

GABRIEL'S HORN



First Congregational United Church of Christ

March 2026

Beloved Community,

A season of reflection is upon us as we begin the journey of Lent. In these forty days, we turn inward to prepare our hearts to receive the mystery of resurrection celebrated on Easter. This year's theme, "Tell Me Something Good: Grounding ourselves in Good News this Lent," insists that at the heart of the gospel we find the good news of God's unrelenting love made known in Jesus Christ. In a time when we are beleaguered by bad news, my prayer is that our sanctuary is a harbor for imagination and the joy of beloved community. We cannot put off joy until Easter, for God created us for abundant living even amidst adversity. Our joy is part of our resilience, and we must have it in every season. So I invite you to cross the threshold of our sanctuary expecting an encounter with Love Divine. Crack your heart open to the victorious claim that God's unbreakable love is the foundational truth of all creation, even when it seems like the gates of hell are prevailing. Embrace gratitude as we embody, in beloved community, another world already here.



This month there are many ways to show up in community. On March 15th, we will welcome the Rev. Dr. Ron Hopson as our guest preacher. On March 28th, we will join in what promises to be the largest day of citizen protest in US history for the "No Kings" mobilization. The very next day, we will mark Palm & Passion Sunday as we remember Jesus' humble entry into Jerusalem to confront the powers and principalities, a confrontation that resulted in his death on the cross. On Maundy Thursday, April 2nd, we invite you to join us for an experiential journey through Holy Week as we observe the Last Supper, pray with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, and remember Jesus' trial and crucifixion.

Throughout the month, we will offer educational opportunities to strengthen our ability to act in the struggle for justice. Our Lenten "Antiracism as My Spiritual Practice" circles continue. After worship nurture programs include learning more about Tommy's Pantry, continuing our series "Faith Communities' Role in Nonviolent Resistance," and a Congregation Action

Network workshop exploring the history of the Sanctuary movement and lived experiences of continuing that legacy today.

Last month, church archivist Judith Gray unearthed an astounding discovery about our history: the gathering place at which it was voted that a new, antislavery Congregational church would be formed in DC was held in the office of Jacob Bigelow, a leader in DC's underground railroad. In his personal residence on the other side of the office wall, runaway teenager Anne Maria Weems once hid away for six weeks before being disguised so she could journey on to freedom. What a legacy of moral courage we have been given! May the Spirit of the Living God continue to inspire us to be the beloved community.

In Gratitude,
Rev. Amanda

Council Capsule

Council Capsule February 2026

Council convened on February 10th for the first meeting of the 2026 term. Key topics/votes included the following:

- Please consider updating your photo for the directory.
- Preparation for music coverage as Ulung remains out and certain related logistics.
- An update from CE regarding ongoing OWL classes and the youth service trip to Detroit.
- Discussion of upcoming inter generational activities like volunteering and the Feb 28 talent show.
- Discussion of recordkeeping and proper documentation of church processes as well as the need to review commission charters.
- Updates on staffing of certain commissions and the 2025 final actual budget.
- Passage of routine yearly motions on scheduling the Fall and Spring congregational meetings, authorizing the treasurer to make certain routine payments, and the adoption of the yearly pastoral housing allowance.
- Creation of Church Documentation Working Group to temporarily help with updating records.

If you have questions, please reach out to Peter Tracey, Moderator (peter.l.tracey@gmail.com) or Michael Enseki-Frank, Assistant Moderator (michaelensekifrank@gmail.com).

Submitted by Abigail Cipparone, Clerk

Christian Education

Confirmation Journey: The Joy of Community and Question



We are delighted to share First Church's Confirmation Cohort is off to a wonderful start. Jonah, Laura, Riley, Miyako, Simon and Brendan began their journey in January. We've had five wonderful classes exploring the foundations of our faith by exploring what the Gospel, the Bible and the Sacraments mean to us. They've done a wonderful job creating a safe and supportive space to ask

questions and to recognize the uniqueness of each person's own faith journey. Each confirmand is paired with a fantastic mentor who not only help teach one of the classes, but have monthly check-ins with their confirmand. The Confirmands want to thank Thaddaeus Elliott, Diane Brenneman, Rev. Amanda, Michael Hopkins, Katie Koza, and David Greer for take the time to being such wonderful mentors.

In February, many of the Confirmands volunteered with Seabury Resources for the Aging "Age in Place" program where we tried to help older Washingtonians live in safe and dignified conditions by providing housecleaning services in their apartment. While the volunteer opportunity was cut short due to unforeseen circumstances, we were grateful to be together and be in relationship with the staff from Seabury and the residents.

Confirmation will culminate on Youth Sunday on May 17th. At that service, the Confirmands will share their "I Believe" statements and discern whether they want to join First Church as full time members.





