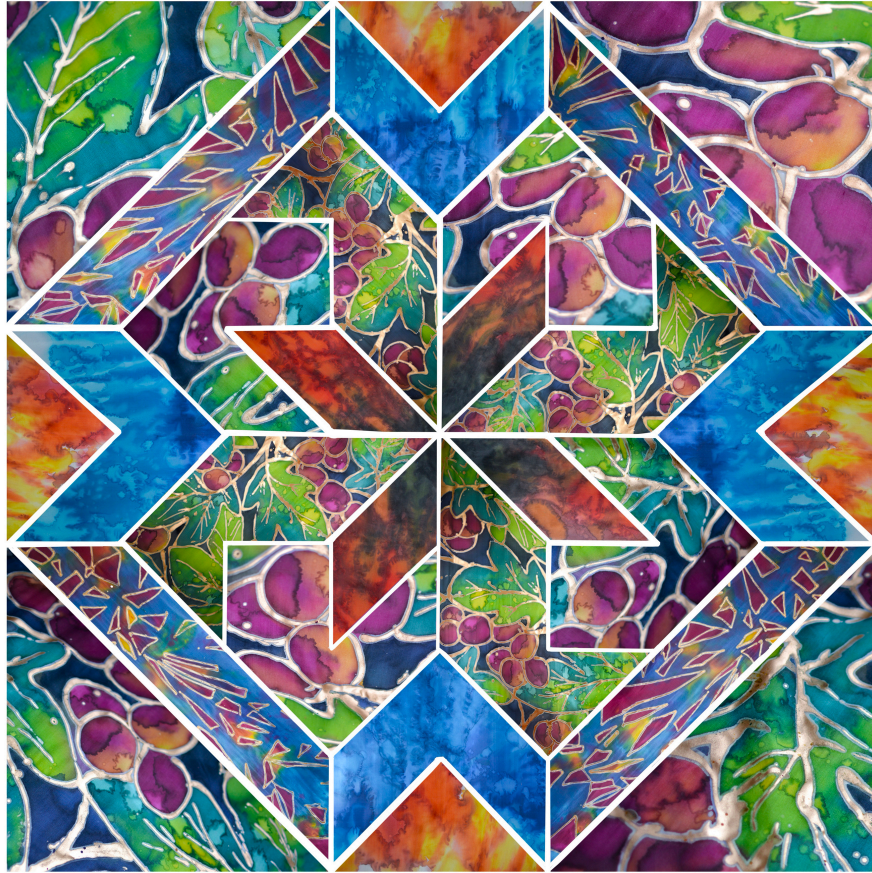


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

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.

You keep us waiting.
You, the God of all time,
Want us to wait.
For the right time in which to discover
Who we are, where we are to go,
Who will be with us, and what we must do,
So thank you ... for the waiting time.
-John Bell

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

arr. by Mark Hayes

Thomas Foster, organ

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pam Weagraff

One: In defiance of the world's pessimism,

All: May there be room for Joy in our hearts.

One: Even when we don't quite feel like it,

All: May there be room for Joy in our hearts.

One: Knowing it can start small and grow,

All: May there be room for Joy in our hearts. Amen.

*** OPENING HYMN 127**

Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates

Truro

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold, the King of glory waits!
The Prince of Peace is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to you; her Lord abide!
Let me your inner presence feel; your grace and love in me reveal.

So come, my sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;
your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: JOY

Simone Gill and Felix Alvarez

SUNG RESPONSE (Hymn No. 611 verse. 3, *Hope is a Star*)

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Savior is born.
When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none will be afraid.

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** *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* Rejoice, Rejoice

Awake! Awake and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born, behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
to open wide the heavenly door, and lives now inside us forever.

CHOIR ANTHEM

Bethlehem Wind

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:1-18-25

BAPTISM OF OLIVIA LEECE SZRETTER

MUSICAL RESPONSE

REFLECTION

"Just one more thing..."

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF JESUS

Our God, 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.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

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 135**

Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Christ whose birth the angels sing;
come adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

setting by J.W. Greene

BAPTISM OF OLIVIA LEECE SZRETTER

This morning we celebrate Olivia's baptism, and promise to support her and her parents, Alicia and Mark. They hope Olivia may be a conduit for God's love, bringing joy to others through her laughter, kindness, and boundless energy. They pray she may become a citizen of the world, building bridges across languages and cultures.

