



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of October 12, 2025

Sunday Worship

*"Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures;
especially Brother Sun, who is the day,
and through whom You give us light."*

– from The Canticle of the Sun by Saint Francis of Assisi

I wonder if you have a favorite sun-themed tune. *Here Comes the Sun* by the Beatles (1969). *You Are the Sunshine of My Life* by Stevie Wonder (1972). *Walking on Sunshine* by Katrina And The Waves (1983). *Soak Up The Sun* by Sheryl Crow (2002).



Taking a cue from Saint Francis, Sunday's worship theme is about praising God for all that God has made and all that God makes possible, especially sunshine! The featured text (selected verses from [Jeremiah 29](#)) includes a subtle reference to the sun's effect on gardens planted in unpleasant places. The chancel choir will offer an interpretation of The Canticle of the Sun. The sermon, too, explores songs and sayings that deal with the delivery of bright blessings from above. I'll say more when I see you.

Be your own kind of brave. Be the church.

rev.fredd



Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Yvonne and Louis Tafuto** in loving memory of their son, **Jason Paul Hannigan**, forever in our hearts.

Light the Steeple

This week our Steeple is lit by **The Spirit Team** in honor of **Rev Fredd**, the light is an expression of love and appreciation for his ministry. We are blessed!

Today's Events

Anne Upson Stone, long standing member of the church, died peacefully on August 20, 2025 after a long and purposeful life devoted to family, community, and social justice. Her family invites you to come to the celebration of life service which will be held this Sunday, October 12th at 1pm in the meetinghouse.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

The Church Office, Academy, and JPW Library will be **closed on Monday, October 12th** in observance of Indigenous Peoples Day.

Sidewalk Dedication During Coffee Hour @ the JPW Library

Sunday, October 19 following worship

Outside: South Sidewalk, JPW Library

Join the JPW Library work group and the Outreach team for Hospitality Hour in the JPW Library as we celebrate our new sidewalk on the south side of the church. Fresh paint, improved lighting, and a brand-new door now welcome visitors from South Main and Blue Back Square to First Church and the JPW Library. Perhaps you saw the article about it on [weha.com](#) – if not, read it [here](#)! And come celebrate with us!

Monthly Celtic Worship Services in the Chapel

Sunday, October 26, at 5 p.m.

Celtic Christian Worship is a contemplative liturgical tradition that invites us 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, Communion, poetry, music, and shared silence. Our October service will be led by Rev. Tom Carr. The free will offering will be donated to [Interval House](#), "working to end domestic violence." Please contact Julia Rosa or Liz Oman-Wilfred with questions.

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 2025 dates: Oct 26, Nov 23, Dec 21

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

Arts in The Center Concerts Presents: Chamber Music Concert Sunday, November 16 at 3:00 p.m. in the Chapel. The Chamber Music Series, is in its third season at First Church designed to bring great music performances to an audience in an intimate setting. The concert is open to the public. A Free Will Offering will be received at the door. Park for free in church lot. If handicap access needed please pull up to the curb on South Main Street and enter via ramp that will be placed at Chapel entrance.

West Hartford Festival of Trees is Coming!

The holidays are on their way, and so is a favorite tradition—the **10th Annual West Hartford Festival of Trees!** The joyful event takes place on Thursday, December 4, from 5 to 8 p.m. during the Holiday Stroll — and on **Saturday, December 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.!**

We'd love for you to be part of the magic by donating a decorated artificial tree or a gift card (or both!). Your festive creation will help light up the event and bring joy to our community. Call a friend and start planning!

Reserve your tree or gift card by Sunday, November 23!

You can register a tree online [HERE](#) (one tree per form) or gift card [HERE](#). Contact us at: festivaloftreeswh@whfirstchurch.org if you need assistance.