Adult Education Opportunities this Winter & Spring

Please join us following worship on Sundays for a variety of programming to nurture the soul and deepen relationships:

March

March 1: Community Potluck

March 8: A Conversation with Tommy's Pantry, led by Rev. Sam

March 15: "Faith Communities' Role in Nonviolent Resistance" led by Jim Riker & Sandy Sorensen

March 22: "Faith Communities' Role in Nonviolent Resistance" led by Jim Riker & Sandy Sorensen

March 29 (Palm Sunday): Inquirer's Gathering with Rev. Amanda

April

April 5: Easter pancake breakfast

Nurture on Tommy's Pantry: March 8th, 12 PM – 1 PM

On March 8th, we will welcome Adrienne Tilton, the Vice President of Tommy's Pantry. 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 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 also 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 or 202-294-5437.

Spring Nurture Series: Faith Communities' Role in Nonviolent Resistance

Please join us for a spring nurture series that will explore the visionary roles that 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 15th and 22nd, 12:00 pm-1:30 pm.

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

Care of Parish

Care of Parish Save-the-Dates

- Sunday, March 1: Community Potluck
- Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday Meal
- Sunday, April 5: Easter Pancake Breakfast

Maundy Thursday April 2: Food Donations Needed

We are planning for 60 people - at least - for a simple meal prior to proceeding into the worship service. Contributions needed:

- 8 bags of pita
- 9 tubs of hummus
- 2 large bags (approx 50) madarins
- 6 bags of dried fruit
- 3 large bags nuts
- 3 bottles of olives
- 4 bags CUBED cheese

Contributions should be marked and left in Kitchen by March 29 so Care of Parish can fill in as needed. Thank you.

Easter Pancake Breakfast

Plan to join us for the annual -always wonderful - Easter Pancake Breakfast immediately following the Easter Sunday Service in the Community Hall. Care of Parish is currently organizing this event and is looking for volunteers! We need help with -- 1) specialty pancake makers, 2) set-up on Saturday and 3) clean-up on Sunday. In addition, we could use a couple more electric griddles. If you're interested in helping in any of these ways, please contact Susan Anderson (ssba@gmail.com) or Nan McConnell (nancyfmccconnell@aol.com). Thank you.

Coffee Hour

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!

Facilities

Coming Up at Live at 10th and G



**Friday Morning
Music Club**

[Friday Morning Music Club](#) Downtown DC Chamber Series. March 20 at noon. Featuring a variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles.

[Vocal Arts DC presents Quinn Kelsey & Craig Ketter.](#)

March 1 at 5:00 pm. This intimate recital explores themes of adventure, nostalgia, and reflection

through Ralph Vaughan Williams' Songs of Travel, a stirring cycle that captures the spirit of the wandering soul. Complementing this journey, selections from Aaron Copland's Old American Songs celebrate the heart of American folk traditions.



[Washington Bach Consort presents Metal and Gut: Two "Violas of Love."](#) March 6 at 7:00 pm. The Viola d'Amore was an instrument unique in timbre and resonance that evoked special emotions in operas and cantatas of the finest Baroque composers.

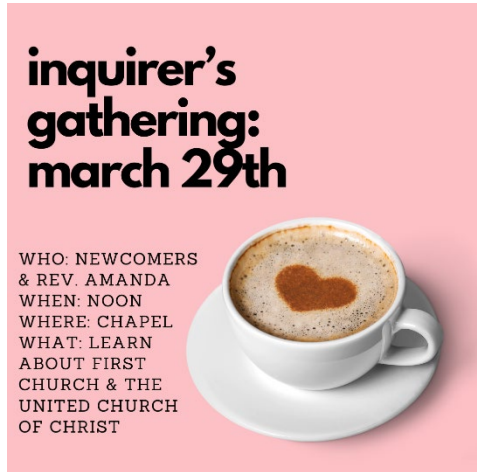
[EmpowerDC](#) Membership Meeting. March 7, 10:00 am. Empower DC advances racial, economic and environmental justice by organizing the political power of DC's lowest income residents.



Outreach & Membership

Inquirers' Gathering: March 29th

Save the date of March 29th at noon to join Rev. Amanda, our Outreach & Membership leaders, and other newcomers for our spring Inquirer's Gathering. This will be a time of getting to know one another, sharing stories, exploring the history of First Church and the UCC, and answering any questions about membership. All newcomers are welcome to attend! This gathering will take place in the upstairs chapel; if you need a Zoom option, please let Rev. Amanda know. If you plan to attend, please email Rev. Amanda at ahendlervoss@gmail.com; however, you do not have to RSVP to attend.



**inquirer's
gathering:
march 29th**

WHO: NEWCOMERS
& REV. AMANDA
WHEN: NOON
WHERE: CHAPEL
WHAT: LEARN
ABOUT FIRST
CHURCH & THE
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Social Action & Awareness

March Second Sunday Special Offering: Tommy's Pantry



We invite you to give generously to our Second Sunday special offering in March, [Tommy's Pantry](#). Tomm's Pantry proudly carries the name of the late Tommy Raskin, whose unwavering belief in ensuring human dignity is the foundation and guiding principle of this valued partner organization. Each month, Tommy's Pantry distributes food boxes, wellness boxes and fresh produce boxes, including to immigrant neighbors. Our children and youth frequently volunteer with Tommy's Pantry by packing food boxes. On Sunday, March 8th, we invite you to attend a nurture program led by Rev. Sam with Adrian Tilton of Tommy's Pantry to learn more about their work and the ways we can deepen our

collaboration.

