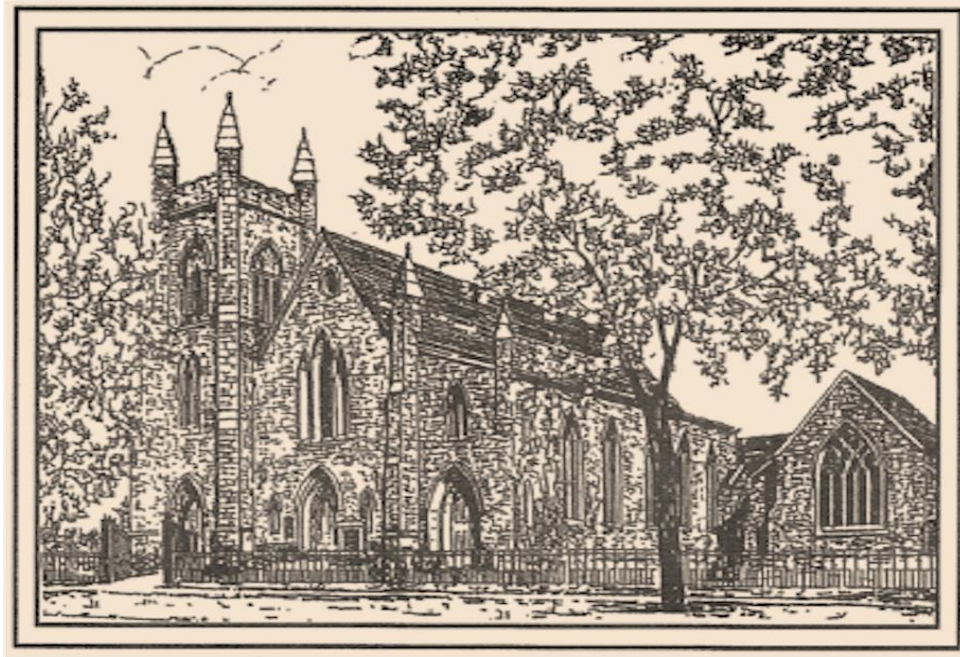


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JULY 12, 2026 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude

“Prelude in B flat”

JS Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

*Call to Worship

One: O God, your word is a lamp to my feet, Lord.

Many: Your word is a light to my path.

One: Though the world around me tosses and tumbles, I hold fast to you

Many: Though I have doubts and worries and I wonder, I hold fast to you.

One: Though my heart hurts, my spirit aches, and I lose my way, I hold fast to you.

Many: Though I encounter wickedness and hate seemingly around every corner, I hold fast to you.

One: Your stories and your songs, O Lord, they comfort me.

Many: Your will and your way, O Lord, they nudge me along.

One: Your presence and your promise, O Lord, they give me hope.

Many: Your world is my heritage and my heart.

One: And I will turn toward you forever.

Many: I will hold fast to you.

All: And, I will sing praises to your name! Amen.

*Invocation

Wondrous God, we gather together in your presence with expectation, hungry for an encounter with you, eager to hear your word. Open our eyes and ears to the presence of your Holy Spirit. May the seeds of your word scatter among us this morning fall on fertile soil. May they take root in our hearts and lives, and may they produce an abundant harvest of good words and deeds. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and our Lord. Amen.

*Hymn

“My Lord! What a Morning” (from the Worship & Rejoice Hymnal # 537)

My Lord! What a Morning 537

Refrain

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and repetitive, using mostly quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staves. The score includes a refrain, a main verse, and a bridge. The bridge has three verses. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata on the final note.

My Lord! what a morn - ing; my Lord! what a morn - ing;

O, my Lord! what a morn - ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.

1 You'll hear the trum - pet sound
2 You'll hear the sin - ner cry to wake the na - tions un - der - ground,
3 You'll hear the Chris - tian shout

look - ing to my God's right hand when the stars be - gin to fall.

to Refrain

WORDS and MUSIC: African-American spiritual; arr. Donald F. Hustad (1918-)
Music Arr. © 1990 Hope Publishing Company

BURLEIGH
Irregular

The Old Testament Reading Isaiah 55:10-13

Caroline Jacobus

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that which goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle, and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

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 Matthew

13:1-9, 18-23

Carol Jacobus

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. If you have ears, hear!"

