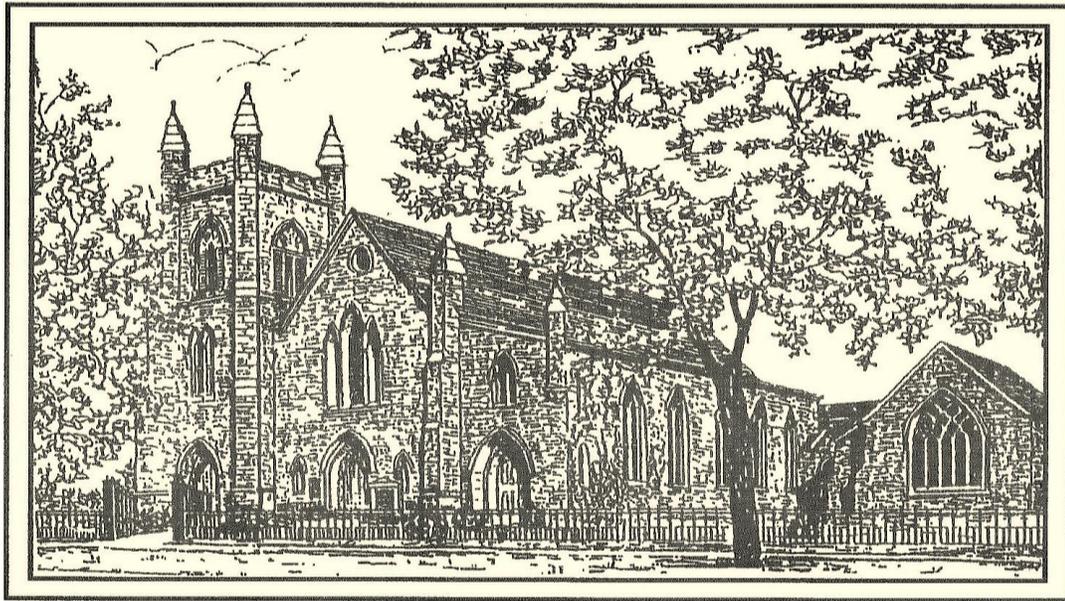


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

HOLY COMMUNION SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

March 1, 2026 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude

“Prelude in G Minor”

JS Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

“Awesome God”

R. Mullins

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: Friends of God, believe this—God loved the world, God loves the world, we are the beloved!

Many: May the truth of this great love story, shine through our worship today, and renew our sense of calling.

One: So come, with your tiredness, your frustrations, and your discouragements; come with your doubts, your fears, and your longings; come to discover yet again how Jesus reveals God’s love and mercy.

Many: Come in friendship to God and to each other, and in friendship to the world, to listen for God’s Word to us, to offer our prayers, and to renew our calling.

One: Friends of God, let us worship! **Amen.**

***Prayer of Invocation**

God of revelation, as we come to worship this morning, unveil your realm in our midst. Show us who we truly are in you; expose the illusions that distort our vision; deliver us from temptations that contort our living; open our eyes in this time of trial—that resistance may be the secret of our joy and our joy a sign of your shalom. Amen.

***A Prayer for Transformation**

Too often, too easily, our eyes are drawn down, God, to the suffering of victims and the pain of perpetrators, to the wounds we inflict on others and the wounds we inflict on ourselves. We need to see these things and pray, but we also need our eyes to be lifted, God, to the signs of your life among us, to the touch of your healing on our souls, to the cross that casts its liberating shadow across all human affairs. We need our eyes to be lifted, God, so our hearts may be filled with faith and hope and love Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Hymn**

“The God of Abraham Praise”

NCH #24

The Old Testament Reading

Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

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

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see God’s realm without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the God’s realm without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of God. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of God be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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** *“God Loved the World”* NCH #208

Sermon “We are Born of Water and the Spirit” The Rev. Dr. Nancy H. 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 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

Offertory *“Give to the Winds Your Fears”* R. Christianson

***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**

For the loving of the world, these gifts. For the flowing of the water, these hearts. For the coming of the God’s realm, these lives. May it be so. Amen.

***Hymn** *“Praise to God”* NCH #5

Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

This is love. Not that you spoke words of comfort, walked with the unclean and unloved, shared wisdom, bread and wine, brought healing into lives and challenged the status quo. This is love. That you spoke the word of God, walked a painful road to the Cross, shared living water, bread of life, brought Salvation to the world and died for the sake of all. This is love. It is a seed sown in the ground, which germinates, blossoms, and spreads its sweet perfume. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** *“God Our Author and Creator”* NCH #530

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

*God be with you till we meet again;
By God's counsels guid, uphold you,
With God's sheep securely fold you:
God be with you till we meet again.*

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

Postlude

"My Song is Love Unknown"

K. Weber

Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship

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

~ Our Music Director and Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~

~ Our lay liturgist today is Susan Donovan ~

~ 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 #3066590 CCSD924 and One License.Net #A-728124. CVLI #505517348

