

# **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK**

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



**December 29, 2024**

**COMMUNION AND BRUNCH**

# 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.

We shall find peace,  
We shall hear the angels,  
We shall see the sky  
Sparkling with diamonds.

– *Chekhov*

**CENTERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. John Weagraff

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Kate Kear

Light the candles:

**The hope of our hearts has been born!**

Sing the carols:

**The star to guide our spirits has risen!**

Embrace your neighbor:

**The cradle of compassion receives us all!**

Believe in the mystery:

**The love we long for is here.**

**\* OPENING HYMN NO. 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!

## **CENTERING PRAYER**

## **SHARING GOD'S PEACE**

God's peace be with you.

**And also with you!**

## **SONG OF CELEBRATION**      Jesus the Light of the World

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing, Jesus, the light of the world;  
Glory to the Christ-child bring, Jesus, the light of the world.

We will follow the light, beautiful light,  
come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright;  
Shine all around us by day and by night,  
Jesus, the light of the world.

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

Revelation 21:1-6a

**WORD FOR ALL AGES**

“The End of Days is Here Again”

**MUSICAL RESPONSE**

**OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR SUBSTANCE**

**OFFERING INVITATION**

**OFFERTORY**

**\* SONG OF PRAISE**

Old Hundredth

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God all creatures here below;**

**Praise God above all heavenly hosts:**

**Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**INVITATION TO THE FEAST**

**TELLING THE STORY**

**COMMUNION PRAYER (UNISON)**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

### **PRAYER OF JESUS (UNISON)**

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 BREAD AND CUP**

### **THANKSGIVING PRAYER**

### **BRUNCH ~ THE FEAST CONTINUES**

\* **SENDING HYMN NO. 134**

*Joy to the World*

Antioch

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.

## **BLESSING**

## **SENDING MUSIC**



# Calendar for Dec. 29, 2024 – Jan. 5, 2025

More at [fccnatick.org/events](https://fccnatick.org/events)

- Sun., Dec. 29**      9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*  
10:30AM *Annual New Year Brunch and Communion Service* in the Vestry  
\*For those worshipping at home, we will be re-releasing  
a favorite service from several years ago
- Wed., Jan. 1**                      **New Year's Day** [church office closed: 12/25-1/1; re-opens 1/2/25]
- Thurs., Jan. 2**      7:00PM *Centering Prayer Circle* via Zoom
- Sun., Jan. 5**      9:00AM *Adult Faith Group*  
10:30AM *Epiphany Worship Combined Churches Service* in the sanctuary

## ADVENT & EPHIPHANY EVENTS

### 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

### 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**

**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: **The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World by Kimmerer** (non-fiction). For more info about directions to the meeting location and to RSVP, please contact the church office at [admin@fccnatick.org](mailto:admin@fccnatick.org)

**20<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://ucc.fccnatick.org/worship-video)).

**Calendar, News, and Program information at [FCCnatick.org](http://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

### Pastor

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry  
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### Director of Spiritual Vitality and Congregational Care

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### Sunday Nursery Staff

Grace Seiche

### Outreach Minister

Rev. Dr. John Weagraff

### Financial Assistant

Cynthia Hamwey

**FCCnatick.org**