March 28: Save the Date to Activate Your Voice!



Join us on Saturday, March 28th for No Kings 3 Protest, which promises to be the largest day of citizen protest in U.S. history. Americans rejected the rule of kings 250 years ago and are coming together to reaffirm and re-assert their commitment for a thriving democracy that respects the rule of law and ensures justice for all.

First Church encourages you to bring your family, children, grandchildren and friends for this momentous day! Let's show the world what true patriotism is!

As plans for the day are evolving, our meet-up location and time is still to be determined. We encourage you to sign up for the Social Action signal group to connect with others who plan to attend this event. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Riker (jvriker@gmail.com).

Sanctuary

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.



Worship

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

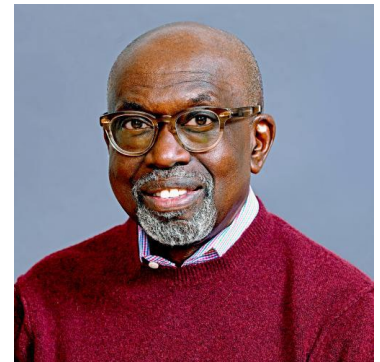


Our worship theme in Lent this year will ground us in something good. At the heart of Jesus' teachings, we find liberation, love, mercy, and grace—all of which are meant to be very good news for us all. This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is good news. It grows like a mustard seed and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

March 15th Guest Preacher: Dr. Ron Hopson

On March 15th, we welcome the Rev. Dr. Ron Hopson back into our pulpit. Dr. Hopson is Associate Professor of Psychology and Divinity at Howard University. Dr. Hopson received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Michigan State University. He attended Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Northwestern University and is ordained in the United Church of Christ. His most current work is in the area of Sexuality and the Black Church, for which he was honored with a Prophetic Ministry Award by Ministers for Racial, Social, and Economic Justice at the 2021 General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Dr. Hopson previously served this congregation and continues to be a beloved friend. He recently preached the Gospel Christmas Service at the Washington National Cathedral, where he worships. We warmly welcome home the Rev. Dr. Ron Hopson!



Easter Flower Orders



Members are invited to order an Easter plant in honor of or in memory of a loved one. On Easter Sunday, their names will appear in our worship folder. The order form is available for those worshipping in the sanctuary; please fill it out and place it in the offering plate on the way out of worship. Or you can use the online order form available [here](#). Payments can be made online via Vanco or PayPal (indicate

Easter flowers) or by mailing a check (with Easter Flowers on the memo line) to the church at 945 G Street NW, Washington, DC, 20001. You may also email your order information to the church office at churchoffice@firstuccdc.org. Please note that all orders must be received by Sunday, March 29th. Questions? Contact Whitney at churchoffice@firstuccdc.org.

Maundy Thursday Worship: April 2 at 6:30

Join us for a powerful experience of the Holy Week journey on Maundy Thursday. We will begin in the Community Hall with a simple middle eastern meal and communion feast as we remember the last supper; we will move to the chapel to pray with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, then we will move to the sanctuary as we remember Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Please join us for one of the most deeply felt services of the year, brimming with music, scripture, and prayer. This hybrid service will take place in person and also be accessible on Zoom, beginning at 6:45 (after the meal), by [clicking here](#).



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.

This Month at First Church: March 2026

Sunday, March 1

9:30 am Bible Workbench
10:30 am Worship Service
& Sunday School
11:45 am Community Potluck

Monday, March 2

7:00 pm Finance Commission

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 Break Away Meditation
7:00 pm Care of Parish Commission

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

Tuesday, March 10

10:30 am Staff Meeting
6:00 pm Drop-In Center
6:30 pm Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 11

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation
1:30 pm Sanctuary as a Faith Practice
7:00 pm O&M Commission

Sunday, March 15

9:30 am Bible Workbench
10:30 am Worship Service
& Sunday School
11:45 am Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Spring Nurture Series

Monday, March 16

7:30 pm CE Commission

Tuesday, March 17

10:30 am Staff Meeting
6:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, March 18

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation
7:00 pm Facilities Commission
7:00 pm SAAC Commission

Sunday, March 22

9:30 am Bible Workbench
10:30 am Worship Service
11:45 am Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Spring Nurture Series

Tuesday, March 24

10:30 am Staff Meeting
6:00 pm Drop-In Center

Wednesday, March 25

12:15 pm Break Away Meditation

Saturday, March 28

Time TBD No Kings Protest

Sunday, March 29: Palm & Passion Sunday

9:30 am Bible Workbench
10:30 am Worship Service
11:45 am Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Inquirers' Gathering

Tuesday, March 31

10:30 am Staff Meeting
6:00 pm Drop-In Center

We are an Open & Affirming congregation, welcoming all LGBTQ+ individuals and families into the full life and leadership of our church.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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

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