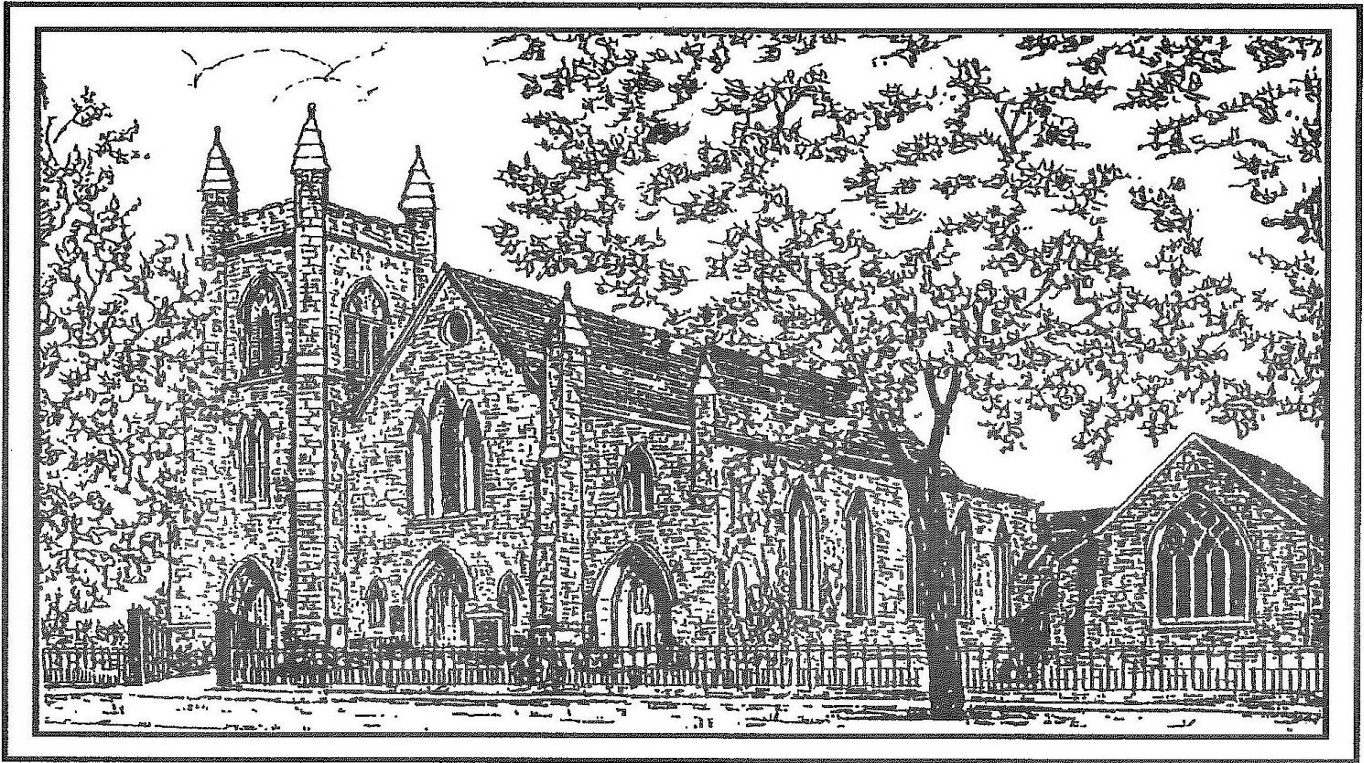


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

HOLY COMMUNION
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
February 16, 2025 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: We worship the God who inhabits our world and dwells in our lives.

Many: We need not look up to find God; we need only to look around:

One: within ourselves, beyond ourselves, into the eyes of another.

Many: We need not listen for a distant thunder to find God; we need only listen to the music of life:

One: the words of children, the questions of the curious, the rhythm of a heartbeat.

Many: We worship the God who inhabits our world and who dwells in our lives. Amen.

***Prayer of Invocation**

Righteous God, we seek your presence anew this day and in the time to come. Help us to recognize you in the sound and feel of our own breath and in the movement and noise of those around us. Embolden us to a faith that surpasses understanding and ministry that reflects radical trust in you and the path of abundance, compassion, and connection. Let our worship in song and prayer be a foreshadowing of our worship in action and witness. Transform us from despair to hope, complacency to courage, and indifference to love in your name. Amen.

***Prayer for Transformation**

Holy God, you called us all into being. Yet, we have allowed good relationships to be broken. We have become distant from you and our neighbour. At times we have failed to speak out for justice, leaving the voiceless without an advocate. To all who fall short of God's glory, you offer pardon and peace, and we seek it today through our worship of you. Amen.

