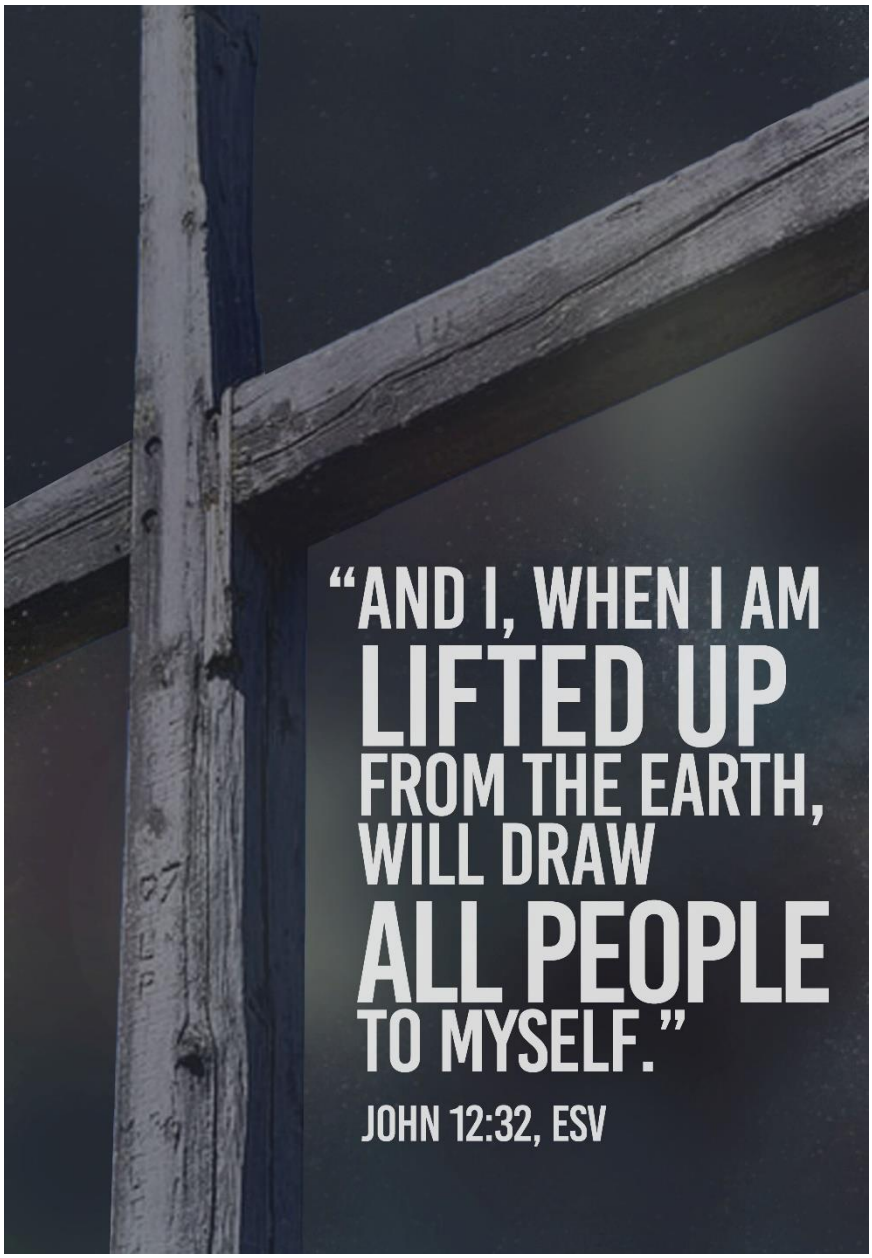

THE FIRST CHURCH

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Congregational – United Church of Christ

†

Gathered December 16, 1685

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

Morning Worship

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 21, 2021 10:00 AM

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*If it is comfortable for you to do so, please stand

APPROACH TO GOD

Let us keep silence as we prepare for worship.

TOWER CHIME Jim Stone

MEDITATION Jeremiah 31:33-34

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

PRELUDE *Lenten Prelude on* HEINLEIN E. Kerr
(1915 – 2011)

CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Psalm 150)

Leader: Praise the Lord!
People: Praise God in the sanctuary.
Leader: Praise God in the vault of heaven.
People: Praise God in the earth and skies.
Leader: Sing praises to the Lord.
People: Shout and sing praises to God.
Leader: We have witnessed God's mighty acts.
People: We have seen the Lord's greatness.
Leader: Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.
Together: Let everything that draws breath praise the Lord!

If comfortable to do so, please join in singing our hymns and sung responses during worship, while wearing your mask.

