

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.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

“We must accept finite disappointment,
but we must never lose infinite hope”.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

PRELUDE

Elaine Smith-Purcell, organ

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Simone Gill

L: God of Hope,

**C: We come into your presence this morning
with confidence that you will meet us here.**

L: Where there is sadness,

C: bring joy;

L: Where there is tiredness,

C: Bring refreshment;

L: Where there is despair,

C: Bring a renewed sense of hope.

L: Let this place be a sanctuary,

C: A home for holy words and songs and prayers. Amen.

* OPENING HYMN 95

Be Still, My Soul

Finlandia

Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

Trust in your God, your savior and your guide,
who through all changes faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a peaceful end.

Be still, my soul: for God will undertake
to guide the future surely as the past.

Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the voice that calmed them in this world below.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall dwell with God forevermore,
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

STATEMENT OF FAITH*

We believe the day is coming
when God's grace will change the human heart,
and we will live as one with every living thing.

We believe the day is coming
when Christ's compassion will fill the earth,
and no one will do harm, be hurt, or feel alone.

We believe the day is coming
when the Spirit's freedom will unbind our souls,
and we will live generous lives for each other
with a joy no circumstance can alter.

We believe the day is coming,
and we wait and work for it with steadfast hope,
for God has promised it, and God is faithful.

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** *Amen We Praise Your Name O God*

Amen, we praise your name, O God. (Sing amen!) (2X)

Amen, amen. Amen, amen.

Amen, we praise your name, O God.

ANTHEM

Give Me Jesus

African American Spiritual, arr. Mark Hayes

Beth Canterbury, Soloist

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 5:1-5

KIDS CHOIR ANTHEM

Draw the Circle

Emily Springer, Soloist

WORD FOR ALL AGES

MUSICAL RESPONSE

After *Word for All Ages*, children (age 3-grade 6) depart for Sunday School (*Godly Play & Connect*). Parents may accompany children and return to worship once they are settled.

READING

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

REFLECTION

The Building Blocks of Hope

Rev. Dr. John Weagraff

MUSICAL RESPONSE

GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE 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.

RESPONSE

Nada te turbe (Nothing can trouble)

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten,

Those who seek God shall never go wanting.

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten,

God alone fills us.

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 place, 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 448

Lead On, O Cloud of Presence

Lancashire

Lead on, O cloud of Presence; the exodus is come;
in wilderness and desert our tribe shall make its home.
Our bondage left behind us, new hopes within us grow.
We seek the land of promise where milk and honey flow.

Lead on, O fiery Pillar; we follow yet with fears,
but we shall come rejoicing, though joy be born of tears.
We are not lost, though wandering, for by your light we come,
and we are still God's people. The journey is our home.

Lead on, O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,
and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.
We pray our sons and daughters may journey to that land
where justice dwells with mercy and love is law's demand.

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Elaine Smith-Purcell, organ

Calendar for Mar. 30 – Apr. 6, 2025

More at fccnatick.org/events

Sun, Mar. 30	9:00AM <i>Adult Faith Group</i>
	10:30AM <i>Worship</i> in the sanctuary
	11:30AM <i>Post-Worship Fellowship: Coffee Hour</i> in Vestry
Mon, Mar. 31	7:00PM <i>Knitting Circle</i> in the Parlor
Wed, Apr. 2	NOON <i>Mid-Week Connection, Zoom</i> ucc.fccnatick.org/midweek
	7:00PM <i>Soul Sabbatical 2025: The Amen Effect</i> in the Parlor
Thurs, Apr. 3	7:00PM <i>Centering Prayer Circle</i> via Zoom
Sat, Apr 5	1:00PM <i>Anthropod Petting Zoo</i> in the Vestry
Sun, Apr. 6	9:00AM <i>Adult Faith Group</i>
	10:30AM <i>Worship</i> with Rev. Cindy in the sanctuary
	11:30AM <i>Post-Worship Fellowship: Coffee Hour</i> in Vestry

TODAY, SUNDAY, MAR. 30

ACHIEVE PROGRAM FUNDRAISER - COLLECTION DEADLINE: SUN., APRIL 6

The Achieve Program is fundraising for a Special Olympics event next month. Everyone is invited to put their bottles & cans in a designated container in the Vestry lobby for the collection.

NEXT WEEK

KNITTING CIRCLE

Mon, March 31, 7pm in the Parlor

PROFESSOR BUGMAN PRESENTS THE ANTHROPOD PETTING ZOO LIVE ANIMAL PROGRAM

Sat., April 5, 1:00-2:00pm - \$5 p.p. advance ticket sales only.

This is a show-and-tell-and-touch featuring live exotic anthropods from all 4 major groups including Crustaceans, like crabs; Insects; Myriapods, like centipedes; and Arachnids aka spiders. Children see, feel, hear, and even smell these anthropods as they learn about the incredible adaptations that help them survive their world and how they benefit us! For ages 6+.

Tickets must be purchased in advance and may be purchased by:

- Venmo, email fcc_events@firstchurchnatick.org
- [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) tickets (fees apply)

NEXT WEEK

FCCN BOOK GROUP:

Book: 29 Gifts: How a Month of Giving Can Change Your Life by Cami Walker

Sunday, April 6, after worship ~ RSVP to admin@fccnatick.org

Light lunch provided and discussion of our book led by Kirsten McDonough.

