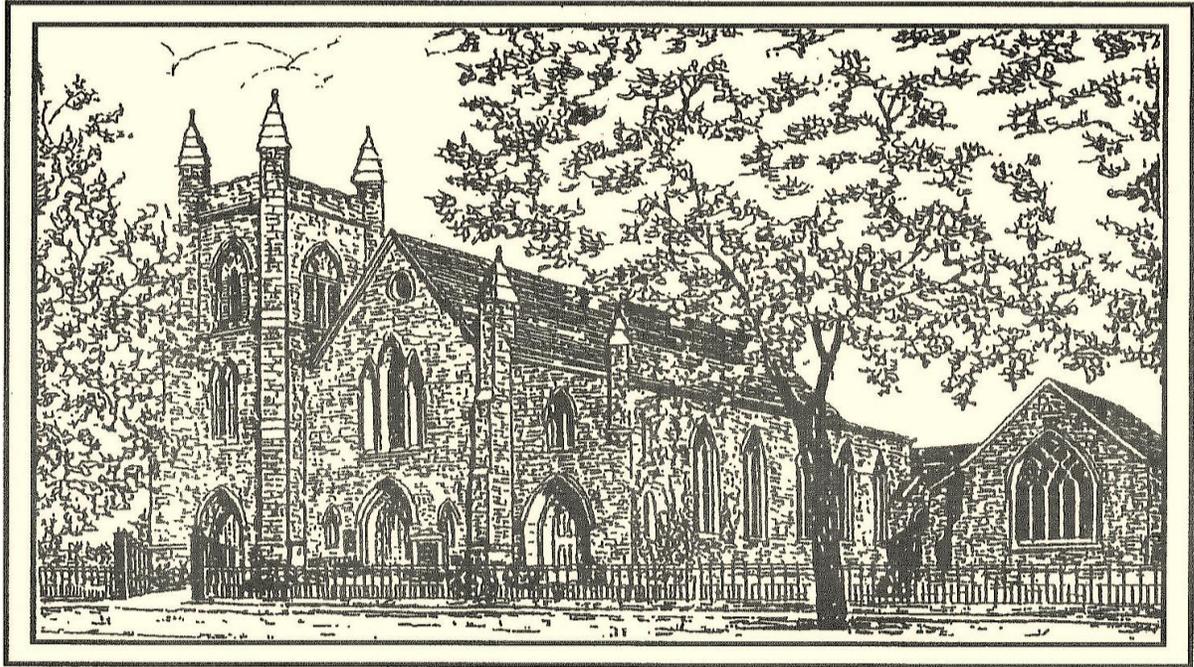


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 22, 2026 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude *“Grace”* J. Alcock

Welcome and Announcements

Introit *“They’ll Know We Are Christians”* P. Scholtes

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ Acolytes

*Call to Worship

One: Holy God, Creator of Life, you call us out of our dark places, offering us the grace of new life.

Many: When we see nothing but hopelessness, you surprise us with the breath of your spirit.

One: Call us out of our complacency and routines,

Many: set us free from our self-imposed bond,

One: fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace,

Many: In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, we pray. Amen.

*Prayer of Invocation

God of all consolation and compassion, your Son comforted the grieving sisters, Martha and Mary; your breath alone brought life to dry bones and weary souls. Pour out your Spirit upon us, that we may face despair and death with the hope of resurrection and faith in the One who called Lazarus forth from the grave. Amen.

Children's Moment

The Gospel Reading

John 11:1-45

Caroline Jacobus

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them."

After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him. The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.

Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Abba, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that

you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in 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** *“Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”* NCH #286

Sermon *“When Believing Seems Insurmountable”* Rev. Nancy H. Soukup

Sharing our Joy and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

(Congregation responds to the petition “Lord in your mercy” with “hear our 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 *“Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive”* D. White

***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: From these offerings, Holy One, create freedom.

Many: From these hearts, Holy One, raise up love.

One: From these hands, Holy One, bring life.

