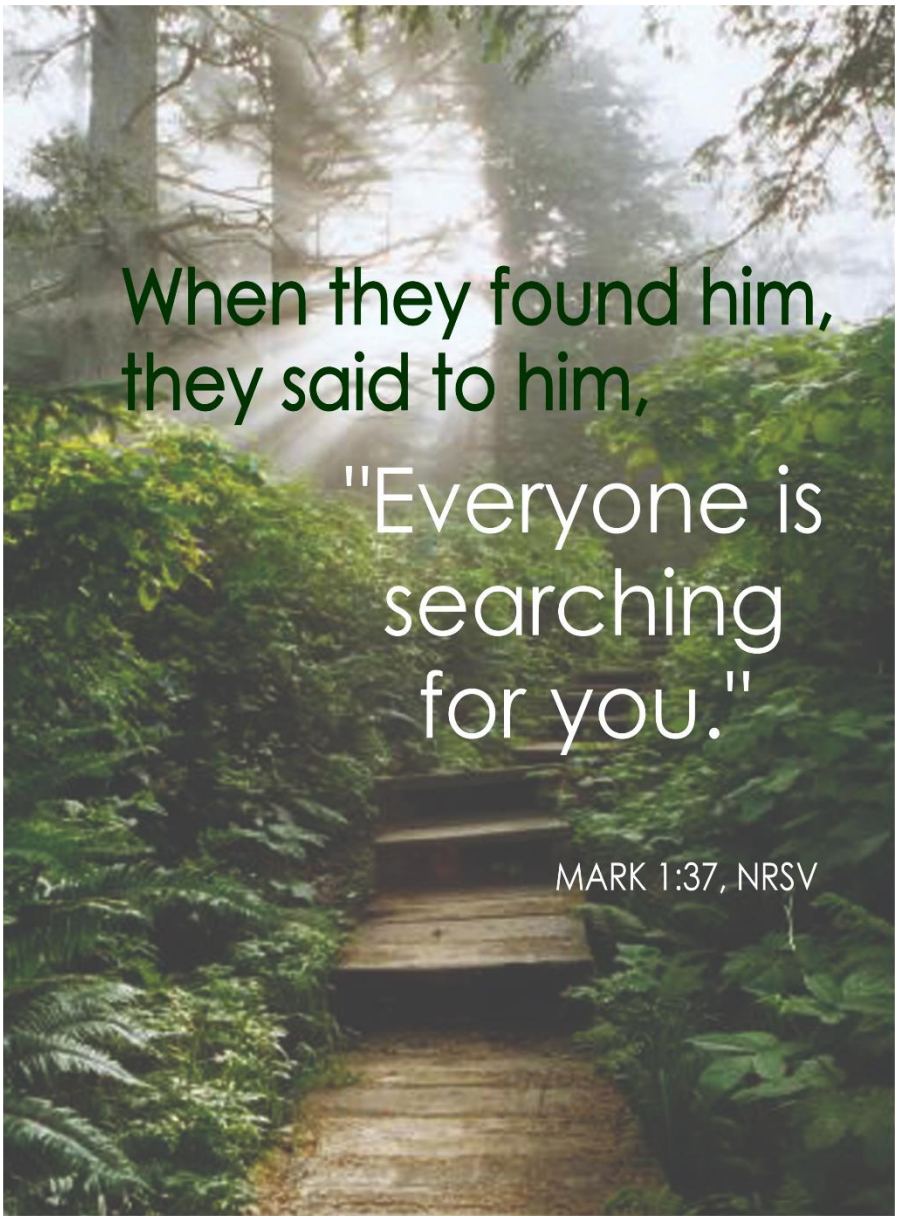

THE FIRST CHURCH

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

Communion Sunday

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 4, 2024 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 Norma MacKinley-Smith

MEDITATION "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength."
- Corrie Ten Boom

PRELUDE *Prière à Notre Dame* L. Boëllmann
from *"Suite Gothique"* *(1862 – 1897)*