We also need more volunteers to help with the planning, setup, and hosting during the event. Please see Ginny Vocelli, Amy Melvin, Nancy Ball, Eleanor Wight, Jennifer deSimas or Molly Bohman if you'd like to help, or let us know at: festivaloftreeswh@whfirstchurch.org.

Covenant to Care

Now through December 31st we will be collecting new or gently worn mittens, hats, scarves, and other winter clothing for Covenant to Care! Please bring items to church and look for designated boxes for collection. Thank you!

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 Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45 am in the chapel. \$20 per session (if this causes a hardship please speak to Cynthia), enter via the North Door. Cynthia Wolcott has been leading yoga and healing movement classes for nearly two decades. After healing a double herniated disc with movement, she began to tailor each of her classes to the needs of the students, customizing the movements to address their particular issues. Through her own practices of yoga and meditation, she experienced the gifts of tremendous healing and growth. She delights in offering those gifts to others.

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.

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.

October 2025 Reach Out - Fidelco Guide Foundation, Inc.

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc. is dedicated to limitless potential — to ensuring people who are blind enjoy increased independence to improve their lives and the world around them. Our clients raise families, serve America in the military, and sacrifice on the battlefield. They advocate for those who are visually impaired, win gold medals as world-class athletes, educate, and more.

It takes 2 years, 15,000 hours, and \$65,000 to create each life-changing guide dog. All Fidelco guide dogs are provided to clients at no cost thanks to generous support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other organizations. To learn more and donate please use the links provided or donate in church (**note Fidelco on your envelope**) or online thru the church: <https://pushpay.com/g/whfirstchurch>

Or to give directly to Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.: <https://secure.fidelco.org/site/Donation>

To learn more about Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.: <https://fidelco.org/about/>



October marks Clergy Appreciation Month. Paul wrote: "Now we ask you to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work." (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). On behalf of the congregation, the Spirit Team will be lighting the steeple each week during the month of October. The light is an expression of love and appreciation for Rev. Fredd's ministry. We are blessed!



GHIAA invites us to share our experiences and shape GHIAA's next steps

We are invited to come together with others in GHIAA's network of 50 congregations, to share stories of personal impact and of what we are seeing in our communities regarding the issues GHIAA has been working on. Each gathering will focus on a specific topic -- immigrant rights and protections, housing affordability, or the human impact of our state's inequitable fiscal policies.

To register to attend a gathering, go to www.cljct.org/ghiaa/housemeetings. If you would like to join the conversation on more than one issue, you are welcome to register for multiple dates. You are also welcome to invite a friend or neighbor to register and attend with you. Everyone is welcome, especially those who have personal stories about the importance of these issues. These critical conversations will help to shape GHIAA's next steps in each of the issue areas.

Questions? Contact Linda Bronstein (lindadiane275@gmail.com) or Terry Schmitt (terryschmittwh@gmail.com).

The topics, dates, times, and locations are as follows:

Immigrant Rights & Protections

Sunday, October 19, 1:00-3:00 pm, UUSE, Manchester

Monday, October 27, 7:00-8:30 pm, Church of Christ (Congregational), Newington

Housing Affordability

Sunday, October 26, 3:00-4:30 pm, First Church of Christ, Simsbury

Tuesday, November 4, 7:00-8:30 pm, Westminster Presbyterian Church, West Hartford

Fiscal Policy Reform

Sunday, October 26, 2:00-3:30 pm, Emanuel Lutheran, Hartford

Thursday, October 30, 7:00-8:30 pm, Congregation Beth Israel, West Hartford



Air-Conditioning Updates

The Buildings & Grounds workgroup heard you! It's hot in the Meetinghouse during the summer and air conditioning would be great!

In 2017, we explored cooling the Meetinghouse but given the huge volume of the space, it really wasn't feasible . . . now with the advent of technologically advanced heat pumps, we think it is a viable option. And because heat pumps both cool and heat, a well designed system should be able to provide 80-90% of our heating needs, making the investment easier to justify. In addition, based on our Building Assessment in 2022, the projected life expectancy of the south boiler (which steam heats the Meetinghouse) is now less than five years. It should continue to function as a back-up source of heat as needed for temperatures below zero outdoors.

