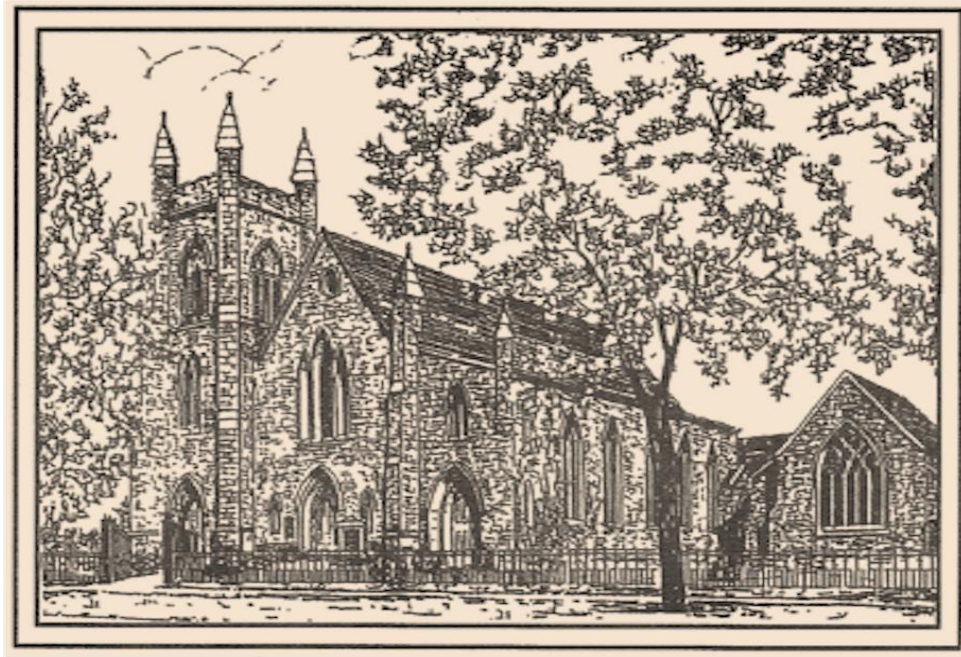


First Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Founded in 1680

Living the Love and Justice of Jesus

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 26, 2026 ~ 10:00 am

Prelude

“Prelude in G”

JS Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Bringing Forth the Light of Christ

Acolytes

***Call to Worship**

One: The kingdom of God is here and coming.

Many: **A mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.**

One: The kingdom of God is here and coming.

Many: **Yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all was leavened.**

One: The kingdom of God is here and coming.

Many: **Treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then joyfully sells all they have and buys the field.**

One: The kingdom of God is here and coming.

Many: **A merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one of great value, sells all of their possessions and buys the pearl.**

One: The kingdom of God is here and coming.

ALL: **Let all who have ears, hear. Amen**

*Invocation

God of small seeds and mighty plants, you take our meager lives and with your love cause them to produce acts of loving kindness for you in this world. You hear our cries and find us when we are lost and wandering in fear. You bring us home with you so that we may be made whole, rejoicing in your goodness. Help us to joyfully serve you all our days, knowing that you are always watching over us. Prepare our hearts to receive your word and our spirits to respond in eagerness to serve you. In Jesus's name, we pray. Amen.

*Hymn

"Softly and Tenderly"

(in bulletin, from Worship & Rejoice #348)

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 O for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me; see, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain
watch - ing for you and for me. Come home, come home,
mer - cies for you and for me? Come home, come home,
par - don for you and for me. Come home, come home,

ye who are wea - ry, come home; ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, O sin - ner, come home!

WORDS and MUSIC: Will L. Thompson (1847-1909)

THOMPSON
11.7.11.7.Ref

The New Testament Reading

Romans 8:35-39

Celeste Bernardino

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our 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

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Celeste Bernardino

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it." "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad." So, it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

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**

"In Solitude"

(in bulletin, from NCH #521)

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

Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 5:18-20

Ruth Duck, 1983



1 In sol - i - tude, in sol - i - tude, I come to God in prayer.
2 When-e'er the world is troub-ling me, and stress is all a - round,
3 In sea - sons of per - plex - i - ty, in times of deep de - spair,
4 And when my heart is bur - dened down with cares for those I love,
5 With psalms and hymns and songs of praise be - fore my God I'll come,
In si - lence and sim - plic - i - ty, my spir - it blos - soms there.
I seek the pres - ence of my God, and heal - ing light is found.
I light a can - dle in the night and turn to God in prayer.
too deep for words, with groans and sighs, de - scends the ho - ly dove.
till death it - self is past and gone, and I ar - rive at home.

