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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Church Weekly Newsletter **January 23, 2026**

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

Worshiping Sundays at 10:30 am via Zoom and in person.

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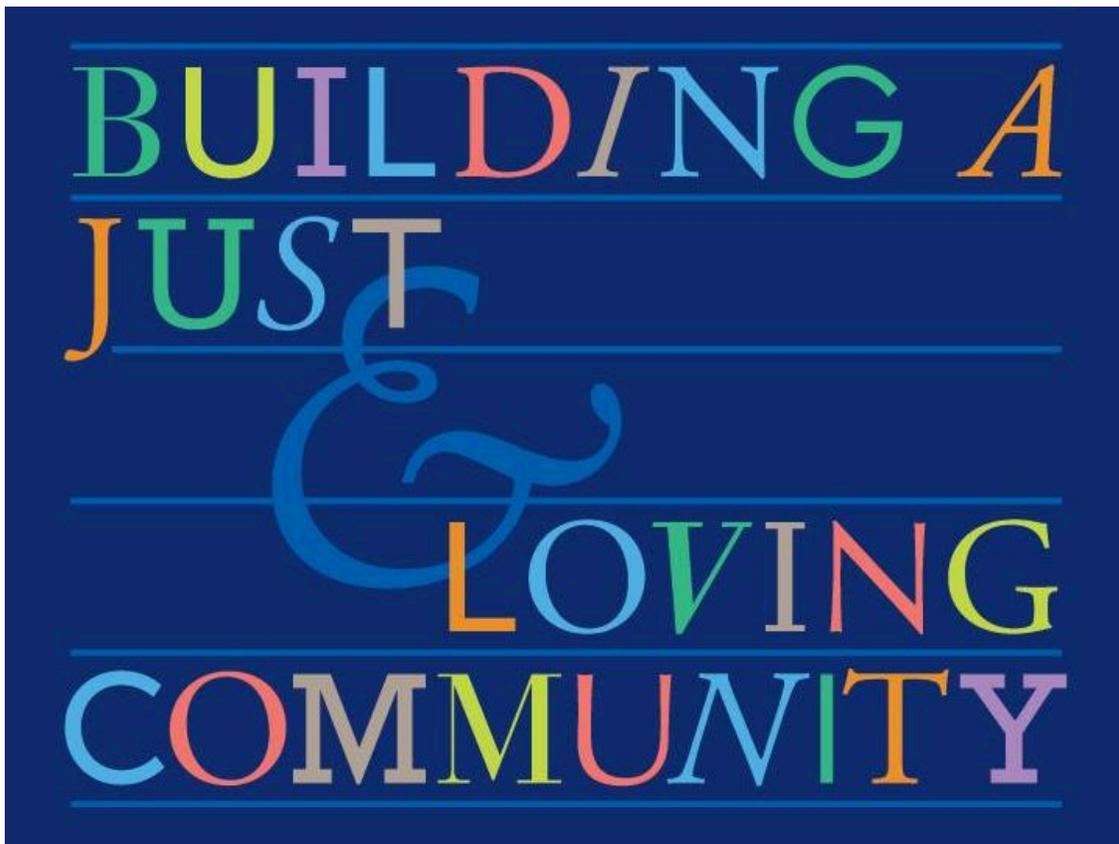
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Worship with Us



Due to the Winter Storm Warning in effect from Saturday evening until Monday morning, the decision has been made not to worship in the sanctuary this Sunday.

On this snowy Sunday, [click here](#) to join us on Zoom ONLY at 10:30 as we reflect on Jesus' call and our shared covenant. Dwan Reece, our outgoing Moderator, will offer a reflection as our call to worship. Rev. Sam will share a special message with our children. Trevor Bakker and Peter Byrne will serve as our scripture readers with focus texts from Psalm 27 (whom shall I fear?) and Matthew 4:12-23 (Jesus calls the disciples). Rev. Amanda will preach. We will also share in prayers of the people. Join us.

Due to the snowstorm, Sunday school has been cancelled this week.

Following worship, grab something warm to drink and join us on Zoom for our congregational meeting at noon, led by Dwan Reece. We will vote on the 2026 budget and commission a news slate of leaders. Please note that the soup luncheon originally planned as a fundraiser for our youth service trip has been rescheduled for February 1st.

This week's worship folder is available online [here](#).