***HYMN #177** *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* HAMBURG

4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

*__PRAYER OF CONFESSION__ (Unison)

Almighty and merciful God, You created the world and all that is in it. You blessed creation with Your love. You called us from slavery into witness and service. Be with us in this sacred time. Clear our minds of all the distractions. Forgive us our sins. Draw us nearer to You. Open our hearts and spirits and let Your healing and empowering love flow in. Prepare us to be witnesses to Your grace and love. We offer this prayer in the name of Your Son our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A time of silence for personal confession

*__WORDS OF ASSURANCE__

Leader: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and will forgive us. God provides freely, in the bread of heaven, all the mercy we need for life everlasting. The good news is forgiveness in the name of Christ Jesus.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

*__PRAISE #148/4__ *Keep, O Keep Us, Savior Dear* HEINLEIN

Keep, O keep us, Savior dear,
Ever constant by thy side;
That with thee we may appear
At the-e-ternal Eastertide.

GREETINGS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.
“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL RESPONSE *Thanks Be to Thee* T. Tallis
STAFF SINGER QUARTET *(1505 – 1585)*

ANTHEM *What a Friend We Have In Jesus* C. C. Converse
(1832 – 1918)
arr. Schrader

SERMON “Transformation” Rev. Dr. Andrew Gilman

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

CENTERING PRAYER (Unison)
O God, your love is wider than the universe and your mercy greater than the heights of heaven. When we are tempted to break faith with you, put a new song on our lips, that we may sing your praises through your Son our only hope and sure defense. Amen.

PRAYER CONCERNS

SILENT PRAYERS and PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, 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.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Teach Me, O Lord, the Way of Thy Statutes T. Attwood
(1765 – 1838)

OFFERTORY *Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God* H. Willan
Psalm 51: 10-12 *(1880 – 1968)*

***LENTEN DOXOLOGY #515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

Lord Christ, throughout these Forty Days
Thy sacrifice our voices praise
Through thy temptation victory won:
Eternal life, Eternal Son.
Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

Generous God, over and over your grace sustains us, over and over your love provides for us, over and over your arm steadies us. We give you these gifts, with gratitude and joy, thankful that you are God over all. Amen.

***HYMN** *Lift High the Cross* CRUCIFER

DISMISSAL *We kindly remind the congregation to be seated after the Benediction, and to wait for dismissal as the ushers come to your aisle. You will be guided to a door nearest to your seating section.*

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTUS** *Go Now in Peace* *D. Besig (*1936)*

POSTLUDE *In reverence to the solemn season, remembering Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, a postlude will not be played during Lent.*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

DEACON OF THE DAY: Dale Neth
HYMNS: Pilgrim Hymnal, New Century Hymnal, CCLI#3034682
STAFF SINGER QUARTET: Janet Poisson, soprano; Brianne Biastoff, alto
Timothy Ayres-Kerr, tenor; Scott Taylor, bass
COVER ART: John 12:32 from ChurchArt Online

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The flowers in the pulpit are given in memory of Ray Chaloner on his birthday, March 22, with love, from Peter and Jeanne Chaloner.

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Have you remembered First Church in your will?

SUNDAY WORSHIP

In-person Worship: One service at 10:00 AM

The service is livestreamed on our YouTube channel and also airs on WSMN Radio AM 1590 and FM 95.3.

Masks must be worn at all times inside the building.

The church office is closed to visitors at this time. The staff is available to take your phone calls between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday. The First Church remains closed to all outside group use through the end of March.

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

All Church Devotional - Lent 2021: A Season of Healing
The final series discussion: Tuesday, March 23: 7:00 PM
Communal Healing with Rev. Jami

Follow this link to the daily readings: https://wp.me/ab3kUy-1Na. Contact Sue, (senglander@tfcucc.org) for the links to the discussion groups. The discussion will be recorded.

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Ministry Team News: Welcome back Rev. Andy Gilman - During the disruption brought about by Covid-19, Church leaders have delayed the search for an Associate Minister. Nevertheless, our ministry team is in need of support. To this end, we are thrilled to announce that former Interim Minister Rev. Andy Gilman will be with us on a limited basis to do just that.

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Easter Flowers - If you would like to purchase a lily or chrysanthemum for Easter Sunday, please complete the form in today's bulletin and return it to the church office, with your payment, **by March 28**. You may leave the form in the collection plate or mail it. Forms are also available in the March newsletter and at: https://tfcucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EASTER-FLOWERS-2021-2.pdf

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Wednesday Morning Men's Group is on break and will resume on March 31.

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Sign up to receive First Church e-News to stay in touch with what's happening at First Church. Contact Dianne at dsmigliani@tfcucc.org, and she will add you to the list.

