

First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

July 14, 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

*Pastor: No matter where you are on life's journey,
Congregation: you are welcome here.*

Prelude

Ringling of the Chimes

Call to Worship

Pastor: Let us turn our hearts to hear from the Holy One!

Congregation: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will embrace.

Pastor: Let us turn our hearts to gain insight from the Holy One!

Congregation: Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.

Pastor: Let us turn our hearts to receive from the Holy One!

Congregation: Righteousness will go before them, and will make a path for their steps.

Hymn of Adoration ~ #366 (please stand)

God of Grace and God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory, on Thy people pour Thy power.
Crown Thine ancient Church's story, bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil 'round us, scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways.
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days, for the living of these days.

Cure Thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to Thy control.
Shame our wanton selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places, gird our lives that they may be,
Armored with all Christ-like graces, in the fight to set men free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, that we fail not man nor Thee, that we fail not man nor Thee.

Save us from weak resignation, to the evils we deplore.
Let the search for Thy salvation, be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving Thee whom we adore, serving Thee whom we adore.

Invocation

(Everyone) God Among Us, your ways are perfect and your laws are just. We gather today in your name and for your kingdom. May it come wherever and whenever two or more gather in your name.

May our hearts open and our understanding expand with the vision of righteousness. May our worship please you, transform us, and bear witness to your love. Amen.

Prayer of Transformation

Congregation: Righteous God, you have created us in your image to reflect your holiness. You have affirmed the goodness within us. We struggle to be the people you call us to be. You have given us the guidance of the Law and the wisdom of the Prophets and the gift of your Presence. Still, we struggle against the pull to go our own direction without your counsel. We fail to extend the grace and compassion you give to us. Be merciful in your judgment while holding us accountable for your justice as we strive to live the fullness of life in you. Amen.

Prayer of Grace

Pastor: Beloved, you were not made to be perfect; you were created to be good. In hope, we affirm that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Lean into the power of God to do the work that we cannot, to meet us at our point of need, and to lead us into the path of new life.

Pastor: *The peace of the Lord be with you.*

Congregation: **And also with you.**

Passing of the Peace

Epistle Lesson

Psalm 85:8-13

Gospel Lesson

Mark 6:14-29

Sermon

"God is Good Always"

Rev. Jack Jones

Hymn ~ Insert (Please Stand)

Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect communion, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight.
Angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest. I in my Savior am happy and bless'd,
watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Sharing Celebrations and Concerns for Community Prayer

Moment of Silence for Personal Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer (*Everyone*)

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 (*Everyone*)

Hear Our Prayer

**Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
Incline thine ear to us, and grant us thy peace.**

Invitation to Generosity

Pastor: God has planted generosity within our beings. The gifts we receive are not for holding and creating idols, they are for the work of the kingdom, the building of beloved community, and manifesting God's abundance so that all may be well and whole.

Giving of our Offerings

Offertory

Doxology (*Everyone & Please Stand*)

Old 100th

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

Prayer of Dedication

Pastor: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts of life and living. We give thanks by bringing our resources to community, to be shared and used for your kingdom, in our ministry, and for the world we inhabit. Bless and facilitate our generosity beyond our imagination. Amen.

Announcements

Sending Forth Hymn ~ Insert (*Please Stand*)

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

Benediction *(Please Remain Standing)*

Be assured of the Holy One's abiding love for you and all creation. Hold fast to hope and share the blessing of the Spirit's direction, Christ's presence, and the Sustainer's peace.

Benediction Response *(Please Remain Standing)*

Edelweiss

**We are all joined in Christ, called by God to be with Him,
Joined with Christ and through Christ, praise our Creator forever.
Honor and glory we give to God, give to God forever,
Joined with Christ and through Christ, praise our Creator forever.**

Chimes

Postlude

Coffee Hour

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!

Connect With Us

Would you like 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. We are glad you joined us today!

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; 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, and also for Jane Boggs as she transitions to her new way of life.

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

Pastoral Relations Committee

Our church would like to form a Pastoral Relations Committee and are seeking members for it.

What is a Pastoral Relations Committee?

The pastoral relations committee supports and maintains an open relationship between the minister (and sometimes other staff) and members of the congregation. It helps the pastor and members of the church share ideas, hopes, dreams and interpretations of mission. It lets the pastor know what people in the church are thinking. It gives a framework for dealing with conflict creatively.

Skills and Attributes Needed

- Maturity.
- Ability to see both sides of a situation.
- Ability to deal with conflict.
- Trustworthiness.
- Visibility in the congregation.
- Availability for listening to church members.
- Confidentiality.
- Ability to set clear boundaries with church members so that inappropriate secret-keeping is not an expectation.

If you are interested in serving on this committee or would like more information, please reach out to our Moderator, Matt Ahaesy or the church office. You can also go to <https://www.uccfla.org/files/docs/pastoral-relations-committee.pdf> to learn a little more about this committee.

Yours in Christ,
Matt Ahaesy

Announcements

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 Sue Anderson for hosting today's Coffee Hour!**

Carpet Fund Collection ~ Our funds are slowly growing for new carpeting in the sanctuary. We now have just over \$800! Please continue to add whatever you can spare to the Teddy Bear jar in the narthex or parlor. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

Rev. Natalie Maynard ~ A service will be held on August 3rd at 10:30am at the Princeton Congregational Church, where Natalie was ordained and her children were raised.

Friendly Messenger ~ If you would like a copy of our newsletter, you can pick one up from the table in the narthex.

Directory ~ Directories are also available in the narthex.

Weekly Calendar

Today	10:00am	FCC Worship Service (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (<i>Hall</i>)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (<i>Upper level</i>)
	1:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
Monday	7:00pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
Tuesday	2-4 pm	ESL Class ~ Tom Jones, Pastor Jack Jones & Pastor Ketelie Altena (<i>Chapel</i>)
	6:30pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
Wednesday	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
Thursday	6:45pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
	3-4 pm	ESL Class ~ Tom Jones, Pastor Jack Jones & Pastor Ketelie Altena (<i>Chapel</i>)
	4:30pm	ESL Class ~ Sharing a Worship Meal outside
Friday	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
Saturday	10:00am	New Hope SDA (<i>Sanctuary & Parlor</i>)
	12:00pm	Church of God (<i>Hall</i>)
Sunday	10:00am	FCC Worship Service (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (<i>Hall</i>)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (<i>Upper level</i>)
	1:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)

The First Congregational Church in Worcester
United Church of Christ

Rev. Jack Jones, Pastor
jackfitzelljones@gmail.com

Scott M. Yonker, Minister of Music
music@fcc-worcester.org

Sue Anderson, Administrative Assistant
office@fcc-worcester.org



1070 Pleasant Street
Worcester MA 01602
508-752-4635
www.fcc-worcester.org

