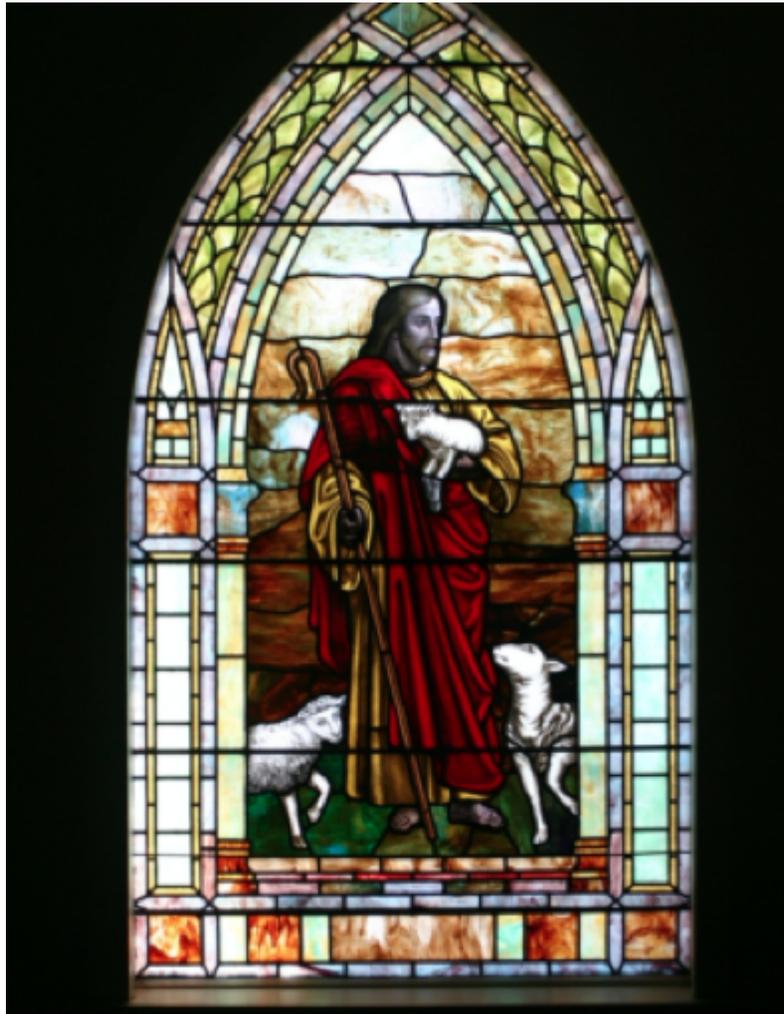


First Congregational Church of Natick

United Church of Christ

March 7, 2021

Third Sunday in Lent



*An Open and Affirming
Congregation*



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

MARCH 7, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

“Midway on our life’s journey I found myself in dark woods, the right road lost.”

~ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*

“Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves.”

~ Henry David Thoreau

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Before the time of the service please prepare some bread, a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread. In some parts of the world tortilla, rice cake, or cassava are used as this element which is defined not as a wheat product but as the most common food of the people. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice – perhaps grape or cranberry – or wine, with or without alcohol.

Set these elements in the living room or kitchen where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Perhaps you want to put them on a lovely cloth or fabric that reminds you of a special time or a person deeply connected with you in the communion of saints. Perhaps you will place a flower or plant or the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup.

Thank you for your preparation.

WELCOME TO OUR DIGITAL WORSHIP!

In this church we focus on the things that matter. 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.

We invite you to “check in” on the social media of your choice, let them know that you are doing church, even in these uncertain times, ask your networks for prayer requests, or otherwise bring your online self into God’s presence today.

SHARING YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS

Because of a few minutes broadcast delay, prayer concerns and celebrations to be shared during worship can be emailed to prayers@firstchurchnatick.org at any time before or during the worship service up to the Reflection.

PRELUDE

Gavotta in E major
Thomas Foster, piano

Arcangelo Corelli

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Following the Announcements, we invite you to have a candle available to light as your worship leaders light the Christ Candle)

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD[†]

Sea Glass Lenten Symbols

Sarallyn Keller and
Rev. Dr. Jonathan New

LENTEN THEME MUSIC

Holy Vessels
Beth Canterbury, soprano

Chuck Bell & Marcia McFee

Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

Draw us together, Holy One, from paths of aimless wandering. Bring the fragments of our lives together into a meaningful whole. Hear our cries, send your mercy, for we are lost and in need of your seeking and saving. We are like sheep that have wandered away from the best we know and cannot find our way back. Come, Good Shepherd, to find us and save us from ourselves. Amen.