Many: From every one of our gifts, in the sharing of our resources,

All: may we be unbound and called forth into a new day together. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** *“I Want to Be Ready”* NCH #616

***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

"Nocturne in C minor"

Chopin

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 Caroline Jacobus ~
~ 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: Nancy J., wonderings through life and other such nonsense, <http://ruminari.wordpress.com/>, re:Worship: Lent 5 A; Revised Common Lectionary Prayers, copyright © 2002, Consultation on Common Texts admin, Augsburg Fortress, Thematic, Intercessory and Scripture Prayers for the RCL, Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>, re:Worship: Prayer for Lent 5A, Lutheran Church of Australia, <http://www.lca.org.au/>, re:Worship: Prayer of the Church: Lent 5A; Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, Unbind: Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, Worship Ways, UCC, Liberating Lineages Collective, Lent 5A-March 22 - United Church of Christ; and Jan L. Richardson, The Painted Prayerbook, <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>, re:Worship: Lent 5 A.



Prayer List for Sunday, March 22, 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 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,

Bette Ann Kile, who died in Carlisle, PA on February 25, 2026

Upcoming Birthdays:

Steven Brosnihan 03/22	John Tyler 03/25	
Brittany Cordeiro 04/07	Avery Walsh 04/07	Tekla Bailey 04/08
Jennifer Mowbray 04/09	Teddy Brosnihan 04/11	Doug Harrington 04/11
Alan Berry 04/16	Kathryn Anderson 04/18	Lindsey Harrington 04/20
Chuck Ramos 04/23	Caroline Bailey 04/23	Shawn Bailey 04/24
Bowne Drawbridge 04/25	Joanne Rotondo 04/26	Reinhard Battcher 3 rd 04/29
Ellie Donovan 04/29	Leah Dieterich 04/30	

What's on the Church Calendar

March 22, 2026	Fifth Sunday in Lent Worship 10:00pm
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)
March 29, 2026	Palm Sunday Worship 10:00pm FLOWER ORDER DUE
March 30, 2026	Monday Lenten Book group 6:30pm (Guiteras House)
March 31, 2026	Tuesday Private Event (DeWolf Room)7:00pm
April 01, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
April 02, 2026	Maundy Thursday Service 7pm
April 03, 2026	Good Friday Labyrinth Walk Circle Noon to 3pm (DeWolf Room)
April 04, 2026	Saturday Easter Set up open to all Volunteers and Flower Committee
April 05, 2026	Sunday Sunrise Worship at Mt. Hope Boat Ramp 6:30am 118 Annawamscutt Dr. Bristol, RI
	Sunday Intergenerational Easter Worship 10:00am
April 06, 2026	Monday Private Meeting 7pm (DeWolf Room)
April 07, 2026	Tuesday Prayer Shawl Circle 6:30pm (Guiteras House)
April 08, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
April 09, 2026	Thursday Deacon Meeting 7pm (Guiteras House)
April 11, 2026	Saturday Stone Church Coffee House 7pm (DeWolf Room)
April 12, 2026	Sunday Worship 10:00am
April 14, 2026	Tuesday Facility Meeting 7pm (DeWolf Room)
April 15, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
April 17, 2026	Friday Trivia Night 7pm (DeWolf Room)
April 19, 2026	Sunday Worship 10:00am
April 21, 2026	Tuesday Church Council Meeting 6:30pm (DeWolf Room)
April 22, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)
April 23, 2026	Thursday CE Meeting (Zoom)
April 25, 2026	Saturday Stone Church Coffee House 7:00pm (DeWolf Room)
April 26, 2026	Sunday Worship 10:00am
April 29, 2026	Wednesday FCC Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm (Dimond Room)

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**



“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 with any questions. Thank you!

**Bristol's Stone Church
Coffeehouse Presents**

An Evening of Blues and Bluegrass Featuring

Dirty Cello



*Blending Blues,
Bluegrass and
World Music with
Roots in
Classical
a Style that
Unique and
Refreshing*

Photo Credit: Frédéric Aubé

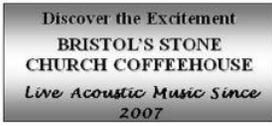


Saturday, March 28, 2026

Doors open at 6:45pm
Music starts at 7:30pm

First Congregational Church
300 High Street
(Corner of Bradford and High St)
Bristol, RI 02809

Tickets are \$25.00 for adults; 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.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Invites You to a Sacred Holy Week Service

MAUNDY THURSDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE

Thursday, April 2 • 7:00 PM

All are welcome to attend this deeply moving service of music, readings for the season, and reflection.

