



"The Baptism of Christ" by Pheoris West

January 11, 2026
Sunday Worship

First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

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

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*During the prelude, we invite you to quiet your heart,
meditating on God's presence as we prepare for worship.*

PRELUDE *Meditation* Daniel Light

WELCOME Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

*OPENING HYMN "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" #1

CALL TO WORSHIP Joseph Darling-LaGamma

TIME WITH CHILDREN Rev. Sam McFerran

* PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD Rev. Sam McFerran
Please greet those around you with words such as "The peace of God be with you." For those joining us online, please unmute to pass the peace. Let us bless one another with deep peace across time and space.

READING FROM THE PROPHETS Michael Enseki-Frank
Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon this one, who will bring forth justice to the nations. My servant will not cry or speak out, nor be heard in the street; a bruised reed my servant will not break, nor quench a dimly burning wick, but will faithfully bring forth justice. My servant will not grow faint or be crushed until justice has been established in the earth and the coastlands wait for this one's teaching.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in shadow. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Abby Goodman-Johnson

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Child, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

SONG OF PREPARATION

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto My Feet"

page 4

SERMON

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

CHORAL ANTHEM

Fill-A Me Up!

Pepper Choplin

OFFERING

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

As we worship virtually and in person, we invite you to give in a variety of ways. Place your offering in the plate, send your check to the office, or [give online](#) via PayPal or Vanco. Consider signing up for auto-giving.

*DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One Triune God whom we adore. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, PASTORAL PRAYER
& PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Adapted by Mark Berry

O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere! Release a space to plant your Presence here. Imagine your possibilities now. Embody your desire in every light and form. Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom. Untie the knots of failure binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others' faults. Help us not forget our Source, yet free us from not being in the Present. From you arises every Vision, Power and Song from gathering to gathering. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

BENEDICTION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

POSTLUDE

During the postlude we invite you to come forward as the Spirit moves you to the baptismal font to remember your baptism. You may wish to dip your fingers in the water and touch them to your head as a ritual of remembrance and a renewal of your baptismal promises.

Music reprinted with permission by One License A-720443.

* Indicates “Please Rise in Body or in Spirit”

THE WORD

Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet 458

Refrain

Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my path. Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my path. When I feel a-fraid, and I think I've lost my way, still you're there right be - side me. Noth-ing will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end.

Fine

D7 to Refrain

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

1

Walter C. Smith, 1867; alt.

1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 36:6

1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 Your life is life - giv - ing— to both great and small;
 4 So per - fect your glo - ry, so bril - liant your light,

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 not want - ing, not wast - ing, but rul - ing in might;
 in all life you're liv - ing, the true life of all;
 your an - gels a - dore you, all veil - ing their sight;

Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 Your jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove,
 We blos - som and flour - ish as leaves and as flowers,
 All praise we now ren - der as your an - gels do:

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, your great name we praise.
 your clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
 then with - er and per - ish— but naught dims your powers.
 in awe at the splen - dor of light hid - ing you.

Walter C. Smith, minister of the Free Church of Scotland and later moderator of the Assembly, wrote poetry as a retreat from work and to say what could not be fully expressed in the pulpit.

Tune: ST. DENIO 11.11.11.11.
 Adapt. from a Welsh ballad in John Roberts' Caniadaeth y Cysegr, 1839

Go Tell It on the Mountain

154

African-American spiritual
 Arr. John W. Work II, 1907

Luke 2:8-20; Isa. 18:3; 52:7

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

Last time, end

Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

to Refrain

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
 Rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 And God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Welcome to First Congregational UCC in Washington DC!

Connect with us!

If you are worshipping from afar but would like to connect with the First Church community, please [click here](#) to fill out an online Visitor's Card and check out our newsletters at our website, www.firstuccdc.org. We welcome you warmly!