"Hear, then, the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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!

ADVENT

167

Long Ago, Prophets Knew

1 Long a - go, proph-ets knew Christ would come,
 2 God in time, God in man, this is God's
 3 Ma - ry, hail! Though a - fraid, she be - lieved,
 4 Jour-ney ends! Where a - far Beth-lehem shines,

born a Jew, come to make all things new, bear his peo-ple's bur - den,
 time-less plan: he will come, as a man, born him-self of wom - an,
 she o-beyed. In her womb, God is laid till the time ex - pect - ed,
 like a star, sta-ble door stands a - jar: un-born Son of Ma - ry,

Refrain

free - ly love and par-don.
 God di - vine - ly hu-man. Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing, choirs, sing,
 nur-tured and pro-ect - ed. Sav-ior, do not tar - ry!

1-3 When he comes, when he comes, who will make him wel-come?
 sing, sing! 4 Je - sus comes, Je - sus comes, we will make him wel-come!

(Prayer card requests will be collected by the Deacons during this hymn.)

Message

“May Your Love Be Like a Seed, Taking Root and Growing Strong.”

Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup

Sharing our Joy and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

*(When prompted, the congregation will respond with
“May your love be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.”)*

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

NCH #769

George Whelpton

*Hear our prayer, O God,
hear our prayer, O God;
incline your ear to us,
and grant us your peace.*

Offertory Invitation

Offertory

“Warum”

from Fantasiesrucke - Schumann

***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**

***Closing Hymn**

“Every Time I Feel the Spirit”

(from the Worship & Rejoice Hymnal # 481)

481 Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Refrain

Ev-ery time I feel the Spir-it mov-ing in my heart I will pray.

Yes, ev-ery time I feel the Spir-it mov-ing in my heart I will pray.

1 Up - on the moun - tain, when my Lord spoke, out of God's
 2 Jor - dan riv - er, chil - ly and cold, it chills the

mouth came fire and smoke. Looked all a - round me,
 bod - y but not the soul. There is but one train

to Refrain

it looked so fine, till I asked my Lord if all was mine,
 up - on this track; it runs to heav-en and then right back.

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

God be with you,

NCH #809
 Thomas A. Dorsey/Artelia W. Hutchins

God be with you,
God be with you till we meet again
O God be with you,
God be with you,
God be with you till we meet again.

Carrying the Light of Christ into the World

Postlude

“Des Abends”

from Fantasiestücke - Schumann

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

~ Our Music Director and Organist is Nikita 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: The prayers used in this service were written by or adapted from the following: The Rev. Erin Counihan; RevGalBlogPals, <https://revgalblogpals.org/2017/07/13/thursday-prayer-126/>, re:Worship: Proper 10 A, Christine Longhurst, re:Worship, re:Worship: Proper 10 A, Terri, RevGalBlogPals, <http://revgalblogpals.blogspot.ca/>, re:Worship: Proper 10 A; Copyright © John Birch, Faith and Worship - Prayers and Resources, re:Worship: Proper 10 A; How the Earth Praises God, United Church of Christ's Worship Ways website, <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/https://re:Worship: Proper 10 A, and Third Space, http://third-space.org.uk/blog, re:Worship: Proper 10 A.>



FCC Prayer List

For cares and concerns in the world:

Members of our local community who are experiencing food insecurity

Prayers for peace in the Middle East and the Ukraine

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

Prayers for all victims of violence

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

Prayers for those who struggle with mental illness and that they have the resources for help and the courage to seek help

For those in need of healing on our prayer list:

Nick and his family, as they find themselves between chemo cycles, living on hope and strength
of character

