



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of November 2, 2025

Sunday Worship

"[Jesus] entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich."

[Luke 19:1-2](#)

Did you hear the other one about the tax collector? I'm asking earnestly. It's a compelling episode that appears in Luke's gospel. This supposed sinner (a less-than-perfect person) was trying to get a glimpse of Jesus as the Savior was passing through Jericho. According to the storyteller, there were several hurdles in Zacchaeus' way.



Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? I'm asking earnestly. Sometimes you have to go to great lengths to overcome obstacles and get to God. I'll say more when I see you.

The sermon is entitled: More Good News for Tax Collector Types.

Be a blessing...be the light of the world!

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Courtland Lewis** in loving memory of **Jean Amols and Nancy Lewis**.

Light the Steeple

This week our Steeple is lit by **Courtland Lewis** in loving memory of **Jean Amols and Nancy Lewis**.

Today's Events

It was decided at last Sunday's 'Let's Talk' information session that the Congregational Meeting (to consider and vote on heat pump/air conditioning system installation) originally scheduled for November 2, 2025 is postponed while additional feasibility study is conducted. Stay tuned!

Upcoming Events and Announcements

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 is 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 5-8pm during the Holiday Stroll, and on Saturday, December 6, from 10am-1pm. Donate a decorated tree or volunteer to help with the festival.

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.

Volunteer Opportunity

Outreach is partnered with **Fern Street Food ministry** and they are seeking volunteers for a variety of different roles and levels of commitment. Opportunities include sorting food, delivering food bags, picking up food donations, unloading and sorting food from the mobile pantry, making sandwiches and more.

If you are interested in getting involved please reach out to Carla Richardson Food Ministry Coordinator (860)233-3669 ext. 109 or email carla@westhartforduu.org

FLYER ON OUR WEBSITE Email any questions to Carol Lorenzo, Outreach team leader. ctlorenzo@comcast.net

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 jpwebsterlib@whfirstchurch.org

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: Nov 23, Dec 21

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

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.

Monthly Celtic Worship Services in the Chapel

Sunday, November 23, 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 Janice Olson. The free will offering will be donated to [APK Charities](#), providing support for veterans. Please contact Julia Rosa or Liz Oman-Wilfred with questions.

Veterans Day November 11th commemorates the service of all U.S. Veterans!
Let us honor and support those who served by supporting CT veterans!

November 2025 Reach Out: APK charities

APK charities was established in loving memory of Captain Andrew Michael Pedersen-Keel (PK), Special Forces ODA 3126 Commander, a highly decorated and exceptional leader who gave his life in Afghanistan in March 2013. APK provides direct financial assistance to Connecticut Veterans, active duty service members, their families, and Gold Star families of all branches and eras of service, who are in need of emergency and hardship assistance. The Direct Assistance Program seeks to alleviate immediate and critical medical, housing, transportation, and other needs. APK partners with CT Army National Guard, CT Veteran's Legal Center, Columbus House, VA Social Services and others. APK has distributed more than \$660,000 in funds to:

- Cover the cost of medical expenses
- Pay rent, rent arrears, security deposits and utilities
- Defray critical home repairs and maintenance costs
- Purchase and repair automobiles
- Furnish and outfit apartments for unhoused Veterans, and much more ...

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

Or to give directly to APK Charities: <https://www.apkcharities.org/donate/>

To learn more about APK Charities: <https://www.apkcharities.org/about-apk-charities/>

GHIAA

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. The upcoming gathering will focus on housing affordability. **Housing Affordability**, Tuesday, November 4, 7:00-8:30 pm, Westminster Presbyterian Church, West Hartford.

To register to attend, go to www.cljct.org/ghiaa/housemeetings. 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).

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

Gift yourself with an hour of meditation, exercise, or Tai Chi / Chi Gong. All classes operate on a drop-in basis and provide 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.

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.

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 jwebster@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)

Days for Girls Volunteers Invited, Simsbury United Methodist Church (799 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070) Annex Next to Playground, Second Saturdays, 9 a.m. - Noon

Janice Olson's annual pre-holiday retreat! *Calm and Bright ~ Preparing Body, Mind, and Spirit for Holiday Serenity* Friday, November 14, 7:00 PM - Sunday, November 16, 12pm, The Shoreline Center for Resilience 61 Middle Beach Road, Madison, CT, 06443 [Register here](#)

Women's AA Retreat, Friday, November 21, 5pm - Sunday, November 23, 1pm, Wisdom House Retreat & Conference Center, 229 East Litchfield Road, Litchfield, CT, 06759, Presented by TJ Murtagh More info and [registration here](#).

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.

