

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Land Acknowledgement

We gather, acknowledging the land we are on, the rocks and waters of this land, the plants and animals of this land, the air we share.

We also acknowledge the original people of this land, including the Nipmuc, Pawtucket, and Massa-adchu-es-et People(s), as well as the legacy of the Natick Praying Indians, and all those who have walked on this land before us, as well as our own ancestors.

We remember ourselves as part of a web extending back in time, forward in time, and in every direction in time.



Welcome To Worship at FCC Natick!

It doesn't matter to us if you grew up in a church or never set foot in one before. You matter to us. We welcome you as you are, because we believe that we are all embraced by God's inclusive and extravagant love.

As a congregation, we strive to practice radical inclusivity and extravagant hospitality. When we gather for worship, we want everyone to have access, to be comfortable, and feel welcomed.

If you are new here, we invite you to introduce yourself to the pastor, and fill out the card in the *Welcome Newcomers* brochure and place it in the offering plate so that we can extend a more personal welcome!

To help you worship with comfort and meaning:

- We invite you to change any portion of today's service to language in which you feel included. We welcome all into God's presence and worship God in wholeness.
- **Large Print Bibles and worship bulletins** are available from the ushers. The bulletin is also available in digital form using the weekly QR code.
- **Noise cancelling headphones** are available from the ushers.
- *Listening Everywhere* app is supported. (Download to a smartphone, bring headphones.)

Childcare for infants through age 3 is available. There is a video link to the sanctuary for parents who wish to stay with their child. There is a changing station in the nursery.

- **Verbal cues** are used along with the bulletin text to direct the congregation. For instance, "Please rise in body or in spirit."
- Our building is **handicap accessible**. This includes handicap parking spaces, a handicap entrance near the lot, an all-floors handicap elevator, and handicap restrooms on 2 floors.
- There is a **gender-neutral bathroom** on the second floor.
- There is an **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)** on the wall on the ground floor elevator lobby. When turned on, it provides step-by-step instructions.
- **Narcan** doses are available via the ushers or the church office.

We realize that our best intentions and efforts may sometimes fall short. Please let us know if there is anything else we can do. Speak to an usher or drop a note in a collection plate.

The only impossible journey
is the one you never begin.

~ *Anthony Robbins*

PRELUDE

Melody

Caleb Simper

Thomas Foster, organ

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Simone Gill

One: The church has been traveling, and gardening, and soaking up the sun.

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

One: The church has been blowing bubbles and making leaf art.

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

One: The church has been to West Virginia,
sharing compassion with the world.

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

One: The church has shiny bathroom floors, a leak-free roof, and
a central light in the sanctuary.

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

One: The church has waved Open and Affirming flags,
and declared that Love is Louder..

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

One: The church has been everywhere we have been, the church has done
everything we have done, because we are the church. And so....

All: The church is here, now, all of us together!

*** OPENING HYMN**

Enter, Rejoice, and Come in

Enter, Rejoice

Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day; Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Open yourself to the song. Open yourself to the song.
Today will be a joyful day; Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Open your hearts everyone. Open your hearts everyone.
Today will be a joyful day; Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Don't be afraid of some change. Don't be afraid of some change.
Today will be a joyful day; Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day; Enter, rejoice, and come in.

CENTERING PRAYER AND THE PRAYER OF JESUS*

Spirit innocent and pure,
Holy is your name.
May love be seen as all that is.
May earth be seen as heaven is.
Nourish us this day with your bountiful supply,
And allow us to receive as
We give that right to others.
Restore us from the perils of illusion,
And renew our perception of truth.
For truth is the kingdom,
And love is the power,
And Yours is the glory forever.

*by Penny Nixon

*** SHARING GOD'S PEACE**

In person we rise to greet each other with a wave, bow or a high five. And we send God's peace to those participating from home!

One: God's peace be with you.

All: And also with you!

* SONG OF CELEBRATION

God's hands are your hands. God's hands are my hands.
God's hands are our hands, working together.
God's hands are your hands. God's hands are my hands.
God's hands are our hands, working for peace.

