

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 of Easter

May 11, 2025

Don't go back to sleep.
~ Rumi

PRELUDE When Morning Gilds the Skies Elaine Smith-Purcell, organ

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP Karen Tripp

One: Wherever we go –

All: Let's choose the path of love.

One: No matter who we travel with –

All: Let's choose the path of love.

One: Even when we're lost –

All: Let's choose the path of love.

One: As we gather for worship this morning –

All: Let's choose the path of love.

*** OPENING HYMN 445** *Be Thou My Vision* Slane

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
nought be all else to me save that thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my redeemer, my love thou hast won;
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
Ruler of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

CENTERING PRAYER AND THE PRAYER OF JESUS*

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now –
Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.
Don't let surface things delude us,
but free us from what holds us back.
From you is born all ruling will,
the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.
Truly – power to these statements –
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow: Amen.

*** 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 watching from home!*

One: God's peace be with you.

All: And also with you!

*** SONG OF CELEBRATION**

Sanctuary

Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
And with thanksgiving
I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You

CHOIR ANTHEM

A Bright Flame Before Me

Celtic Prayers of Iona

Senior Choir, Elaine Smith-Purcell, director; music by Mark Burrows

SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:1-20

WORD FOR ALL AGES

MUSICAL RESPONSE

READING

Another Direction

by Rev. Sandra Fees

REFLECTION

The Road to Damascus

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry

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 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 406**

Blest Are They

Blest Are They

Blest are they, the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they who dwell in sorrow; they shall be consoled.

(refrain)

Rejoice and be glad!
Blessed are you, holy are you.
Rejoice and be glad!
Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blest are they, the meek and lowly; they shall inherit the earth.
Blest are they who thirst and hunger; they shall have their fill.

(refrain)

Blest are they who show God's mercy; mercy shall be their reward.
Blest are they, the pure of heart; they shall see their God!

(refrain)

Blest are they who search for peace; they are the children of God.
Blest are they who suffer in faith; heaven's joy is theirs.

(refrain)

"Blest are you who suffer hatred, all for my sake", Jesus said.
Rejoice, be glad, for yours is the kingdom; shine for all to see.

(refrain)

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Invocation to the Trinity

arr. by Jane Carrier

*Aramaic Lord's Prayer

Calendar for May. 11 – May. 18, 2025

More at fccnatick.org/events

Sun, May 11	HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!
	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
Tues, May 13	7:00PM <i>Finance Meeting</i> in the Vestry
Wed, May 14	NOON <i>Mid-Week Connection</i> , Zoom ucc.fccnatick.org/midweek
	7:00PM <i>B&G Meeting</i> in the Vestry
Thurs, May 15	12:30PM <i>Lunch Bunch</i> in the Vestry
	7:30PM <i>Centering Prayer</i> via Zoom
Sat, May 17	1:00-4:30PM <i>WV Work Camp Fundraising Dinner Prep</i> in the Kitchen
	5:00-7:00PM <i>WV Work Camp Fundraising Dinner</i> in the Vestry
Sun, May 18	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
	11:30AM <i>Welcome Lunch</i> in the Chat Room #116

TODAY, SUNDAY, MAY 11

THANKS TO OUR COFFEE HOUR HOST THIS WEEK:

Jeff Clausen!

REVERSE OFFERING 2025:

During worship on Sunday, May 11th, you will receive an envelope with \$5 in it for you to spend as you see fit. The only rule is to use it to Pass Along Peace and Comfort in the world, such as through a charitable donation or seed money to help someone's passion project. You are welcome to add to the contribution, but that is not required. Those who are unable to join us in-person are still invited to participate! If you are interested, please contact the church office and we will get an envelope to you while supplies last.

We want to hear from you! Please share how you put this donation to work, so please send Rev. Cindy an informal email (revcindyfccn@gmail.com) with your stories (and even pictures, if you have them)! We will celebrate the impact of this project in worship on June 8th.

