



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of August 10, 2025



Sunday Worship

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." – Hebrews 11:1

Faith is the implicit subject of every sermon, every Sunday. I don't always say it directly because certain texts necessitate a subtle, understated teaching technique; but I'm always trying to illustrate (and illuminate) the meaning of faith.

This Sunday, I intend to come right through the front door! The featured text (Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-12) demands nothing less than a direct approach. It explicitly suggests that faith is an acquired ability to be confident (though not certain) about matters that have not yet materialized, despite the absence of touchable proof or tangible evidence. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **What You Can't See Yet Is What You Get.**



Be blessed! Be a blessing!

Rev. Fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Paul and Bev Truebig** in loving memory of **Barbara and Emory Smith**, Bev's parents.



Upcoming Events and Announcements

Covenant to Care

We hope everyone is enjoying their summer! It's almost back to school time and Covenant to Care is conducting the annual Backpack Drive for our sponsored children. Diane and Molly Bohman will be distributing backpacks **TODAY** at the auditorium entrance to the church. We will include a sheet with the suggested items for you to purchase and place in the backpack. The filled backpacks must be returned by Sunday, 8/24. If you have any questions please contact Diane at dmbohman@comcast.net or Molly at jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org. Thank you for your support!

Coming soon... Tuesday night Sun is Shining concert series! Kicks off August 5!

TUESDAYS IN AUGUST, 5:30-7:30. Free and open to the public.

With local pop, jazz, and blues bands – and more!

The groups playing will be:

August 12 - The Jeffrey John Band

August 19 - Rock Voices

August 26 - Still Kickin' with the Big City Horns.

Margaret "Peg" Johnson, longstanding member of the church, passed away on July 5, 2025. Her 3 sons invite you to come to the celebration of life service which will be held on August 16th at 10am in the meetinghouse.

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: Aug 24 <https://whfirstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/>

West Hartford Food Pantry and Fern Street Food Ministry

Donations for the WHFood Pantry and Backpack program of Fern Street may be dropped off 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 oz peanut butter or Sunbutter, soup, macaroni and cheese, canned soup (no beef or pork), dried beans, canned vegetables and beans. Donations will be delivered by the Outreach Team.

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.

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.

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 2025 dates are available: Sept. 21, Oct. 19, 26, Nov. 16, 30, Dec. 7, 21, and 28!

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. Donations will be added to the Save the Steeple fund. [click HERE](#).

August 2025 Reach Out: Connecticut Foodshare

Founded in 1982, Connecticut Foodshare is a member of the Feeding America nationwide network of food banks. Their mission is to deliver an informed and equitable response to hunger by mobilizing community partners, volunteers, and supporters.

Connecticut Foodshare supports individuals and families – from one end of the state to the other – by addressing root causes, creating long-term solutions, and distributing nutritious food through local partner programs in an effort to alleviate hunger. "Our vision is to have a thriving community, free of hunger."

To learn more and donate please use the links provided or donate in church (note Connecticut Foodshare on your envelope) or online thru the church: <https://pushpay.com/g/whfirstchurch>

Or to give directly to Connecticut Foodshare: <https://donate.ctfoodshare.org/campaign/649646/donate>

To learn more about Connecticut Foodshare: <https://www.ctfoodshare.org/who-we-are>

Please join with "Rock Voices West Hartford" to support CT Foodshare!

Rock Voices West Hartford will hold a fundraiser performance that will benefit CT Foodshare on Friday August 15th at 7:30 at Trinity on Main 69 Main Street, New Britain, CT! Please join us for the "Summer of One Hit Wonders" concert where funds raised from ticket sales and basket raffles will go directly to CT Foodshare.

For tickets please go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rock-voices-west-hartford-presents-one-hit-wonders-tickets-1470850025019>



Greetings From the Spirit Team

The Spirit Team recently extended wishes to all for a summer filled with fun and relaxation. We still do! As part of the summer tradition, we hope you were able to attend the July Carillon series. Come and see the tent that will shade our musicians during the "Sun is Shining" concert series that begins on Tuesday, August 5 at 5:30 pm on the front lawn and continues every Tuesday through August 26.

