



Sunday Notes

First Church Happenings for the week of April 19, 2026



"My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty years old. She's ninety-seven now, and we don't know where the heck she is" – Ellen DeGeneres

Hello friends:

Sunday's featured scripture is another appearance story (Luke 24:13-35) that takes place on the day of Jesus' resurrection. According to the writer, two disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were discussing all the things that had happened – the things about Jesus and how the chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

While they were engrossed in conversation, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were initially kept from recognizing him. Sometimes you have to walk a while before you can begin to make sense of things. I'll say more when I see you. The sermon is entitled "Everywhere Is Within Walking Distance...If You Have the Time".

Love you to pieces,

rev.fredd

Altar Flowers

This week our Altar Flowers are donated by **Pam Hastings**, given in loving memory of **Richard and Lorain Hastings, Richard Hastings III, Mr. and Mrs. R. Cleveland Hastings, Marcia Hastings Peck, and Charles and Lucy Jaworski.**

Altar Flowers Donations

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

Light The Steeple – April 19

The Steeple will be lit, "In loving memory of **Paul & Corolyn Hudson**" from **Nancy Hudson**

Interested in Joining First Church? Sunday April 26 at 11:15 a.m.

Attend an information session for prospective new members. We expect to receive new members into the life of the church during the 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, May 3. Please contact Rev. Fredd in person, by telephone at 860-233-9606, or via email fredd.ward@whfirstchurch.org

Bible Study - April 19 at 9 a.m.

Join us every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month in the JPW Library for Bible Study. No registration required.

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.

A Guided Tour of Early Christianity – April 22 at 6:45 p.m.

Join us in the Youth Room for the next stop in our adventure into the world of those who walked with Jesus, talked about him and sought to understand this new movement of followers, using Bart Ehrman's "Jesus Before the Gospels," feel free to join mid-journey. Child care is available- Kindly [sign up](#) or reach out to Michael Protos.

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 a.m. 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.](#)

Oxen Hill Farm at First Church- May 17

As part of our CSA partnership, Lisa Griffen from Oxen Hill Farm will be visiting during coffee hour. Be sure to say hello and learn more about the fresh produce that will be available for pickup in the coming months.

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](#).

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. *Taichi/Qigong will not meet on Thursday, 4/23* [Learn More and Register](#)

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-4:30pm. 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!

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. All welcome!

Environmentalist Bill McKibben at First Church this Monday!

In coordination with "NOAH: A Future Hope," the JPWL welcomes author and activist Bill McKibben for an evening of conversation in the First Church Auditorium 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

Today! 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 will be 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 20
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 includes members of the 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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