

# *First Congregational Church*

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

*April 21, 2024*



## **Our Purpose Statement**

It is our purpose to joyfully celebrate Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives; to respect one another in love, actively seeking and embracing those who wish to grow with us in faith, hope and love; to follow the example of Jesus, as we minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the community. *Through service we flourish.*



# *The First Congregational Church in Worcester*

## *United Church of Christ*

*You are invited to a time of quiet preparation during the Prelude*

**Welcome**

*Rev. Jack Jones*

**Prelude**

*How Firm a Foundation ~ arr. Dixon*

**Ringling of the Chimes**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: When we are scattered, Jesus our Good Shepherd gathers us in..

**All: When we are lost and lonely, we can depend on Christ's love.**

Leader: When we are oppressed, Jesus our Good Shepherd cares for us.

**All: When we are threatened because of who we are, we can depend on Christ's protection.**

Leader: We know Christ, because Christ's tenderness has guided us for generations.

**All: Christ knows us by name. Christ will lay down his very life for our sake.**

Leader: Let us worship our Good Shepherd, who cares for all of us with fierce love.

**All: Let us give thanks for Christ's presence with us.**

**Invocation**

Holy God, you sent us Jesus as our comforter and guide. We give you thanks for the ways he cares for us. Help us be empowered to join him in protecting the oppressed and marginalized. We pray this in gratitude for your provision. Amen.

**Prayer of Transformation**

Shepherding Christ, even as you lay down your life for us, we confess our unwillingness to support the those in need. Too often, we may be more like the one who runs away in times of trouble. We aren't always bold enough to protect the powerless; following your example is rarely easy or comfortable. Forgive us. Help us lay down our apathy and follow your example. Remind us that we belong to one another, and to you. Amen.

**Prayer of Grace**

**Leader:** Beloved of God, receive this comfort. It is impossible to respond to every need in this complicated world. A full life of faith gives us the grace to lay down our work, take the rest we need, then refocus our energy toward the cause of the oppressed. Rest in the shelter of your Good Shepherd, knowing you can take up the cause again with restored souls.

**All: We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

**\*Hymn of Adoration ~ #260**

*The Church's One Foundation*

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
she is His new creation, by water and the word.  
From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride;  
with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,  
her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.  
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,  
and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,  
she waits the consummation of peace evermore;  
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,  
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,  
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won;  
O happy ones and holy! Lord give us grace that we,  
like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with Thee.

**New Testament Lesson**

*Acts 4:5-12*

**Gospel Lesson**

*John 10:11-18*

**Sermon**

*"Love in Action"*

Rev. Jack Jones

**\*Hymn ~ #263**

*Christ is Made the Sure Foundation*

Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ the head and cornerstone;  
chosen of the Lord and precious, binding all the church in one;  
holy Zion's help forever, and her confidence alone.

To this temple, where we call thee, come, O Lord of Hosts, today!  
With thy faithful loving-kindness hear thy people as they pray,  
and thy fullest benediction shed within its walls away.

Here vouchsafe to all thy servants what they ask of thee to gain;  
what they gain from thee forever with the blessed to retain,  
and hereafter in thy glory evermore with thee to reign.

Laud and honor to the Father, laud and honor to the Son,  
laud and honor to the Spirit, ever three and ever one;  
one in might and one in glory, while unending ages run.

**Sharing Celebrations and Concerns for Community Prayer & Announcements**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Moment of Silence for Personal Prayer**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive**

those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## Prayer Response

*Into My Heart*

Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus;  
Come in today, come in to stay; come into my heart, Lord Jesus.

## Invitation to Generosity

One: All are invited to give joyously to the church that bears witness to Christ's love.

**All: Let us give with a joyful heart.**

One: God's loving generous love has given us every good and gracious gift.

**All: We offer our gratitude for God's abundant blessings in our lives.**

One: Now, let us be a blessing to others in the ways that God has faithfully and generously blessed us.

## Giving of our Offerings

### Offertory

*Canzona ~ Young*

### \*Doxology

*Nettleton*

For the life that you have given, for the love in Christ made known,  
With these fruits of time and labor, with these gifts that are your own;  
Here we offer, Lord, our praises; heart and mind and strength we bring;  
Give us grace to love and serve you, living what we pray and sing.

