



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of August 24, 2025

Sunday Worship

We preempt this pastoral missive to bring you a brief parish service announcement...

I've made two work-life adjustments in the interest of efficiency and energy conservation. The first is that I will observe sabbath time on Thursdays – not necessarily time “off”; but, at least, time “away” from the office and email and phones. The second is that I have a new cellular number dedicated for First Church matters: **860.798.6768**. Please save it! Please use it! ☺

We now return to your regularly scheduled Sunday Notes content.

Loved ones:

This week's featured text ([Luke 13:10-17](#)) describes Jesus healing a woman who had been suffering for eighteen years. The Savior performed this miracle on the Sabbath – laid hands on her; told her that she was free; and she immediately stood up straight. Which the leader of the synagogue considered a serious violation of tradition. There's certainly something to be said about that controversy; but I can't stop thinking about how much time that woman spent stooped and unable to look the world in the eye. I'll say more when I see you. The reflection is entitled: **On Being Bent Out of Shape**.



Be blessed! Be a blessing!

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Mary Matke** in loving memory of **Joseph F. Patterson, Jr.**



Upcoming Events and Announcements

Tuesday night Sun is Shining concert series! TUESDAYS IN AUGUST, 5:30-7:30. Free and open to the public. With local pop, jazz, and blues bands – and more! **August 26:** Still Kickin' with the Big City Horns.

Let's Make Lunches! TODAY! 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: TODAY!!! Aug 24 <https://whfirstchurch.org/ministry/outreach/>

Potluck Dinner - Friday, September 19 at 6 p.m. in the Auditorium

The Inreach team invites you to join your First Church friends for a potluck dinner! Make your favorite dish and join us for an evening of good food and fellowship. There will be games for the kids and for the young at heart. We look forward to seeing you! Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

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.

West Harford 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.

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, Nov. 16, 30, Dec. 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>



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 this free workshop. It is limited to 20 participants, so don't delay.

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/seedsdohope.



Check Out the John P. Webster Library!

At the JPW 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.



Book Group News:

Book groups resume in a couple of weeks! All books are in – pick up yours at the Book Mobile or at the JPW Library!

Awakening the Spirit resumes meeting Monday, September 8, noon to 1:30 p.m. to begin discussing Richard Rohr's [The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage](#). "...Tears come from both awe and empathy, and they generate even deeper awe and deeper empathy in us. The sympathy that wells up when we weep can be life-changing, too, drawing us out of ourselves and into communion with those around us."

Food for Thought resumes Tuesday, October 7 at 5 p.m. We're reading [*How Lucky*](#) by Will Leitch, "the unforgettable story of Daniel, a fiercely resilient young man living with a physical disability, as he works to solve a kidnapping incident he has witnessed. Unforgettable. Brilliant." (online reader reviews).

Believe in YourSHELF Tween Book Group resumes Sunday, October 19 at 10 a.m. in the Community Room. We're starting the year with [*The Puzzling Fate of Millicent Graves*](#) by Dora M. Mitchell. "If life were a bookshelf, Millicent Graves would have it organized to perfection. Instead, her life is filled with chaos. When mysterious jigsaw puzzles offer Millie a chance to change her destiny, she rearranges the pieces she doesn't like, replacing some parts with ones that better suit her vision of an organized life" (Amazon). That's a great idea, right?

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 Jennifer or Molly at 860-232-3893 or at jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

New Reads at the JPWL!

[*Religion in the Lands that Became America: A New History*](#) by Thomas A. Tweed

Traditional narratives of religion in North America begin with the arrival of English settlers, bypassing the 10,000 years of religious practice that predated the pilgrims and had an enormous impact on the development of the continent. Historian Thomas A. Tweed illuminates the histories of Native American, African American, and European American religious traditions in North America, as well as their complex interactions, to provide a fascinating and prescient look at the spiritual practices that have shaped the continent.

[*Angelica: For Love and Country in a Time of Revolution*](#) by Molly Beer

Beer's debut novel breathes new life into a period often dominated by masculine themes or dulled by familiarity. In her well-researched account of Angelica Schuyler Church (you might remember Angelica from "Hamilton," the blockbuster Broadway show), Beer illuminates how American women have plied influence and networks for political ends, including the making of a new nation. An enthralling and revealing telling of the birth of the United States.

[*Ferris*](#) by Kate DiCamillo

"This story pretends to be small and unassuming, it's also universal and bittersweet and genuinely funny, all packed into a few meaningful, carefully chosen words. It's about unlikely ghosts and even more unlikely raccoon infestations. It's about would-be outlaw sisters and sparrows in feasting halls. It's about lighting chandeliers, holding hands, and sitting with someone as they cry and eat their pie. This book is about a lot of things that all turn out to be one thing. If you're wondering, that thing would be love" (online reader review)

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.

