



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of February 22, 2026

Sunday Worship

"Resisting temptation does not mean refusing to go into places where one is tempted, does not mean evading the quandaries of one's life. We must go to those places because we have to, because they are necessary way stations on the journey...The real work is to go where we are led, to see what is there, to respond out of our own truth." – Parker Palmer



Lenten blessings loved ones:

Our featured scripture on the first Sunday of Lent is the story of Jesus wrestling with temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). According to the gospel writer, Jesus was led by Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil not once but repeatedly. Which would never happen in life.

So, just imagine. Imagine the feeling of someone pressuring you to prove your identity and your value; to perform minor miracles; to risk your life to save face; or to give up your beliefs to gain power and prestige. Imagine having to endure those temptations not once but repeatedly. Forty days and forty nights. For a long period of time.

If you're familiar with that pressure, we should lean into it...in search of our true and faithful responses. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled: **Who Are You Fooling? What Are You Trying to Prove?**

Love you.

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **The Carlson Family** in loving memory of Nancy Carlson's Grandmother, **Elizabeth Fatt**.

Light the Steeple

This week our Steeple is lit by **The Carlson Family** in loving memory of **Laura B. Matties**, and by **Tandy Jarvis** in loving memory of **Josephine Riley Medlin**.

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

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, March 8, 2026, starting at approximately 11:15 AM.

This meeting is called to transact the following items of business:

1. To consider and vote on the minutes of the congregational meetings held on 03-09-2025, 09-21-2025, and 02-01-2026.
2. To consider and vote on the proposed slate of Officers, Team Leaders and Team Members for First Church for the 2026 year.
3. 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 February 22, 2026

Linda Bronstein, Secretary

Today's Events

Sunday February 22, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Lunch and Parade

TODAY!!! 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. Join the parade and goof off with us as we get ready for the beginning of Lent.

Jeffrey Carbone's Eagle Scout Project

Please consider donating to help fund the renovation of the Festival of Trees storage closet. The space will need some new shelves, storage bins and fresh paint. Jeffrey will answer questions and accept donations by Venmo or cash during Coffee Hour today.

Celtic Worship Today · February 22 at 5pm in the First Church Chapel

Come to this sacred space and encounter the divine in the beauty of the everyday through prayer, Communion, poetry, music, and shared silence. Rev. Tom Carr will lead our February service; the free will offering will be donated to [My Sister's Place](#), "committed to empowering individuals and families to achieve independence and stability." Please contact Julia Rosa or Liz Oman-Wilfred with questions.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

*** Postponed until March 16* 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.

Covenant to Care · Fill an Easter Basket

Starting Sunday, March 8th, see Diane or Molly in the Auditorium to sign-out an Easter Basket to fill and return by March 29th (Palm Sunday)! Age-appropriate suggestions will be included with each basket. Thank you!

March Madness Volunteer Opportunity: Levo International

Food insecurity is a major issue for Connecticut families, particularly in urban settings. A food desert is an area that lacks access to healthy food, particularly fresh produce. The city of Hartford ranks as the 8th worst food desert in the country based on USDA data. Levo's hydroponics model turns vacant land into highly productive agricultural space. Hydroponics is an affordable and practical way of growing fresh produce in almost any setting. These neighborhood farms produce food that employs local community members as well as increasing food access. Levo's goal is to reach one million pounds of vegetables grown in Hartford by 2028. Join us for a hands-on volunteer event dedicated to revitalizing a space for sustainable food production! Help us start building systems at our new Enfield lot. We need your help to make it happen! Located at 280 Enfield St, Hartford, CT **Dates: Saturday March 7, 14, 21, 28 & Tuesday March 10 & 31** Gather friends & sign up here: <https://levointernational.org/volunteer>

Arts in The Center Concerts Presents: Chamber Music Concert Sunday, March 15 at 3:00pm in the Chapel.

Great music performed to an audience in an intimate setting. The Foundry Quartet will perform. Find out more about them on their website: <https://www.foundryquartet.com>. 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.

Dialogue Circles, Sunday, March 15 at 11:15am in the Fellowship Room

You're invited to participate in Dialogue Circles with Master of Arts in International Peacebuilding (MAP) students from HIU (Hartford International University for Religion and Peace). The conversations are conducted as part of the MAP curriculum. Students are training to become community change agents by developing proficiency in conflict transformation and fluency in the religious traditions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The ability to facilitate productive conversation is a critical skill for MAP students and all peace builders. Which is why your participation matters. We'll form break-out groups to consider this question: "What does it mean to live out our faith in the world?" The goal is to get 20-25 participants. The hope is that all who join the circles will gain insights and be inspired! Please register here: <https://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/370/responses/new>

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

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.

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.



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!

Giving Statements

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

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/>

FREE Wellness Classes – Drop Ins Welcome

Start a new spiritual practice -- attend an aerobics or Taichi class. Both classes provide opportunities for meditation and movement; both can improve overall health and wellbeing. Register is ongoing (join anytime!) at the link below. More information is available on each class's registration page. Both classes run through the last week of June. These programs are provided for free through the JPWL Crofut Fund.

- **FitMix Fitness with Kathi Boratko** – Tuesdays, 5:45 – 6:45 p.m. [More info and registration here.](#)
- **Tai Chi & Qi Gong**– Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. [More info and registration here.](#)

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

For More Detailed Information Read the NEW JPWL E-Newsletter! "*Shelf Reflections*" <https://conta.cc/3O6gmZx>

New in the JPWL Gallery! February 22 – April 12

Surrealist Art Prints Available · *ÁDÁM WÜRTZ (1927-1994): Hungarian Painter, Illustrator, and Printmaker*

Ádám Würtz drew his inspiration from the rural Hungarian region where his family had lived for centuries. Little villages nestled within gentle hills, and steeped in wild and fantastic legends, became the foundation for his amusing, sometimes grotesque, drawings. JPWL staff discovered this collection of Würtz prints in the Archives during a routine inventory several years ago. After thoughtful review and consideration, we determined that they should be removed from the collection. The staff spent months searching for places to donate or sell the prints, and the remaining ones are now on display. The JPWL is offering the remaining prints to First Church members and friends in exchange for a suggested donation of \$35. All donations will directly support the continued care and preservation of the Archives. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in this work. Please see Jennifer with questions.

Let the (Board)Games Begin! Wednesdays, 2:30-4 p.m. · JPW Library

Lunch & Learn: Navigating the "Goo Stage" with Stephanie Simpson, MA, MFA, PCC

Free 2-hour interactive workshop

Sunday, March 22 from 11:30-1:30 in the JPW Library

Feeling overwhelmed? You're not alone. Ongoing life changes—at work, in relationships, with health, or in daily routines—can add up quickly. During times of transition and uncertainty, many of us find ourselves in the "Goo Stage": the in-between space where old ways no longer fit, new ones haven't formed yet, and things can feel messy, unclear, or unstable. [Register here](#)

Book Group Info:

- **Awakening the Spirit:** Next Meeting: February 23 from 12-1:30 pm in the JPW Library, Book: *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* by Amy Jill Levine
- **Food for Thought:** Next meeting: Tuesday March 3, 5:00-6:30, Book: *Where are All the Kids? A Mother's Journey of Determination (Based on a True Story)* by Teri Leonard Michaud.
- **Believe in YourSHELF Middle School Book Group:** Next Meeting: March 15th at 10:15 a.m. in the Community Room, Book: *Very Bad at Math* by Hope Larson

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.](http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request)



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](#).