Sources for this service are written by or adapted from the following: Ann Siddall, Stillpoint Spirituality Centre, <https://stillpointsa.org.au/>, re:Worship: Call to Worship: John 3: 14-21; Monthly Prayers of the Christian Aid, <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>, re:Worship: invocation; John van de Laar, Sacredise, re:Worship: Prayer: Looking Up; © 2003 Nathan Nettleton, <http://www.laughingbird.net/>, re:Worship: Words of Assurance: Lent 4 B; <http://www.brummhartpublishing.com/>, re:Worship: Prayer: God of Abram and Nicodemus; John Birch, <http://www.faithandworship.com/>, re:Worship: Prayer: The Love of Jesus, Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, Of Water and Spirit: Service Prayers for the Lent 2A, Worship Ways, UCC, Lent 2, Lent 2A-March 1 - United Church of Christ; and Rev. Kathryn Matthews Huey and the Rev. Susan A. Blain, "O Merciful God: God of Wisdom: Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Lent," Worship Ways, UCC, re:Worship: Lent 2 A.



Prayer List for Sunday, March 1, 2026

For cares and concerns in the world:

Prayers for the latest victim of the shooting incident at the Lynch Arena in Pawtucket who died this past week and for all victims of gun violence.

Members of our local community who are experiencing food insecurity

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:

Juan Morales
Tony Morettini
Juan Morales
Betty Soukup Blackburn and Patrick McLean Blackburn
Our congregation family as we recover from the fire on October 31
Angel Rose, a local teenager who is in the hospital after neurosurgery and for her family
Bill Walsh, who is at the VA Hospital
Tommy, who is dealing with a degenerative muscular disorder
Sug Grant, who is undergoing cancer treatment
Sally Evans
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, and for Jen's Uncle Paul 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
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
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

For those who have died:

Rob O'Neal, a wonderful, loving, caring man who passed away on Valentine's Day.
Pray for his bereaved family and friends, especially his sons and his wife, Mary Claire

Upcoming Birthdays:

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

March 01, 2026	Second Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm
March 02, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)
March 03, 2026	Tuesday Prayer Shawl Circle
March 04, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 05, 2026	Thursday Private event DeWolf Room
March 08, 2026	Third Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm
March 10, 2026	Tuesday Facility Meeting 7pm
March 11, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 12, 2026	Thursday Deacons Meeting 7:00pm (Guiteras House)
March 13, 2026	Friday Trivia Night 7:00pm (DeWolf Room)
March 15, 2026	Fourth Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm
March 16, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)
March 17, 2026	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 7:00pm (DeWolf Room)
March 18, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 22, 2026	Fifth Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm
March 23, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)
March 25, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
March 26, 2026	Thursday Christian Ed Meeting 7pm (Zoom)
March 28, 2026	Saturday Stone Church Coffee House 7:30pm (DeWolf Room)
March 29, 2026	Palm Sunday Worship 10:00pm
March 30, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)

Acolyte Training, Sundays, March 1 and March 8 at 9:15

We will be starting trainings for those who wish to be acolytes the next two Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary. These two sessions will be led by Katherine Harcourt. All those interested should join her at that time.

Main Doors Closed after Service

After each service, we lock the main doors to the church. We wait until most have left the sanctuary. However, there have been occasions when people will come back through the sanctuary after Coffee Hour and exit through the main doors, which do not lock automatically, leaving the church unsecured. We ask that after the service, everyone exit the building from the DeWolf Room doors. We have signage now in the narthex that will help remind you. Many thanks.

Lenten Book Series

This Lent we will hold four sessions on the book by Howard Zehr, the *Little Book of Restorative Justice*. Our first meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. For this meeting, we will gather by Zoom because of the weather. I will have books at church on Sunday to give to those who have expressed interest in joining the group. Please let me know if you are interested. I will get a book for you and send you the zoom link for our first meeting. Rev. Nancy, nhsoukup@gmail.com.

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/>.



KEEP THOSE RECEIPTS COMING

A Community Partners Program with Clements Marketplace



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

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 in the Narthex (the entrance of the church).

Hands for Hospitality Are Needed: Church on Sunday is not really church without Coffee Hour! The morning feels incomplete without the time to share refreshments and chat following worship. Since the fire in the church kitchen on October 31st 2025, Coffee Hour has had to adapt in its location and format as renovations take place. As of January 11th, it has returned to the DeWolf Room, but the re-opening of the kitchen is still many weeks away. Members of the Hospitality Committee continue their work each week in providing refreshments, but assistance is still needed on Sunday mornings to help set up, clean up, or provide goodies for this time of fellowship. If you are able to assist with any of these, there is no need to “sign up” ahead of time or to commit to a specific number of Sundays. Just show up and offer your help to the Hospitality members who are there! You may contact Sandy Patterson at 401-935-9066 or at sandrasmpatterson@aol.com with any questions. Thank you!