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Greetings, First Church! Many thanks to all of you who have reached out to me in a myriad of ways since the passing of Eli.

Eli was able to celebrate the acceptance of Turbulence (Finishing Line Press, 2020), my first book of poetry, in the spring, about this time of year, something for which I am forever grateful. I will be doing a ZOOM poetry reading- my first!- on Thursday, March 25, 6:00 PM, hosted by the Mary E. Bartlett Library in Brentwood. Below is the link. Happy Spring! https://zoom.us/j/91347347259

Quincy

First Church Scholarships are awarded each year to deserving students who intend to further their education beyond high school. Criteria for the scholarships include:

Active Membership at First Church

- Service to and participation in the church
- Financial need
- Community service and extracurricular activities

Scholarship applications are emailed directly to senior students and their parents and are also available on the church's website: www.tfcucc.org. Completed applications must be returned electronically **no later than noon April 15, 2021**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Educational grants are available for adult members of the church pursuing any type of vocational or academic program and for students who are already in college and who have not received a First Church scholarship in the past. Grant applications can be emailed to applicants directly and are available on the church website, and are due **by noon on April 15, 2021**.

Email questions about the scholarship and grant program to: scholarships@tfcucc.org.

Donations to the Scholarship Fund are always welcome. Checks should be payable to First Church with "Scholarship Fund" in the memo, and may be dropped in the offering plate or mailed to the church office.

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COVID Vaccine Registrations- We have a volunteer who is eager to help people from the church register for a vaccine. If you need help registering for your COVID vaccine online, contact the church office and we'll get you connected.

If others would like to be added to the list of volunteers, please contact the church office.

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Submit Prayer Concerns Online - Find the 'prayer request' button on the worship page for any prayer concerns you would like to share with Rev. Jami. You may also submit a confidential prayer by calling the church office.

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Mobile Ministry - Please contact Rev. Jami if you or a loved one have a need for someone to pick up your medications, grocery shop for food, or other items or if you would like to volunteer on this team.

Music Ministry Choirs Update - It is a long-term goal for the Music Ministry, to see if one or two worship projects per choir can be safely integrated back into our worship life prior to the summer months.
Members of all ensembles will be contacted during March for potential interest in resuming rehearsals for the following ensembles on the following dates:

Decibells (*Adult hand bells)*:
Thursday March 25; (first Sunday is April 25)

First Folk (*Adult contemporary SATB)*:
Tuesday April 20 (first Sunday is May 9)

Chancel Choir (*Adult traditional SATB):*
Wednesday May 5 (first Sunday is May 23)

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United Way of Greater Nashua's "Learn United" tutoring program is matching volunteer tutors with students in grades 1 - 11 who need help in Math, Science, Literacy and other subjects. Tutors are needed for IN PERSON tutoring at youth-serving organizations. Register to help here: http://www.volunteergreaternashua.org/need/detail/?need_id=540849

If you know of any families in need of tutoring for their Nashua area student, please direct them to this page: https://files.constantcontact.com/68400ac7001/df367891-a9cb-4a8d-8e9d-7ac1401759e8.pdf

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Online Giving - Did you know that The First Church offers convenient e-giving options for pledges and other giving? Contact Dianne Smigliani in the church office to learn more. Scan the QR code below to view one of the giving options available.

Foundations of Christian Formation

Lenten Boxes, *Crafted with Love by your Cristian Formation Ministry team,* are available at the welcome center and the church office. They contain "Holy Week in a Box" to tell The Story, an Easter Lily craft bouquet, a love rock, a picture of First Church and some coloring pages designed for you by Holly Columbus.

Confirmation – Class meets today at 11:30 AM.
Confirmands are invited to come to worship on Sundays if you are able to attend. Remember to livestream when you are at home!

Reflections on the Heart, an illustrated LENT for Families by Illustrated Ministry is available as a digital download. This is Christian Formation's devotions for families this Lenten season but ***all ages are encouraged to partake***. Please read this excerpt from the introduction:
Each Sunday in Lent has devotions written for all ages with appropriate questions and topics for your children no matter what the age. You do not need to do all the activities to have a meaningful experience. Each devotion consists of the following elements:

1. **Scripture:** selected from the Gospel concerning treasures and matters of the heart.
2. **Reflection:** a brief reflection is offered for each of the scripture texts. It might make sense for you to read this section to your family, or you may want to read it for yourself and see what questions or themes will resonate best for your family.
3. **Discussion and coloring page**: This is a chance for some family conversation. Sometimes the best conversations often happen while coloring and doing something creative together. We suggest discussing the questions offered (tied to scripture and activity) while coloring the week's coloring page.

