



# Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of March 8, 2026



## Sunday Worship

Hey there:

Remember that time two weeks ago when I told you that the Associate Pastor Search Committee had invited its presumptive finalist to visit with us on March 8th? Well, that day is now at hand. A word about our invited guest, Rev. Dr. Daniel Lee: He leads an interdisciplinary career as a preacher, performer, and teacher. He's a fourth-generation Presbyterian minister and third-generation concert violinist. Daniel has served churches and organizations in Connecticut, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York, and currently teaches baroque performance practice at Yale University. He strives to explore the intersection of arts and spirituality, where creativity can inspire harmony in human society.

During worship, I'll share a question-and-answer moment with Daniel; he'll accompany the choir anthem and offertory selection on violin; and...he'll preach! A word about the morning message, in his own words:

"Do you feel safe—physically, emotionally, spiritually, or in any other way? As we approach Sunday, I invite you to reflect on your sense of safety and comfort. For many of us, home is a place where we can experience these feelings. For others, that may be in different places. The word sanctuary means a place of refuge or safety. Do you have your own sanctuary? Where is it?"

I look forward to sharing my thoughts with you on the question **'Where Is Home?'**

Daniel"

Be there! Be a blessing meantime!

rev.fredd



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## Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **George and Dottie Stone**, given with treasured memories of their parents, **George and Bea Stone and Roland and Shirley Selden**.

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## 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

### **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!



### **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. Donate by Venmo until March 14.

### **Let's Go to The Mountaintop – A Theater Invitation from Rev. Fredd**

April 3, 1968. An exhausted Martin Luther King Jr. retires to his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis after an unscheduled address to striking sanitation workers. A mysterious young maid named Camae delivers room service. They engage in humorous conversation – a chance encounter that develops into a soul-searching discussion about their mutual hopes and fears. When Camae reveals a secret, Dr. King is compelled to confront his destiny and legacy. I've reserved ten seats (\$50.00 per) at **The Playhouse on Park for the March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2:00pm** closing performance of this Olivier Award-winning play written and directed by Pulitzer Prize winner Katori Hall. Join me for the show and talk back with the cast following the show! Interested? See me.

### **New Book Club: A guided tour of early Christianity**

Grab your explorer's hat and get ready to adventure into the world of those who walked with Jesus, talked about him and wondered what was going on with this new group of devoted Jesus people. How does history written over the course of 2,000 years inform our beliefs today? Join Michael Protos for this new book group on every other Wednesday at 6:45 p.m., starting on March 11 in the Youth Room (near the auditorium). We'll embark on a path that allows you to jump in and jump out based on your availability without feeling out of touch with the discussion. Child care will be available for parents who would like to attend and need a hand! Kindly sign up at this [GOOGLE FORM](#) or reach out to Michael.

### **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 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>

**Meet the Author** You're invited! Teri Leonard Michaud will chat about and read from her book, *Where are All the Kids? A Mother's Journey of Determination (Based on a True Story)* on **Tuesday, March 31 in the JPW Library**. Join us if you have read the book or are interested in her story!

## One Great Hour of Sharing

March 15th is a special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). This is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. Please use the provided envelopes and thank you. [OR DONATE HERE](#)

## Blessing Bags

Creating blessing bags is a heartfelt way to offer support to those in need, and can be a fun and meaningful project for the whole congregation. Please join the Outreach team on **Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>** in the auditorium to assemble blessing bags for our Outreach Mission Partners. To fill the bags we are collecting the following items (please place in blue bins labeled for Blessing Bag collections by March 28<sup>th</sup>)

- Underwear (women and men's, size large)
- Individual snacks
- Socks
- Lip Balm
- Lotion
- Shampoo
- Q-tips
- Body Wipes
- Body wash
- Washcloth
- Deodorant
- Shaving Cream
- Bar Soaps
- Disposable Razors
- Travel Size Lotion
- Travel Size Body Wash
- Tampons/Pads
- Dish Soap
- Surface cleaner
- Bathroom cleaner

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## March Reach Out: Interval House

Founded in 1977, Interval House is the largest agency in the state of Connecticut dedicated to ending domestic violence. Interval House has long been committed to empowering its clients, providing a nurturing and encouraging environment for victims to heal and acquire the tools to move on. The hotline and Safe House provide a lifeline to those in urgent need of safety, and Interval House's advocates provide guidance for clients facing legal and financial obstacles as a result of leaving a violent home. Interval House's robust network of partnerships connects clients with community resources aimed at helping them pursue higher education, start careers and live productive, self-sufficient lives in safety.

Services provided:

- 24-Hour Hotline
- Emergency Safe House
- Safety Planning and Counseling
- Court Advocacy
- Children's Programs
- Law Enforcement Partnership
- Lethality Assessment Program
- Support Groups
- Breaking The Cycle

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

To learn more visit: <https://intervalhousect.org/> or to donate directly: <https://intervalhousect.app.neoncrm.com/forms/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.](#)

\* **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.

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

## First Church's John P. Webster Library is open Sundays for you!



- 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 also open Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm*

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### 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](#)

### 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. Several years ago, during a routine inventory, JPWL staff uncovered this group of Würtz prints in the Archives. After careful evaluation, we concluded that the prints did not align with our collection policy and should be deaccessioned. Over the following months, staff worked diligently to identify appropriate institutions or buyers for donation or sale. The remaining prints 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.

### Book Group Info:

#### Awakening the Spirit:

Mondays from 12-1:30 pm  
in the JPWL

Next Meeting: March 9 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: April 7 in the JPW Library

Book: *The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami, a  
National Book Award finalist about the mysterious  
death of a Moroccan immigrant in California, with a  
diverse cast of characters divided by race, religion,  
and class. "A touching and well-paced story of  
people in a desert town in the USA" (reader review).

**Believe in YourSHELF  
Middle School Book  
Group**

Next Meeting: March 15  
at 10:15 a.m. in the  
Community Room  
Book: *Very Bad at Math*  
by Hope Larson

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### Four Ways to Give

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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](mailto:Office.Manager@whfirstchurch.org) or 860-233-9605.

Submit Prayer Requests: [http://bit.ly/FCprayer\\_request](http://bit.ly/FCprayer_request).