Music will be led by Nikita Zabinski, Music Director, and will feature a powerful blend of works by J. S. Bach and Sergei Prokofiev, and contemporary choral music by Heather Sorenson and Ruth Elaine Schram.

Special musical offerings include vocal solos by Cara Massey, Sarah Albeneise, and Katherine Harcourt, as well as a featured violin sonata performed by Alexi Shabalin, violinist with the Rhode Island Philharmonic.



Experience an evening of profound beauty, solemnity, and reflection as light fades into darkness.

Open to all.

First Congregational Church in Bristol, 300 High Street, Bristol, RI.

Don't miss this powerful Holy Week tradition

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



Good Friday April 3, 2026



Come and Walk the Labyrinth at 300 High St. Bristol, RI

Walking the labyrinth is an active prayer form of meditation that can give insight and guidance for life's challenges, help solve a problem, stir creativity, bring solace to those in sorrow, peace to the chaos of life, and provide an opportunity to recognize and give thanks for our blessings. Come join us on a labyrinth walk.

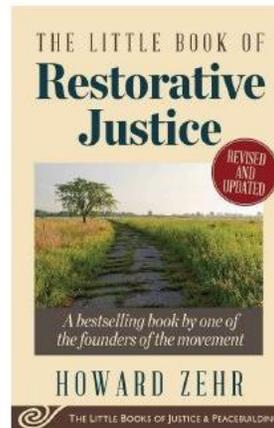
**Hours are
Noon – 3:00pm**

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

3-2026

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.

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

Bristol's Stone Church Coffeehouse Presents

The Great Folk-Rock Festival Featuring Gathering Time

Performing songs
by The Eagles,
Bob Dylan,
Simon &
Garfunkel, Joni
Mitchell, Buffalo
Springfield, The
Youngbloods, the
Grateful
Dead, Janice Jau
and many more



Jerry
McKenny

Christine
Sweeney

Stuart
Markus

Saturday, April 11, 2026

Doors open at 6:45pm
Music starts at 7:30pm

First Congregational Church
300 High Street
(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.



Discover the Excitement
BRISTOL'S STONE
CHURCH COFFEEHOUSE
Live Acoustic Music Since
2007



First Congregational Church at 300 High St. Bristol, RI

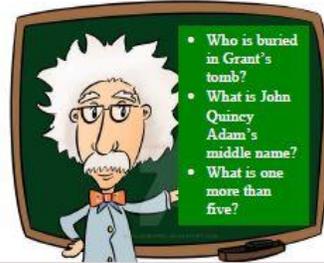
Team Trivia Night

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



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

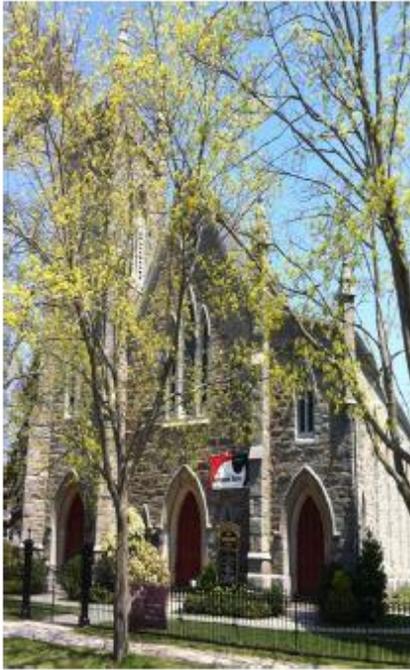
www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACA72BA7F94-62680863-april#/

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!



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*

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Church location 300 High Street • mailing address 281 High Street • Bristol, Rhode Island 02809