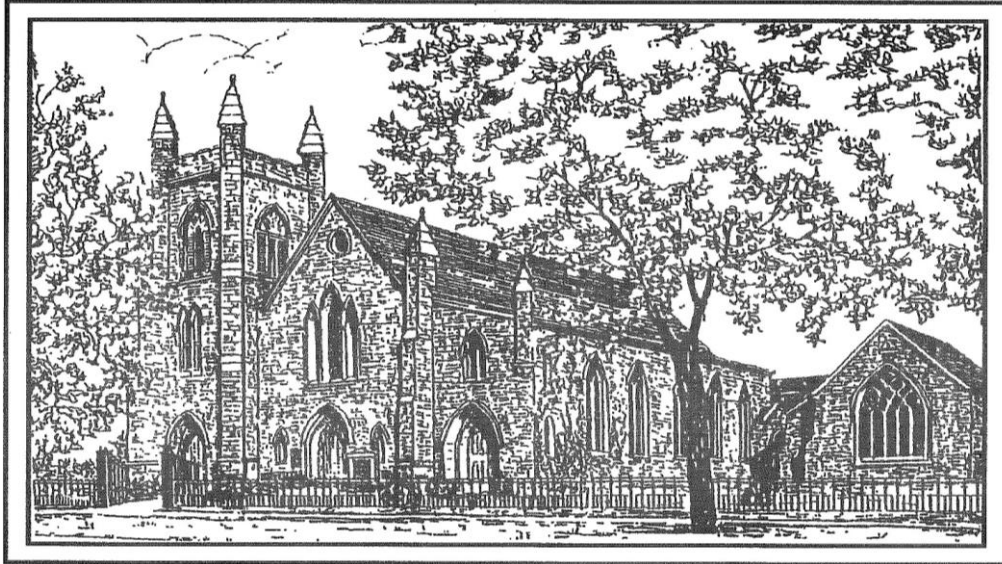


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

HOLY COMMUNION
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 1, 2024 ~ 10:00 am

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Ring of the Bell

Prelude

“Prelude in d minor”

R. Brachmann

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: November ends. December begins.

Many: We find our beginning and our ending in God.

One: Month after month, our God attends us and supports us.

Many: For God’s company, we offer thanks and praise.

One: Let us worship the God who gives us Jesus Christ:

Many: God, who is the Alpha and the Omega,

One: the beginning and the end,

Many: the Living One and our Redeemer, now and forever. Amen

The Lighting of the First Advent Candle

Introduction

The word “Advent” comes from an ancient Latin phrase meaning “until the coming.” It is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming of the Christ-child.

One: Each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus we will reflect on some themes that center us as we wait with eager expectation for God's glory to be revealed. This Sunday, many across the globe center on "Hope."

Many: When the world is frightening, and we desire to escape from ongoing suffering, all Creation invites us to remember the hope within us, which can lead to transformation around us. We strive to hold onto hope in a world full of despair; we search for it; and we dare to discover hope in the small, yet magnificent moments of our days.

One: Let us light this candle of hope as we remember the God-with-us and the hope within us. (candle lit)

***Invocation**

This Advent, we hope and pray for: joy as we journey together, sight for the blind and healing for the sick, freedom for the prisoners and good news for the poor, release for the oppressed with justice for all, and love for each other. And, we hope and pray for the coming of God's topsy-turvy, inside out, upside-down rule in this world. Amen.

***A Prayer for Transformation**

God of the Possible and Probable, gloom often encapsulates us when life is confusing, and conflict is great. Our faith can be rattled, and we can be swallowed by shadows of fear. We forget that even when shadows have lengthened, there remains a crack in the surface. Light begins to stream into our space, and warmth dances upon our hearts. When fear unnerves us, may we cling to the hope of God's love and the possibilities of joy once again. Amen.

Assurance of God's Love

***Hymn**

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

PH #103

The New Testament Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Doug Harrington

How can we thank God enough for all the joy that we feel because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now, may our Creator God and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may the example of Jesus so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Reader: For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD!

The Gospel Reading

Luke 21:25-36

Doug Harrington

[Jesus said,] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Holy One coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the God's realm is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Be on

guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Holy One.

Reader: For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD!

