



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of September 21, 2025

Sunday Worship

*"My dearest Lord,
Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path beneath me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
today and evermore."*

The lyrics of this Sunday's offertory anthem were originally penned by Columcille (aka Columba) who is widely celebrated in Ireland as a gifted poet, writer, and raconteur. Columba was a person of faith and vision who is said to have successfully founded forty-one monasteries in forty-one years across Ireland. He was also familiar with failure having been found guilty of copying a book of psalms that belonged to a fellow monk.



Forced into exile as the result of his "sin", Columba set sail toward the island of Iona. He gave himself unreservedly to God's care, asking God to surround him on all sides – before, above, beneath, and behind. When I see you, I'll say more about the saint and about being surrounded.

The sermon is entitled: **Everywhere (Season Finale): A Prayer of Saint Columba.**

Be blessed! Be a blessing!

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Lee and Ken Roberts** in loving memory of **AnnaLee and Robert Van Allen**, Lee's parents.

Light the Steeple

This month our Steeple is lit by **The Friends of Ed Lennig** who honor **Ed** and his many trips around the sun!

Call to Congregational Meeting

Notice is hereby given that a Congregational Meeting of the First Church of Christ Congregational of West Hartford, Connecticut, UCC, will be held in the Meetinghouse on Sunday, September 21, 2025 following morning worship to address the following items of business:

1. To consider and vote on the proposed budget for the First Church Academy for Young Children, for the budget year 2025-2026. [BUDGET LINK](#)
2. In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in this Call to Meeting.

Notice given on September 7, 2025
Linda Bronstein, Secretary of the Church

First day of Sunday School is today. Scan QR Code to Register your child if you have not done so already!



Upcoming Events and Announcements

New Member Information Session – TODAY! Sunday, September 21 at 11:30am Following Worship. We expect to receive new members into the life of the church during the 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, September 28th. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860.798-6768, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

SUNDAY, October 5 at 12:30 p.m. on the front lawn - Officiated by Rev. Fredd.

Join us for a simple service of worship to honor God's gift of creation, especially our furry companions! This event is open to people of all faiths and creatures of all kinds. Bring your pets (on a leash or crated, please!); or, if worshipping in person is not a comfortable option, bring a picture!

Let's "Gather Round the Table"!

Join your friends at First Church for conversation, conviviality, and community for our combination potluck and guess who's coming to dinner, which is held 3 times during the year. We call it "Gather Round the Table". See Matha Calef, Linda Moffitt, or Susan Tobin at coffee hour through the end of September to ask questions and sign up. All ages are welcome and encouraged to stop by and talk with us. The first round of dinners will begin in October. [SIGN UP FORM](#)

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."

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

Upcoming 2025 dates: **Sep 21**, Oct 26, Nov 23, Dec 21

Questions: Contact Outreach member Dottie Stone, dottie@stone-stonect.com, 203-856-7403

Please donate food: West Hartford Food Pantry, Loaves and Fishes and Fern Street Food Ministry

Donations for all 3 divisions may be dropped off in the marked blue bins outside the auditorium and around the building. Paper bags with a list attached are by the auditorium making it easy to gather Fern Street essentials. Non-perishables of all kinds will be sorted for the others and be delivered by the Outreach Team.

Yoga with Cynthia Wolcott begins Wednesday, October 8th 9:30-10:45 am in the chapel. Mark your calendar!

Family News! We need your family news and photos! [Click here](#) to submit yours and we'll share as soon as we can. Please include captions for your photos, keeping in mind that we may edit to fit, and that this is a public page.

Coffee and Conversation Join First Church friends at Nero Kitchen at 13 South Main Street in West Hartford Center on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. for coffee and conversation.

Donations are needed for the new Hall High School Sewing Club. Accepted are any working sewing machines, fabric of any kind, patterns. Questions or donations, please text 860-324-5279.

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: 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](#). **These dates are open: 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26 and more!**

It's back to school time...

***Let's support our dedicated teachers and enrich the classroom experiences of WHPS students by donating to
The Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools!***

September 2025 Reach Out - The Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools

The Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing educational experiences by providing financial support for unique and inspiring programs in West Hartford public schools. Twice a year, certified WHPS teachers apply for grants that showcase creativity, innovation and align with the school curriculum. Application are evaluated on educational merit and potential impact on student learning.

