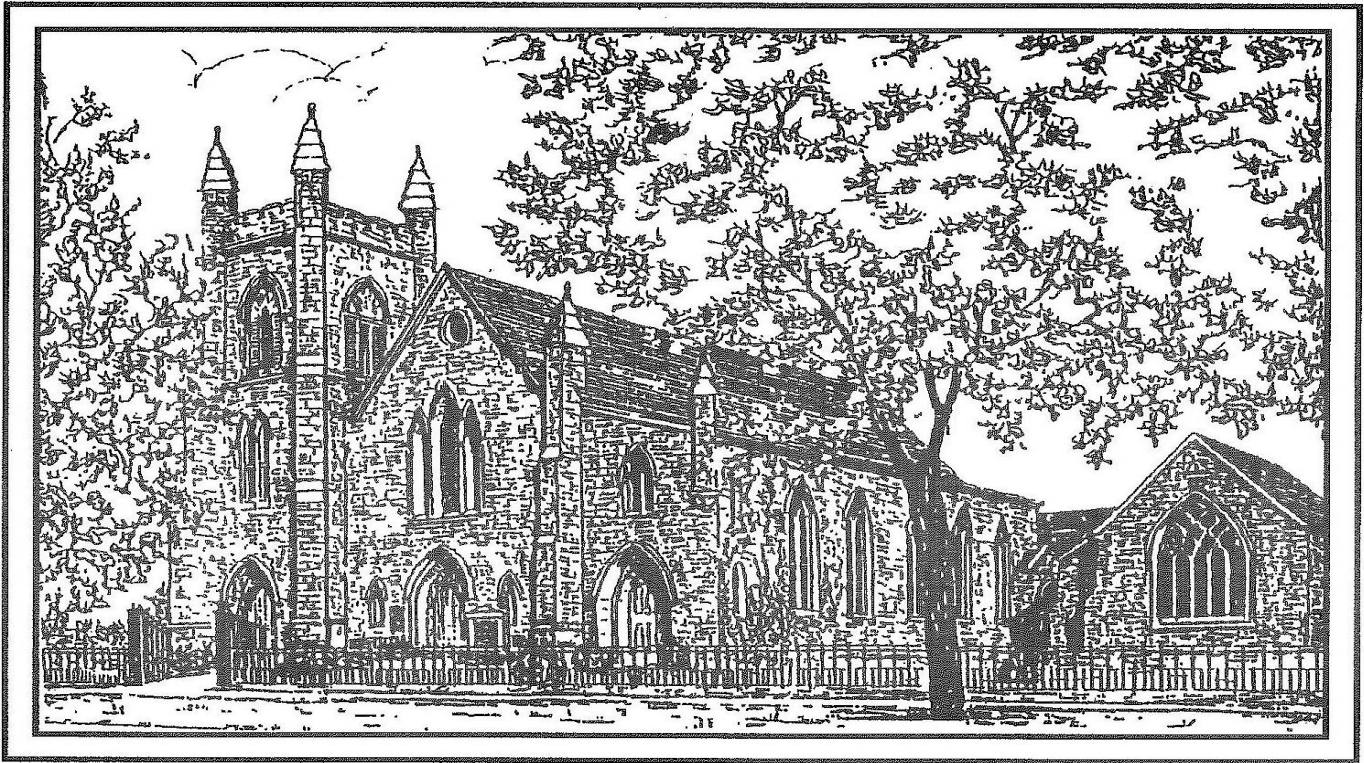


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY A SERVICE TO HONOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

February 23, 2025 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

"I Woke Up This Morning"

African American Spiritual

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: Come, Beloved, and release your frenzied fear.

Many: We come, trusting the enduring promises of the Holy One.

One: Let meekness rise as strength for the soul.

Many: May our promised inheritance of love shine brightly all around.

One: May it strengthen us in our waiting and our working.

Many: May all that is evil wither, and all that is good grow to fullness.

One: May the grace of God rest on us all as we gather. **Amen.**

***Prayer of Invocation**

Holy Love, bear in us a new beginning. Soften our hearts and still our minds into your gracious embrace. Hold the worries and wanderings of our lives. Gift us with the renewing energy of your Holy Spirit. Let it meet our fatigue and form in us a deepened commitment to your vision of the beloved community. Yes, mold us with Christ into agents of your blessing for the good of the world. May the cup of our lives run over with your love. In your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

***Hymn**

“Standing at the Future’s Threshold”

NCH#538

The New Testament

Colossians 3:11-17

Katherine Harcourt

In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to our God.

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!

Readings from Our Civil Rights Ancestors

Church School Members

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”

Harriet Tubman, American abolitionist

Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion: The potential for greatness lives within each of us.”

Wilma Rudolph, Olympic track and field athlete

“The time is always right to do what is right.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., minister and civil rights activist

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

Audre Lorde, writer and social activist

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

Alice Walker, novelist and social activist

“Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

Dr. Mae Jemison, engineer and former NASA astronaut

“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”

Shirley Chisholm, first African-American congresswoman

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

James Baldwin, writer

“Ours is not the struggle of one day, one week, or one year...Ours is the struggle of a lifetime, or maybe even many lifetimes, and each one of us in every generation must do our part.”

John Lewis, politician and civil rights activist

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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!