Announcements

Lenten Antiracism Training: Sign Up Today

In keeping with our covenant to live into God's calling to be an antiracist church, we will offer a six-week antiracism training during Lent in 2026. As we seek to build a critical mass of members accompanying one another on the lifelong journey of antiracism, we especially invite new members and anyone active in church life, especially if you anticipate serving in a leadership capacity. The training will focus on content from the UCC's Sacred Conversations to End Racism. We will offer an online training co-facilitated by Dr. Vivian Jackson of Peoples Congregational UCC and the Rev. Dr. Marty Kuchma, Senior Minister of St. Paul's UCC in MD. The online cohort will meet Monday nights from 7:00-8:30pm on Feb 9 & 23, March 2, 9, 16 & 23. We will also offer an in-person training co-facilitated by Dr. Vivian Jackson and Saskia Campbell, member at Hope UCC and Executive Director of the George Mason University Career Services. The in-person cohort will meet on Wednesday nights from 7:00-8:30pm on Feb 11 & 25, March 4, 11, 18 & 25. The class will cost \$25 (scholarships available), and spaces will be limited. [Click here](#) to sign up now. Questions? Connect with Rev. Amanda. We give thanks for this opportunity to connect more meaningfully with God and one another as we face and dismantle racism in our hearts and in the world.

January 25: Congregational Meeting

Please join us for the Congregational Meeting at noon on Sunday, January 25 on Zoom, following the regular worship service. The topics on the agenda will include:

- Vote on the 2026 Budget
- Commission a new slate of leaders
- Other reports/issues from the community

Please plan to join us in conducting the church's important business. Your attendance and input at our three yearly Congregational Meetings enable us to determine how we live our faith and enact the policies to make this happen. We need full participation to ensure a quorum! Please contact Moderator, Dwan Reece or Assistant Moderator, Peter Tracey if you have questions or other agenda items. Materials for the annual meeting are available [here](#).

Soup Lunch: Postponed to February 1

The Care of Parish and Christian Ed Commissions will partner together to provide soup, bread and homemade cookies during coffee hour on February 1. There will be vegan and gluten free options. This is a fundraising activity for our Youth, so come prepared with some small bills to place in the collection vase.



Invitation to Show Up for Minneapolis

Minneapolis-based UCC clergy are calling for a presence of people of faith in Minneapolis on January 22-23. [Click here](#) to learn more, register, or support this gathering in other ways. They note, "This is a crisis of our Constitution, federal overreach, militarized enforcement, and the erosion of civil liberties. A crisis of our democracy. A crisis of our morals. A crisis of faith communities failing to live into a vision of Beloved Community. This is a crisis not confined to one city. It is a crisis all over the land..."

From the First Church Staff: A Gracious Thank You



Beloved Community, on behalf of the entire First Church staff, I want to express a depth of gratitude for your overwhelming expression of appreciation through the love offering taken up for us during the Christmas season. Thank you with my whole heart! Your gifts mean so much to each of us, and I pray that your generosity of spirit returns to you, as Jesus says in Luke's gospel, "pressed down, shaken together, and running over." What a blessing it is to serve the community that is First Church. God's love is made real in you. In Joy, Rev. Amanda

Sign-Up for Coffee Hour in 2026

Coffee Hour gives each of us an opportunity to provide a warm welcome to visitors and regular attenders alike by setting out drinks and snacks for post-worship fellowship. **For this to happen each Sunday, we need all members**

to sign up at least twice per calendar year. Care of Parish is scheduling for 2026. If you've not signed up for at least 2 dates in 2026, you can do so by

- Visiting our [SignUpGenius page](#) to select your preferred date
- Emailing us at copfirstuccdc@gmail.com with your requested date(s)
- Signing up on the paper calendar after church

If you're looking for additional information on our Coffee Hour Tradition you can go:

- [here](#) for background information
- or [here](#) for instructions

Thank you for supporting this vital ministry of hospitality. Together, we can ensure Coffee Hour continues to be a warm and welcoming space for all. Many hands make light work, so sign up today to take part in this vibrant tradition!

First Church Movie Group: January 28

The First Church Movie Group meets this month! We'll watch, on our own, *Reds* and then discuss it via Zoom:

Reds is a 1981 American epic historical drama film co-written, produced, and directed by Warren Beatty, about the life and career of John Reed, the journalist and writer who chronicled the October Revolution in Russia in his 1919 book *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Beatty stars in the lead role alongside Diane Keaton as activist Louise Bryant and Jack Nicholson as playwright Eugene O'Neill. It was well received when released and, in June 2008, the American Film Institute included it in the AFI's "10 Top 10"—the best ten films in ten "classic" American film genres. A head's up: it's long! A little over 3 hours.

We'll meet on Wednesday, January 28. Please [contact Anne Mascolino](#) if you would like to be sent the Zoom link for the discussion.

January's Second Sunday Special Offering: Free DC

In January, we will take up a second Sunday special offering for [Free DC](#), a movement led by the people of the District of Columbia to win dignity for our communities and exert our right to self-determination. Free DC fights to advance racial justice, centering the voices of Black and Brown residents of DC. They grow power through joyful celebrations of the culture and people of

DC. They work to protect DC Home Rule and toward a future of DC statehood. They also offer training in de-escalation and non-cooperation. Please give generously to support Free DC.



