



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of January 25, 2026

Sunday Worship



These days we may get into political discussions, or even arguments, with friends and relatives that leave us confused and dispirited because we don't know why others think the way they do. But perhaps the question for us in these encounters might better be, why do we think the way we do?

I'm going to be pretty direct this Sunday that our faith ought to be the basis for our worldview. Further, the absolute bedrock of our faith has to do with love. That's what Jesus taught us. Using the lens of love is a powerful tool that should help us understand our world. It should help us determine what is good, and what is evil. And as Christians, we can and should be ready to use the lens of love as our guideline in what we think.

And, as importantly, in what we do.

See you in church!

Yours,
Terry

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **The Hamblett Family** in loving memory of **Gail Hamblett**.

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, January 25, 2026 at 11:15 AM following morning worship to address the following items of business:

1. To consider and approve the agenda for the meeting.
2. To consider and vote on the minutes of First Church congregational meetings held on 2/23/25, 6/8/25, and 11/30/25 [BUDGET LINK](#)
3. To consider and vote on the proposed budget for First Church for the budget year 2026.
4. In accordance with the By-laws of First Church, action will be taken only on matters included in the Call to Meeting.

Notice given on January 11, 2025
Linda Bronstein, Secretary of the Church

Today's Events

Celtic Worship CANCELED DUE TO PREDICTED STORM

January 25· 5 pm ·First Church Chapel

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.

Celebrating Dottie Stone's Dedication to Our Lunch-Making Program

We're celebrating our amazing Dottie Stone as she retires from leading and organizing our monthly lunch-making program for Loaves and Fishes. Dottie's selfless dedication has made a difference in so many lives—both for our volunteers and for those who receive these meals. We are so grateful for everything she's done! Exciting news: a new team of leaders has stepped up so the program will keep going strong (Stay tuned for that announcement!!)

Giving Statements

Check your email next week for link and instructions for Giving Statements! Any questions? Contact the office!

Storm Closings

Just a reminder that storm closings will be posted on [WORSHIP](#) and [SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP](#) pages or go directly to [NBC](#) or [CBS](#).

Bible Study – February 1 & 15 - 9-9:45am - Community Room (next to the JPW Library)

Join us as we discover the history and biblical wisdom to be found in Scripture, and it's meaning for us in our daily lives. Initially we will focus on the New Testament, following as often as possible the scripture reading in worship for that Sunday. (First and Third Sunday of the month) Everyone is invited to bring coffee and anything to share. We will use the NRSV and on occasion *The Message* by Eugene Peterson, as well as other biblical texts. I look forward to our time together. Rev. Joseph Tobin (Joe, please)

Let the Games Begin!

Wednesdays, 2:30-4pm.- JPW Library

Join us in the JPW Library on Wednesday afternoons for some mad board game fun! Bring your own games or play one of ours. We have several traditional games like "Scrabble" or "Guess Who?" and a few newer ones, such as "Really Loud Librarians (*Think fast, not hard*)." We also have a nice selection of jigsaw puzzles for all ages. All games and puzzles are available to borrow with your JPW Library card.

Friends of Silver Lake

Our Southern New England UCC Conference (SNECC) will be ending its ministry at Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center with this summer's program, where many generations have experienced great camps and retreats. However, an independent group called the **Friends of Silver Lake** has been formed consisting of Connecticut and Massachusetts ministers, former campers, camp counselors and parents with a goal to provide a life-changing ministry to youths and young adults. George Stone spoke with several people last week, and he provided a link to the Friends website where you can learn more about Silver Lake and the efforts to continue this ministry:

<https://www.friendsofsilverlake.com/connect/>

Curious about GHIAA and Faith-Based Organizing?

Here's your chance to learn how it all works. GHIAA's annual basic training series will be held in person at Temple Sinai (41 W. Hartford Rd., Newington) on Tuesdays 6:30-8:30pm, Feb. 10, 17, and 24, and March 3 (snow date March 10). You can sign up [by clicking here](#), or contact Linda Bronstein (lindadiane275@gmail.com). If you are not yet familiar with GHIAA, use the same registration form to sign up for a one-hour Zoom (or in-person) orientation as well. Participating with GHIAA allows us to join with over 50 diverse faith communities in the Hartford area to help create a more just, generous, and loving world.

Volunteer Opportunity

Fern Street Backpack program needs brown bag packers, drivers to deliver bags and drivers to pick up food donations! See specific details in link, visit the Outreach webpage [here](#) and scroll down to the Fern Street button to find the link for opportunities to help. Thank you in advance.

