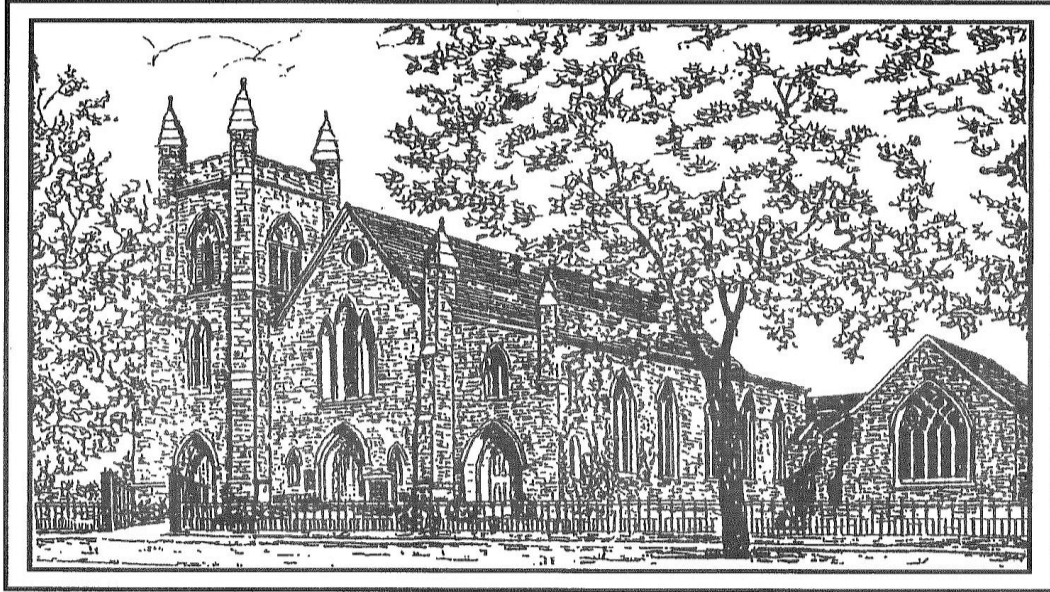


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 15, 2024 ~ 10:00 am

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Ring of the Bell

Prelude

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: Sing praises to God on high, for glorious are God's works.

Many: Sing praises to the ends of the earth.

One: Shout and sing for joy, O people of God,

Many: for great is the Holy One in our midst.

One: Blessed is the One who comes to dwell among us. Amen.

***Invocation**

Holy God, as the memories of happiness sweep back into our minds, we delight in the Advent blessing of joy. Such blissfulness turns our spirits from the lengthened nights to God's Divine Light, which arrive soon. Like the saints of old, we celebrate together, rejoicing in the season, and knowing the best is yet to come. Amen.

The Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

Introduction

Isaiah 61:10 says: "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God, for God has clothed me with the garments of salvation." Today is Gaudete Sunday—the 3rd Sunday of Advent. It is a joyous celebration that anticipates the coming of the Christ child and provides a break from the more reflective tone of Advent.

One: Each Sunday leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus we reflect on a theme that centers us as we wait with eager expectation for the glory of God to be revealed. This Advent we continue our centering on "Hope."

Many: **The rose-colored candle reminds us to be encouraged, to lean into a softer sentiment. Let us light the candle of joy. Amen.**

*Hymn

"Rejoice, You Pure in Heart"

NCH #55

The Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 12:2-6

Ann Roussel

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid, for the LORD is my strength and my might; God has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: "Give thanks to the LORD; call on God's name; make known these deeds among the nations; proclaim that God's name is exalted. Sing praises to the LORD, for great things have been done; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

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 3:7-18

Ann Roussel

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

"With Joy Draw Water"

NCH #109

A Sermon Message

“Practicing the Art of Hope”

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**

God of Holy Darkness and Returning Light, we give our full hearts, knowing that you will bless this world with love. We give our full minds, knowing that you will bless this world with peace. We give our full souls, knowing that you will bless this world with hope. May the joy of your gifts encourage us to share the best we have, creating your realm here on earth. Amen.