We have engaged a professional HVAC engineer who has designed a couple of options. Invitations to bid have gone out to qualified commercial HVAC contractors with the expectation that bids will be returned by 10/24/25. Since Eversource rebates past the end of the year are likely but not assured at this time, we recommend every effort at prompt installation should the project be supported by the congregation.

To this end, please look for a call-to-meeting in early November. Our by-laws would require approval by congregational vote for a project costing more than \$10,000 which heat pumps clearly would. More information will be made available over the next month. Any member who wishes to review our consultant's document may obtain the same by contacting Kathleen Allen.

Court Lewis, Chair
Buildings & Grounds workgroup



Visit the JPWL this Sunday!

- Watch the live-streamed worship services while your toddler explores the children's area!
- Find a separate place to worship when you need one
- 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.

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](#).

Seed Library Needs Your Donations

Please keep *WeHa Grows!* in mind as you put your gardens to bed this fall. Your donation of locally harvested seeds is what sustains our seed library.

How to collect seeds: After allowing a portion of a plant to go to seed, remove seeds and place them in a sealed paper envelope (available through the JPW Library and Book Mobile). On the outside of the envelope, note your name and the plant's name, variety, and year of harvest. Drop off your seeds during JPW Library hours or at the Book Mobile. Thank you for donating to and supporting this important ministry!

FREE Fitness Classes -- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Spirit!

The JPWL invites you to attend a free *Faithful Fitness* class. Each class provides an opportunity for meditation as well as movement. More information is available on each class's registration page:

- **FitMix with Kathi Boratko** – Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium.
[More info and registration here.](#)
- **Practicing Presence** meditation led by Janice Olson – **Resumes Wednesday, October 8** from 11-12 in the Quiet Room (#407). No registration required; just drop in!
- **Tai Chi & Qi Gong** with Cynthia Hoag – Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel.
[More info and registration here.](#)

*These programs are provided for free through the JPWL Crofut Fund.

Join a Book Group!

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.

- **Awakening the Spirit meets Mondays from 12-1:30.** This month, they continue discussing [The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage](#). 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 as we cope with private disappointments and the anger we may feel in these unpredictable times. 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: [The Names](#)** by Florence Knapp. Next meeting: Tuesday, November 4, 5-6:30 p.m. A mother ponders her newborn son's future. If she names him after his father, will he grow up to be abusive, like his father? Would a different name produce a different man? Knapp explores three different futures for the boy, examining domestic abuse and the heartbreaking decisions women are often forced to make in this story of survival, sacrifice, and the invisible weight of keeping everyone else happy.
- **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).

New Books at the JPWL!

- *Chicka Chicka Tricka Treat* by Julien Chung
The classic alphabet chant gets a Halloween twist as the letters sneak their way up the tree, all donning their spiffiest costumes. But when a witch swoops in, and the letters come tumbling down, will that be the end of their Halloween fun...or just the beginning? (Simon Schuster)
- *The Wilderness* by Angela Flournoy
An era-defining novel about five Black women over the course of their twenty-year friendship, as they move through the dizzying and sometimes precarious period between young adulthood and midlife—in the much-anticipated second book from National Book Award finalist Angela Flournoy (HarperCollins).
- *Being Here: Prayers for Curiosity, Justice, and Love* by Pádraig ÓTuama
In *Being Here*, acclaimed poet and theologian Pádraig ÓTuama offers a thoughtful collection of prayers and essays to focus attention in a world full of distractions. Featuring 31 collects - an ancient five-fold form of prayer - this unconventional devotional invites readers into a daily rhythm of connection and creativity (Eerdmans Publishing).

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 this improves your worship experience. If there is something else that is a struggle for you during the service, please let Jim Boratko know.

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.

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: 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](#).

