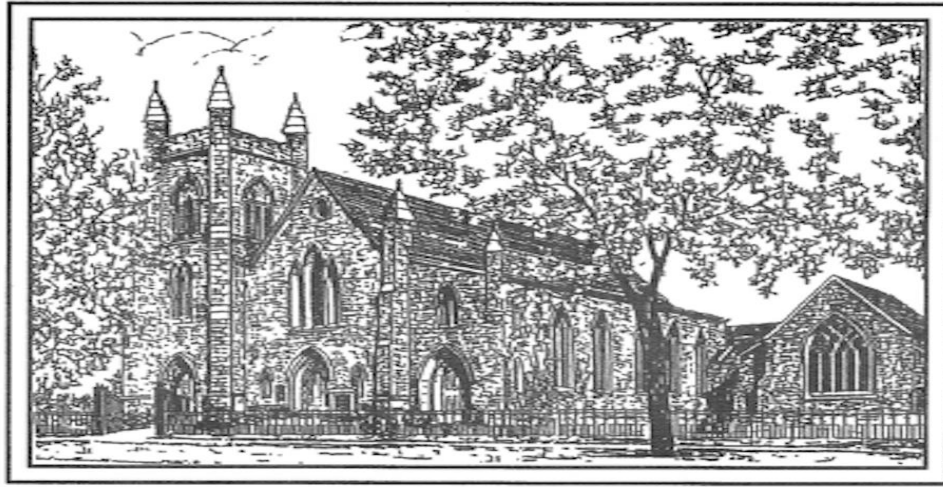


First Congregational Church

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 14, 2025 ~ 10:00 am**

Prelude

“Mary, Did Yiu Know?”

Arr. J. Schrader

Welcome and Announcements

The Lighting of the Third Advent Candle — Today we light the Candle of Joy.

Susan and Glenn Donovan

One: Joy is often considered the easiest
of these four weeks before Christ’s holy birth.

**Many: We may cling to hope,
and pray for peace,
but in joy, we delight.**

One: In joy, our struggles are released.
In joy, we find relief and comfort,
a connection to friends and family and God.
In joy, we find innocence within
that has not been ground out.

**Many: The lighting of this candle is joy.
and it reminds us of candles lit in our lives.
No matter the size or color of the wax,
no matter what room it is lit in,
the act itself is exquisite.**

**All: While the flame dances, we are one
in the miracle and beauty of its light.**

Introit

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: Joy is the gift God gives us upon waking in the morning to see beams of sun dance in dusty corners or hear much needed rain, even on a leaky roof.

Many: Joy is in the delight of tiny precious things.

One: Joy is the magnificence of the Redeemer when the tests come back clear, or when a school test is finally passed, or when the spirit is tested and chooses faith over fear.

Many: Joy is in the hands that hold our own while we sit silently and wait.

One: Joy is the patience of Emmanuel when petty disagreement turns into great injustice and change is slow to bend towards what is right and good.

Many: Joy is in the small actions we take each day to help righteousness and peace abound.

***Invocation**

**Let us pray for the Spirit of Wisdom to rest upon us
A spirit of understanding and knowledge
Grant us to live in harmony
God's mercy prevail**

**Let us pray for God's steadfastness to gird our spirit
May peace prevail like lamb and wolf
Grant us to live in harmony
God's mercy prevail**

**Let us pray, for voices crying out in the wilderness
Women living in fear, children hiding
Grant all a place of harmony
God's mercy prevail**

**Let us pray, repent of harm done to the innocent
Clear the chaff of abuse and hurt
Bear the Spirit of harmony
God's mercy prevail**

**Let us pray for the God of hope, joy and peace to fill
All hearts, one voice glorify
God, prepare the way
God's mercy prevail**

***Prayer for Transformation**

**In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, remind us that you are always with us,
that like Joseph we might always be eager to fulfill your will, and be eager to pray:**

O God, in days to come the mountain of your house will be established, and your joy shall reign. We pray for the church (especially...), that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths.

Assurance of God's Love

May we open our hearts to the God who is with us,
and receive the gifts which have been offered to us.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

***Hymn**

"When Peace Like a River"

NCH #438

The Old Testament Reading

Psalms 146: 5-10

Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith for ever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The Lord will reign for ever, thy God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!

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 1:46b - 55

And Mary said,

Mary's Song of Praise

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers,

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**

"My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praises"

NCH #106

Message

"Joy"

Rev. Jametta Alston

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

Taizé

*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.*

Offertory Invitation

The Offertory

“O Come to Us, Emmanuel”

Arr. J. M. Martin

*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

Emmanuel, hear our prayer! We bring these gifts before you to spread peace throughout our homes, our communities, and our world. On every street corner, beside rivers, lakes, oceans, at the top of your tallest mountains, and dwelling below the cliffs, your people are in need. Take these gifts to strengthen our church and bring relief to your beloved children. Amen

*Hymn

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore You”

NCH #4

*Benediction

Beyond these walls, the world needs peace. Go out taking with you the exquisite peace of Christ. Carry it boldly and spread it to all those you meet, knowing that God is within you, strengthening the light of the world. Amen.

*Benediction Response

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

Postlude

“In the Bleak Midwinter / Away In a Manger”

Arr. P. Perkins

~ Leading Worship today are the Rev. Jametta Alston ~

~ Our Music Director and Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~

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



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.

