



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of June 15, 2025



Sunday Worship

Greetings:

One of my favorite stories from the Hebrew Bible appears in the fifth chapter of 2 Kings. It features a person, Naaman, who was "a great man...a mighty warrior" and someone who suffered with a skin condition. Naaman learned that Elisha, the prophet of Israel, could heal the condition. When the two meet, Elisha gives Naaman simple solution that Naaman doesn't take too well.

I've preached this story several times in the past. And. I've revisited the text...revised my thoughts on the possible takeaways, particularly Elisha's advice to Naaman. It's universally applicable and relatable. I'll say more when I see you. Sunday's Juneteenth sermon is entitled:

Free to Be Your Own Kind of Beautiful.

BE YOUR OWN KIND OF
Beautiful

See you soon.

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Carl Hoff and Rich & Janice Hoff** in loving memory of **Dick & Dottie Hoff**.



Upcoming Events and Announcements

Fern Street Backpack Program

A big THANK YOU to all the members of the Outreach Team and our congregation members who visited the Fern Street backpacks program table Sunday, June 1st. Thanks for making their team feel so welcome! We have already collected several bags of food donations which will be dropped off this week. Several also signed up to be volunteers in the fall at their Fern Street location. Fern Street team members will be in contact at the start of the school year and we will continue collecting food over the summer to deliver in late August! Thanks for all your continued support of First Church Outreach programs!

Levo International Volunteer Opportunities

Following Christian Heiden's recent "interview" with Rev. Fredd, many people expressed interest in volunteering at Levo's 441 Homestead Avenue. There are many opportunities: Friday, June 27th, 5:30pm until 7:30pm – pizza party and planting seedlings; and Saturday, June 28th, 9:00am until 12:noon – building farming systems. (Rev Fredd will be there!) Visit www.levointernational.org. Click 'Get Involved'. Then click 'Volunteer'. Select the date(s). See you at the lot!

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." A Half-hour activity for all ages following Sunday Worship in the Auditorium. Lunch bag contents includes: sandwich, chips, apple, and homemade cookies
Upcoming dates:, June 22, July 27, Aug 24 <https://whfirstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/>

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

Yoga Classes *POSTPONED*

Yoga Classes with Cynthia Wolcott are postponed for the summer and will resume in September on Wednesdays from 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. in the First Church Chapel. Contact Cynthia at cjwolcott@gmail.com.

Camp Courant June 2025 Reach Out

Camp Courant is the oldest and largest FREE summer day camp in the nation.

For 131 summers, Camp Courant has adapted to meet the needs of Hartford's most at-risk children by providing a dozen educational programs, all designed and taught by certified teachers, to lessen summer learning loss during the summer months. Camp Courant offers campers a safe, enriching and fun place to be kids, to play, to learn to make friends in an environment where they will learn as many social skills as they will academic skills.

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

For more information about Camp Courant: <https://campcourant.org/history/>

To donate directly to Camp Courant: <https://www.classy.org/give/658931/#!/donation/checkout>

Visit the Church Library

At the John P. Webster Library, you can:

- Watch First Church's live-streamed worship services
- Find a separate place to worship when you need one
- 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.!



We Commemorate Juneteenth at today's worship service. Each family is invited to take a copy of [*Josey Johnson's Hair and the Holy Spirit*](#) by Esau McCaulley and LaTonya Jackson. While Josey gets her hair braided for church, "she begins to wonder why people are so different from one another. Her dad explains that our differences are not a mistake; instead, they are part of God's wonderfully creative plan for the world. With vibrant illustrations and a heartwarming story, this book invites children and adults alike to celebrate the beauty diversity around them." A special note at the back of the book offers parents and caregivers practical tips for discussion. "Captures the warmth of family and the joy of diversity" (IVP Kids, publisher). The books are a gift from the John P. Webster Library through the generosity of Florence S.D. Crofut.

Volunteers Needed for 6/21 PRIDE Booth!