If you wish to download a copy, contact LeeAnne, lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org or Sue, senglander@tfcucc.org for the link. Printed copies are available in the church office and at the welcome center on Sunday mornings. Contact the office if you would like a copy.

Prayers for Marking a Year of COVID-19 by Illustrated Ministry
Please enjoy these touching prayers and coloring pages for yourself or to create a gift for someone in need of cheer. Printed copies are available at the welcome center on Sunday mornings or by contacting Sue at senglander@tfcucc.org or LeeAnne at lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org during office hours.

Teachers and Families - Be on the lookout for Holly Columbus' Noah's Ark Lesson and "Where in the church is Ms. Holly?" video later this week on the church website. We filmed a special lesson and activity.
Kids: *write to Ms. Holly here at the church with Attention to: Christian Formation Ministry.* Teachers: if you're inspired and willing to film your own lesson here at church, please be in touch with LeeAnne by phone or email lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org.

Palm Sunday
March 28: 10:00 AM
In-person and livestreamed
Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong
Music:
Staff Singer Quartet
Handbell Trio:
Dale Neth
Rhonda O'Keefe
Pam Sturdevant

Maundy Thursday
April 1: 7:30 PM
Service of Word, Sacrament & Tenebrae
In-Person and livestreamed
Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong
Rev. Jami Boyle
Music:
Janet Poisson, soprano
Julianne Gearhart, soprano
String Quartet

Easter Sunday
April 4: 9:00 and 11:00 AM
In-person and livestreamed
Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong
Music:
Staff Singer Quartet
First Brass

FRIDAYS at FIRST
ORGAN SERIES

Recitals will be on the first three Fridays of the
Lenten season and will begin at 12:15 p.m.

Regional organists will perform FREE 30-minute programs
on our 4,000-pipe, 1926 Anderson Memorial Organ—each designed
to replenish the soul with beautiful music for the workday
or to get the weekend off to a great start.

MARCH RECITALS

12 **Leonardo Ciampa**
First Lutheran Church, Worcester, MA

19 **Juan A. Mesa**
St. Leonard of Port Maurice Church, Boston, MA

26 **Janet Hunt**
St. John's Seminary, Brighton, MA

Parking behind the church building.
Handicap accessibility / elevator access is in the courtyard
between old and new buildings.

Please bring your masks and enjoy the ample socially distanced seating.

THE FIRST CHURCH
1 Concord Street • Nashua, NH

For more information:
FIRST-MUSIC.ORG
603.882.4861

FIRST MUSIC
FM
CONCERT SERIES 2020-21 SEASON

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Associate Minister for Congregational Care, *Rev. Jami D. Boyle*, jboyle@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO*, jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Director of Christian Formation, *LeeAnne Steenhoek*, lsteenhoek@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani*, dsmigliani@tfcucc.org
Secretary/Receptionist, *Susan T. Englander*, senglander@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *Steve Buck*

Pastors Emeriti, *Rev. James S. Chaloner and Rev. Dr. Jeffrey C. Evans*

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to all who are attending this worship service. A special greeting to those who are visiting or worshiping for the first time. Please sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary or fill out the **visitor card** found in the pew racks. Fill out the back of the card, and put it in the offering plate or hand it to a minister, Usher or Deacon so we may acknowledge your visit. Join in the time of fellowship, in Fellowship Hall, following worship. If you have any questions about the life and ministry of First Church please seek out the individuals wearing colored name tags; they are members of the various boards and committees.

INFORMATION

First Church was gathered on December 16, 1685 as The Church of Christ in Dunstable. On the same day Thomas Weld was ordained and settled as minister of the church. The current building, built in 1894, is the tenth building to house the First Church community. In 1961, the church entered fellowship with the United Church of Christ. We welcome into our membership any who will own the covenant of First Church and seek to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in the community and world. Those interested in joining the church should contact the church office for information. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month and the Sacrament of Baptism on the last. First Church is supported almost entirely by pledges. Every member is expected to make a financial pledge according to their ability.

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is available to all in need. Please keep the ministers informed of occasions of sickness, sorrow, and joy. Let the church office know if you or family member or friend is hospitalized.

COMMUNICATIONS

If you have a change of address, phone number, or email address, please let the church office know so that we may keep our records current.

All information for the weekly bulletin must be in the office by noon on Wednesday. All information for the monthly newsletter must be in the office by 4:30 PM on the second Monday of the month.

<u>All use of the building must be scheduled by the Secretary.</u>

The First Church * One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 882-4861

Office Hours: The office is currently closed to visitors.
The staff is available for phone calls, Monday- Friday, 9:00am-noon & 1:00-4:00pm

Visit our web site at www.tfcucc.org
Find us on Facebook