



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of October 26, 2025



Sunday Worship

"No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection." – Bishop Ken Untener

Did you hear the one about the Pharisee and the tax collector? I'm asking in earnest. The pair appear in a parable that provides important instruction about prayer ([Luke 18:9-14](#)).



The Pharisee's attitude was pretentious and self-righteous: *"God, I give thanks that I'm not like other people -- the unlovable types that I loathe."* The tax collector, on the other hand, prayed with humility: *"God, have mercy on me -- an imperfect individual."*

Do you see yourself in those two examples? I'm asking in earnest. Jesus said that being down-to-earth is the key to being lifted up. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **Good News for Tax Collector Types.**

Stay salty!

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Judy and Terry Schmitt** in loving memory of **Jean Quick Piper**.

Light the Steeple

This month 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

"Let's Talk" about AC in the Meetinghouse. After Sunday Service in the Auditorium 11:15

Let's Make Lunches! After Sunday Service in the Auditorium! Help make 80 sandwiches and fill lunch bags for folks in the Asylum Hill neighborhood with "very low food security."

Festival of Trees Volunteer Meeting 11:30 in the JPW Library.

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, November 2, 2025 at 11:15 AM following morning worship to address the following item of business:

1. To consider and vote on heat pump/air conditioning system installation in the meeting house.
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 October 19, 2025

Linda Bronstein, Secretary of the Church

Upcoming Events and Announcements

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 [Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.](#) Please contact Julia Rosa or Liz Oman-Wilfred with questions.

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.

WH Festival of Trees needs trees, gift cards and volunteers 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.! Donate a decorated tree or volunteer to help with the festival. We also need more volunteers to help with the planning, setup, and hosting during the event. Please come to the **Oct. 26 meeting, in the JPW Library after church at 11:30.** If interested but can't attend please let us know.

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.

Thanksgiving Baskets:

Our food collection for Thanksgiving baskets is here! If you would like to help, please bring in a food item, using the following guide: If your last name begins with...you'll bring:

Please bring items to church and place them in a Food for Friends barrel by November 23rd. We will use these items to fill the baskets. We will also be collecting Stop and Shop gift cards, which each family will receive along with their basket of food items. We are looking for volunteers to fill and organize the baskets on Sunday, November 23rd after worship.

A-D: Bread and roll mix; stuffing mix
E-H: Gravy and Cranberry Sauce, Spanish Food (ie Goya Products)
I-L: Canned fruits and vegetables
M-P: Juice, tea and coffee
Q-T: Rice and potatoes
U-Z: Breakfast cereals and juice boxes

If you can help out or have any questions please contact Diane Bohman at dmbohman@comcast.net or Molly Bohman at jwebsterlib@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!

One of our Covenant to Care families is in need of a coffee table and a bookcase. If you have either of these items that you are willing to donate, please contact [Diane](#) or [Molly Bohman](#).

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.

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.

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.

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!

October 2025 Reach Out - Fidelco Guide Dog 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/>

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
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

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.

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.

Practicing Presence - Weekly Drop-In Meditation Gathering, Wednesday's from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Room 407
Learn techniques to quiet the mind and nurture the spirit during Practicing Presence, the weekly meditation session at First Church. Led by Janice Olson, certified yoga instructor and spiritual director, the session consists of a 20 minute meditation followed by a brief time for journaling and we finish with a discussion of our experience. No meditation experience required; just show up and be curious. Sponsored by the JPW library, there is no cost and no obligation to attend. Drop in and check it out...all are welcome. For more information, contact Janice at (860) 985-1883.

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.

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, 5:45 – 6:45 p.m. in the Auditorium.
[More info and registration here.](#)
- **Tai Chi & Qi Gong** with Cynthia Hoag – Thursdays, 10:30-11:30am in the Chapel.
[More info and registration here.](#)

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



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.

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.** November's discussion is based on [Stress Less: 9 Habits from the Bible and Brain Science](#) by Dr. Charles Stone. In late August, Rev. Fredd used parts of the book as the basis for his sermon about building up resilience. This month-long conversation (guided by Rev. Fredd) consists of deeper exploration of Dr. Stone's nine practical insights for combatting our common worries and fears. According to a poll from the American Psychological Association more than a quarter of American adults say they're so stressed they can't function. Young people too. *Stress Less* provides hope and healing.
- **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, November 16th at 10:15am (when Sunday School starts) in the Community Room. We will discuss [Whale Eyes](#), a memoir by James Robinson. "Told through an experimental mix of intimate anecdotes and interactive visuals, this book immerses readers in James's experiences growing up with strabismus, allowing them to see the world through one eye at a time. Readers will get lost as they chase words. They'll stare into this book while taking a vision test. They'll hold it upside down as they practice "pretend-reading" and they'll follow an unlikely trail toward discovering the power of words. (Amazon)

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.