***Hymn**

“Now Is the Time Approaching”

NCH #609

A Sermon Message

“Hope Floats”

Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup

Moment of Silence

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

The Pastoral Prayer

Our 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

**Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace.**

Offertory Invitation

The Offertory

***The Doxology PH #515**

Old Hundredth

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

Joyous God, Originator of all Gifts, this day and always, we celebrate the gifts of our hands and hearts. We share our talents and time, knowing our energy builds the world with love. We share our treasures, knowing that all gifts we entrust to your Church will build your realm. With joy, we devote our first fruits to loving you and your children. Amen.

Hymn

“Jesus Took the Bread”

NCH #343

Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy God of Peace, we seek you in these darkening days of winter. We seek a calm “yes” within us and an absence of conflict between people and nations. But more deeply, we seek your *shalom*—the deep and abiding peace that will come only through the justice of your reign. Amen.

*Hymn

“We Would Be Building”

NCH #607

*Benediction

*Benediction Response

*Amen, amen,
Amen, amen, amen.*

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

*Postlude

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

J. Moultrie

~ Leading Worship today is the Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup ~

~ Our Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~

~ Our lay liturgist today is Doug Harrington ~

~ Our greeters today are Janine Beausoleil, Eleanor Ingraham & Clifford Gustafson ~

Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship



Prayer List for Sunday, December 1, 2024

As a congregation, we lift up prayers today and throughout the week for the following people.

For concerns in the world:

For peace to prevail in our world

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Mary Costa, who had surgery at Boston Children’s Hospital

Mark

Mary Aberg for her Shoulder Surgery

Annette Moren, who is having surgery

Jeannine Marshall, Charlotte Burnham’s cousin, who has cancer but is improving

Jane Texada, a childhood friend of Sug Grant, who is mourning the loss of her husband

Fred Thornton, a Friend of the Burnham Family

Stephen

Jacob Johnson in Seattle and his Girlfriend Emma who is Under the Sea in a submarine.

Residents of Asheville, NC, especially Sue Morettini's sister-in-law and nieces

Kathy, Beverly Larson's cousin, who is recovering after a hospitalization

Charlie

Ken Latham in Leicester, MA, who started chemo last Thursday for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma

Fred Z. in CT
 Those who have lost their way that they may have wisdom, courage, and strength
 Harriet
 Lola, Carolina Bailey's sister with stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer
 Ryan
 Donna Castiglicgo, who is recovering from surgery
 Mark E., who has an aggressive form of prostate cancer
 Luybov, Nikita's grandmother
 Fred Davis, who has stomach cancer
 Muriel Smith
 Charlotte Griffith
 Bob and Sally Evans
 Sue Moreira
 Barbara and Jack Ringland
 Kellie and Juan Morales's daughter
 Bruce C., who is in physical rehab, and Pat P. and her husband Tom, all friends of Ed Wiacek
 Peter Leiche, a friend of Sue Moreira, who has cancer
 Jamie's health and for his mother Katelyn
 Simone Silveri
 Caregivers in our congregation

For those who have died

Betty, the wife, mother, grandmother of the Sirpenski family

Upcoming Birthdays:

Susan Brosnihan 12/07	Dave Sartrys 12/07	Susan Morettini 12/08
Melissa Fournier 12/09	Barbara Ringland 12/10	Eleanor Ingraham 12/13
Susan Butler 12/18	George Roach 12/18	Meriel Smith 12/21
Ruth Fisher 12/21	Diane Swire 12/22 Rev.	Nancy Soukup 12/27



What's on the Church Calendar

December 01, 2024	Sunday Worship: First Sunday of Advent 10:00am
December 03, 2024	Prayer Shawl Circle 6:30pm
December 04, 2024	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
December 07, 2024	Saturday, Bristol Christmas Festival Crafts Fair 11:00am-6:00pm (DeWolf Room, Christian Education Wing)
December 08, 2024	Sunday Worship: Second Sunday of Advent 10:00am
December 08, 2024	Sunday, Bristol Christmas Festival Crafts Fair 12:00am-5:00pm (DeWolf Room, Christian Education Wing)
December 10, 2024	Tuesday Facility Meeting 7:00pm DeWolf Room
December 11, 2024	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
December 12, 2024	Thursday Deacons Meeting 7:00pm
December 15, 2024	Sunday Worship: Third Sunday of Advent 10:00am

