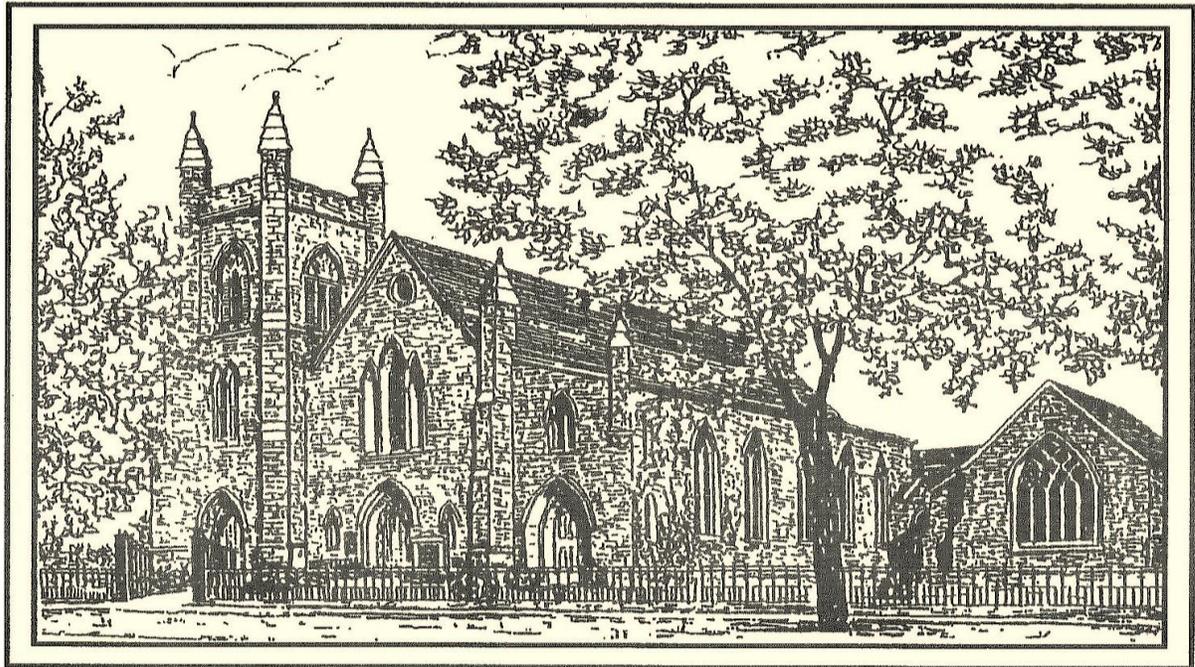


# First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

*Living the Love and Justice of Jesus*

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 15, 2026 ~ 10:00 am

<b>Prelude</b>	<i>“La Carolina”</i>	JS Bach
<b>Welcome and Announcements</b>		
<b>Introit</b>	<i>“They’ll Know We Are Christians”</i>	P. Scholtes
<b>Bringing Forth the Light of Christ</b>		Acolytes

### \*Call to Worship

One: God of justice, peace, and righteousness,

**Many: come into our midst this morning.**

One: Breathe your breath,

**Many: your Spirit of prophecy,**

One: your energy, and your imagination on us.

**Many: Wake us up and open our eyes.**

One: Unplug our ears, that we might hear, that we might see,

**Many: that we might dream, and that we might follow the ways of your extraordinary universe.**

**Amen.**

## \*Prayer of Invocation

**Jesus, you are the Light of the World. Shine your light in us today. Chase away the darkness of sin, the darkness of fear, and doubt and despair. Fill us with the light of your truth, your word. Produce in us the fruit of righteousness—the evidence that our Holy Spirit lives in us and works in us and works through us. Teach us what is pleasing to you. Make us a shining example of your amazing grace, redeeming love, and life-changing power. May others be drawn to you through us. Amen.**

## \*Hymn

*“Many Are the Lightbeams”*

NCH #163

## Children’s Moment

### The New Testament Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

Karen Satti

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

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 9:1-41

Karen Satti

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that

this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

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**

*“Amazing Grace”*

NCH #547

**Sermon** “Light Is Found in All that Is Good and Right and True”

Rev. 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**

*“What Wonderous Love”*

F Ortega

**\*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**

One: Into a world desperate for signs of hope,  
**Many: let these gifts arrive as beacons.**  
One: Into communities working for signs of freedom,  
**Many: let these gifts unlock shackles.**  
One: Into hearts searching for signs of compassion,  
**Many: let these gifts offer tenderness.**  
One: Into each breath yearning for signs of new life,  
**Many: let these gifts come as possibility. Amen.**

**\*Closing Hymn**

*“There Are Some Things I May Not Know”*

NCH #405

**\*Benediction**

**\*Benediction Response**

*God be with you till we meet again;  
By God’s counsels guide, 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**

*“Sarabande”*

WC Choulm

*Please join us for fellowship hour following Worship*

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

*~ Our Music Director and Organist is Zabinski ~*

*~ Our lay liturgist today is Karen Satti ~*

*~ 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 used during this service were written by or adapted from the following: Jonny*

*Baker, <http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/2012/07/wake-up.htm>, re: Worship: Lent 4 A; John*

*Birch, [http://www.faithandworship.com/Lectioary\\_C/YearC\\_28th\\_in\\_Ordinary.html#ixzz2bWd9nWkx](http://www.faithandworship.com/Lectioary_C/YearC_28th_in_Ordinary.html#ixzz2bWd9nWkx), re: Worship: Lent 4 A;*

*<http://www.beliefnet.com/ilovejesus/features/10-great-prayers-from-ephesians.aspx?p=2#2Fx15YHzCLC4gS4L99>, re: Worship: Lent 4 A;*

*Sally, *Eternal Echoes*. [http://sallysjourney.typepad.com/sallys\\_journey/](http://sallysjourney.typepad.com/sallys_journey/), re: Worship: Lent 4 A; Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, *The Signs: Service**

*Prayers for Lent 4A, *Worship Ways*, UCC, Lent 4A - March 15 - United Church of Christ; and copyright © Jan L. Richardson, *In the**

*Sanctuary of Women*, <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>, re: Worship: Lent 4 A.



