

First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

November 17, 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

My Prayer is to Thee ~ Elliot

Ringling of the Chimes

Call to Worship

Pastor: The Holy One raises up the poor from the dust and lifts the needy to inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth belong to the Holy One. On them God has set the world.

***Congregation:* Exalt in the Holy One! Find strength in God. God guards the faithful.**

Pastor: Wickedness will perish. Righteousness will thunder. For not by might does one prevail.

***Congregation:* Exalt in the Holy One! Find strength in God. God guards the faithful.**

Pastor: Worship the Holy One through grief and gladness, in despair and hope, in peace and trial.

***Congregation:* Exalt in the Holy One! Find strength in God. God guards the faithful.**

Hymn of Adoration ~ Insert (*please stand*)

How Firm a Foundation

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He 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 with 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 his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Invocation

(Everyone) **Eternal and Everlasting God, our time is finite and precious. Help us to be present in each moment and honor our days. Give us a heart to pursue beauty, glory, and justice for your name's sake. Reign in our lives and move through our hearts. Open up our spirits to declare your praise, glory, and honor. We seek your face, your voice, and your power in our gathering. Amen.**

Prayer of Transformation

(Congregation) **Redeemer and Liberator, we call upon your power to make all things new. We confess that we have compromised your good news and settled for a comfortable gospel rather than embrace the radical love, hospitality, and inclusion of your kingdom. We have been satisfied with a faith**

that conforms to the world rather than one that challenges the systems and ways of the world. Forgive us for our focus on our own survival and pleasure while your creation perishes all around us. For your mercy and in repentance, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Grace

Pastor: Beloved, you bear the image of God. You receive power from the Spirit of God. Be encouraged that Holy Love meets you with boldness and renewal. Let God be glorified as you accept the call to be the activating agents of a new world where love reigns, hope endures, and peace abounds.

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you.

Congregation: **And also, with you.**

Passing of the Peace

(Please refrain from shaking hands during this season of viruses, flus, colds and such.)

New Testament Lesson

Hebrews 10:11-14; 15-18; 19-25

Gospel Lesson

Mark 13:1-8

Sermon

"Three Little Pigs"

Rev. Jack Jones

Hymn ~ insert (please stand)

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn with strong desires for thy return!

With such I hasten to the place where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer! thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless.

And since he bids me seek his face, believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Sharing Celebrations and Concerns for Community Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Moment of Silence for Personal 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*)

Open My Eyes

**Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit Divine!**

Invitation to Generosity

The generous life nurtures hope, cultivates, peace, and generates love in tangible ways. Let us bring our resources for our common life and for communal good as a reflection of our commitment to the way of Jesus.

Giving of our Offerings

Offertory

Pastorale ~ Wesley

Doxology (*Everyone & Please Stand*)

Kremser

**We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator, in grateful devotion our tribute we bring;
We lay it before You, we kneel and adore You, ie bless Your holy Name, glad praises we sing.**

Prayer of Dedication

Pastor: Holy Love, may these gifts and offerings make a difference in this life of the community we love, serve, and reflect. May these gifts and offerings extend beyond the borders and boundaries of the stones that encase us to the world that needs us. May these gifts and offerings be a balm to a world in need of comfort and a fire to a world in need of refining. May it begin within us and flourish beyond us. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Announcements

Sending Forth Hymn ~ insert (*please stand*)

Near to the Heart of God

There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God,
a place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God,
hold us, who wait before thee, near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God,
a place where we our Savior meet, near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God,
hold us, who wait before thee, near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release, near to the heart of God,
a place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God,
hold us, who wait before thee, near to the heart of God.

Benediction *(Please Remain Standing)*

As you go, embrace the good, proclaim the truth, be the good news. Amen.

Benediction Response *(Please Remain Standing)*

Ar Hyd Y Nos

**Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing – You are my own.**

Chimes

Postlude

Victory Through Christ ~ Smith

Please Join us at Coffee Hour immediately following the service.

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

Ellen Dalbeck requests prayers for her nephew, *Tyler McDermott* and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer. Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece *Linda*, and for *Russell Mohamed*, who is home and recovering from an auto accident. Mark Leslie requests prayers for his wife, *Carol*. Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, *Melanie*; Sue's brother, *Danny Waskevich*, and their friend, *Roger Waite*. Please also pray for their doctor, *Dr. Phillip Fournier*, as he continues cancer treatment. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for *Gina Ahaesy*; The Deacons request prayers for *Ann Scherdell*, *Dolores Trzcinski*, *Jeanne Fassett*, *Paul Scherdell*, and *Joyce & Armand Thienel*. Kristin Olson requests prayers for *Mitch Bourque*. Prayers also continue for *Erika Vecsey*, and also for *Jane Boggs*.

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.

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 go out to Sue Anderson for hosting Coffee Hour today.**

Carpet Fund Collection ~ Our new carpeting looks beautiful! Please continue your contributions to our teddy bear so we can finish the carpeting in the sanctuary.

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

Church Directory ~ Directories are available in the church office.

Stewardship Corner

Potluck Luncheon of Thanks ~ November 24th

Next Sunday is Stewardship Sunday in our church, and we are having a Potluck Luncheon of Thanks immediately following the service. This will still be a Coffee Hour but “a little bit more”. It will not be a sit-down dinner. We are truly thankful to all who support our church. Please let us know if you’ll be attending and what you’d like to bring. Above all, bring your appetites! We’re fortunate to have so much love in our church, so breaking bread together and sharing God’s bounty, is a wonderful way to show it. To make your reservations for the luncheon and to let us know what you’ll bring, please sign up in the narthex or parlor. Alternately, you can call the office, Sue Anderson, Ruth Nickerson, Matt Ahaesy, or Ellen Dalbeck.

Give God the Corners

Today let us take a quick look at Leviticus 23:22 because I think there’s a great principle here that we can apply to our tithes and offerings.

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”

Why did God tell the Israeli farmers they couldn’t harvest the whole field?

It didn’t make much business sense – it was like leaving money on the ground!

(They still planted seed right to the edges but then didn’t harvest it.)

Though it may seem counterintuitive, God was teaching them a valuable lesson – always leave room for Him.

Similarly, our tithes and offerings are opportunities to make space for God’s provision and blessing.

When we give, we demonstrate trust in His faithfulness and invite His abundant work in our lives. The blessings we receive go far beyond what we could hold onto tightly on our own.

So let’s be like the Israeli farmers and give God the corners. This is where the real blessing is!

Please return your pledge form with your giving of time, talent and treasures next Sunday and place them in the cornucopia on the altar.



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>)
	10-2pm	Church Office Open
	7:00pm	Bible Study (<i>Conference Room</i>)
Tuesday	2-4 pm	ESL Class ~ Tom Jones, & Pastor Ketelie Altena (<i>Chapel</i>)
	6:30pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
Wednesday	10:30am	Fellowship ~ Lunch at The Old Mill in Westminster
	7:00pm	Iglesia Pentecostal Casa de Vida (<i>Sanctuary</i>)
	7:00pm	Autobiographical Writing (<i>Conference Room</i>)
Thursday	6:45pm	AA Meeting (<i>Hall</i>)
	10-2pm	Church Office Open
	3-4 pm	ESL Class ~ Tom Jones, & Pastor Ketelie Altena (<i>Chapel</i>)
	4:00pm	Worship Meal (<i>Hall or Parlor</i>)
	6:00pm	Lenox Hill Neighborhood Watch meeting (<i>Parlor</i>)
Friday	10-2pm	Church Office Open
	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>)
	11:00am	Potluck Luncheon
	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