***Assurance of God's Grace**

***Hymn**

"Standing at the Future's Threshold"

NCH#538

Children's Moment

The Old Testament

Song of Solomon 1:5-7

Charlotte Burnham

I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has gazed on me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions?

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 New Testament Reading

Acts 8:26-40

Charlotte Burnham

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep I was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so the Divine does not speak and in humility was denied justice. Who can describe this generation? For the Holy One's life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about the Divine or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip

away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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**

"I Will Trust in the Lord"

NCH#416

Message

"We Are All Made in God's Image"

Rev. Dr. Nancy Soukup

Sharing our Joy and Concerns

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 all Abundance, you have planted generosity in our hearts. Receive our gifts as part of your redemptive work to save the world from inequities, pain, and despair. May our resources be renewed and magnified so that all needs are met, and your name be praised. Amen.

***Hymn**

"Take Me to the Water"

NCH#322

Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God, you are the source of human dignity, and it is in your image that we are created. Pour out on us the spirit of love and compassion. Enable us to be reverent to each person, to reach out to anyone in need, to value and appreciate those who differ from us, to share the resources of our nation, and to receive the gifts offered to us by people from other cultures. Grant that we may always promote the justice and acceptance that ensures lasting peace and racial harmony. Help us to remember that we are one world and one family. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

"We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky"

NCH#563

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

Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship



Prayer List for Sunday, January 16, 2025

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

For concerns in the world:

For those who are hungry today.

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Peter MacDonald, who has Lung Cancer

Rusty, who has Lung Cancer

Dan Marrin, a neighbor of Ed Wiacek, who had emergency prostate surgery

Liz Soyka, a friend of Lynne Ramos, who had cataract surgery this past week

Benevides Family, who lost their home to a fire here in Bristol

John Miller who had ankle surgery

Amanda and Raymond, who have been affected by the fires in Pasadena

Autumn Quezada-Harrison

Ellie's Dad, who she misses

Becky, Sue Moretinni's friend, who had surgery

Carol, Karen's cousin, who had brain surgery

Carrigan and Tyler, who have cancer, and for Carrigan's nurse, Kristen, who is also being treated for breast cancer

Rosa Cermeno, who prays to welcome a healthy baby to their family

Joanne Bergeron

Terry and Pat
Anne, Sarah Albanese's cousin
Jim Morgan
Barbara Malony, Barbara Ringland's mother
Mary Costa, who had surgery at Boston Children's Hospital
Mark
Jeannine Marshall, Charlotte Burnham's cousin
Charlie
Ken Latham in Leicester, MA, who is on chemotherapy for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma
Fred Z. in CT
Those who have lost their way 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
Barbara and Jack Ringland
Kellie and Juan Morales's daughter
Bruce C., who is in rehab, and Pat P., both friends of Ed Wiacek
Caregivers in our congregation

Upcoming Birthdays:

Jean Cotta 02/22
Sandra Reynolds 02/27
Allison Allen 02/27
Roger Dubord 02/28

What's on the Church Calendar

February 16, 2025	Sunday Worship: Sixth Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
February 18, 2025	Church Council Meeting 7:00pm
February 19, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
February 22, 2025	Saturday Bristol Stone Church Coffee House
February 23, 2025	Sunday Worship: Seventh Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
February 26, 2024	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
February 27, 2025	Thursday Private Event (DeWolf Room) 6:00pm

Please visit our website for more information about the Church
and its events: 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 9:00am – 2:00pm

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 for this service are written by or adapted from the following:

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/mlk-resources.pdf, re:Worship: Martin Luther King Jr. Day; “I Was in Prison and You Visited Me,” Worship Resources for Social Justice Sunday, The Social Justice Network, re:Worship: Search results for justice; Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Down with Them: Service Prayers for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Worship Ways, United Church of Christ, After Epiphany 6C - February 16 - United Church of Christ; The Billabong, re:Worship: Search results for racial justice; Gill Le Fevre, re:Worship: Search results for Gill; and Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Social Justice Resource Center, re:Worship: Search results for justice.

**Bristol’s Stone Church
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- CHIP MODAKE, LONESOME NOISE



Saturday, February 22, 2025 **First Congregational Church**
Doors open at 6:45 pm 300 High Street
Music starts at 7:30 pm (Corner of Bradford and High St)
Bristol, RI 02809

Tickets are \$25.00; Students are Half Price; Children 5 and Under are Free
Seating is Limited and Early Reservations are Recommended.
Please Call 401-253-4813 for reservations or ticket information.



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