

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



Christmas Eve

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.

Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Christmas, perhaps,
means a little bit more.
- *The Grinch*

PRELUDE

Selected Carols

Thomas Foster, organ

Brass: Daryl Robbins, Jake Crawford, trumpet; ~ Andrew Knight, Erik Borberg, trombone

WELCOME

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

CALL TO WORSHIP

*** CAROL 132**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing,
all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;

refrain

Child for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with love and awe;
who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?

refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Eternal, now in flesh appearing;

refrain

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Taylor Purvis & Family

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of God be with you.

And also with you!

CHOIR ANTHEM

Love Came Down at Christmas
Senior Choir; Thomas Foster, director

Mark Burrows

LESSON I

Luke 1:26-35, 38
The Angel Visits Mary

* CAROL 137

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Hark! The herald angels sing “Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

Hark! The herald angels sing “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise all souls on earth, born to give us second birth.

Hark! The herald angels sing “Glory to the newborn King!”

READING I

What Are You Here For

by Quinn Caldwell

LESSON II

Matthew 1:18-25
The Angel Visits Joseph

*** CAROL 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!

READING II

Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light

by Jan Richardson

LESSON III

Luke 2:1-7

Jesus is Born

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Adagio

Tartini

Daryl Robbins, Jake Crawford, trumpet ~Thomas Foster, organ

LESSON IV

Luke 2:8-20

The Shepherds

REFLECTION

*** CAROL 160**

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our savior's birth.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

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.

SHARING THE LIGHT

*** CAROL 142**

Silent Night

Stille Nacht

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent Night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the savior is born! Christ, the savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

READING III

For So the Children Come

by Sophia Lyon Fahs

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The savior reigns:
let earth her songs employ;
let fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Christ rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Concerto in B flat major
Thomas Foster, organ

Vivaldi

Christmas Eve Offering

Our Christmas offering this year will support the MetroWest Free Medical Program, which has served the MetroWest area for 20 years. The Program serves as an entry point to the healthcare system for those that are uninsured or insufficiently insured.

The Christmas offering will be received during Christmas Eve worship, December 24 at 7 pm. You can also participate in the Christmas offering by giving online (<https://fcnatick.org/giving/>) or sending a check directly to the church, with “*Christmas offering*” in the memo line.

Calendar for Dec. 25, 2024 – Jan. 5, 2025

More at fccnatick.org/events

- Wed., Dec., 25 *Christmas Day* {Church Office closed 12/25-1/1; re-opens 1/2/25}
- Sun., Dec., 29 9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*
 10:30AM *Annual FCC New Year Brunch and Communion Service*
 in the Vestry
- Thurs., Jan., 2 7:00PM *Centering Prayer Circle* via Zoom
- Sun., Jan., 5 9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*
 10:30AM *Epiphany Worship Service w/ area churches* in the Vestry

EPHIPHANY & NEW YEAR EVENTS

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. For those worshipping at home, we will be re-releasing a favorite service from several years ago.

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

Common Cathedral-City Reach Clothing Collection Drop-Off

***drop off donations in the Vestry by January 5**

Items needed: Socks, Underwear, Coats, Sweatshirts, T-shirts, Jeans, Bags, Backpacks, Blankets, Sleeping Bags, Toiletries, (No children's clothes, please).

Pub Theology (rescheduled one week later)

Sun., January 8, 7:00 PM

This month's topic TBD; but will likely be centered on immigration.

FCC Book Group: *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Kimmerer (non-fiction)

Sun., January 19, after worship at Amy's house.

Join us for this informal, friendly gathering with lunch and catching up and talking about our book pick. For more info about directions to the meeting location and to RSVP, please contact the church office at admin@fccnatick.org

20th Annual Natick Community Celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Mon., January 20, 9:00 AM @ Natick High School Auditorium

Program begins at 10am. Keynote by Jemele & Amy Adams.

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.



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

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 *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

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