CHOIR ANTHEM

Together

Ken Dosso

Senior Choir; Thomas Foster, director

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

BLESSING FAITH FORMATION TEAM

Matt Basiliere	Rick Dubois	Rhonda Mulloy	Grace Seiche
Michelle Brewer	Amy Foley	Lane McDonough	Heather Seiche
Beth Canterbury	Chris Gentry	Bill Ramage	Maura Shaughnessy
Robin Clausen	Sarabeth Guptill	Gwyn Ramage	Alyssa Springer
Amy Corbin	Sara Hanna	Ric Ripley	Jessica Treadwell
Mark Dixon	Justin Kear	Mikal Rosendahl	Pam Weagraff
Gretchen Dubois	Janet Levesque	Rachel Schmitt	Kristine Weddle

**We believe that the spirit of God moves in each of us,
no matter how young we are or how old we grow.**

**God is as close as the air around us, just waiting for us to breathe in.
No one needs to learn how to breathe; it is how we are made.**

**It is language that we must learn –
the language of God's great love story with the world,
the language of prayer, the language of care,
the language of selflessness.**

**To teach that language of faith is our opportunity,
our responsibility, and our joy.**

**As we begin a new year together,
we promise to share our faith with each other –
children, youth, and adults alike.**

**We will seek to be a community where everyone
is welcome and everyone can experience the love of God.**

**We make this promise with God and with each other
as we strive to follow the way of Jesus Christ, our Teacher.**

Amen.

BLESSING THIRD GRADERS AND THEIR BIBLES

Andrew Corbin, Noah Mattera

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me. If you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord.

~ Jeremiah 29:11-14a

MUSICAL RESPONSE

BLESSING THE BACKPACKS

**God of love, bless these backpacks, briefcases and purses,
and your children who will use them -
to store supplies, and lunches, and homework,
extra sweatshirts and snacks.**

May every day of this year, even the hard moments, be full of blessings.

**Tuck into the side pockets our love, our support, our prayers,
that each of these beautiful souls
will know we are with them, as are you. Amen**

REFLECTION

Blessing The Journey

MUSICAL RESPONSE

GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

ALLELUIA

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR SUBSTANCE

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY

As the plates are passed from person to person, we share our financial gifts. Even if we are not adding money to the plate, we offer thoughts of gratitude. As you hold the plate, you might breathe deeply and pray, "May all the earth be healthy and whole."

*** SONG OF PRAISE**

Old Hundredth

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*** SENDING HYMN 363**

In the Midst of New Dimensions

New Dimensions

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wand'ring in their sep'rate ways?

Refrain:

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
now and ever, now and evermore. ...

Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair,
Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?

refrain:

Though we reach the highest heavens, holding worlds at our command,
We are yet a desert people searching for the promised land.

refrain

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again.

refrain

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

'Corno' from Voluntary No. 4

John Stanley

Calendar for Sept. 8 – 15, 2024

- Sunday, Sept. 8** 9:00 AM *Adult Faith Group* – Contemplation and Action
10:30 AM *Worship* with Rev. Cindy in the sanctuary
11:30 AM *Post-Worship Fellowship*: Coffee Hour in Vestry
- Wed., Sept. 11** NOON *Mid-Week Connection*, Zoom ucc.fccnatick.org/midweek
- Thurs., Sept. 12** 7:00 PM *Prayer Circle* via Zoom (ucc.fccnatick.org/prayercircle)
- Sunday, Sept. 15** 9:00 AM *Adult Faith Group* – Contemplation and Action
Rally Day!
10:30 AM *Worship* with Rev. Cindy
10:45 AM *Godly Play & Connect*
11:30 AM *Rally Day Fellowship*: BBQ in the tent
5:00 PM Crosswalk Youth Group (at St. Paul's)

Today

The Opioid Project

Sept. 1 - 22, FCC sanctuary

Changing Perceptions through Art and Storytelling. These artworks and stories were created in memory of loved ones lost to opioids and in honor of others in recovery. Each piece of art includes written/audio stories, opening up the dialogue about opioids and the lives lost.

Thanks to Coffee Hour hosts,
Kirsten & Lane McDonough!

Pride, Trans, and Mental Health Flags “upcycled” into bags!