About Today's Cover Art

The Baptism of Jesus Christ by Pheoris West

This contemporary piece, oil on canvas, by North American artist Pheoris West, depicts a Black Jesus standing in the water as his baptism begins. The face of Jesus is looking forward toward the viewer. Sorrowful and contemplative, is Jesus seeing what will happen to him? Is the artist asking us to see the past of the African American experience and the sorrow that comes with remembering? A sharp angular silhouette of John the Baptist is on the far right. The black arms and hands surrounding Jesus are the arms of John holding Jesus. Also notable is the face of shadow, perhaps an African mask, as it merges with the light to the left of Jesus.

Families with Children

Children, complete with their wiggles and noises, are welcome in worship! At First Church, we provide Sunday school during the academic school year for preschool - 6th Grade and nursery care for infants and toddlers in our Christian Education (CE) suite on the second floor. If you would like to be added to our listserv for First Church families, please contact Rev. Sam at mcferran.sam@gmail.com. We are so grateful to welcome your children into our life together at First Church!

Assisted Listening Devices

We offer assisted listening devices with either headphones or loops to connect directly to hearing aids. Please see an usher if you would like to use an assisted listening device.

Coffee Hour Following Worship

All are invited to join us for coffee, light refreshments, and fellowship in the lobby immediately following worship. Upcoming Coffee Hour Hosts:

January 18: Fredda Sparks

January 25: Kim Darling, Kiss Family

Invitation Cards

Stop by the Usher's Table to pick up one or more of the invitation cards. We invite members to use them to invite someone in your circle to come to First Church with you.

Thank You to Today's Worship Participants & Volunteers

Worship Leaders: Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss & Rev. Sam McFerran

Musicians: Dennis Turner, First Church Choir

Call to Worship: Joseph Darling-LaGamma

Readers: Michael Enseki-Frank, Abby Goodman-Johnson

Sanctuary Set-up: Ann Bushmiller

Ushers: Mary Pence, Charlotte Simpson, Nan McConnell

Coffee Hour Hosts: Kristen & Whit Wheeler

Zoom Moderator: Alyx Cheng

A/V Technician: Dwight Davis

Sunday Morning Coordinator: Moe Shorter

Happening at First Church

Today Following Worship: Congregational Budget Hearing

Please join us today following worship, for a budget hearing in advance of our congregational meeting on January 25th. The budget hearing will unpack the proposed 2026 budget and the recommendation of the Investment Commission to transfer money from our endowment to the fund to bridge our structural deficit. Time for Q & A will be included. Then, at the congregational meeting, we will vote on the budget and commission a new slate of leaders as we give thanks for those who guided our ministries through 2025. Please save these dates and plan to join us.

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.



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. The link to sign up is in the weekly newsletter. 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.

For more information on the life and ministry of First Church, scan the QR code to view our most recent weekly newsletter.



Prayer List

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, and Rev. David Lindsey.

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 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, serving as chaplains.

Welcome to First Congregational UCC. We were founded in 1865 by abolitionists as one of the first racially integrated church in Washington, D.C. In 1867 our mission committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. The church has been located at its present site at 10th and G Streets NW since 1868. In more recent years, the church affirmed its vision as an Open and Affirming (ONA) Church (1987), a Just Peace Church (1985), Multiracial/Multicultural Church (2003), and an Anti-Racist Church (2021). Our new building, constructed according to Gold LEED standards, was dedicated in 2012. First Church continues to follow its faith journey into the future and to be a prophetic voice for the Spirit in the nation's capital. If you would like to know more about First Church or would like to make it your spiritual home and community, please contact churchoffice@FirstUCCDC.org or 202.628.4317.



Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church
Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss
Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran
Building Manager – Byron Adams
Sexton – Ines Marquez
Administrative Assistant – Whitney McColley
Member in Discernment – Lynaya Morris

945 G Street NW, Washington DC 20001
Phone: 202.628.4317 • Fax: 202.347.4911
www.firstuccdc.org

Follow us online:   