THIS WEEK

LUNCH BUNCH

Thursday, May 15 @ 12:30pm in the Vestry

Bring your own brown bag lunch. We'll provide munchies, drinks & dessert!

WV FUNDRAISER ~ LASAGNA DINNER:

Saturday, May 17 from 5:00-7:00pm in the Vestry. Chef Bob and the crew will be hosting an upcoming lasagna dinner. Dine-in or Take-out. Cost: \$15 (vegetarian or meat; gluten free available). Menu includes salad and garlic bread. **Deadline: Wed, 5/14.** Place your order online: ucc.fccnatick.org/lasagna.

NEXT WEEK

WELCOME LUNCH

Sunday, May 18, after Worship ~ Chat Room #116

“New” folks, especially folks who have been attending FCCN for a year or less, are invited to lunch next Sunday! 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

FCCN IS HOSTING THE OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY MEAL

Monday, May 19 at the Natick Elks Club. We will serve about 60 people. Please join us. Our menu: Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Salad, Dinner Rolls, and Dessert. Here is the sign-up genius [link](#).

MOVIE NIGHT AT FCCN!

Tuesday, May 20th, 6:30-9:00pm, in the Vestry, John Lewis: Good Trouble.

A documentary on the life of John Lewis (2020, PG, 97 min.). FREE; Please RSVP to: admin@fccnatick.org Snacks provided, discussion to follow

SUMMER EVENTS

FCCN BOOK GROUP: SUN, JULY 13th, CHAT ROOM, AFTER WORSHIP

Lunch offered. RSVP to admin@fccnatick.org

Please join us for lunch and discussion about the book, *The Walk* by Evans. Gretchen will be leading the discussion. All are invited whether you've read the book or not! Hope to see you there. Note: audiobook-4 hours

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	Kate, Janet & Andrew Levesque
Chris Stefanatos	Lois and Pam Dotter	Family & friends of Richrd Farrar
Kenny Hoffman	Katie	Friends & Family of Tommy Zack
Susan & Bob	Char Hannon	Friends & Family of Kathleen Grant
Angela	Irene & Walter	Amy Appleyard and family,
Joel	Charles	<i>(following the loss of her father, Dennis)</i>
Debbie Collins	Shirley Lilly	Family & friends of Richard Conway
Jeanna B.	Aunt Gwen	Family & friends of Alice Bridinger
Aunt Kathy	Robin and Laura	The family & friends of Wayne Smith
Eric	Uncle Al & Aunt Deb	<i>(Rev. Cindy's uncle)</i>
Sarah Kazim	Paul S.	Tammy, daughter Ashley & Veronica
Joan Person	Don & Heather C.	The family & friends of Rev. John Lilly
Brian J.	Mary Cerreto	Declan and his parents Beth & Kenny
Beverly Newell	Connie Sullivan	The family & friends of Barbara Shirley
Anna Hayes	Phil Jennings	Myriam's brother Alex
John Sullivan	Faye Bishop	Mary Anderson
Ronnie	Tommy Hannon	Peg & Charlie Ostrander
Jane Hall	Paul	Frankie Notarbartolo
Jenna Hayes	Anne	Melissa & Tiffany Wallace
Abby Robbins	Molly	Ann & George Schmidt
Natalie Friend	Evelyn and Family	Charles Gobron
Jayne Hayes	Mike McCormick	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey
Myriam's Mom	Malfrid Abrahamsen	Pat & Jane Conaway
Robbins Family	Bob Brown	Peace for the world and in everyone's day
Jackie Snizek	Doug Shirley	All immigrant families seeking justice
Dorothy Young	Diane	The people of Ukraine & Russia
Jennie Lynch	Madhu Gupta	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja
Tanya	Steve & Deb Evers	Angels of Hope in Uganda
		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 ljchampion17@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 *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

Pastor

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry
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Interim Music Director

Elaine Smith-Purcell
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