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# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## **First Church Weekly Newsletter** **February 27, 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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**Worship with Us**



Join us at 10:30 in the sanctuary or [click here](#) to join us by Zoom on this Communion Sunday in Lent as we continue our theme, "Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in Good News this Lent." Alisa Tanaka-Dodge and Tadashi Dodge will serve as our Lenten candle liturgists, offering a personal reflection and extinguishing another candle as we make our way toward the shadows of Holy Week. Abby Goodman-Johnson and Louisa Jensen will serve as our scripture readers with focus texts from Luke 7:36-50 (a woman anoints Jesus' feet) and Matthew 25:35-40 (as you did it unto the least of these). Rev. Amanda will preach. Omari Hardy will sing "Go Down, Moses," accompanied by Dennis Turner. Rev. Amanda and Rev. Sam will invite us to the communion feast. For those joining us from home, please prepare your table with the elements of bread and cup, which we will bless and break together. Join us!

Our children will begin Sunday morning in their classrooms in the Christian Education suite for Sunday school with Rev. Sam. They will join us in the sanctuary for communion. The nursery will be open for infants and toddlers.

Following worship, all are invited to join us in the Community Hall for a potluck meal. Please bring a dish to share; we especially welcome vegan and gluten free options to ensure food for all.

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

## Announcements

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### **TOMORROW: All-Church Talent Show**

We're excited for our upcoming Church Talent Show, and you're invited! The Talent Show will be on Saturday, February 28 starting at 6pm in the First Church Sanctuary.

Come one, come all to an evening of joy, laughter, and community as we showcase our incredible talents within our congregation. From singing and dancing to poetry, comedy, and unique surprises, there's something for everyone to enjoy!

Let's come together to celebrate the gifts God has given us. Don't miss this special event—mark your calendars today!

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### **This Sunday: Community Potluck**

Bring a favorite dish to share on Sunday, March 1 for our monthly community potluck. There isn't a theme this month so have fun. We are thrilled at the turnout we've had recently at First Church so instead of serving 6, Care of Parish suggests thinking about a dish that can serve 8.

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### **March 8: Nurture with Tommy's Pantry**



Following worship on Sunday, March 8, we will welcome Adrienne Tilton, the Vice President of Tommy's Pantry for a conversation in the Community Hall. Tommy's Pantry has been a long term service partner of First Church. Volunteers of all ages from First Church have helped serve and package goods over the last five years. Tommy's Pantry serves individuals in the greater Silver Spring area who are facing food insecurity by providing them with fresh and packaged food, as well as toiletries. A majority of their beneficiaries are immigrants. Please

come join us to hear Adrienne provide an update on Tommy's Pantry during this important time of caring for and protecting our neighbor. Whether you are a volunteer or a congregant who has not been able to volunteer but is eager to learn more, we hope you can attend this important nurture. Tommy's Pantry will be the beneficiary of March's Second Sunday offering. The nurture will also be available via zoom. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Rev. Sam at [mcferran.sam@gmail.com](mailto:mcferran.sam@gmail.com) or 202-294-5437.

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### **Spring Nurture Series: Faith Communities' Role in Nonviolent Resistance**

Please join us for our **Spring Nurture Series** that will explore the visionary roles faith communities play in leading to successful nonviolent movements and “people power” initiatives for resistance and positive social change.



- What are the “six superpowers that faith communities bring to nonviolent struggle” (Stepan 2025), and how can citizen activism advance positive social change on key civic issues?
- How have faith communities historically engaged in visionary moral action made a significant impact?
- What are the lessons from faith communities in action for contemporary civic activism today?

This film and discussion series will draw directly on the perspectives of leading faith communities and civil society activists through documentary films and formal presentations of successful “people power” initiatives for social change at the local, national, and global levels. The series will focus on the visionary pioneers of key people power movements, the role of faith communities in the Civil Rights and anti-War movements in the United States, the moral witness of faith leaders and the rise of people power movements in the Arab World, Estonia, Liberia and beyond, and the role of faith communities and citizen activism in advancing democracy and constructive social change in the United States and around the world!

Venue & Time: First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, D.C., Community Room, March 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 12:00 pm-1:30 pm.

Nurture Co-Leaders: Jim Riker and Sandy Sorenson and all congregation members!