Message

"The Small Difference"

Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin 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

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

"Images"

(Book 1, Mov. 2) - Debussy

***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

Holy Spirit: With astonishment, we see that you renew our strength constantly. Allow us not to forget your presence, even in adversity. And, in our turn, we will renew our gratefulness, and we will sing for your love. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

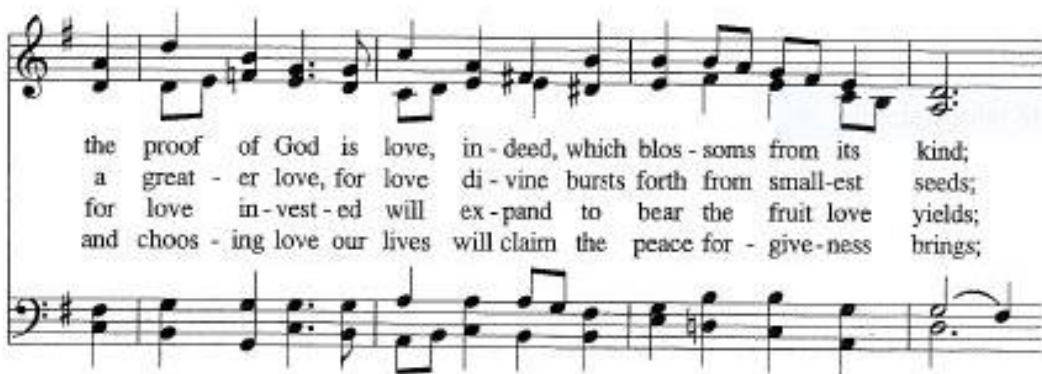
“We Plant a Grain of Mustard Seed” (in the bulletin, from NCH #540)

*Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19;
John 13:34-35; 15:12-17*

Mary Bryan Matney, 1990



1 We plant a grain of mus - tard seed, and in our faith we find
2 Our ac - tions, more than words, de - fine how love's ex - am - ple feeds
3 When stooped to lend a help - ing hand, we find a touch that heals,
4 Make love our pur - pose, love our aim, for love en - dures all things,



the proof of God is love, in - deed, which blos - soms from its kind;
a great - er love, for love di - vine bursts forth from small - est seeds;
for love in - vest - ed will ex - pand to bear the fruit love yields;
and choos - ing love our lives will claim the peace for - give - ness brings;



the proof of God is love, in - deed, which blos - soms from its kind.
a great - er love, for love di - vine bursts forth from small - est seeds.
for love in - vest - ed will ex - pand to bear the fruit love yields.
and choos - ing love our lives will claim the peace for - give - ness brings.

5 So may our new be - gin - nings prove,
like liv - ing bread and wine,
that through our com - mon hu - man love
we taste what is di - vine;
that through our com - mon hu - man love
we taste what is di - vine.

6 Our lives will be ful - filled and blessed
if through the seeds we've sown
and by the love that we pro - fess
the love of Christ is known;
and by the love that we pro - fess
the love of Christ is known.

Mary Bryan Matney and Sally Ann Morris wrote this hymn in 1990 for the marriage of friends. In 1992, it won first prize in its category in a hymnwriting competition sponsored by the Charlotte, North Carolina, chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Tune: NEW BEGINNINGS 8.6.8.6.8.6.
Sally Ann Morris, 1990

***Benediction**

***Benediction Response**

NCH #809

Thomas A. Dorsey/Artelia W. Hutchins

God be with you,
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

“Waltz No. 3”