HYMN No. 8

From All That Dwell Below the Skies
Beth Canterbury, soprano

Lasst uns Erfreuen

*From all that dwell below the skies
let the Creator's praise arise! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung through every land, by every tongue!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Eternal are thy mercies, Lord,
eternal truth attends thy word! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore till suns shall rise and set no more!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(Reach your hands out in a gesture of blessing or place your hands together over your heart and bow in a sign of Namaste. Once worship is concluded, consider being in touch with someone you know to share Christ's peace.)

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR SUBSTANCE

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Sonata in G major

Domenico Scarlatti

SONG OF PRAISE *(Please feel free to use either traditional or inclusive language.)*

*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

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:1-7

Bill Ladd

REFLECTION

"Lost & Found Department"

Rev. Dr. Jonathan New

GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

RITUAL ACTION - SEA GLASS AND SAND

THE MORNING PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (TOGETHER)

*Our Father, 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.
And 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.*

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION & INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION (TOGETHER)

*Healing One, there is no lockdown on your blessing
and no quarantine on grace.
Send your Spirit of life and love,
power and blessing
upon every table where your child shelters,
that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love
and this Cup poured out to give hope to all.
Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you.
Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.
Touch us, that all our brokenness may be made whole.
Guide us, that in our lostness we may yet
find our way and your Way.*

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

We are one in Christ in the bread we share.

Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We give you thanks, merciful God, for your acts of grace. We come to you, hearts rent and aware of our brokenness, and you put aside all anger in favor of steadfast love. We praise you, that though we sin we may yet be sanctified by you. We are grateful that we who are broken in our many ways may know your healing and receive your peace. We thank you that in this life-giving bread and wine, we may be renewed and reconciled with you, our sisters and brothers, and ourselves. Amen.

HYMN No. 88

My Shepherd, You Supply My Need
Beth Canterbury, soprano

Resignation

*My shepherd, you supply my need: most holy is your name;
in pastures fresh you make me feed, beside the living stream.
You bring my wandering spirit back when I forsake your ways;
you lead me, for your mercy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.*

*When I walk through the shades of death, your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows, your oil anoints my head.*

*Your sure provisions, gracious God, attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode, and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come;
no more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.*

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Allegro Giocoso

Joseph Haydn

†About Today's Worship – Our worship service draws on the resources of Marcia McFee, adapted. Worship series design and original music ©Worship Design Studio, used with permission.

*Online Communion (adapted) was written by the Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi. ©2020 Maren Tirabassi, all publishing rights reserved. Permission for congregations to use in worship or educational settings, including streaming.

Livestreamed & Recorded Worship

In consideration of the safety of our worship leaders and to demonstrate that everyone should avoid going out into public unless absolutely necessary our worship leaders will continue leading worship from their homes for the foreseeable future. *During this time, livestreamed and local access cable broadcasting of worship at the usual Sunday 10:30 a.m. worship time will continue as usual.*

Worship is at the very center of our life together as a congregation, as well as being at the heart of our call to proclaim and embody the good news of Jesus in the world. Church leaders remain committed to ensuring that we can do that well. Thanks in advance for your patience and understanding as we seek to do what is best for our worship leaders and right for our community while remaining a church that gives high priority to worship together as the Body of Christ. If you have feedback for our worship leaders please contact Jonathan at pastor@firstchurchnatick.org. We appreciate your input!

Post Worship Fellowship

11:30AM – 12:30 PM, on Zoom following livestream worship

Join us for an informal virtual gathering where we can greet one another, and – if the spirit strikes us – talk about the day's worship experience.

Join Zoom Meeting

Follow this link for the videocall: <https://zoom.us/j/314817921> or,

To join by phone: call in at (929) 205-6099, then enter 314817921# (and don't forget the # at the end!).

NOTE: Please be patient for the arrival of your Zoom host since he may still be transitioning from live-streaming the worship.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH 7, 2021 - MARCH 14, 2021

- Sunday, March 7**
- 10:30 AM Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus.
 - 11:30 AM Post Worship Fellowship via Zoom
 - 11:30 AM Godly Play LIVE! via Zoom
 - 2:00 PM Virtual Worship service will be available on the church website.
 - 5:00 PM Jr. Youth Group
 - 7:00 PM Sr. Youth Group
- Tuesday, March 9**
- 5:00 PM Children in grades 5/6
 - 7:00 PM Finance Team Meeting via Zoom
- Wednesday, March 10**
- 12:00 PM Mid-week Connection via Zoom
 - 7:00 PM Lenten Soul Sabbatical via Zoom
- Saturday, March 13**
- 5-7 PM Pickup your dinner from Chef Bob at FCN
- Sunday, March 14**
- 10:30 AM Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus.
 - 11:30 AM Post Worship Fellowship via Zoom
 - 2:00 PM Virtual Worship service will be available on the church website.

