



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of March 15, 2026

Sunday Worship

Loved ones:

You've read the Happenings announcement about the Dialogue Circles with Master of Arts in International Peacebuilding (MAP) students from HIU. I've underscored it from the pulpit and encouraged you to participate this coming Sunday. Here's a final call. I believe that we're living in a moment wherein wisdom compels us to consider who we are in terms of our public witness and our response to matters of social justice. To that end, the students will help us wrestle with this spacious question: "What does it mean to live out our faith in the world?"

The sermon (based on selected verses from Ephesians) should serve as a conversation starter. It's about living as children of light and "trying to find out what is pleasing to [God]." I'll say more when I see you.

Be well meantime!

rev.fredd



Altar Flowers 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 the Office Manager in the church office or <https://whfirstchurch.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/326/responses/new>

Easter Lily and Organ & Carillon Donations

This is a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one! Easter Lily donations can be made online [HERE](#) and Organ & Carillon donations can be made online [HERE](#). If you prefer, a printable form can be downloaded [HERE](#) please return it to the church office with your payment. If you wish to have your donation listed in the Sunday Bulletin, please make your donation by Monday, March 30th. If you have any questions, please contact the Office Manager at office.manager@whfirstchurch.org or 860-233-9605.

Covenant to Care - Fill an Easter Basket

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!

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 22nd 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.

Exploring Scripture

Please join us on Sunday, March 15, from 9:00 AM - 9:45 AM in the J.P. Webster Library for coffee, when we will continue to explore interesting scripture: What is the message, and how can we relate its message to each of our lives? The scriptural text this next week will be John 1-41 to John 1-12. I've been away for several weeks and want to thank Michael Protos and Molly Bohman for filling in for me. Please join us and bring a friend. There are never any right or wrong questions or answers. Joe, Rev. Joseph Tobin

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>

Invitation to Hear about Levo International's Neighborhood Farms

Are you Curious about hydroponic gardening and Levo International in Hartford? A Levo staff member will be speaking here on Monday, April 6 at 1:00 in the auditorium. Levo's hydroponic gardens turn vacant land into agricultural space which produces affordable fresh produce and employment for city residents. These neighborhood farms also increase much needed easy access to fresh vegetables. The Mountain Valley Garden Club has engaged the Levo staff member for their meeting and is happy to have First Churchers join their meeting on Monday April 6, 1:00pm, auditorium. Please RSVP on or before Monday, Mar 23 to Nancy Ball via text or email: 860-966-9337, shoedog1961@gmail.com

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>

Celtic Worship

March 22 at 5 p.m. in the First Church Chapel

Celtic Christian Worship is a contemplative liturgical tradition that invites us to experience the sacredness of all Creation through ancient rituals steeped in the enduring message of God's people: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Therefore, we will not fear...

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 March service; the free will offering will be donated to Interval House, which works "to protect and support domestic violence survivors in our community and build awareness to break the cycle of abuse." Please contact Julia Rosa or Jennifer deSimas with questions.

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. [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 29th** 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 28th)

- 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

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.

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 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

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!

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- 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

Days for Girls, Simsbury Chapter

Simsbury United Methodist Church (799 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070)

Annex Next to Playground. Second Saturdays 9 a.m. - Noon

Join a [Days for Girls](#) workshop and help with sewing or non-sewing tasks on the second Saturday of each month.

Bring your own machine if you can; otherwise show up ready to cut, sew, serge, and assemble. Plenty of opportunities to help!

The [Days for Girls Simsbury Team](#) makes sustainable menstrual kits that, along with appropriate health education materials, are distributed to schools, missions, and clinics around the world. Women and girls in many countries stay home from work or school one week per month during their menstrual period due to a simple lack of hygiene products. When women cannot tend to school, work, or familial responsibilities because of period poverty, the impact falls on their families, communities, and nations. Help make a difference! Please see Doey Barnett for more information or contact Doey at doeybarnett115@gmail.com.

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

with Stephanie Simpson *Next Sunday!* March 22 from 11:30-1:30 in the JPW Library [Register here](#)

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.

This free 2-hour interactive workshop offers a supportive pause—a low-pressure space to slow down and orient to what's shifting, without needing answers or feeling pressure to fix anything. Through guided reflection, structured discussion, and small-group conversations, you'll explore the changes you're navigating, how the "Goo Stage" may be showing up in your life, and learn simple, practical tools to stay grounded and care for yourself and others during times of transition. A light lunch will be served.

Art Sale in the JPWL Gallery! ÁDÁM WÜRTZ (1927-1994): Hungarian Painter, Illustrator, and Printmaker

Surrealist Art Prints Available February 22 – April 12

The JPWL is offering a selection of lithograph 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. Take a look at the prints in the JPWL Gallery. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in this work.

JPWL Author Visit: Teri Leonard Michaud

Tuesday, March 31, 5 – 6:30 p.m. JPW Library

You're invited! Local author Teri Leonard Michaud will share her book, *Where are All the Kids? A Mother's Journey of Determination (Based on a True Story)*, a memoir from 1960s West Hartford. All are welcome to join us! See Jennifer or Molly with questions.

Book Group Info

The John P. Webster Library sponsors three book groups that meet regularly from September through June. Copies of the books are provided for participants, and new members are always welcome! 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 JPWL

Next Meeting: March 16 in the JPW Library

Book: *How We Learn to Be Brave* by Mariann Edgar Budde.

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.

Believe in YourSHELF Middle School Book Group – *this Sunday!*

Next Meeting: March 15 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