First Church and the JPW Library are sponsoring two booths in June, and we'd love to have you on board!

- ***Be Loud, Be Proud at the West Hartford Pride Celebration on Saturday, June 21!*** We need volunteers to cover the booth in one- or two-hour shifts. This event is organized by WH Pride, "where people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, age, races, ethnicities, and abilities are valued and feel a sense of belonging, and where allies support identities and interests outside their own." If you would like to help, please contact Glen McLeod, Jennifer deSimas (jpwebsterdir@whfirstchurch.org) or Molly Bohman (jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org).

\Stonewall Speakers Community Forum

Thursday, June 26, 7 - 8:30pm

First Church Auditorium

Join us for an inspiring evening in celebration of Pride Month, as we honor diversity, inclusion, and the power of authentic storytelling. Three remarkable speakers from the LGBTQ+ community will share their personal coming-out journeys—stories of self-discovery, resilience, and triumph over adversity. Their insights will shed light on the challenges they've faced and the strength it takes to live openly and authentically.

All ages are welcome. A Q&A session will follow, offering space for questions, shared experiences, and meaningful dialogue. Let's come together to celebrate identity, embrace diversity, and support one another in the spirit of acceptance and understanding. Presented by the JPW Library and Stonewall Speakers, a program of the Connecticut Stonewall Foundation, Inc., an all-volunteer speaker's bureau comprised of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, pansexual, queer people and their allies.

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

The latest JPWL exhibit is a gorgeous photographic display of motherhood from the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut. Photographers contributed images of mothers and families that 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, for arranging the loan of this lovely display.

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.

Gallery Talk

Sunday, June 29, 11:30 a.m.

Chaplain Aida Mansoor will lead a Gallery talk through the above exhibit on Wednesday, June 29 (please note the date change!) starting in the Auditorium Hallway. Please join us to hear about these intriguing images! Contact Jennifer with questions.

Upcycled First Church Totes

Here's your opportunity for local, "green" gift buying! The JPWL is offering bags created from used vinyl church banners. These upcycled, one-of-a-kind First Church-branded totes and clutches can be used as gift bags, make-up pouches, lunch bags, or kid-sized beach bags! They'll be for sale during Hospitality Hour in the Auditorium. Cost: Freewill donation. Proceeds will be shared with [KNOX](#) of Hartford, "committed to connecting and empowering communities to grow a greener, healthier Hartford."

Practicing Presence: Finding Purpose through Meditation

Mondays, June 23 -- July 28 at 12 Noon, First Church Chapel

Join Janice Olson for Practicing Presence on Mondays in June and July. Attendees will practice a different form of meditation each week, then journal about the experience and share insights or experiences (if comfortable doing so). The benefits of meditation include lowered stress, improved memory, increased focus, and better sleep. Make meditation a daily habit -- come and find a meditation practice that works for you. Free; this program is sponsored by the John P. Webster Library through the 1976 bequest of Florence Crofut.

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 through the 1976 bequest of Ms. Florence Crofut, longtime church member.

- FitMix with Kathi Boratko – Tuesdays from 5:45– 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. [Sign up here](#). Ends June 24.
- Tai Chi with Cynthia Hoag – now includes elements of Tai Chi for more experienced practitioners. Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. [Register here](#). Ends June 26.

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
- **Food for Thought** is on hiatus until October 6. Happy reading – have a wonderful summer!
- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group**
Meets on the Third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m.
This group has concluded for the summer. Please visit us for books and chats! We will return in October.

Altar Flower Donations

Donating altar flowers is a meaningful way to honor loved ones and is part of our Inreach ministry. If you would like to donate, please reach out to Bethany in the church office or [CLICK HERE](#) These dates are open: July 13, and 20, 2025...and more!

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](#).

Four Ways to Give

1. **Sunday Morning Offertory** Please note the designation of your donation on the envelope. (Pledge, Reach-Out, General Fund)
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.

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

