

November 22-29, 2020 at

First Congregational United Church of Christ

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Worshiping Sundays at 10:30 AM via Zoom



Worship with Us This Sunday

[Click here](#) to worship with us by Zoom this Commitment Sunday at 10:30 AM as we mark the end of our stewardship season focused on the theme of "Wonder & Gratitude." Our Young Adult group will lead the service, with Michael Hopkins offering a stewardship moment and making music on the marimba; an original Call to Worship created by Emily Laing and Chris Byrne. The scripture text of Matthew 25 reflects an interpretation for our times, and the meditation will be offered by Abigail Cipparone and Olivia Hoynes. We will also be blessed by a meditative centering moment from Heather Goetsch and special music from Polly Gordon. We give thanks for Rev. Sam's leadership and the powerful way in which the Young Adult group embodies gratitude for a commitment to our faith community. Don't miss it!

Worship will be followed by a Zoom coffee hour. The suggested topic for discussion is: What are your favorite foods or traditions for Thanksgiving? How will you celebrate differently this year?

Stewardship Season Draws to a Close: Wonder & Gratitude

Throughout the 2020 stewardship season we have focused on "Wonder and Gratitude," as we have enjoyed the opportunity to hear from beloved members of our community as they share stories of gratitude related to the mission and ministries of our church. Never before have we been so mindful of the simple gift of being in community and worshiping God together. Let us renew our commitment to the community and mission of First Church by completing thoughtful pledges for 2021; we ask that you submit a pledge card or email your pledge to Assistant Treasurer Lucille Dickinson at lucilledickinson@aol.com by November 22, our Commitment Sunday. Thank you for your generosity in these challenging times. [Click here](#) to access the online pledge card.

Thanksgiving School Supplies Drive: To Support Wheatley Educational Campus

Through Thanksgiving, the Young Adults are conducting a School Supplies Drive to support the students of [Wheatley Educational Campus](#). Wheatley is a terrific Pre-K through 8 school located in the Trinidad neighborhood. Wheatley will be welcoming students back on campus on November 9. Therefore, First Church wants to help ensure that all the students are equipped for a great return to back to school learning.

We are so grateful for church member Troy Bent for helping organize this School Drive. For the last years, Troy has been a math teacher in their middle school. You can support the School Drive by purchasing from the Amazon Wishlist here: [Thanksgiving School Supplies Drive](#). If you have any questions, please email Rev. Sam at mcferran.sam@gmail.com. Thank you for supporting this important ministry!



Advent Wreaths & Table Tents for Your Home

November 29 marks the start of the season of Advent and a new year in the Christian Calendar. This year we invite everyone to create their own Advent wreath at home so we can light Advent candles together each Sunday morning in worship from home. [Click here](#) for an instructional video from Rev. Amanda and Simon including a few possibilities for making your own wreath. In Advent, we prepare our hearts to receive the sacred mystery of Jesus Christ being born among us once more. It is a season of great expectation and waiting. As a gift to accompany you in this season, First Church will send to active families/individuals a packet of table tents to be cut out and put together, one for each week of Advent and one for Christmas Eve. Each tent will include a reflection on our theme of Hygge: The Art of Comfort & Coziness and the weekly theme (Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love), a prayer, spiritual practices, and family activities. As we pray these prayers and engage in these practices together, may we be united across space and time this blessed season. If you did not receive a packet but would like one, please contact Cindy at churchoffice@firstuccdc.org.

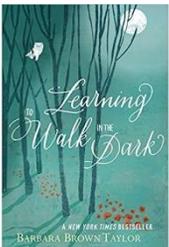


Blue Christmas Service: December 17 at 7:00 PM

[Click here](#) to join us for a Blue Christmas service on Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 PM. As we approach the longest night of the year on winter solstice, we await the birth of an inner light and dare to imagine that God will come to us again. The Blue Christmas service is traditionally a time to acknowledge the underside of "the most wonderful time of the year." This year, we are even more mindful of the stress, the amplified grief of loss, the sorrows of those living on life's edge, and the realities of a world in which violence is a lived experience for too many. From the coronavirus pandemic to bleak isolation, a racial reckoning, a challenging election season, and lowered expectations for what is possible this holiday season, we will lean into the ancient lament of our tradition as well as God's comfort. This service will meet us in our grief and struggle and lead us out toward the light with healing music, words that nurture, and the warmth of community. Join us and tend to your soul.

