



Photo by Kaan Durmus

July 5, 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

Prelude

William H. Harris

WELCOME

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

*OPENING HYMN

"How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies"

#594

PRAYER OF CONFESSION & SILENT PRAYER

Rev. Laura Simmons

Eternal God, before you nations rise and fall. We cannot hide the grim contradiction that has always defined America—our proclamation of justice and liberty for all and our original sin of slavery. Denying freedom for some has harmed us all, restraining our full potential. And yet the unsung heroes of our nation have always believed in the promise of liberty, even when it was denied them. Help us to believe too that your kingdom will come here on earth as we build your beloved community. Renew our nation, we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Beloved Community, hear the good news made known in Jesus Christ: there is no chasm that cannot be bridged, no loss that cannot be redeemed by the grace of God. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

MOMENT FOR POETRY

"The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus

Rev. Jason Carson Wilson

* PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

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 HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Sandy Sorensen

2 Samuel 11: 27b-12:1-20

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said, "There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man

had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare and drink from his cup and lie in his bosom, and it was like a child to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loathe to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had arrived, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah, and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in my sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me."

READING FROM THE EPISTLES
Ephesians 3:16-21

Michael Enseki-Frank

I pray that, according to the riches of God's glory, you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through God's Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to the one who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

SERMON

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

MUSICAL OFFERING

"Up Over My Head"
Jim Riker, guitar and vocals

Betty Mae Fikes

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss & Rev. Laura Simmons

At First Church, all are welcome to God's table to celebrate the sacrament of communion, including children. We receive communion in the round, gluten free bread is available and all the cups are filled with grape juice. For those joining us online, please set your table with a form of bread and cup, which we will bless and break together. Taste and see that God is good!

Communion Prayer

Prayer of our Savior

Our God, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion Song

"Lord, I Want To Be a Christian"

#454

Prayer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

*CLOSING HYMN

"This Is My Song"

#591

BENEDICTION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

POSTLUDE

God Bless America

arr. Jennifer Eklund

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* Indicates "Please Rise in Body or in Spirit"

About Today's Music

"Up Over My Head (I See Freedom in the Air)" by Betty Mae Fikes (1964) is an adaptation of a traditional African-American spiritual for the civil rights and freedom movement of the 1960s. Betty Mae Fikes originally introduced this song at "The Sing for Freedom Conference" in Atlanta, Georgia in 1964.

How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies

Miriam Therese Winter, 1993; Adapted from
 "America the Beautiful" by Katharine Lee Bates, 1893

1 How beau-ti-ful, our spa-cious skies, our am-ber waves of grain;
 2 In-dig-e-nous and im-mi-grant, our daugh-ters and our sons:
 3 How beau-ti-ful, sin-cere la-ment, the wis-dom born of tears,
 4 How beau-ti-ful, two con-ti-nents, and is-lands in the sea

our pur-ple moun-tains as they rise a-bove the fruit-ful plain.
 O may we nev-er rest con-tent till all are tru-ly one.
 the cour-age called for to re-pent the blood-shed through the years.
 that dream of peace, non-vi-o-lence, all peo-ple liv-ing free.

A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God's gra-cious gifts a-bound,
 A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God grant that we may be
 A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God grant that we may be
 A-mer-i-cas! A-mer-i-cas! God grant that we may be

and more and more we're grate-ful for life's boun-ty all a-round.
 a sis-ter-hood and broth-er-hood from sea to shin-ing sea.
 a na-tion blessed with none op-pressed, true land of lib-er-ty.
 a hem-i-sphere where peo-ple here all live in har-mo-ny.

On her first trip west in the summer of 1893 the distinguished
 New England educator Katharine Lee Bates was inspired to
 write "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies." One hundred years later
 Miriam Therese Winter wrote new stanzas to clearly include all
 of the Americas.

Tune: MATERNA C.M.D.
 Samuel A. Ward, 1882

1 Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart, in my heart;
 2 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart, in my heart,
 3 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart, in my heart;
 4 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart, in my heart;

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.

Refrain

In my heart, in my heart, in my heart,
 In my heart, in my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.

This Is My Song

Ps. 82:8

Lloyd Stone, 1934

1 This is my song, O God of all the na - tions, a song of
 2 My coun-try's skies are blu - er than the o - cean, and sun-light

peace for lands a - far and mine. This is my home, the
 beams on clo - ver - leaf and pine; But oth - er lands have

coun - try where my heart is; here are my hopes, my
 sun - light, too, and clo - ver, and skies are ev - ery -

dreams, my ho - ly shrine; But oth - er hearts, in oth - er lands are
 where as blue as mine. O hear my song, O God of all the

beat - ing with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.
 na - tions, a song of peace for their land and for mine.