Fill our Food buckets!

This is a gentle reminder that the day-to-day needs for food aren't going away. Please see [suggestions here](#) for ideas and add a few items to your grocery cart.

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.

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](#)

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](#)

The Stewardship Team invites flavorful people like you to Stay Salty!



"You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world." These are the words that Jesus uses to remind us that we're powerful and brilliant. Our power and brilliance equip us to do God's good work in the world through the church.

Help us season and brighten the world by making an annual pledge. In so doing, you make it possible for us to fulfill the Savior's instruction: "...let your light shine before others". You can bring your completed pledge card to worship or mail it to the office. You can also make your pledge online [HERE](#) or scan the QR code. Thank you!

January Reach Out: South Park Inn

Founded in 1982, South Park Inn provides a range of programs and services to assist people experiencing homelessness as they transition back to permanency. The agency's goal is to provide a safe, temporary place to stay as individuals identify the support and opportunities that will yield long-term housing solutions. South Park Inn's emergency shelter, opened in 1984, operates 24/7/365 and provides 55 beds to men and women. South Park Inn has 15 Transitional Housing beds for Veterans, ten of which are dedicated for high-barrier Veterans exhibiting acute and/or active substance use and mental illness. South Park Inn also operates 17 respite beds to provide people recovering from recent medical or behavioral health hospitalizations with a safe place to stay that includes staffing to monitor for complications/side effects, follow-up care, treatment compliance, and/or medication errors; case management, and rehousing support.

Your support changes lives! When you donate to South Park Inn, you support our mission to improve our community by providing equal access to shelter and solutions for all people to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. The cycle of homelessness CAN be broken, and it happens with your support!

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

To learn more and to donate directly: <https://www.southparkinn.org/donate>



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, located beneath the Meeting House, is open Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm, and Sundays 9am-12pm

Movie Night with our UU friends!

Saturday, February 21, 6pm

Universalist Church of West Hartford (433 Fern Street)

The JPW Library is partnering with the Universalist Church of West Hartford to present [Legacy: Apartheid's Shadow](#). The film "follows the grandson of the so-called 'Architect of Apartheid' as he grapples with his family's role in one of history's most brutal regimes. LEGACY is a global call to confront the past in order to re-imagine a more equal future. A vital meditation on accountability and social justice that resonates far beyond one nation, mirroring struggles playing out worldwide today" (legacydocumentary.org). A Q&A with Director Tara Erica Moore will follow.

FREE Wellness Classes – Start a Healthy Habit in 2026!

The JPWL invites you to attend a free Faithful Fitness class. Both classes provide opportunities for meditation as well as movement. More information is available on each class's registration page. These programs are provided for free through the JPWL Crofut Fund.

- **FitMix with Kathi Boratko** – Tuesdays, 5:45 – 6:45pm. [More info and registration here.](#)

Kathi Boratko leads a well-rounded class with resistance training, cardio, and balance using multiple fitness modalities. Chairs may be used for seated and standing support. Bring a mat, light weights, and a small ball. No tools? No worries! We have some you may borrow.

- **Tai Chi & Qi Gong** – Thursdays, 10:30-11:30am. [More info and registration here.](#)

Gain balance and mindfulness through movement with Cynthia Hoag! QiGong and Tai Chi promote the flow of qi, or energy, in the body, helping to reduce stress, depression, or fatigue while providing a sense of balance and clarity. Each session concludes with a short heartfelt meditation intuitively curated for those in attendance (seated or standing).

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.

Book Group Info

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: Mondays from 12-1:30 pm

Next Meeting: January 26 in the JPW Library.

Book: *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* by Amy Jill Levine.

Food for Thought: First Tuesdays of each month, 5:00-6:30

Next meeting: February 3 in the JPW Library

Book: *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans

Believe in YourSHELF Middle School Book Group

Next Meeting: February 15th at 10:15am in the Community Room

Book: *Two Tribes* by Emily Bowen Cohen

Spreading Your News

The Communications Team is made up of members of our Outreach Ministry, and the church Office Administrators.

- **Sunday Notes/Happenings submissions** are *due by noon* on Tuesdays to Bethany: office.manager@whfirstchurch.org
- **Website, printed pieces, and Social Media additions or changes** can be sent to Amy and Joy anytime. Amy Melvin: Communications@whfirstchurch.org, Joy Taylor: Communications2@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: http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request.