On sale after worship, while limited supply lasts

These flags flown at FCCN have been transformed – by stitchers, pinners, and ironers – into bags. The market totes are sold out, but smaller zippered bags (\$15) are still available. Proceeds support FCCN and ONA justice work. Cash, check or Venmo. Questions? See Carolyn Williams.

Rally Day!

Sunday, September 15th, 10:30 am, in the sanctuary and tent

Worship at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary, with Rev. Cindy. Sunday School (Godly Play and Connect). Afterwards, a BBQ (burgers & dogs) replaces coffee hour. Rally Day celebrates a new church year. Families enroll children and youth in a church programs.

FCC hosts Open Door

Monday, Sept. 16, 4:30 pm at the Elks Club

Open Door provides a free community meal every Monday at the Natick Elks Club. On Sept. 16, FCC folks will prepare a meatloaf dinner. Food prep at 4:30 pm, meal served at 5:30 pm, cleaned up by 6:30 pm. To participate, contact Kirstin at kirstenmcd26a@gmail.com.

Join FCC Natick

Sunday, September 22nd during worship

We will be welcoming new members at FCC Natick during worship on Sept. 22! Membership is open to anyone who wants to formalize their covenant with the congregation. Membership is required for some leadership positions, and to vote at congregational meetings. You don't need to be a member to fully participate in worship, serve on most ministry teams, contribute financially, or share your thoughts in a congregational meeting. If you'd like to learn more about membership, and consider joining the church on Sept. 22, please contact Rev. Cindy at revcindyfccn@gmail.com or the church office.

Lunch Bunch

Thursday, September 26th at 12:30 pm in the Vestry

Lunch Bunch is on the *fourth* Thursday this month (instead of the third). Also, it will start a half hour later (12:30 pm) going forward. There are drinks, snacks, and stories to share.

Where Can We Live in Peace? The Migrant Crisis [film]

Sunday, Sept. 29, 5-7 pm, in the sanctuary

Join award-winning filmmaker Judy Jackson for a screening of her latest film, "Where Can We Live in Peace?", with a discussion after. The documentary humanizes the struggle and dangers migrants face. QR code reserves your spot. This event is jointly sponsored by the FCC Natick, the Congregational Church of Needham, and the non-profit Partners for Guatemala Education.



Festive-All Concert Community Celebration

Saturday, October 5th at 7 pm in the sanctuary

Strings, piano, dance, cabaret – and more! – in a community space that now blends historical architecture and welcoming innovation. Performers from Walnut Hill, Greater Boston School of Dance, the Robinwood Ensemble, Unfinished Cabaret, and musicians from FCC Natick will fill the sanctuary with music and movement. Reception to follow. Freewill offering supports future events and the MetroWest Free Medical Program.

PRAYER LIST

Sharing Your Prayer Requests. Prayer concerns and celebrations to be shared during worship can be done so verbally (raise your hand to be recognized) or in writing (use provided notecards) or emailed to prayers@fccnatick.org.

Linda Champion	Peg & Charlie Ostrander	The Levesque Family
Pam Dotter	Fran Schroeder	Bob Brown
Joel	Char Hannon	Tanya
Debbie Collins	Irene & Walter	Friends & Family of Mark Stunkel
Jeanna B.	Charles	Steve Perry
Aunt Kathy	John Lilly	Frankie Notarbartolo
The Lewis Family	Aunt Gwen	Melissa and Tiffany Wallace
Nathan Duarte	Robin and Laura	Ann and George Schmidt
Eric	Tom Hamm	Charles Gobron
Deb Evers	Noah & Jennie Lynch	Susan Eck and family
Sarah Kazim	Karin Garcia's fiance	Richard Conway
Joan Person	Uncle A1 & Aunt Deb	Friends & Family of Michael Connolly
Brian J.	Jack Mulloy	Abigail Brewer
Beverly Newell	Paul S.	Hillaree and family
Anna Hayes	Don & Heather C.	Doug & Barbara Shirley
John Sullivan	Mary Cerreto	Mary Connolly
Ronnie	Connie Sullivan	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey
Jane Hall	Phil Jennings	Alice Bridinger
Jenna Hayes	Faye Bishop	Pat & Jane Conaway
Abby Robbins	Tommy Hannon	Malfrid Abrahamsen
Natalie Friend	Paul	Peace for the world and in everyone's day
Jayne Hayes	Anne	All immigrant families seeking justice
Myriam's Mom	Molly	The people of Ukraine & Russia
Robbins Family	Johnson Family	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja
Jackie Snizek	Evelyn and Family	Angels of Hope in Uganda
Mark Sullivan	Mike McCormick	Overdose victims