## **Prayer List for Sunday, March 15, 2026**

### **For cares and concerns in the world:**

Members of our local community who are experiencing food insecurity

Prayers for peace in the Middle East

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:**

Pat Cory

Bob Wilson

Tara, Steve Aveson's daughter-in-law who has been newly diagnosed with cancer

Charlotte Burnham's brother and for his improved health

Stephen, the nephew of one of our members, and for his recovery

Juan Morales

Tony Morettini

Betty Soukup Blackburn and Patrick McLean Blackburn

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

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 are in Manila, Philippines.

Nick Chaccone, 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

### Upcoming Birthdays:

Justin Riccio	03/16	Jennifer Johnson	03/19	Steven Brosnihan	03/22
John Tyler	03/25				

### What's on the Church Calendar

<b>March 15, 2026</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm</b>
March 16, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House)
March 17, 2026	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 7:00pm (DeWolf Room)
March 18, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
<b>March 22, 2026</b>	<b>Fifth Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm</b>
March 23, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House)
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)
<b>March 29, 2026</b>	<b>Palm Sunday Worship 10:00pm</b>
March 30, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House)

### 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 once the main doors are locked, 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 are reading the book by Howard Zehr, the *Little Book of Restorative Justice*. The next three meetings will be held on Mondays, March 16, 23, and 30, in Guiteras House. Let me know if you are interested. I will get a book for you. Rev. Nancy, nhsoukup@gmail.com.

Please visit our website for more information about the Church  
 And Events go to [fccbristol.org](http://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 RECIEPTS 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](mailto: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](mailto:office@FCCBristol.org)

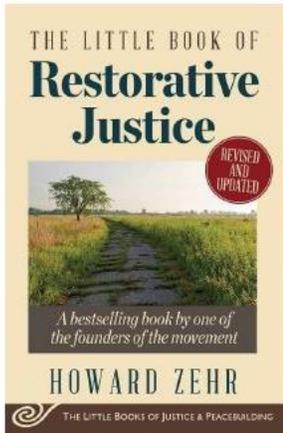
### **Pastoral Office Hours**

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

Church office line 401/253-7288 or e-mail [office@FCCbristol.org](mailto: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](mailto:nhsoukup@gmail.com).

## First Congregational Church at 300 High St. Bristol, RI

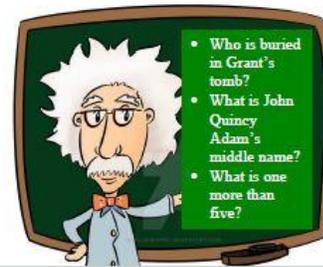
Team Trivia Night

Friday, April 17, 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](mailto:dubordrjd@cox.net)



## First Congregational Church in Bristol



### Sign up for Helping with Ecumenical Meals

You have been invited by The First Congregational Church to sign up for "APRIL Ecumenical Meals 13 MEALS."

Please consider cooking, baking, assembling or delivering as part of a team or as an individual. This is a great opportunity for the whole family. We have 13 recipients and will update when the current church delivering turns over the job to our Church on the last Saturday in April.

We have 4 Saturdays to prepare for, which is a wonderful blessing for our church to have the opportunity to bring light and nourishment to all who receive meals from the program.

WE NEED COOKS AND DRIVER FOR APRIL Saturdays.

Thank you for considering to serve through the Ecumenical Meals Program.

To sign up go to

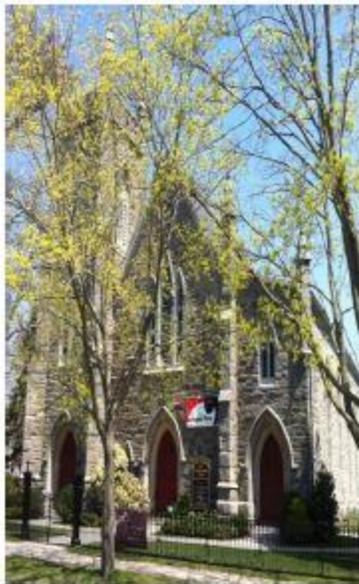
[www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACA72BA7F94-62680863-april#/](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACA72BA7F94-62680863-april#/)

# ***Lent & Easter Services***

**First Congregational Church**  
300 High Street  
Bristol, RI 02809

401-253-7288 ~ office@FCCBristol.org ~ FCCBristol.org

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. Wherever you are on life's journey you are welcome here!



**March 15<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
Worship 10am

**March 22<sup>nd</sup> Fifth Sunday of Lent**  
Worship 10am

**March 28<sup>th</sup> Saturday**  
Stone Church Coffee House

**March 29<sup>th</sup> Intergenerational Palm  
Sunday**  
Worship 10:00am

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> Maundy Thursday**  
Worship 7pm

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> 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***  
***Officiating all worship will be The Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup***

2026

Church Office (401) 253-7288 • Office@FCCBristol.org •  
Church location 300 High Street • mailing address 281 High Street • Bristol, Rhode Island 02809