29 Gifts is the insightful story of the author's life change as she embraces and reflects on the naturally reciprocal process of giving. Many of Walker's gifts were simple--a phone call, spare change, a Kleenex. Yet the acts were transformative. By Day 29, not only had Walker's health and happiness improved, but she had also created a worldwide giving movement. 29 Gifts shows how a simple, daily practice of altruism can dramatically alter your outlook on the world.

This short book is available at the library, by paperback, and kindle/audiobook (6 ½ hours).

LENT

2025 EASTER LILIES: ORDERS/DEDICATIONS BEGINS NEXT SUNDAY APRIL 6

In person dedications and donations for lilies will begin on **Sunday, April 6th & Sunday, April 13th**, after worship (in the Narthex). You may also stop by the office during the week, email the office at admin@fccnatick.org or call the church office at 508-653-0971. Dedications & donations deadline: Tuesday, April 15th to be printed in the Easter bulletin.

LENT AT FCC NATICK

Lent is the season set-aside in the Christian tradition for reflection, for turning toward God, for remembering the stories of Jesus' life and death and listening to what wisdom they hold for us today. This year we are reading *The Amen Effect*, by Rabbi Sharon Brous, along with the Soul Sabbatical resource created by Sarallyn, available on the website and from the church office. All are invited to gather in person on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm for opportunities to reflect, learn and share – whether you've read the book or followed the Soul Sabbatical practices, or not!

Worship will also draw us deeper into reflection. For those in person, there are wounded / mended hearts at stations along the windows. You are invited to write a prayer on a heart and lay it on the communion table to be added to the prayer wall. If you want the prayer to be private, just write it on the white side, which won't be visible. You can use this practice in whatever way is useful to you. You might get a heart and marker during the pastoral prayer and place it on the table during the offering. Folks at home, send your prayers to Rev. Cindy in a note or email (revcindyfccn@gmail.com), she will add them to the wall.

SOUL SABBATICAL 2025: THE AMEN EFFECT:

A LENTEN JOURNEY TO MEND OUR BROKEN HEARTS & WORLD

Wednesdays: March 12 – April 9, 7:00-8:30pm

You are invited to join our small group gatherings on Wed. evenings during Lent this year. We will meet 5 times with our small group and do daily devotional work on our own for 45 days to strengthen our individual understanding of these issues and to enrich the group discussions.

LENT

SOUL SABBATICAL 2025: THE AMEN EFFECT (*continued*)

You will need a few resources for this Soul Sabbatical: *The book *The Amen Effect* by Sharon Brous (*copyright 2024, Penguin Random House*) *books available at Ten Trees Bookstore on Main St, *Soul Sabbatical Participant Guide (*see Sarallyn if you need a guide*), *A journal to write your reflections (optional), *A candle, if you wish.

Each week will have the same rhythm. We will use a variety of prayer practices to dig deeper into the idea that life is better when we travel together. That the connections we have with one another are essential to live and thrive as whole persons. We hope that you will consider joining us on this journey of discovery. Contact Sarallyn to register for the Soul Sabbatical. Even if you are unable to join us for the small group gatherings, you can pick up a copy of the Lenten materials and participate in these spiritual practices at home.

EASTER VIGIL

Sanctuary, Sat., April 19, 7pm through Sun., April 20, 7am

The Easter Vigil will take place in the Sanctuary from 7:00 PM Saturday, April 19, 2025 to 7:00 AM Sunday, April 20, 2025. You can sign up in the vestry after Sunday worship. Signup closes Thursday night, April 17, 2025. All are invited and encouraged to take part in this spiritual experience. Contact members of the Worship Team if you have any questions: David Coulter (coulterdl@aol.com), Jeannine Keedy (jkeedy@rcn.com), or Ric Ripley (FWR334@yahoo.com), or the church office (admin@FCCNatick.org).

ON THE HORIZON

FCCN YARD SALE ~ SAVE THE DATE

Sat., May 3, 9:00am-2:00pm

In preparation for the huge yard sale, you may bring your ‘*merch to the church*’ on Sundays at noon on: 3/30, 4/6, & 4/13. Note: Apr 21- Apr 27 by appointment & evenings 4/30 - 5/2. Bring following merch items to church at noon: Household & kitchen, jewelry, framed art, musical instruments, toys, games & puzzles, children’s gear, current sports equipment, bicycles & electronics, books/DVD’s/records, small furniture items, collectibles/vintage items. *NO clothing, TVs, Computers.

WELCOME LUNCH: SAVE THE DATE!

May 18, after Worship ~ Chat Room

“New” folks at FCC Natick are invited to lunch on Sunday, May 18th! Especially for folks who have been attending FCCN for a year or less, this is a great chance to meet folks, share thoughts, and get questions answered. We’ll provide the food, the fun, and childcare! Please contact Rev. Cindy to RSVP or with any questions at revcindyfccn@gmail.com

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.

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

Pastor

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry
revcindyfccn@gmail.com
508-653-0971

Director of Spiritual Vitality and Congregational Care

Sarallyn Keller
sarallyn@fccnatick.org
508-740-3134

Church Office

Colleen King, Office Administrator
admin@fccnatick.org
508-653-0971

Interim Music Director

Elaine Smith-Purcell
music@fccnatick.org

Sunday Nursery Staff

Grace Seiche

Outreach Minister

Rev. Dr. John Weagraff

Financial Assistant

Cynthia Hamwey

FCCnatick.org