Sign-Up to Serve as a Scripture Reader or Liturgist

[Click here](#) to sign up to serve as a scripture reader or liturgist in worship this winter as we enter into Black History Month and the holy season of Lent. We welcome members and friends, local and far flung, adults, youth and children to participate. Your voice helps make us who we are, so please take a moment to sign up. Our worship is enriched by you! Questions? Email Rev. Amanda at ahendlervoss@gmail.com.



SIGNAL--A New Way to Communicate at First Church

The First Church Council is establishing a Signal group as a way for members to share information about upcoming events and programming. The group will only be available to individuals who are a part of the First Church community and each member can decide whether to participate. Individuals who opt-in will be able to access different group chats, such as a group focused on Christian Education events, one focused on social action events, and one for Young Adults. These groups represent initial ideas for sub-groups, and the Council can add additional groups for other commissions or interest areas. [Click here](#) for more information on the First Church Signal group and how to sign-up.

We look forward to rolling this out over the summer and will offer a Signal sign up tutorial on Homecoming Sunday in September. Please contact Dwan Reece (dreece111@verizon.net), Kristen Wheeler (dessertlady@mac.com) or Michael Enseki-Frank (michaelensekifrank@gmail.com) with any questions.

Prayer List

As we seek God and walk this journey of faith together, First Church gives thanks that we are a community that prays with and for one another. If you have a prayer request that you wish to be lifted up in service or included in the prayer list below, please email the church office (churchoffice@firstuccdc.org).

Prayers for justice, healing, and peace for the people of Minneapolis following the killing of Renee Nicole Good, and for our friends and former members there: Rev. Susie Hayward, Welling Hall, Rev. David Lindsey, and Susan Peacock.

Prayers of strength for David Hendler, Rev. Amanda's father-in-law, as he recovers from a fall and faces treatment for cancer.

Prayers of wisdom for all of the public servants being sworn in across the nation this month, that they would lead with compassion.

Prayers of compassion and care for all federal workers facing chaos, cruelty, and uncertainty.

Prayers of courage and strength for our democracy.

Prayers of support for Dale Ostrander, living with memory loss.

Prayers that God's strength and wisdom surround the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, the UCC's General Minister and President.

Prayers for peace and rebuilding in Gaza.

Prayers of mercy for the women of Afghanistan.

Prayers of peace and liberation for Sudan, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti.

Prayers of mercy for families struggling to eat and make ends meet.

Prayers for Peoples Congregational UCC, our sibling congregation.

Prayers of strength for Rev. Laura Simmons and Rev. Diana Gomez de Molina, who serve as chaplains.

Happening at First Church this Week

Sunday, January 25

9:30 am - Bible Workbench

10:30 am - Worship Service &

Sunday School

11:45 am - Congregational Meeting

Tuesday, January 27

Wednesday, January 28

12:15pm - Breakaway Meditation

Sunday, February 1

9:30 am - Bible Workbench

10:30 am - Worship Service &

Sunday School

11:45 am - Soup Lunch

10:30 am - Staff Meeting

6:00 pm - Drop-In Center

Reminders and Quick Links

Upcoming Coffee Hour Hosts

February 1: Goodfellow-Mills Family

February 8: Ethan Miller, Susan Anderson

[Instructions for Coffee Hour](#)

[2026 Coffee Hour Host Schedule](#)

Quick Links

[This Week's Worship Folder](#)

[This Month's Gabriel's Horn](#)

[Worship Service Recordings on YouTube](#)

[Online Member Directory via Servant Keeper](#)

[First Church Usher Schedule](#)

Community Bulletin Board

"The President's Own" Marine Band Chamber Concert:

January 25 at First Church

On January 25 at 2pm, the Marine Chamber Ensembles take the stage for this concert at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, DC, featuring Edward Gregson's Three Dance Episodes performed by a brass septet, plus, Franz Schubert's "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" ("The Shepherd on the Rock") will dazzle listeners with its clarinet and vocal duet. Flutist Staff Sgt. Christina Hughes and harpist Staff Sgt. Taylor Fleshman perform a duet on William Alwyn's *Niades*. Alwyn was a prolific composer described by contemporaries as "avant-garde," and also wrote concerti for violin, viola, oboe, and piano, five symphonies, song cycles and three large-scale operas. Full program available [here](#). This concert is free and open to the public--no tickets are required.

NOTE: As of publishing time, the Marine Band Chamber Concert is still scheduled. Please check [their website](#) for weather updates and cancellations before travelling to attend the concert.

Freedom and Resistance: an exhibition inspired by The 1619 Project

In celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month, the DC Public Library presents the exhibition *Freedom and Resistance: an exhibition inspired by The 1619 Project*. It will be on display in the Great Hall of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library from Jan. 16 - Mar. 15. The exhibition features three sections, created in collaboration with the editors of The New York Times Magazine and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones and educators from The Pulitzer Center.

The Community Bulletin Board serves as a place for members to share announcements or requests. Submissions should be [emailed to Whitney](#) no later than noon on Thursday to be included in that week's newsletter. Announcements will be included as space allows.



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