Together, We're Making A Difference!

Our church is responding to the current health crisis in innovative ways, by continuing to gather on Sundays in live-streamed worship, and being in fellowship and shared ministry through videoconferencing. Now we're also exploring how to further live into our identity as Natick's *Digital* Front Porch. Far from putting our mission on hold, this is the time when Spirit-led people can tend the spirits of others in our community feeling anxious and isolated. There's never been a more important time to proclaim and embody the Good News of God's abiding love given to us by Jesus!

We need your generous support of our shared ministry during this time when the offering plate isn't being passed during in-person worship. The average congregation receives only 16% of its household contributions from mailed, online, or auto-bill paid giving. Most comes through the offering plate. We're pleased that 63% of our giving is now coming in alternative ways. But, while this is a terrific shift, it still means that we're only seeing about two-thirds of our regular giving from church members and friends. If you haven't done so already, here's how you can shift your in-person offering plate giving to other giving means:

- Mailing in donations to: 2 East Central Street, Natick, MA, 01760.
- Making one-time or recurring gifts online through our church website and its secure giving platform: <http://firstchurchnatick.org/give-online>.
- Setting up auto-bill pay with your bank (usually be done online), just the same way you would for paying utility bills.

The world needs what FCC Natick can be and do, particularly in this time that is challenging all of us in unprecedented ways. Thanks for doing your part to make sure we can keep our unique and vibrant ministry going at just the moment it's needed most!

PRAYER LIST

Abby Robbins
Andi
Anna Hayes
Aphrodite Hoge
Becky Sherman
Canasta Solidaria
Carole
Chris Gobron
Connie Sullivan
Don Peterson
Eileen
Grandma Pat
Hailey
Ian
Jamie Polk
Jane Hall
Jenna Hayes
Joe
John
John Swaney
Karen
Kiara
Liam Schmitt
Margarita Ralios
Mark & Patty
Mark Crouch
Miriam's Mom
Nicholas
Oliver
Patrick
Randall D.
Ronnie
Stephan Gordon
Susan

Friends & Family of James S. Urda
Friends & Family of Justine
Friends & Family of Kevin B. Simmons
Friends & Family of Pat Hanks
Friends & Family of Don O'Meara
Friends & Family of Hannah Nickerson
Family & Friends of Nadena Wonkka
Family & Friends of Gregor and Kelsey
The Rodriguez Cruz family
Peter Sinesi & his family
Sara Hull & her family
Michelle, Catherine & Noah
Jen M. & family
Shirley & her family
Evelyn & her family
Jose Yadira and family
Katie and her family
Jean & Paul Joyce
Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey
Sari, Andrew & Tyler
Marcy Bailey-Adams
Sibyl Waterman Haley
John & Kay Hartman
Char & Tommy Hannon
Bonnie & George
Kenny and Ann Hoffman
Brian & Silvia Blackman
The people of Santa Maria Tzeja
All those struggling with substances
All those suffering from eating disorders
All those waiting at the border
Health Care Workers
Minimum Wage Workers
People feeling Isolated and Separated
People living at home in Difficult Situations
People searching for a Place to Live
The families and loved ones who have passed due
to the pandemic
Prayers for all those in Texas who are struggling to
stay warm and safe.
Prayers for college students back at school and
facing many challenges.
Praying for wisdom for teachers as they engage in
difficult shares or conversations with their
students.

Alice Bridinger
Amanda Sinesi
Audra Teague Mackey
Barbara Bidwell
Barbara Dickson
Beverly Newell
Bobby Pelletier
Brad Stickley
Carolyn Aycock
Cheryl Gowdy
Carolyn Sarbello
Chris Starks
Donna Shermerhorn
Ed Kinley
Faye Bishop
Federico Perea
Grace Osgood
Gerry Granfors
Heidi Burger
Jayne Hayes
Joan Hayes
Josh Stackhouse
Keith Jennings
Lynne Parker
Mary Cerreto
Mickey Nieman
Natalie Friend
Pam Dotter
Palma Casadio
Paul Ladd
Peter Cho
Peter McKinney
Richard Keller
Roger Hanson
Tiffany Spigarolo
Tim Porter

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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