Tchaikovsky

~ Leading Worship today is the Rev. Dr. Nancy Hamlin Soukup ~
~ Our Music Director and Organist is Nikita Zabinski ~
~ Our lay liturgist today is Celeste Bernardino ~
~ 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: Prayers from this service were written by or adapted from the following: Katherine Hawker, *Outside the Box*, re:Worship: Call to Worship Litany: Kingdom of God; Nancy C. Townley, <http://www.ministrymatters.com/>, re:Worship: Opening Prayer: Mark 4; John van de Laar, *Sacredise.com*, re:Worship: Proper 12 A; Rev. Dr. Barb Hedges-Goettl, <https://bjhlog.wordpress.com/2020/02/19/nl-mark-1017-31-the-rich-young-man-march-1-2020/>, re:Worship: Proper 12 A; <http://www.sacredpauses.com/>, re:Worship: Prayer for Renewed Strength; and Christine Longhurst, re:Worship: Benediction: Romans 8:26-31.



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:

Jacob, who is seeking a full-time job at RWU

Caroline Jacobus, who is recovering from hip surgery

Tara, Steve Aveson's daughter-in-law who has been newly diagnosed with cancer
Nick and his family, as they find themselves between chemo cycles, living on hope and strength
of character
Josephine
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
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
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
Nick Chaccone, for recovery
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

For those who have died:

Charlotte Griffith, and for her family Karen and Mark Dietrich and Brent Griffith and all her grandchildren.

Upcoming Birthdays:

Jo-Ann Wilbur 07/27	Glenn Donovan 07/27	
Cassidy Allen 07/28	Julia Allen 07/31	
Nathan Dieterich 08/10	Evan Fournier-Swire 08/10	Liam Donovan 08/12
Drew Carpenter 08/15	Charlotte Burnham 08/16	Katherine Harcourt 08/28
Matthew Benson 08/30		

SHARE YOUR MUSIC TALENTS THIS SUMMER

This summer, we are inviting anyone who could like to participate musically in a worship service on Sundays to let Nikita Zabinski know. You can sing, play an instrument—anything—and you can be any age. The tendency is to be shy to come forward but don't underestimate yourself. Sign up on the sheet attached here.

What's on the Church Calendar

July 26, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
July 28, 2026	Tuesday RI Blood Bank Bus, CANCELED
July 30, 2026	Thursday fitness class 9:00am - 10:00am (DeWolf Room)
August 02, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
August 04, 2026	Monday Prayer Shawl Circle 6:30pm (Guiteras House)
August 4-6, 2026	Church Office Closed Barbara will be on vacation
August 09, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
August 11, 2026	Tuesday Facility Meeting 7:00pm (DeWolf Room)
August 13, 2026	Thursday CE Meeting 6:00pm (Zoom)
August 13, 2026	Thursday Deacons Meeting 7:00pm Guiteras House)
August 16, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
August 18, 2026	Tuesday Church Council Meeting (DeWolf Room)
August 23, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)
August 30, 2026	Sunday Worship Service 10:00am (AC in DeWolf Room)

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 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/>.



that

Starting in
August

A promotional flyer with a blue sky background and a sun in the top left. It features a central image of a 'Bloomin' 4 Good' bouquet. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with orange and blue accents. At the bottom, there is a decorative border of orange flowers and grass.

Let Your Impact Shine

Be a bright spot in your community!

Every specially marked \$11.99 Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet sold at our selected Stop & Shop during August sends \$1 to our organization, helping us continue our mission and create local impact.

BENEFITING ORGANIZATION:

First Congregational Church in Bristol
300 High Street
Bristol, RI 02809
FCCBristol.org / 401/253-7288

AT THIS STORE LOCATION:

STOP & SHOP
605 Metacom Ave
Bristol, RI 02809

STOP&SHOP
stopandshop.2givelocal.com

Bloomin' 4 Good Program



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! 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.

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 \(13\)](#)

97th Annual
First Congregational Church
300 High St Bristol RI

HARVEST MOON BAZAAR

NOV 21
10 AM TO 3 PM

2026

FREE PICTURES
WITH SANTA!
CHICKEN SALAD
CHILI &
HOT CIDER

BAKED GOODS
HANDMADE KNITS
CRAFTS
FLOWERS & VENDORS
SILENT AUCTION!!

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