Help Lead Worship this Advent & Christmas Eve

[Click here](#) to sign up to serve as a reader or liturgist for the deeply-felt worship season ahead as we launch a new year in the cycle of the Christian calendar, beginning with the first Sunday of Advent on November 29. If you have trouble using Google docs, feel free to email Rev. Amanda to sign up and she will ensure your name goes on the sign-up sheet.



Theology Reading Group: Tuesday, December 15

The Theology Reading Group will next meet on Tuesday, December 15 to discuss Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, a book recommended by Rev. Amanda for Advent. The link is <https://georgetown.zoom.us/j/94474569293>. All are welcome!



RSVP for Christmas Cookie Exchange

Please let Care of Parish/Kristy Goodfellow Mills know by Friday, November 27 if you would like to participate in this year’s Christmas cookie exchange. This year, participants will be paired with someone in their geographic area and asked to make a door-step delivery of 1-2 dozen cookies any time during the month of December. We encourage all bakers to wash their hands frequently and wear a mask while baking their cookies. We want to ensure that this cookie exchange is as safe and fun as possible! If you’re interested, please send the following information to Kristy Goodfellow Mills at kristy.a.goodfellow@gmail.com or call/text (563)580-5558:

- Name
- Address where cookies should be delivered and any special instructions
- Email/phone
- Any allergies

Please also let Kristy know if you or someone else in our church family you are aware of may benefit from receiving cookies during December but are unable to participate in the exchange. We will make that list of names available to those in their geographic area.

Finally, if you are interested in sharing a cookie recipe, please email your recipe to Abigail Cipparone (abigailcipparone@gmail.com) by December 1. Abigail will combine and distribute the recipes in early December.



Comfort for the Journey Advent Nurture Series November 29 and December 6, 2020

For many of us, Advent is ushered in with words from Isaiah 40 and strains from Handel’s Messiah: “Comfort, comfort my people,” “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,” “In the wilderness, prepare a way for God.” These are words for our time as we navigate a pandemic and the deep divides revealed by our recent election. In these two nurtures, we will be sharing times when the comforting presence of God or the tender care of other people has calmed and quieted us and helped us find our way when we have felt lost or overwhelmed, blocked or immobilized, depressed or despairing. We will share how we have learned to comfort, care for, show compassion to ourselves. How our experiences of being comforted and cared for have helped us to offer comfort and care to others, build community and journey together.

Sharing on November 29: Fredda Sparks, Anthony Leonard, Robert Mann Thompson,

Sharing on December 6: Dwan Reece, Jessica Prentice, John Marsh

Please note that the church staff will observe a Thanksgiving break on Thursday and Friday, November 26 & 27

Prayer List

Prayers of healing for Peg Lorenz who is recovering from internal blood loss;
that she might gain strength and her spirit be restored.

We celebrate the arrival of baby Arthur James Mills, born to Kristy and Barry on Tuesday.
Welcome beloved child of God!

Prayers for the safe and successful transition of the incoming Biden administration.

Randy Jones, for treatment of basal cell carcinoma and missing his congregation.

Healing prayers for Larissa Prentice, sick with COVID

Dwan Reece and Peter Parsons, as Peter returns home after brain surgery.

Garnell Yarbrough, for continued healing

Immigrants in the Farmville ICE Detention Center

The Latinx and immigrant communities who are suffering

and for the Congregational Action Network

seeking to support and resource the congregations that serve them.

People's UCC, our sibling congregation

Emmanuel Okorie-Dunn and Ellen Bushmiller, who serve as nurses

Rev. Laura Johnson, who serves as a hospital chaplain

Hospital employees and first responders

Pat Ashbrook • Don Bassler



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church
Designated Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran

Director of Music – Mr. John Horman

Building Manager – Mr. Byron Adams

Administrative Assistant – Ms. Cindy Dobbs

Sexton – Ms. Ines Marquez

Members in Discernment – Dwight Davis, Lynaya Morris

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