Anthem

“Deep River”

Arr. Moses Hogan

Message

“An Invitation to Trust in Our God”

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

“One Day (When We All Get To Heaven)”

Matt Redman Arr. Heather Sorenson

Soloists: Kyle Louviere

***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 Affirmation**

I refuse to believe that we are unable to influence the events around us. I refuse to believe we are bound by racism, war, and injustice. I believe those around me are my brother and my sister. I believe in dignity every day and that our brokenness can be healed. I believe we can overcome oppression and violence without resorting to it. This means I seek to reject revenge and retaliation. I remember, "Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can." Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

"We Shall Overcome"

NCH#570

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

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

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

Postlude

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"

African American Spiritual

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

~ ~ Our Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~

~ Our lay liturgist today is Katherine Harcourt ~

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

Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship



Prayer List for Sunday, February 23, 2025

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

For concerns in the world:

As we honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we pray for all those who continue to labor for civil and human rights

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Kristen

Robin Vestal, who has Stage 4 Duodenal Cancer, and her husband Ulysses, who are friends of the Grant family

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

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:

Sandra Reynolds	02/27	Allison Allen	02/27	Roger Dubord	02/28
Lynne Ramos	03/10	Alma Ivor-Campbell	03/11	Sandie Campbell	03/11
Sasha Temple	03/12	Camille Pansa	03/14	Shawen Williams	03/14
Justin Riccio	03/16	Jennifer Johnson	03/19	Steven Brosnihan	03/22
John Tyler	03/25				

What's on the Church Calendar

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 Mt Hope High School (DeWolf Room) 7:00pm
March 02, 2025	Sunday Worship and Holy Communion: Transfiguration Sunday after Epiphany 10:00am
	Shrove Pancake Supper 11am (DeWolf Room)
March 04, 2025	Prayer Shawl Circle
March 05, 2025	Ash Wednesday Labyrinth Circle 4-6pm (DeWolf Room)
	Ash Wednesday Service 6:00pm (DeWolf Room)
March 09, 2025	Sunday Worship: First Sunday of Lent 10:00am
March 10, 2025	Monday Lenten Book Club 7pm (Guiteras House)
March 11, 2025	Tuesday Facility Meeting 7pm

March 12, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 13, 2025	Thursday Deacons Meeting 7pm (Deacons Meeting)
March 14, 2025	Friday Trivia Night 7pm
March 16, 2025	Sunday Worship: Second Sunday of Lent 10:00am Haiti Taskforce Presentation 11am (DeWolf Room) (rescheduled from February) Private Party 2pm (DeWolf Room)
March 18, 2025	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 7pm
March 19, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 22, 2025	Saturday Bristol's Stone Church Coffee House
March 23, 2025	Sunday Worship: Third Sunday of Lent 10:00am
March 26, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7pm (Dimond Room)
March 28, 2025	Friday Special Speaker Ken Nomiyama 7pm (DeWolf Room)
March 30, 2025	Sunday Worship: Fourth Sunday of Lent 10am ANNUAL MEETING, 11am (Sanctuary) (rescheduled from March 16)
Match 31, 2025	Monday Lenten Book Club 7pm (Guiteras House)

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 10:00am – 2:00pm

Office e-mail address: office@FCCBristol.org

Rev. Nancy away Wednesday, February 19, to Saturday, February 22, and March 17, to March 24

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

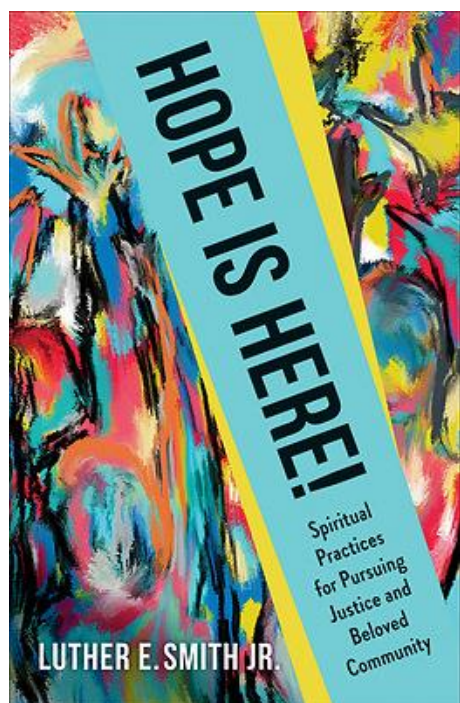
You may also schedule an appointment by contacting Rev. Nancy.

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: The prayers used during this service were written by or adapted from the following: The Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, *A Good Measure*; Service Prayers for the Seventh Sunday after Epiphany Year C, *Worship Ways for Epiphany 2025*, After Epiphany 7C – February 23 - United Church of Christ, 33 Black History Month Quotes Students Should Know | BestColleges; Rev. Mindi, Rev-o-lution, re:Worship: Search results for racial justice; Abigail Reichard, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Worship Resources, Council on Christian Unity.



Lenten Book Discussion Series, Mondays, March 10, March 30, April 7, April 14, at 7:00 p.m. (Guiteras House Dining Room)

During Lent, Rev. Nancy will lead a book discussion on *Hope Is Here: Spiritual Practices for Pursuing Justice and Beloved Community* by Rev. Dr. Luther E. Smith, Jr. This is the book that was the focus of her Advent sermons. March 10 will be the introduction. The next meeting will be March 30, giving all the time to read the book. Books will be made available for those in the discussion group. Please contact Rev. Nancy at nhsoukup@gmail.com if you are interested in taking part in the series. All are warmly welcomed.

**Bristol's Stone Church
Coffeehouse Presents**

*An Evening of Country and Bluegrass Music Featuring
Amy Gallatin and Stillwaters*



Saturday, March 22, 2025 **First Congregational Church**
Doors open at 6:45pm 300 High Street
Music starts at 7:30pm (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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**BRISTOL'S STONE
CHURCH COFFEEHOUSE**
*Live Acoustic Music Since
2007*