Welcome to First Congregational UCC in Washington DC!

Connect with us!

If you are worshiping 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!

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. Over the summer, Sunday school will focus on the summer theme "Unsung Heroes," and will be held on the following dates: June 28, July 12 and 19, August 16 and 23. The nursery will also be open on those dates. For other summer Sundays, we invite children and youth to worship with us in the sanctuary. 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:

July 12: The Darling-LaGamma Family

July 19: Kristen & Whit Wheeler

July 26: Gail Sonnemann

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. Laura Simmons

Musicians: Dennis Turner, Jim Riker

Speakers & Liturgists: Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, Sandy Sorensen, Michael Enseki-Frank

Sanctuary Setup: Kim Darling

Coffee Hour Hosts: Moira Jones, Sophie Jones

Ushers: Anne Mascolino

Zoom Moderator: Barry Mills

A/V Technician: Joseph Hiep

Sunday Morning Coordinator: Kemmesha Thomas

Happening at First Church

Summer Theme: Unsung Heroes

This summer in worship, as our nation marks the 250th anniversary of our independence, we will uplift the legacy of ancestors who stood for justice and worked for liberation whose names and stories we may not know, both in American history and in the Bible. What does it mean to train our eyes on the margins, seeing history or the gospel from this perspective? Which unlikely figures, the poor and dispossessed, has God used to build the beloved community? How can we relearn our history and theology from their stories? How does Jesus' solidarity with the "crucified peoples of the world" transform our faith? Join us this summer for intimate worship settings as we deepen our understanding of liberation and delve into a variety of special music offerings.

Lean into Summer Worship

This summer, when you hear the singing bowl invite us into holy time, the musical prelude marks the shift between the noise of the world and the sanctuary of God's house. We invite you to consider the prelude as a spiritual practice; a cue to breathe deeply and quiet the heart, to return to the life-giving love of God. Throughout the summer, you will notice our sanctuary is set for a more intimate gathering. Please join us in the chairs on the floor of the sanctuary as we sit in the round, so we can see one another and worship side-by-side. Special music will minister to us weekly, and we will enjoy a deep bench of preachers from the pews: Abigail Cipparone, Trevor Bakker, Diana Gomez de Molina, and Sandy Sorensen, along with Rev. Amanda and Rev. Sam. On July 12th, our youth will deliver the message following their service learning trip to Detroit. Lean in this summer as together we invite the gospel message of liberation and love to wash over us here in the nation's capital.

All-Church Summer Read!

Join us on our All-Church Summer Read. We have selected Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's book *Stamped From the Beginning*. This book is available in a variety of versions designed for most levels of readers making it a great option for a read aloud or read along for your entire family. The public libraries in our area carry copies and there are a couple copies in our Antiracism library in the church living room. We will have a discussion of the book and its relevance to our community in August.

Ice Cream Social: July 12

It's time for Ice Cream! Plan to be at church on July 12 so you can enjoy the ice cream social after worship. Hosted by the Darling-LaGamma family, be ready to choose your favorite ice cream and all kinds of yummy toppings.

Inquirers' Gathering: July 12th

Save the date of July 12th at noon to join Rev. Amanda, our Outreach & Membership leaders, and other newcomers for our summer 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.

**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 of joy for the Rev. Dr. LaTayna Purnell, officially called to serve as the new Associate Minister of Care and Community at Christ Congregational Church UCC in Silver Spring, MD.

Prayers of mercy for the people of Venezuela following the devastating earthquakes.

Prayers of peace and comfort for Polly Gordon as she undergoes treatment for lung cancer.

Prayers of joy for the birth of Josephine Cheng Meekins to Alyx and Matthew. Welcome to the world, beloved child of God!

Prayers of comfort for Ann, Paul and Ellen Bushmiller, Susan Anderson, and their families following the death of their beloved father and longtime First Church member, Hugh Bushmiller, at age 98.

Prayers of comfort for the family of Rev. Laura Simmons, whose father passed away after battling cancer.

Prayers for peace in Iran and for all those impacted by the war.

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

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
Interim Director of Music – Dennis Turner
Building Manager – Byron Adams
Sexton – Ines Marquez
Administrative Assistant – Whitney McColley
Member in Discernment – Lynaya Morris

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