Josephine

Charlotte Griffith

Chris Desusa, to be safe and well
 Kathy Conoway, Sug Grant's niece, whose breast cancer has come back after eight years in remission; she will be getting additional treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix
 For Change Management and blessings for Jacob Johnson moving home and for Sara as she moves into new apartment
 Barbara and Jack Ringland
 Grace Steere
 Matt Benson, as he recovers from a fall earlier in the month
 James Hackett, a 50-year-old nephew of Celeste Bernardino's friend, who had a lung transplant a year ago and is now battling several other medical issues
 Roy and Judy Evans, who are Tori's parents, as they recover from illnesses
 The family of Julie Teeter
 Jimmy Lai, Hong Kong publisher, democracy advocate, and Christian, who has been imprisoned
 Children and grandchildren to return to church to know Jesus and persevere in the Holy Spirit
 Ray, Lorraine, and Kathleen for peace and healing
 Bob and Sally Evans
 Tracy, who is undergoing a difficult time in her life
 Bridget, who had surgery for cancer
 Rich Goldman, who is contending with Alzheimer's Disease and that he may enjoy days that reinforce the love so many send his way
 Dana Corbett, healing and happiness as she returns home from cancer treatment
 Tara, Steve Aveson's daughter-in-law who has been newly diagnosed with cancer
 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
 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
 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
Kellie and Juan Morales's daughter
Bruce C., who is in rehab, and Pat P., both friends of Ed Wiacek

Upcoming Birthdays:

Ella Drawbridge 07/24	Carla Finn 07/25	Marty Roussel 07/25
Jo-Ann Wilbur 07/27	Glenn Donovan 07/27	Cassidy Allen 07/28
Julia Allen 07/31		

What's on the Church Calendar

July 14, 2026	Tuesday Facility Committee Meeting (DeWolf Room)
July 16, 2026	Thursday fitness class 9:00am - 10:00am (DeWolf Room)
July 19, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
July 23, 2026	Thursday fitness class 9:00am - 10:00am (DeWolf Room)
July 26, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
July 30, 2026	Thursday fitness class 9:00am - 10:00am (DeWolf Room)

Bosworth Lecture's Tribute to Rev. Henry Wight to be Reprised on Sunday, July 19, Following Church Service



The life and times of Rev. Henry Wight, founding pastor of our July Fourth tradition, was the topic of the Bosworth Lecture Series this past June. On Sunday, July 19, immediately following the church service, we will reprise that lecture for the congregation. Members of the church, Dyan Vaughan and Rei Battcher, will explore the life and times of Rev. Wight, who presided as the sixth pastor of the town's founding church for 44 years after serving himself in the Revolutionary War. The Historical Properties Room at FCC, which exhibits relics and documents from this era, will be open on this occasion.

Rev. Wight was outspoken in the areas of religion, education, civic life, and politics, and his daily journals chronicled life in Bristol from 1784 until his death in 1837. In 1785 he started the tradition of reading the Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July, which continues to this day, making it the first patriotic exercise in the history of the country.

The original lecture was held in conjunction with the Fourth of July Committee, and in tribute to the 250th Anniversary of our Declaration of Independence. The lecture was so well received that we wanted to present it again for the congregation. So we invite you to stay after church and learn about the life of this patriot and preacher, to see how he was shaped by the Revolution, and to discover how his views influenced the Town he loved. The lecture will conclude with excerpts from Rev. Wight's Patriotic Address from July 4, 1809, read by Mr. Steve Brosnihan.

The Roswell S. Bosworth Jr. Lecture Series is presented by the Men's Club, a local organization that pays tribute to its founding member, former editor and publisher of the East Bay Newspapers, with lectures of interest to the public. FCC collaborates with the Lecture Series to hold the annual June lecture at the church.

Please visit our website for more information about the Church and Events go to **fccbristol.org**



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

“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! Where do I drop off my receipts?

At First Congregational Church in envelopes marked receipts that are pinned to the bulletin boards in the Narthex (the entrance of the church) and the DeWolf Room.





AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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 **AUGUST 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 August.

We have 5 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 AUGUST SATURDAYS.

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

To sign up go to

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4AACA72BA7F94-62680882-august/83485705#/>

[FCCBristol/EMeals: August 2026 Ecumenical Meals \(13\)](#)

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



Applications for vendors are available for Harvest Moon Bazaar. Please call the church office at 401/253-7288.

STRETCH, STRENGTH AND
BALANCE

FITNESS CLASS

THURSDAYS 9AM TO 10AM

First Congregational Church, 300 High St. Bristol, RI



WORKSHOP DETAILS

Join experienced fitness instructor, Becca Capodilupo for a gentle exercise class designed to improve mobility, endurance, and flexibility.

EXERCISES WILL INCLUDE

- gentle warm-ups
- strength and balance exercises
- relaxing stretches

All experience levels welcome.

Participants must be able to get up from a chair without assistance.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED CALL BECCA TO SIGN UP!
(508) 843-8518

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