

First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

February 18, 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
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You are invited to a time of quiet preparation during the Prelude

Welcome

Prelude

Ave Verum ~ Mozart

Ringling of the Chimes

Call to Worship

The voice of God proclaims of Jesus, "You are my beloved, and I love you."

We, too, are God's beloved children, loved and embraced.

With all the voices reminding us that we are not enough or don't belong, it is tempting to forget our place in God's Kindom.

With the waters of baptism and the voice of God's promises, we can face the temptations of any wilderness or desert that would draw us away from the Source of our hope.

Embrace your belovedness.

We rejoice in God's unending love for us!

Invocation

God of waters and deserts, God of hope and horizons, we celebrate your presence among us and among all your people. You have proclaimed that Jesus was beloved and, tenderly, you have claimed us as your own. Open the skies. Break through the clouds. Fall softly upon our shoulders and say our names with joy. For this day and each day, no matter what the other voices may say, we are your beloved and we rejoice in your inbreaking Kindom. Amen and Amen!

*Hymn of Adoration ~ #153

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

Lord, who throughout these forty days, for us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay.

As you with Satan did contend, and did the vict'ry win,
O give us strength in you to fight, in you to conquer sin.

And through these days of penitence, and through your Passion-tide,
Forevermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.

Abide with us that when this life of suffering is past,
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last!

Epistle Scripture Lesson
Gospel Lesson

1 Peter 2
Mark 4:1-11

Sermon

"The Journey Begins"

Rev. Jack Jones

*Hymn ~ Insert

Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters

Wash, Wash O God, our sons and daughters, where your cleansing waters flow.
Number them among your people; bless as Christ blessed long ago.
Weave them garments bright and sparkling; compass them with love and light.
Fill, anoint them; send your Spirit, holy dove and heart's delight.

We who bring them long for nurture; by your milk may we be fed.
Let us join your feast, partaking cup of blessing, living bread.
God, renew us, guide our footsteps; free from sin and all its snares,
one with Christ in living, dying, by your Spirit, children, heirs.

Oh, how deep your holy wisdom! Unimagined, all your ways!
To your name be glory, honor! With our lives we worship, praise!
We your people stand before you, waterwashed and Spirit-born.
By your grace, our lives we offer, recreate us, God transform.

Sharing Celebrations and Concerns for Community Prayer

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

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer,
when I call, answer me. O Lord hear my prayer.
O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Giving of our Offerings

Offertory

God So Loved the World ~ arr. Sewell

*Unison Prayer of Dedication

Most Holy God, by your grace make of us more than the sum of our parts and make of these offerings more than a sum recorded on a balance sheet. Rather let these offerings be a sign of our loving dedication to do your will of bringing love to a broken world. Amen.

*Doxology

Ellacombe

Accept, O God, the gifts we bring of spirit and of clay,
transform them into blessings on those we serve today.

Rekindle deep within us all a passion to fulfill
the ministry disciples have, empower'd to do your will.

Sending Forth Announcements

*Sending Forth Hymn ~ #399

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O Light that follows all my way, I yield my flick'ring torch to thee.
My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee.
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee.
I lay in dust, life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red, life that shall endless be.

*Benediction & Benediction Response

New Britain

Depart in peace to do God's will, walk ever in the light;
for Christ is with you evermore, to guide your day and night.

Chimes

*Postlude

Paeon ~ Young

**Please stand in body, or in spirit.*

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! Thank you to Sue Anderson for this week's treats.

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 this morning.

The First Congregational Church in Worcester

United Church of Christ



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Prayer Requests

Please hold Pastor Jack in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from a recent hospital stay. 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. In addition, we request prayers for Bev Bean as she recovers from a recent fall in her home. Greg Waters and Cindy MacLaurin request prayers for Cindy's mother, who is battling cancer once again.

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

The First Congregational Church in Worcester, Call for the Annual Meeting ~ will be held **NEXT Sunday, February 25, 2024 following worship at 10:45 AM.** The Annual Meeting will be held in person and via Zoom Meeting. For the quorum for Annual meeting, we need 15% of members either in person or on zoom which will be 10 members. Nancy Taylor, Clerk

Fellowship ~ We will be meeting at 10:00 in the Parlor. All are welcome. Please join us.

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, at this time of year, we provide the coffee, tea, hot chocolate, hot cider and paper goods. You don't even have to bake, store-bought is A-OK. It doesn't have to be fancy either. Fruit is always good and so are crackers and cheese. Also, two or more people can sign up together

Carpet Fund Collection ~ Our new carpeting fund continues to grow! Please continue to add whatever you can spare to the Teddy Bear jar in the narthex. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

Weekly Calendar

Today	10:00am	FCC Worship (Sanctuary)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (Hall)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (Upper level)
	11:30am	Deacons Meeting (Conference Room)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
Monday	7:00pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
Tuesday	6:30pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
Wednesday	10:00am	Fellowship (Parlor)
Thursday	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)
Saturday	10:00am	New Hope SDA (Sanctuary & Parlor)
	12:00pm	Church of God (Hall)
Sunday	10:00am	FCC Worship/ Annual Meeting (Sanctuary)
	10:00am	Family Christian Church of God (Hall)
	11:00am	Ghanian Resurrection Ministries (Upper level)
	11:30am	Council Meeting (Conference Room)
	6:45pm	AA Meeting (Hall)