Prayer List for Sunday, December 14, 2025

For cares and concerns in the world:

The citizens of the United States as we come together this Thanksgiving to remember the earliest aspirations and strivings of our country nearly 250 years ago

Members of our local community who are experiencing food insecurity as well as frustration about access to health care and or those who may be affected by a government shutdown

The Palestinian and Israeli people that they will be able to broker a lasting peace from the fragile negotiations in the ancient land of our spiritual ancestors

Peace in the Ukraine

Prayers for all victims of violence

Prayers for those who have lost their way may have wisdom, courage, and strength

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Rev. Nancy Soukup as she recover from surgery

Our congregation family as we recover from the fire on October 31

Mary Ann, who is recovering after surgery, and for all those who are preparing for surgery
and are recovering from their procedures

Angel Rose, a local teenager who is in the hospital after neurosurgery and for her family

Marina, as she mourns the loss of her friend Kaitlyn Bric

The residents of Atria Senior Living Residence, where a COVID required a lockdown recently and
for the recovery of all those who had COVID

Bill Walsh, who is at the VA Hospital

Tommy, who is dealing with a degenerative muscular disorder

Sug Grant, who is undergoing evaluation for cancer treatment

Sally Evans, who is undergoing tests in preparation for surgery

Ronald Blackburn, Rev. Nancy's brother-in-law, who is in hospice care, and her brother
Alan Dana Soukup

Kathy Conoway, Sug Grant's niece, who has Stage 4 Breast Cancer, which had been
in remission but has probably reoccurred

Kathy, Jen Johnson's cousin, who decided to return home against her doctor's recommendation;
prayers for her safety and for Jen's Uncle Paul's safety as he tries to care for Kathy

Kristen, calling on all available angels to gather around Kristen as she undergoes extensive
chemotherapy treatments with a minimum of pain and discomfort

Camille Pansa, who is recovering from a fall

Sarah, Celeste's niece, who is nine years old and is waiting for a liver transplant

Steve, Amanda, and Elliana Wiacek, Ed Wiacek's son and family, who have begun a
three-year diplomatic tour at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Philippines.

Nick Chaconne, for recovery

Ryan Higgins, Lilly Kilvert's son-in-law, who has Leukemia

A beloved son, who is suffering from Leukemia

Marty Costianes

Renee that she may find resolutions to issues pressing in on her

Claudia and her family, as she enters hospice

Scott, Brenda, and Cameron, who need divine guidance and strength to follow
God's path for them

Max, for healing and freedom, and for his Mom

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

Rusty, who has Lung Cancer

Ellie's Dad, who she misses

Carol, Karen's cousin, who had brain surgery

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

Ken Latham in Leicester, MA, who is on chemotherapy for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma

Harriet

Ryan

Mark E., who has an aggressive form of prostate cancer
Fred Davis, who has stomach cancer
Meriel Smith
Charlotte Griffith
Kellie and Juan Morales's daughter
Bruce C., who is in rehab, and Pat P., both friends of Ed Wiacek

Upcoming Birthdays:

Susan Butler 12/18	George Roach 12/18	
Meriel Smith 12/21	Ruth Fisher 12/21	Diane Swire 12/22
Barbara Sakstead 12/24	Rev. Nancy Soukup 12/27	Naomi Carpenter 12/28

What's on the Church Calendar

December 14, 2025	Sunday Worship 10:00am THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Private Event 3:00pm – 6:00pm Sanctuary
December 16, 2025	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 6:30pm (Dimond Room)
December 17, 2025	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
December 18, 2025	Thursday CE Meeting (Zoom)
December 20, 2025	Saturday Cookie Walk (Dimond Room)
December 21, 2025	Sunday Worship 10:00am FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Christmas Pageant
December 24, 2025	CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 6:00pm
December 25, 2025	CHRISTMAS DAY
December 28, 2025	Sunday Worship 10:00am First Sunday after Christmas
December 31, 2025	NEW YEAR'S EVE

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

Pastoral Office

Call the Church office to schedule an appointment.

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

KEEP THOSE RECIEPTS COMING



A Community Partners Program with Clements Marketplace

Clements Marketplace at 1150 Hope Street in Bristol is engaged in their Community Partners Program. Twenty-seven years ago, they began this effort at their other locations to support organizations and groups in the area. By saving and submitting your Clements' shopping receipts, you help support First Congregational Church.

Where do I drop off my receipts? At First Congregational Church in an envelope marked receipts that is pinned to the bulletin boards in the Wardwell Room near the church kitchen and/or in the Narthex (the entrance of the church).

Please save those Clements' receipts and join with us in their Community Partners Program to benefit First Congregational Church! Please.

FCC Bakers Sign up Dec 20 2025 Cookie Walk

You have been invited by Jennifer Johnson to sign up for "Dec 20 2025 Cookie Walk - Baker Sign up." Please click on the button below to view the online sign up sheet.

Each slot is for 4-5 dozen cookies; we are looking for 8-10 dozen per Cookie Type.

Please review the available slots below and click on the button to sign up. Thank you!

To sign up for a cookie type that is not on the list, please sign up for Miscellaneous and add the type and quantity of the cookies you will bake in the Comments.

Please bring cookies to the Dimond Room on Friday Dec 19, or Saturday Dec 20 by 9 am.

[Yes, Click here ito sign up:](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094FAAAD2BA4FAC61-60871265-dec202025)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094FAAAD2BA4FAC61-60871265-dec202025>



First Congregational Church presents its 34th Annual

Christmas Cookie Walk

Saturday, December 20th



10am to 12noon



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

*Large Assortment of \$ 15 lb.
Homemade*

*Holiday Cookies
and Fudge*



*Plus, Mini-Bazaar:
Homemade items*



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



*First Congregational Church
300 High Street, Bristol*



2025



Poinsettia Plants Order Form 2025

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 date 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