Church Office Hours are Tuesday – Friday 9:00am – 2:00pm

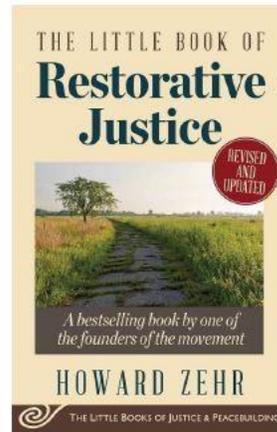
Office e-mail address: office@FCCBristol.org

Pastoral Office Hours

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

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

Lenten Book Group 2026
The Little Book of Restorative Justice
by Howard Zehr



Howard Zehr is known as the founder of the Restorative Justice process.

The Restorative Justice process began as another method to identify the justice needs between perpetrators and victims of crimes. It is based on the ancient art of talking circles in which a group comes together to work out problems, crises, conflicts to hear each other and find new levels of understanding.

However, Zehr's work has moved beyond use in the criminal justice system and now has been incorporated into multiple settings, including schools, community groups, and churches. In a world full of contention—restorative justice practice is a tool to open up constructive dialogue.

Meetings:

- Monday, March 2, 6:30 p.m., Guiteras House or Zoom.
- Monday, March 16, 6:30 p.m., Guiteras House or Zoom.
- Monday, March 23, 6:30 p.m., Guiteras House or Zoom.
- Monday, March 30, 6:30 p.m., Guiteras House or Zoom.

Books will be provided. Contact Rev. Nancy at nhsoukup@gmail.com.

First Congregational Church
at 300 High St. Bristol, RI

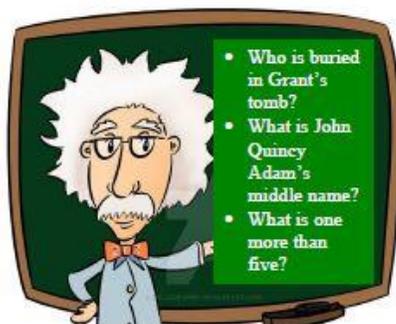
Team Trivia Night

This Friday, March 13, 2026 @ 7PM

Ask Friends and Family and Come Join the Fun
Up to 8 Per Team

- *Up to 8 per Team*
- *No Charge*
- *Bring Snacks and a Beverage*
- *Light Refreshments and Snacks will be available*
- *Prizes for the Top Finishers*
- *Call (401) 253-4813 to pre-register*

your team or send an email to dubordrjd@cox.net

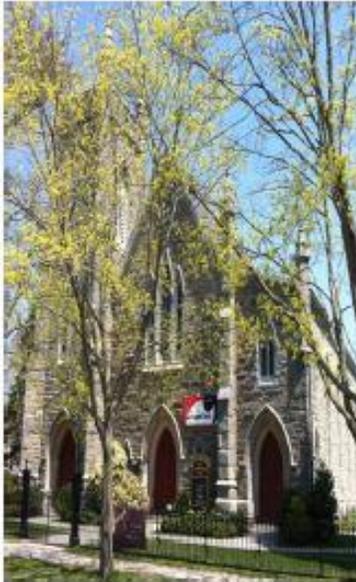


Lent & Easter Services/Events

First Congregational Church

300 High Street
401-253-7288
Bristol, RI 02809

Welcome to the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,
in Bristol. We are an open and affirming congregation and
believe that God is still speaking to us.
Wherever you are on life's journey you are welcome here!



February 17th Shrove Tuesday Event

*Dessert Bar Potluck and Donation Event
for the East Bay Food Pantry at 6pm*

February 18th Ash Wednesday

*Labyrinth Walk Circle 3pm-6pm
Worship Service 5:30pm-6pm*

February 22nd First Sunday of Lent

Worship 10am

March 1st Second Sunday of Lent

Worship 10am

March 2nd Lenten Book Club Monday

6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)

March 8th Third Sunday of Lent

*Worship 10am
Daylight Savings—turn your clock ahead 1 hour*

March 13th Friday

Trivia Night 7:00pm

March 15th Fourth Sunday of Lent

Worship 10am

March 16th Lenten Book Club Monday

6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)

March 22nd Fifth Sunday of Lent

Worship 10am

March 23rd Lenten Book Club Monday

6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)

March 28th Saturday

Stone Church Coffee House 7:30pm

March 29th Intergenerational Palm Sunday

Worship 10:00am

March 30th Lenten Book Club Monday

6:30pm (Guiteras House or Zoom)

April 2nd Maundy Thursday

Choral Worship and Tenebrae 7pm

April 3rd Good Friday

Labyrinth Walk Circle Noon to 3pm (DeWolf Room)

April 05, 2026 EASTER

Sunrise Worship at Mt. Hope Boat Ramp 6:30am

118 Annawamscutt Dr. Bristol, RI

Intergenerational Easter Worship 10:00am

*For information about any of these services or events, contact the church office
at (401) 253-7288*

Church Office (401) 253-7288 • Office@FCCBristol.org •

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