Calendar for Dec. 15 – Dec. 22, 2024

More at fccnatick.org/events

- Sunday, Dec. 15** 9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*
10:30AM *Worship w/ Rev. Cindy in the sanctuary*
11:30AM *Post-Worship Fellowship: Coffee Hour in Vestry*
5:00PM *11th Annual Interfaith Community Vigil in Sanctuary*
- Wed., Dec. 18** 7:00PM *FCC Coordinating Council in the Vestry, Rm 115*
- Thurs., Dec. 19** 12:30PM *Lunch Bunch in the Vestry*
- Sunday, Dec. 22** 9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*
10:30AM *Worship w/ Rev. Cindy in the sanctuary*
11:30AM *Post-Worship Fellowship: Coffee Hour in Vestry*

Thanks to Coffee Hour hosts Robin and Jeff Clausen

TODAY

Christmas Poinsettias

Place your order TODAY after worship

Order a poinsettia to remember a loved one or to celebrate a blessing! Following worship on Dec. 22nd, poinsettias will be delivered to those in our church family unable to be with us for worship. Look for Flower Ministry volunteers in the Vestry as you leave worship (or contact the church office). Give them the dedication you want printed in the 12/22 bulletin. Donate any amount.

NOTE: If you do not place your orders and dedications today, please contact the church office directly no later than the **deadline of Tuesday, Dec. 17th.**

11th Annual Interfaith Community Vigil

Sun. Dec. 15, 5-6pm

The evening will include music, testimony, interfaith prayer, inspirational speaking and a candlelight vigil. A meeting hosted by The Journey Bereavement Group will follow. All are welcome.

ADVENT & DECEMBER EVENTS

Lunch Bunch

Thurs. Dec. 19, 12:30pm in the Vestry

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tues., December 24, 7 PM in the Sanctuary

A service with candles and carols.

New Year Brunch/Communion Service

Sun., December 29, 10:30 AM in the Vestry

Save the Date ~ Welcome in another year with our Annual FCC New Year Brunch and Communion Service. Join us for a worship and communion service embedded in a festive brunch experience.

Epiphany Worship-combined with area churches

Sun., January 5, 10:30 AM in the Sanctuary

Four churches gather to celebrate Epiphany! First Congregational and Eliot Churches in Natick, Edwards and Plymouth Churches in Framingham have invited Matt Crane, Executive Director of Hospitality Common, Inc. HCI currently provides evening adult ESL classes and weekly meals to folks in the Metro West and is expanding to offer housing for new refugees in our community. Stay for refreshments and further conversation after the service. A program for children (ages 3-grade 6) runs concurrently with worship

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.

Chris Stefanatos	The McLaren Family	The friends and family of Jacqui Leferink
Kenny Hoffman	Lois and Pam Dotter	Declan and his parents Beth and Kenny
Susan & Bob	Katie	Family & Friends of Noah Lynch
Angela	Char Hannon	Family & Friends of Mary Connolly
Joel	Irene & Walter	Family & Friends of Tom Tannar
Debbie Collins	Charles	Peg & Charlie Ostrander
Jeanna B.	John Lilly	The Levesque Family
Aunt Kathy	Aunt Gwen	Tanya
Eric	Robin and Laura	Frankie Notarbartolo
Sarah Kazim	Uncle Al & Aunt Deb	Melissa and Tiffany Wallace
Joan Person	Paul S.	Ann and George Schmidt
Brian J.	Don & Heather C.	Charles Gobron
Beverly Newell	Mary Cerreto	Richard Conway
Anna Hayes	Connie Sullivan	Abigail Brewer
John Sullivan	Phil Jennings	Doug & Barbara Shirley
Ronnie	Faye Bishop	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey
Jane Hall	Tommy Hannon	Alice Bridinger
Jenna Hayes	Paul	Pat & Jane Conaway
Abby Robbins	Anne	Peace for the world and in everyone's day
Natalie Friend	Molly	All immigrant families seeking justice
Jayne Hayes	Evelyn and Family	The people of Ukraine & Russia
Myriam's Mom	Mike McCormick	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja
Robbins Family	Malfrid Abrahamsen	Angels of Hope in Uganda
Jackie Snizek	Bob Brown	Overdose victims
Dorothy Young	Myriam's brother Alex	

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).

Calendar, News, and Program information at FCCnatick.org.

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 *Prayground* 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

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Outreach Minister

Rev. Dr. John Weagraff

Financial Assistant

Cynthia Hamwey

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