



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of February 8, 2026

Sunday Worship

"Love doesn't die with death. Love is like liquid; when it pours out, it seeps into others' lives. Love changes form and shape. Love gets into everything. Death doesn't conquer all. Love does. Love wins every single time. Love wins by lasting through death. Love wins by loving more, loving again, loving without fear."

—Kate O'Neill

Hi there:

Sunday's sermon is based on three words from the eighth verse of Saint Paul's epistle to the church in Corinth. His purpose for writing was to address reports that he'd received about conflict regarding the matter of spiritual gifts. The people argued about prophesy, teaching, working miracles, healing, and speaking in tongues. They argued, "Those abilities are the best above all the rest." Paul advised, "Without love, those gifts won't gain much."

Not the Valentine's Day variety. Not the brotherly type. Those bonds are truly beautiful. And they can be broken. They even expire. God's love, however, wins every single time. "It bears all things...endures all things." I'll say more when I see you about these three words: Love Never Ends.

Blessed are those who worship with us this weekend, for they shall behold The Hot Cat Jazz Band!

Just saying.

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Wyrot and Fred Ward** in loving memory of Wyrot's mother, **Evangelist Inell Evans**

Today's Events

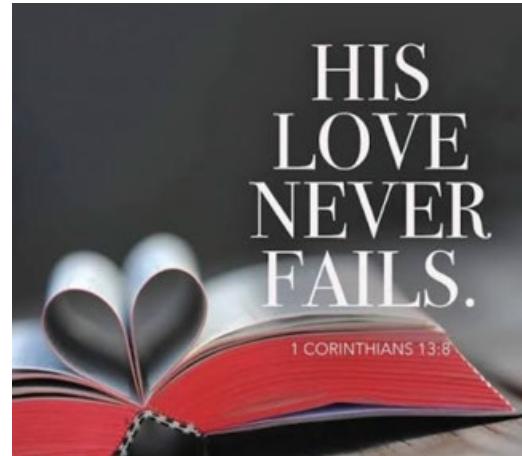
The Hot Cat Jazz Band!

Opportunity Fair, TODAY! Sunday, February 8, 2026, 11 am

First Church is bustling! Have you ever wondered about the various energetic groups and teams that seem to be having fun? Have you ever considered joining in but were hesitant to ask? On Sunday, Feb. 8, during coffee hour, representatives of these groups will be happy to chat with you. We are even going to pass the mic for anyone to briefly showcase their work. Think of it as Karaoke at First Church! Perhaps something will capture your interest and you will find yourself warmly welcomed to actively participate. Welcome to a vibrant First Church!

What is Lent?

It's the 40-day period (not including Sundays) leading up to Easter. When is Lent? It begins February 18th (Ash Wednesday) and ends April 2nd (Maundy Thursday). And, so? We'll take the journey together, beginning with contemplative worship on **Ash Wednesday — February 18th — at 6:00pm in the chapel**. The 30-minute service includes sacred music, a brief pastoral reflection, candle lighting, and imposition of ashes. Come just as you are, without one plea...receive peace and pardon.



Sunday February 22, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Lunch and Parade

SAVE THE DATE! Celebrate Shrove Tuesday with a Pancake Lunch and Parade. Join the Inreach Team and Faith Formation following worship in the auditorium. Enjoy pancakes, sausage, fruit and beverages. Plan on wearing your wackiest outfits, put on your beaded necklaces, bring your noisemakers and masks, eat pancakes, join the parade and goof off with us as we get ready for the beginning of Lent.

Updating the Church Directory

Has this ever happened to you? You sit in the same pew behind the same couple each week, but you can't remember their names. A solution is coming!! An up-to-date picture directory is in the works. We will be using any names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and pictures that are in "CCB". If you wish for your information to be included or excluded, please complete this form <https://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/367/responses/new> by March 1, 2026. Once the directory is complete, it will be made available only to church members and not to anyone outside of the church. Any questions? Please reach out to [Diane Bohman](#) or [Susan Tobin](#).

Member Photos Needed

Is your profile lacking a photo? If so please share a pic to add to your CCB, by taking a selfie or see Amy Melvin and she can photograph you. Share via text or email; 860-798-5829, communications@whfirstchurch.org. Thank you.

Pre-Lenten Workshop – February 11 – Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT

Dear Friends - If you'd like to deepen your spiritual life this Lent, join me for a one-day Pre-Lenten workshop on February 11th at Wisdom House in Litchfield, CT. This gentle, reflective day focuses on love rather than deprivation, using simple practices of kindness, self-compassion, and intention to prepare our hearts for Easter's promise of new life. For details and registration, visit: <https://www.wisdomhouse.org/program-calendar/prelenten-workshop>
Scholarships are available through Wisdom House. Questions? (860) 985-1883 janiceolson756@gmail.com.
-Janice Olson

Giving Statements

Check your email 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](#).

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/>

Bible Study – February 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 its 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. If you would like to donate, reach out to Bethany in the church office or [CLICK HERE](#).



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

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!

February Reach Out: My Sisters' Place

Every day, throughout the greater Hartford area, there are hundreds of people—the overwhelming majority often women and children—who have found themselves homeless due to domestic violence, eviction, unemployment, or mental illness.

Since 1982, **My Sisters' Place** has provided a safe, nurturing environment for those who find themselves without a home. Through a unique combination of services and support, guidance, encouragement, and outreach, we work to help empower disadvantaged people in becoming independent.

My Sisters' Place provides shelter, food for women and their children, and services designed to get them back onto the road to independence, including medical care, management of financial affairs, and much more.

My Sisters' Place Core Values: Resilience, Safety, Adaptability

Resilience – honoring courage and strength; viewing setbacks as opportunities for growth.

Safety – provide safe, secure, and trauma informed environments that foster healing and stability.

Adaptability – capacity to adjust to new situations and changing environments, embracing flexibility in the face of uncertainty.

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

To learn more or to donate directly: <https://sistersplacect.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](#). A Q&A with Director Tara Erica Moore will follow. 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. Learn more at [legacydocumentary.org](#), or see Cathy Mieczkowski or Jennifer with questions.

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

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 jpwebster@whfirstchurch.org.

Awakening the Spirit: Mondays from 12-1:30 pm in the JPW Library

Next Meeting: February 9

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: Tuesday March 3 in the JPW Library

Book: *Where are All the Kids?* By Teri Michaud

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

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