The Foundation for WHPS relies on community support to fund these exceptional educational programs. Individuals, families, businesses, civic groups and alumni across the country help to bring these wonderful learning experiences to West Hartford public school students.

Since its founding in 1997, the Foundation has awarded over \$2,100,000 in grants to hundreds of classrooms across all 16 WHPS schools.

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

Or to give directly to FWHPs: <https://fwhps.org/page/donate-now>

To learn more about The Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools: <https://fwhps.org/page/about-us>

Visit 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 open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday at 9-12.

Enneagram Overview With Q & A Wednesday, September 24 6-7:30pm, First Church Fellowship Room (303)

Facilitated by Rev. Laurie Andersen and Mark Goodwin [Register Here](#)

Note: Rev. Laurie & Mark will be available to answer your questions about this topic today during coffee hour. Look for a table near the JPWL Book Mobile.

The Enneagram is a study of personality types or energies, a tool that fosters understanding of our innate spirituality and God-given way of being. It leads to insight into how we each fall from our holy path, why, and how to return. In this short "taste" of the enneagram, participants will learn the enneagram's basic types and gain some understanding of how these types affect our spiritual path.

Rev. Laurie Andersen and her husband Mark Goodwin have team-taught Enneagram for 20 years in churches and church-wide organizations. Please contact Jennifer deSimas with questions.

Celtic Worship Service First Church Chapel, September 28, 5 p.m.

Celtic Christian Worship is a contemplative liturgical tradition that invites everyone to experience the sacredness of all creation. It's a sensory journey that combines ancient rituals with the enduring message of Christianity, creating a space for deep connection and reflection. In this tradition, you'll find a path to encounter the divine in the beauty of the everyday through prayer, poetry, music, and shared silence. Our September service will be led by Rev. Susan Izard. Freewill offering this month will be donated to the [Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools](#). Please contact Julia Rosa or Liz Oman-Wilfred with questions.

Sound Healing & Meditation Event First Church Chapel, Sunday, October 19, 4-5:30

Free Program*

An immersive journey using sound therapy, meditation, and various energy healing modalities to promote wellness. Participants report blissful relaxation, transformative re-patterning of thoughts, personal insights, and a spiritual connection for those seeking alignment of mind, body, and Spirit. You are welcome to bring yoga mats, pillows, blankets, or journals. Please dress comfortably. *This is a free program, thanks to the generosity of Miss Florence Crofut. A freewill donation will be collected at the door and donated to the Fidelco Guide Dog foundation. Please [register here](#).

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Spirit: JPWL Faithful Fitness Classes Resuming!

The JPW Library invites you to attend a free* fitness class! All sessions provide an opportunity for meditation as well as movement, and perfect attendance is *not* required. More information is available on each class's registration page.

*These programs are provided free of charge through our sponsors and the generosity of Ms. Florence S.M. Crofut.

- **FitMix with Kathi Boratko** – Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. [More info and registration here.](#)
- **Practicing Presence** with Janice Olson – Starts in October. Time and place TBD
- **Tai Chi & Qi Gong** with Cynthia Hoag – Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. [More info and registration here.](#)

Book Group News:

Book groups are resuming! All books are in – pick up yours at the Book Mobile or at the JPW Library!

- **Awakening the Spirit** meets on Mondays from noon to 1:30 p.m. We're discussing Richard Rohr's [The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage](#). How do we live compassionately in a time of violence and despair? What can we do with our private disappointments and the anger we feel in such an unjust world? Fr. Richard Rohr turns to the writings of the Jewish prophets, revealing how some of the lesser-read books of the Bible offer us a crucial path forward today. Drawing on a century of biblical scholarship, breathing new life into ancient wisdom, Rohr paves a path forward for anyone seeking a way of compassionate living in a hurting world.
- **Food for Thought** meets 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** meets 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 jwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

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.

Worship Accessibility Improvements

Closed captioning has been added to our TV monitor in the Meeting House.

Large print versions of the hymns are available.

We have upgraded our Assisted Listening System.

We hope these improve your worship experience. If there is something else that is a struggle for you during the service, please let Jim Boratko know.