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### **Lenten Devotional: Tell Me Something Good**

On Sunday, pick up a daily devotional booklet provided by A Sanctified Art, beckoning you deeper into the theme, "Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News this Lent." The devotional includes reflections, visual art, journal prompts, music, scripture readings and poetry; it is designed for adults and older youth. Enjoy this guide to the holy season as an invitation to deepen your spiritual practice of observing Lent. Devotional booklets will be available at the usher's station on Sunday mornings.

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### **Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in Good News this Lent**

Our worship theme in Lent this year will ground us in something good. At the heart of Jesus' teachings, we find liberation, love, mercy, and grace—all of which are meant to be very good news for us all. This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is *good news*. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It



tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world. We hope this series will provide fertile ground, rooting our hearts and lives in the expansive goodness of God. May the good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.

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### **Sanctuary As A Faith Practice: March 11**

Join Congregation Action Network, our Sanctuary Committee, and local communities of faith for a workshop featuring the Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra, one of the founders of the new sanctuary movement and Academic Dean at Fuller Seminary. We will dive into the the historic Sanctuary Movement and the lived experience of congregational solidarity during moments of state escalation, including the occupation of Los Angeles. Drawing from decades of organizing, theological reflection, and frontline leadership, Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra will guide participants in discerning how faith communities can move

beyond symbolic witness into durable solidarity. This event will take place in our sanctuary from 1:30 - 3:30pm on Wednesday, March 11th. To learn more, reach out to Susan Saudek or Jody Kenney. We thank the Sanctuary Committee for helping to host this meaningful workshop.

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### **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](mailto: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!

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### **Sign-Up to Serve as a Scripture Reader this Lent - Easter**

[Click here](#) to sign up to serve as a scripture reader or liturgist in worship this holy season of Lent and Easter through Earth Sunday. 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 your participation.



## **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](mailto:dreece111@verizon.net)), Kristen Wheeler ([dessertlady@mac.com](mailto:dessertlady@mac.com)) or Michael Enseki-Frank ([michaelensekifrank@gmail.com](mailto:michaelensekifrank@gmail.com)) with any questions.

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## **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](mailto:churchoffice@firstuccdc.org)).*

Prayers of comfort for Gail Sonnemann and her family, following the death of her beloved mother, Betsy.

Prayers of healing and comfort for Steve Guy, father of First Church staff member Whitney McColley, as he recovers from multiple heart procedures.

Prayers of blessing and gratitude for Lindsay Swisher as she relocates to Detroit for a new job.

Prayers of support for Bob, the father of Rev. Laura Simmons, who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Prayers for justice, healing, and peace for the people of Minneapolis 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, 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

### **Saturday, February 28**

6:00pm - All-Church Talent Show

### **Sunday, March 1**

9:30 am - Bible Workbench

10:30 am - Worship Service &  
Sunday School

11:45 am - Community Potluck

### **Tuesday, March 3**

10:30 am - Staff Meeting

6:00 pm - Drop-In Center

7:00 pm - Worship Commission

### **Wednesday, March 4**

12:15 pm - Breakaway Meditation

7:00 pm - Care of Parish

### **Sunday, March 8**

9:30 am - Bible Workbench

10:30 am - Worship Service &  
Sunday School

11:45 am - Coffee Hour

12:00 pm - Tommy's Pantry Nurture

## Reminders and Quick Links

### **Upcoming Coffee Hour Hosts**

March 1: Ann & Tony Saudek, Kristy Goodfellow & Barry Mills

March 8: Sophie Jones, Polly Gordon, Nora Marsh

March 15: Jaimie Orr, Jody & Mike Kenney

[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

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### **From the Justice and Witness Action Center: A Virtual Convening on Local Boycott Efforts**

As consumers, we have the power to challenge corporate complicity by withholding our dollars and spreading awareness to other consumers. Come learn about local boycott movements, how to get involved and explore how we might do so *together*. This event builds on our JWAN DC virtual gathering last October, when we came together to explore how we might work together toward Justice for DC communities. Loving our neighbor includes countering the forces that create our neighbor's distress. The Zoom meeting will take place on March 3 at 6:30pm. Register [here](#). For more information, contact Emily Parker at [parkerec@gmail.com](mailto:parkerec@gmail.com).

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### **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.

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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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