(dedication of Keith Reynolds print in the DeWolf Room following the service)

December 17, 2024 Tuesday Church Council Meeting 7:00pm
December 18, 2024 Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
December 22, 2024 Sunday Worship: Christmas Pageant 10:00am
December 24, 2024 Christmas Eve Worship 6:00pm
December 29, 2024 Sunday Worship 10:00am

Please visit our website for more information about the Church
And Events go to **fccbristol.org**



“Invitation to Share Time, Talent, and Treasure”

When you give to First Congregational Church, you make possible our ministries that serve all God’s people. Your gifts share the love of Jesus all year long. The act of giving is our personal expression of worship and also keeps our church financially healthy. Stewardship is not payment for services rendered. It is an act of faith and devotion to God. You may go to the following link to give now:

<https://fccbristol.org/support-us/>.



Church Office Hours are Tuesday – Friday 8:30am – 3pm

Office e-mail address: office@FCCBristol.org

OFFICE Closed Friday Nov. 29, 2024

Pastoral Office Hours Tuesday – Thursday, 9am – 1pm

You may also schedule an appointment by contacting Rev. Nancy.

Church office line 401/253-7288 or e-mail office@FCCbristol.org

NCH = New Century Hymnal (black hymnal) and PH = Pilgrim Hymnal (red hymnal)

Sources and Credits: Hymn tune names - as well as composers of the music and authors of the text - are listed in the hymnals with each hymn. CCLI License #1958911 and One License.Net #A-728124.

The prayers used during this service were written by or adapted from the following: Harry Disher, Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2004–2005, United Church of Canada, <https://www.united-church.ca/worship>, re:Worship: Advent 1 C; Third Space. <http://third-space.org.uk/>, re:Worship: Advent 1 C; Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, For All the Joy: Service Prayers for the First Sunday of Advent Year C, Worship Ways, United Church of Christ., Advent; Ted Loder, Guerrillas of Grace, http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0014ENRR4/ref=dp-kindle_redirect?ie=UTF8&btkr=1, re:Worship: Advent 1 C; Rev. Susan A. Blain, Justice Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, copyright 2019, Advent Communion Service - United Church of Christ; and Joanna Harader, Spacious Faith. <http://spaciousfaith.com/>, re:Worship: Advent 1 C.



Alternative Christmas Giving Project

Alternative Christmas Giving December 7th & 8th 2024

Since 2014, First Congregational Church in Bristol has invited area nonprofit service organizations to share information about their important work and to offer charitable donations as an alternative for those who may not want physical items as holiday gifts. On December 7 and 8, 2024, the 10th annual Alternative Christmas Giving event will be held at First Congregational Church in conjunction with the craft fair portion of the community-wide Bristol Christmas Festival. Between the selection of distinctive gift items from local artisans and the opportunity to honor friends and family with charitable contributions, there are sure to be enough gift options to fulfill everyone's wish list!

Representatives from nine 501c3 nonprofit organizations will be present to share information about their missions and their critical work in the areas of health, social services, education, hunger, and the arts. The Deacons of First Congregational Church hope you will visit and donate generously as part of your holiday gift giving. If you are unable to attend this event, donations in the form of a check may be sent to the church office to be forwarded to the organization(s) you wish to support.

10th annual Alternative Christmas Giving event will feature:

The Tomorrow Fund (providing support to children with cancer and their families)

East Bay Food Pantry (decreasing hunger and increasing nutrition in the East Bay)

Heifer International (ending poverty and hunger in a sustainable way through agriculture)

Matthew Patton Foundation (providing education and advocacy to help active duty and Veteran service members achieve their best mental health)

R.E.S.T. (Resources, Education, Support, Together – recovery services)

SHARE Foundation (providing adaptive assistive technology to people living with disabilities)

Community String Project (providing affordable and accessible string music lessons)

Sojourner House (providing culturally sensitive support, advocacy, housing, and education for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking)

East Bay Community Action Program (providing high-quality, comprehensive and accessible health and human services to assist people to achieve their fullest potential)

First Congregational Church of Bristol (No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.)

