



Sunday Notes



First Church Happenings for the week of April 12, 2026

Looking Towards Sunday

Hey there:

I have two things to tell you. First. On Palm Sunday, during the sermon, I mentioned that Kathleen and I had interviewed an intriguing applicant for the Office Manager position. I said that we both had an unmistakable feeling that the candidate seemed like the kind of person we were searching for and that we were the kind of community the candidate was seeking. It turns out, we were right about Kat Pagan (and vice versa)! She started on Monday, March 30th. I hope you'll find an excuse to stop by and offer words of welcome!

Second. There were 325 souls in the meeting house of Easter Sunday! My Lord, what a breathtaking morning! The Second Sunday of Easter is known as Low Sunday – a morning when pastors hold their breath because attendance usually dips significantly. The reasons include the “Chreaster” effect (people who only worship on Christmas and Easter take the following week off); Spring break; and prioritized televised sports events like March Madness and The Masters Tournament. The estimated attendance dip is supposedly as high as 47%.

In any case, we'll consider the ongoing story of Easter, particularly the risen Savior's appearance to Thomas. Thomas, as you probably know, beheld Jesus' crucifixion wounds and came to believe. Tradition tells us that he became a missionary who helped heal others. Doubters can become doers! If my calculations are correct, I'll say more when I see 172.25 of you. Supposedly. The sermon is entitled “He Was Wounded for You and Me Too”.

Love you. Mean it.

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers Donations

If you would like to donate, please reach out to the Office Manager in the church office or [Donate Online](#)

Business Team Meeting- Postponed to Wednesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.

Coordinating Team Meeting- Postponed to Thursday April 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Next Chamber Music Concert – April 19 at 3 p.m.

April's concert will feature various musicians, including a harpsichordist. Our handcrafted harpsichord, made by John McClelland, Nancy Ball's father, produces sound by plucking strings rather than striking them like a piano.

Food Share Walk Against Hunger- Saturday April 25

All are invited to join the First Church Striders at Dunkin Park to raise money for Loaves & Fishes. Meet in the church parking lot at 8:45 AM to carpool. The 1.5-mile walk begins and ends at Dunkin Park. Sign up on the [CT Foodshare website](#) as a team member or sponsor a walker. For questions, contact Dave Simpson at 860-997-4219.

Let's Make Lunches- Sunday, April 26

Once a month, as part of our Outreach mission, we come together after worship to prepare 80 sandwiches and assemble lunch bags for our neighbors in the Asylum Hill community who are experiencing low food security.

Let's Make Blessing Bags – Sunday, April 26

Creating blessing bags is a wonderful way to support those struggling. It's a fun and meaningful project for everyone in the congregation. [Check the website](#) and flyers for needed items.

April Reach Out: Autism Families CONNECTicut

April is World Autism Month! Autism Families CONNECTicut (AFC), founded in 2010 by families seeking more weekend activities for children on the autism spectrum, provides recreational and social programs that foster growth and connection. Serving ages 3–35, AFC offers programs like Playing on the Spectrum, Leisure Explorers, Teen Night, and Young Adult Hangout, along with special events. Programs are local, affordable, professionally run, and held in safe, supportive environments where participants can have fun, stay active, and build friendships. To donate in church (note AFC on your envelope). [Learn More](#) or [Donate Online](#)

GHIAA Update at Halfway Point of Legislative Session

Success! The bills supported by GHIAA have passed out of committee and may now go before the full legislature. Thank you to everyone who submitted testimony. To get involved in advancing housing affordability, immigrant protections, and safeguarding our community from federal funding cuts, contact Linda Bronstein or Terry Schmitt.

A Free Family Arts Event with Arts for Learning

On Saturday, May 16 (10:00 AM–2:00 PM), the Family Arts Festival is taking place at the West Hartford Senior Center (Bishops Corner). This is a free, drop-in community event designed to bring families together through hands-on arts experiences and live performances. [More info and register here.](#)

FREE Wellness Classes – Drop Ins Welcome

Try a new spiritual practice through movement and meditation with aerobics or Tai Chi. Both support health and well-being and run through late June. Ongoing registration—join anytime. Free through the JPWL Crofut Fund.

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

Days for Girls, Simsbury Chapter

Join the [Days for Girls Workshop](#) at Simsbury United Methodist Church (799 Hopmeadow St.) on the second Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.–Noon. Contact Doey Barnett at doeybarnett115@gmail.com for [more info](#).

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



First Church's John P. Webster Library is open Sundays and Monday–Thursday, 9 am–5 pm!



- 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

Sign up for the JPW Library Newsletter or check out the [website](#) to Learn About More Events!

Wednesday Board Games

Every Wednesday from 2:30-4 p.m. through April 15

NOAH: A Future Hope

Sponsored by Hartford International University for Religion and Peace & JPW Library, April 12 – May 15 at HIU

Three faiths, three artists, one story. The JPWL and HIU present a timely art exhibit featuring Jewish, Christian, and Muslim artists blending faith and culture. **Opening reception:** Sunday, April 12, 6 p.m. – All welcome! [Register Here](#)

Environmentalist Bill McKibben at First Church

In coordination with "NOAH: A Future Hope," the JPWL welcomes author and activist Bill McKibben for an evening of conversation in the First Church Meeting House on April 20 at 7-8:30 p.m. McKibben will share insights from his latest book, [Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization](#), and will be joined in conversation by HIU Professor of Ecotheology Lisa Dahill. [Register here](#) to attend.

FAITH VOTES: Climate & Creation Postcard Campaign

Sunday, April 19 – Coffee Hour, First Church Auditorium. Join the JPWL and IREJN in writing postcards to the Governor and your state legislators urging action on climate change. Find us next to the JPWL Bookmobile!

Celtic Worship Service

Join us Sunday, April 26 at 5:00 p.m. in the First Church Chapel for a peaceful, reflective service with prayer, Communion, music, poetry, and shared silence. Led by Rev. Susan Izard. A freewill offering will support Autism Families CONNECTicut, which helps individuals on the autism spectrum and their families build meaningful, connected communities.

JPW Library closed- Monday April 27, regular hours will resume Tuesday April 28

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: April 13
No Meeting April 27
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: May 5 in the JPW
Library
Book: *Upward Bound* by Woody
Brown

**Believe in YourSHELF Middle
School Book Group**
Next Meeting: April 19 at 10:15
a.m. in the Community Room
Book: *Tuck Everlasting: The
Graphic Novel* by Natalie Babbitt

Spreading Your News

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

- **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
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