The Spirit Team hopes that you will consider joining the Choir and Bell Choir ensembles this Fall. Choir practices are Tuesdays, from 7-8:30 pm. The Bell Choir practices on Wednesdays from 7-8 pm. Both begin the first week of September. Fear not! Jim Boratko and Jessica Berube-Sengupta are masters of talent development!



Upcoming GHIAA Workshops on Combating Racial and Religious Hate

We are all invited to register for any or all of these free workshops. Each one is limited to 20 participants, so don't delay.

Combating Anti-Muslim Bigotry training with Chaplain Aida Mansoor of Muslim Coalition of CT, Wed., Aug. 13, 2025, 12:30-3:00pm (in person, at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, 55 Sherman St., Hartford). Learn about the various ways anti-Muslim bigotry and Islamophobia present themselves, and what we can do as a community to address them. For additional information and to register, click [HERE](#).

Combating Racism: (Up)Rooting Racial (In)Justice training with consultants Shae Washington and Jason Fredlund, Thursdays, Oct. 23 & 30, Nov. 6 & 13, 6:30-9:00pm (mostly via Zoom). Learn and practice skills to uproot racial injustice and root ourselves more deeply in a lifelong commitment to racial justice and collective liberation. For additional information and to register, click [HERE](#).

Seeds of Hope: A Preaching Gathering for All

Join siblings from across the Southern New England Conference and beyond Sept. 5 & 6 in downtown Hartford for a two-day gathering of storytelling, preaching, live music, and workshops.

This is more than a preaching event - it's a space for storytellers, artists, community builders, preachers, lay folks, and seekers to gather in a time when the ground feels uncertain - to speak, to listen, and to plant what must come next. It is not just for preachers or clergy, but for anyone who feels the world shifting beneath their feet and still chooses to plant, to root, and to rise.

Hartford Stage will host us Friday night for a Moth-like storytelling event and again Saturday afternoon for a dynamic gathering of music, messages, and performance. Saturday morning will feature preaching workshops at nearby Christ Church Cathedral. All are welcome.

Learn more and register at: www.sneucc.org/seedsdofhope.



Visit the Church Library

At the John P. Webster Library, you can:

- Watch the live-streamed worship services in air-conditioned comfort!
- 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.!



Practicing Presence: Finding Purpose through Meditation

August 11 at Noon

Join Janice Olson in the Community Room (down the hall from the JPWL) for the last session of **Practicing Presence**, a basic introduction to meditation. Prior attendance not required! [Tap here](#) for more information and to register.

Book Group News:

The John P. Webster Library sponsors three book groups that meet regularly in the library September-June. Copies of the books are provided for participants, and new members are always welcome to any group! For more information, please contact the library at 860-232-3893 or at jpwwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

- **Awakening the Spirit** resumes meeting 12 – 1:30 p.m. Monday, September 8 to discuss Richard Rohr's [The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage](#). "Drawing from his own journey through anger, sadness, and into love, Rohr offers a deeply personal and universal message, inviting readers to integrate action and contemplation in a vibrant and compassionate tradition of contemplative Christianity." Books are now available at the JPW Library.
- **Food for Thought** resumes at 5 p.m. Tuesday, October 6.
- **Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group** resumes at 10 a.m. Sunday, October 19.

Summer Reading from the JPWL

We have lots of new books for summer reading – and plenty of oldies too!

Before Dorothy by Hazel Gaynor

For fans of "The Wizard of Oz" and anyone who loves a story about strength, love, and resilience: Have you ever wondered how Dorothy came to live with Uncle Henry and Auntie Em? Here is their backstory, along with a dose of historical perspective and lots of Oz Easter eggs throughout. "Rich, enchanting, and full of heart" (online reviews).

Dream State by Eric Puchner

Here is a character-driven novel about the vagaries of the human heart and the meaning of life. Spanning 50 years and set against the backdrop of a rapidly warming Montana, *Dream State* explores what it means to live with the mistakes of the past—both our own and the ones we've inherited. Online reviews praise Puchner's treatment of the issues of male friendship, addiction, fidelity, depression, and love. "A good and messy family saga."

The Words of Her Mouth: Psalms for the Struggle by Martha Spong

Ten women poets bring the ancient collection of psalms into modern context: seeking justice and celebrating beauty, longing for grace and proclaiming love. "A balm in this season of spiritual strife and political struggle."

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.