The prayer list is updated periodically. If you find a name has been rotated off the list for whom you would like continuing prayers, please contact Prayer List Coordinator Linda Champion at lchampion17@gmail.com or the office at 508-653-0971. Also, if a known issue has been resolved, please let us know. Thank you to all for your care and prayers.

Welcome To Worship at FCC Natick!

Offering. Every week we practice the spiritual discipline of generosity by sharing our financial resources. We call this the Offering. We offer multiple ways to give. In person we pass the plate through the congregation, where donations by cash and check are welcome. By mail, checks may be sent to the church office. Online (get there using the *QR code* or by visiting ucc.fccnatick.org/give), you may give using a credit card. But if this is your first time with us, please consider yourself our guest and just pass the plate along. If you'd like to learn more about money at FCCN, please see the pastor.



Communion. We usually celebrate communion on the first Sunday of the month. Folks online are invited to have a bit of food and drink handy. In person, we serve communion in several different ways, so the worship leader will instruct you. Our communion table is open to all who find meaning there, regardless of age, membership, or belief.

Photography/Videography Policy. Sunday worship is livestreamed via local cable access. In addition, we occasionally take video or photography during worship and elsewhere on the church property. By your presence, you grant FCCN unrestricted rights to use and publish, transmit, or telecast images that may be taken of you for use in communication related to the church. Please contact the church office (508-653-0971 or admin@fccnatick.org) with questions or concerns.

Name Tags. Please consider wearing a **name tag** – and a pronoun pin! Nametags are on the board in the elevator lobby (ground floor) and upper vestibule of the Sanctuary. If you don't yet have a nametag or are missing yours, make a note on the sheet and one will be on the lobby board next week. We want our church to be a place where everyone knows your name!

The LINK e-Newsletter. The LINK is emailed to subscribers every Tuesday and Friday. Please subscribe to the LINK, to stay in the loop. The Community LINK goes out Tuesdays (with happenings in Natick beyond the church). The Worship LINK goes out Fridays (and is more focused on the goings on in the congregation and that Sunday's service). It's free to subscribe: use the QR code or go to ucc.fccnatick.org/subscribe.



Hybrid Worship. Many folks worship from home, at least from time to time. Join us live online (ucc.fccnatick.org/livestream). Natick residents can join us through local access cable (Comcast Xfinity 22, Verizon Fios 29, RCN 03). You can also find worship recordings on our website: (ucc.fccnatick.org/worship-video).

Welcome To Worship at FCC Natick!

Open and Affirming. FCCN is an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation, affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We welcome everyone into full participation, including people of every ability, race, culture, gender, economic circumstance, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

Denominational Affiliation: FCCN is a member of the **United Church of Christ**, a liberal Protestant denomination within the Christian tradition. It offers for reflection a traditional Statement of Faith, yet values the individual's right and ability to prayerfully and thoughtfully determine what to believe regarding the Bible, God, creation, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, etc. The UCC values outreach and justice work. It seeks to be inclusive. Authority is held by members of the local congregation, not the church's pastor or national staff.

Children and youth. Children and youth are always welcome in our worship services. The *Playground* down front has a great view and quiet activities. Midway through worship, children ages 3 through grade six are invited to join in for Sunday School: preschoolers through kids in grade 3 explore sacred story through the *Godly Play* curriculum, and youth in grades 4 through 6 participate in our *Connect* program. If they wish, parents may accompany their child to the classroom, then return to the Sanctuary. Parents are encouraged to attend coffee hour after worship, then pick up their child from their classroom at 11:45 am. (Staffed *nursery care* is also available near the sanctuary throughout the service: ask an usher for directions or information.)

First Congregational Church of Natick (FCCN) Staff

Pastor

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