### \*Sending Forth Hymn ~ *Insert*

*How Firm a Foundation*

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!  
What more can be said than to you God hath said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."

### \*Benediction

Today you have received the gift of Christ's protective, unceasing love for you. Because you are beloved, may all that you do and all that you are be a reflection of that love. Fight for the powerless, help the weak, and provide for the needy, because Jesus provides for you. Amen.

### \*Benediction Response

*Tallis' Canon*

Go with us, Lord and guide the way through this and every coming day,  
that in your Spirit strong and true our lives may be our gift to you.

**Chimes**

**Postlude**

*Trumpet Voluntary ~ Clark*

***\*Please stand in body, or in spirit.  
Bold Print ~ Congregation Reads Aloud***

*We are glad you joined us today. All are welcome to attend Coffee Hour immediately following our worship service in the Parlor. Not sure where to go? Just ask. Any one of us would be delighted to help you!*

*Want to get more connected with the happenings at First Church? Simply fill out one of our "Welcome Home!" cards located in the pew back in front of you and place it in the offering basket this morning.*

### **Prayer Requests**

*Please continue to hold Pastor Jack in your thoughts and prayers as he works through his health issues. We would like to keep Hampton Bagdasarian in our prayers as he is having trouble with one of his eyes; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda and friend Marie Samuelson who is very ill; Judy Mitchell requests prayers for her granddaughter, Ellanora; Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, Melanie Anderson, Sue's brother, Danny Waskevich, and their friend, Roger Waite. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for Gina Ahaesy; The Deacons request prayers for Dolores Trzcinski, Jeanne Fassett, Paul Scherdell, and Joyce & Armand Thienel. Our prayers are also with Normairis Rivera's son, Joey. Kristin Olson requests prayers for Mitch Bourque. Prayers also continue for Erika Vecsey, as she continues her battle with cancer. Please keep Rev. Natalie Maynard in your prayers as she is now in hospice. Greg Waters and Cindy MacLaurin request prayers for Cindy's mother, who has taken a turn for the worse. Our fervent prayers are with Greg and Cindy and their loved ones as they mourn the passing of Greg's mother.*

***If you would like to add a prayer concern or update our list, please email the church office at [office@fcc-worcester.org](mailto:office@fcc-worcester.org) or call the office at 508-752-4635.***

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## ***The First Congregational Church in Worcester***

### ***United Church of Christ***

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## Announcements

**Fellowship** ~ City Councilor Wayne Griffin will be our guest speaker.

**Hospitality** ~ Please join us in the parlor for coffee and goodies every Sunday after worship. If you are able to host a coffee hour, there is a sign-up sheet on the table. If you bring the goodies, we provide the coffee and other beverages, and the paper goods. If you'd like, two or more people can sign up together to make it a little easier. **Our thanks to Nancy Taylor and Sue Anderson for hosting today's Coffee Hour!**

**Carpet Fund Collection** ~ Our funds are slowly growing for new carpeting in the sanctuary. Please continue to add whatever you can spare to the Teddy Bear jar in the narthex or parlor. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

## Weekly Calendar

<b>Today</b>	10:00am	FCC Worship Service (Sanctuary)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (Hall)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (Upper level)
	11:30am	Council Meeting (Conference Room)
	1:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (Sanctuary)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
<b>Monday</b>	7:00pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
<b>Tuesday</b>	6:30pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
<b>Wednesday</b>	10:30am	Fellowship ~ Speaker - Councilman Wayne Griffin
	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (Sanctuary)
	6:30pm	Deacons Meeting (Conference Room)
<b>Thursday</b>	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
<b>Friday</b>	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (Sanctuary)
	1:00pm	Trustees Meeting (Conference Room)
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00am	New Hope SDA (Sanctuary & Parlor)
	12:00pm	Church of God (Hall)
<b>Sunday</b>	10:00am	FCC Worship (Sanctuary)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (Hall)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (Upper level)
	1:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (Sanctuary)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)