shelters are currently above capacity, together let us help support at risk women and children.

To learn more and donate please use the links provided or donate in church (note Interval House on your envelope) or online thru the church: Designation>Reach Out Monthly Collection: <https://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/giving>

To learn more about Interval House: <https://intervalhousect.org/about-us/history/>

To donate directly to Interval House: <https://intervalhousect.org/get-involved/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.

Visit the Church Library

At the John P. Webster Library, you can:

- Find a separate place to worship when you need one
- Watch First Church's live-streamed worship services
- Set your toddler free in the children's area
- Have a cup of tea or coffee (or hot chocolate!) at our Coffee Bar

The JPW Library is also open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.!

New Exhibit! at the JPWL Gallery "Paradise Lies at the Feet of the Mother: A Special Photo Exhibit Honoring Mothers"

May 1 – June 30 in the JPW Gallery and the Auditorium Hallway

Just in time for Mother's Day, the latest JPWL exhibit is a gorgeous photographic display of motherhood from the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut. Photographers contributed images of mothers and families sharing meals, playing, reading, and praying together. These tender portraits convey the affection, humor, and pride these moms and their offspring share. We thank Chaplain Aida Mansoor, Instructor and Director of Field Education at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, for arranging the loan of this lovely display. Aida will present a Gallery talk on the display Wednesday, **May 21** starting in the Auditorium Hallway at 1 p.m.

The [Muslim Coalition of CT](#) is a not-for-profit organization working to build bridges in communities by providing opportunities for the Connecticut Muslim community to integrate with the greater community, while maintaining core Islamic values.

FREE Fitness Classes

Free Faithful Fitness classes – drop-ins welcome! Both classes include meditation as well as movement. Perfect attendance is not required. More information is available on each class's registration page. Sponsored by the JPW Library.

- FitMix with Kathi Boratko – Tuesdays from 5:45– 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. [Sign up here](#). Ends June 24.
- Qi Gong with Cynthia Hoag – Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. [Register here](#). Ends June 26.

Days for Girls Workshop – Join us!

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 are needed to 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 access to the church and JPWL via the South Door on the second floor of the meeting house. 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 stairway that made the church entrance very accessible. However, this sidewalk was removed during the 2006-08 renovation of the Noah Webster Library. In addition, a fence was installed at that time which blocks all access from South Main Street. 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.

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** meets Mondays from 12-1:30 p.m.
[HILDEGARD OF BINGEN: A Saint for Our Times: Unleashing Her Power in the 21st Century](#) by Matthew Fox
Fox offers a biography of St. Hildegard in which he compares her life and actions to contemporary figures such as physicist Albert Einstein and the poet Mary Oliver. "a mystic, a poet, a composer, a god-drunk warrior who challenged the church of her day with passion and no fear at all,"
- **Food for Thought** meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 5-6:30 p.m.
Next Meeting: June 2
[Gaytheist Coming Out of My Orthodox Childhood](#) by Lonnie Mann; illustrated by Gatts Ryan
A coming-of-age graphic novel memoir about a young man who, growing up in an Orthodox Jewish community, realizes he's gay and struggles to reconcile his faith with who he is. "A vital, emotionally immersive self-portrait" (Kirkus Reviews).
- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group**
Meets on the Third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m.
Next Meeting May 18 Next Sunday!
[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.