The 2024 Bristol Christmas Festival & Grand Illumination

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL at Unity Park

11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

500 Wood St., Bristol RI

TREE LIGHTING at The Burnside Building

5:30 p.m. Entertainment begins

6:00 p.m. Tree Lighting

400 Hope St., Bristol RI

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL at Unity Park

12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.



2024

Bristol Christmas Festival

December 7 & 8

UNITY PARK

500 Wood St., Bristol, RI 02809

Rectangular Snip

DECEMBER 7TH

- **CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL** - 11a-6pm - Unity Park
- **CRAFT & GIFT FAIR**- 11a-6p - First Congregational Church- High St
- **CULINARY MARKET**- 11a-6p at Pivotal Brewery - Unity Park
- **GRAND ILLUMINATION** - Festivities start at 5:30pm, Tree Lighting at 6pm in front of the Burnside Building on Hope St.

DECEMBER 8TH

- **CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL**- 12p-6p - Unity Park
- **CRAFT & GIFT FAIR** - 12p-5p - First Congregational Church - High St
- **CULINARY MARKET** - 12p-5p - at Pivotal Brewery - Unity Park

First Congregational Church presents its 33rd Annual

Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 21st

10am to 12noon

Get a box for You, Get a box for a Gift!

Large Assortment of Homemade Holiday Cookies and Fudge \$15 lb.

Plus, Mini-Bazaar: Homemade items

Coffee, Tea, Mulled Cider, or Hot Chocolate With 2 Cookies \$5

Coat Drive! Donate 1 or more gently used Coats and get \$5 off your total purchase of cookies! (With Minimum of 1 pound)

First Congregational Church
300 High Street, Bristol

COAT DRIVE

Children's

December 21, 2024

Please look through your closet to see if you have coats/jackets you do not wear or out grown of or don't want any more.

Lady's

Let us pass them on to people in need of a coat.

Men's

Lets help others

For the month of December 2024

THIS SEASON WE'RE

Blooming & Giving



STOP&SHOP

This season, let your purchase do more. Head over to our selected Stop & Shop location this month and purchase a specially marked \$10.99 Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet. Every bouquet sold will send us a \$1 donation!

stopandshop.2givelocal.com
Bloomin' 4 Good Program

Benefiting:



First Congregational Church in Bristol
281 High Street
Bristol, RI 02809
O: 401-253-7288
Office @ FCCBristol.org

At This Stop & Shop Location:

STOP&SHOP
605 Metacom Ave.
Bristol, RI 02809

"Remembering Sisters"

Quilt Raffle

78" x 91"

Tickets sell for \$1 each
or 6 tickets for \$5



On sale at the First Congregational Church office, after Sunday services, at the Harvest Moon Bazaar Nov. 23rd, and by many church members.

This quilt was made by Sandra Reynolds, a member of the First Congregational Church in Bristol RI.

Fabrics in this Quilt were purchased in Sisters, Oregon, a town known as the "Quilting Capital" of the Northwest and the host of one of the largest Quilt shows on the west coast every July. Sandra and her husband Keith had headed to the Northwest as Keith had grown up there.

The fabric colors chosen reflected the beautiful colors of early fall that Sandra saw. Thus, the name reflects that wonderful town of Sisters in Oregon!



Poinsettia Plants Order Form 2024

First Congregational Church
281 High Street, Bristol, Rhode Island 02809

Fill in #1, OR #2 OR a combination of both

#1 I would like to donate _____# (Quantity) of my plant(s).

Is there someone you know who should be included in our plant ministry?

** Name of shut-in _____

AND / OR

#2 I will take _____# of my plant (s) home after the service.

Please fill in below for each plant you purchase so we may list it in the Christmas bulletin.

Please Print

Please let me know which <u>In memory of</u> or <u>in honor of</u> or <u>?</u>	Given by:

(If you need more room, please use the back of this paper.)

The DEADLINE for orders is Dec 17th . Please complete this form and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. Checks should be made payable to the First Congregational Church and sent in with this form. Please note “Christmas Flowers” in the memo. Plants will be \$18.00 each.

Please send order form and check to First Congregational Church, 281 High Street, Bristol, RI 02809
Any question please give me a call Barbara 401/253-7288

THANK YOU

Church location 300 High Street • mailing address 281 High Street • Bristol, Rhode Island
401/253-7288