Hymn

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

NCH #506

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

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

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

***Postlude**

*~ Leading Worship today is the Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup ~
~ Our Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~
~ Our lay liturgist today is Ann Roussel ~
~ Our greeters today are Janine Beausoleil, Eleanor Ingraham & Clifford Gustafson ~*

Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship



Prayer List for Sunday, December 8, 2024

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

For concerns in the world:

For all the citizens of Syria

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Barbara Malony, Barbara Ringland's mother

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.

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

Mark E., who has an aggressive form of prostate cancer

Fred Davis, who has stomach cancer

Meriel Smith

Charlotte Griffith

Bob and Sally Evans

Sue Moreira

Barbara and Jack Ringland

Kellie and Juan Morales's daughter

Peter Leiche, a friend of Sue Moreira, who has cancer

Caregivers in our congregation

Upcoming Birthdays:

Susan Butler 12/18

Ruth Fisher 12/21

George Roach 12/18

Diane Swire 12/22 Rev.

Meriel Smith 12/21

Nancy Soukup 12/27



What's on the Church Calendar

December 15, 2024	Sunday Worship: Third Sunday of Advent 10:00am
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 23, 2024	Monday Facility meeting 7:00pm
December 24, 2024	Christmas Eve Worship 6:00pm
December 29, 2024	Sunday Worship 10:00am
January 02, 2025	THURSDAY ANNUAL REPORTS DUE
January 05, 2025	Sunday Confirmation Worship
January 07, 2025	Tuesday Prayer Shawl Circle 6:30pm
January 08, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
January 09, 2025	Thursday Deacons meeting 7:00pm Guiteras House
January 10 & 11	Friday & Saturday Bristol Stone Church Coffee House DeWolf room
January 12, 2025	Sunday Worship: First Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
January 14, 2025	Tuesday Facility meeting 7:00pm DeWolf room
January 15, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
January 19, 2025	Sunday Worship: First Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
January 21, 2025	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 7:00pm
January 22, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
January 10 & 11	Saturday Bristol Stone Church Coffee House DeWolf room
January 26, 2025	Sunday Worship: First Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
	Congregational Annual meeting following worship
January 29, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)

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

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.

Sources: Prayers for this liturgy were written by or adapted from the following: Harry Disher, Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany, 2004–2005, produced by the United Church of Canada, <https://www.united-church.ca/worship>, re:Worship: Advent 3 C; Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, Again...Rejoice: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday of Advent Year C, Worship Ways, <https://www.united-church.ca/worship>, Advent 3C - December 15 - United Church of Christ; and Madeleine L'Engle, Cry Like a Bell, 57. <http://carolinemccain.wordpress.com/>, re:Worship: Advent 3 C.

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:



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!





A Community Partners Program with Clements Marketplace

As many know, Clements Marketplace has opened a third location at 1150 Hope Street in Bristol. As they have in Portsmouth and Manomet in Plymouth, MA, Clements is extending their Community Partners Program to their new location. Twenty-seven years ago, they began this effort to support organizations and groups in the area.

How does it work?: As a registered Community Partner, First Congregational Church (FCC) will collect any Clements’ Marketplace receipts from members’ shopping. When these receipts total \$2500.00, we send the receipts to Clements. (The total is taken from before sales tax and after any Clements’ Shoppers Card savings, coupons, and discounts.) Within 30 days, we will receive a check for a percentage of the total of submitted register receipts. Since 1997, this program has allowed Clements’ family of stores to donate approximately \$800,000 to an array of non-profit organizations.

Where do I drop off my receipts?: At FCC, an envelope for receipts will be pinned to one of the bulletin boards in the Wardwell Room or in the Narthex, starting Sunday, October 27. Or you can drop them off to the office. The receipts collected and tallied.

Plases save those Clements’ receipts and join with us in their Community Partners Program to benefit FCC!



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 ?	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



First Congregational Church presents its 33rd Annual



Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 21st



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

10am to 12noon



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

Plus, Mini-Bazaar:
Homemade items

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



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