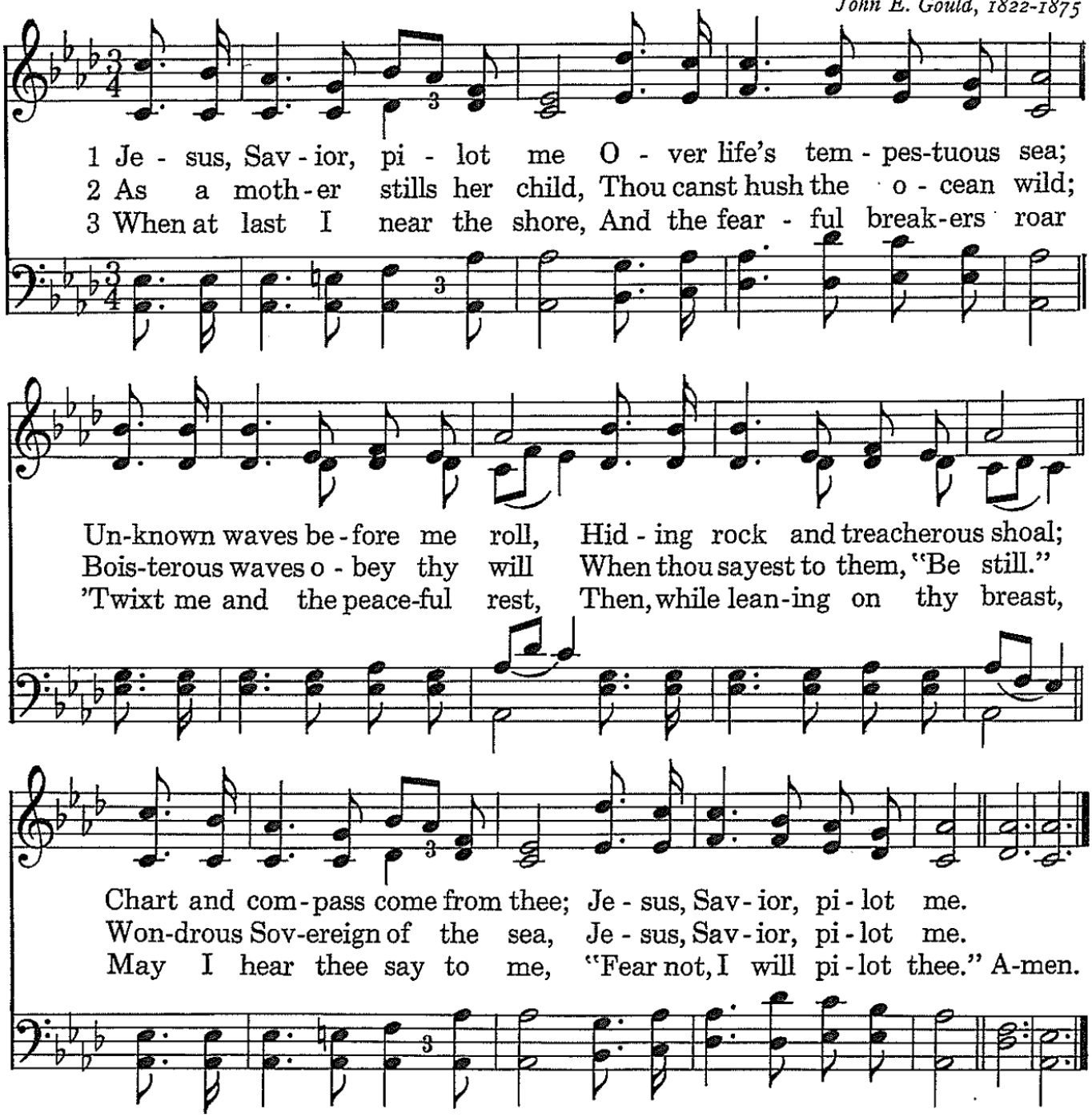
INTROITUS *The Lord Is In His Holy Temple* F. R. Lund
CHANCEL CHOIR *(*1938)*
Composer-In-Residence

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Have you heard? God heals the broken and blesses the wounded.
People: Sing praise to God!
Leader: Have you heard? God forgives, and the past is over and done.
People: Sing praise to God!
Leader: Have you heard? God lifts up the downcast and gives peace to the troubled.
People: Sing praise to God!
Leader: Have you heard? God smooths out rough paths and makes a way for us.
People: Sing praise to God!
Leader: Have you heard? God gives power to the weak and renews our strength. Sing praise to God.
All: We come to worship the Eternal God.

***HYMN 213** *Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me* PILOT

Edward Hopper, 1818-1888

PILOT 7.7.7.7.7.7.
John E. Gould, 1822-1875

CCLI # 3034682

***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

Gracious God, hear our songs. Gather us in as one people, that we may worship You as one body. Heal our broken hearts and bind up our wound that we may come into Your presence healthy and whole. As we seek Your wisdom, help us to discern Your greatness, as we honor the power and glory of Your love. Amen.

***GLORIA PATRI #513**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end, A-men, A-men.

GREETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Isaiah 40:21-31**

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Mark 1:29-39

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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

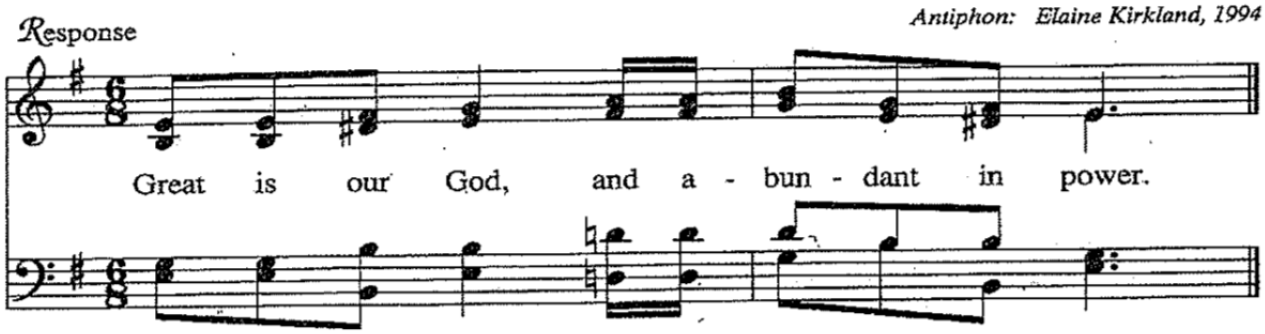
GRATIA TIBI *Thanks Be to Thee* T. Tallis
(1505 – 1585)

SERMON "Looking for Jesus" Rev. Dr. Andrew Armstrong

RESPONSIVE PSALM 147:1-11, 20

ZOË HARPER, psalmist

The Psalm will be intoned once: The Congregation sings the same Response, and then again at the "℟" indication below.



℟

[1]Praise God! How good it is to sing
praises to our God;
for God is gracious, and a song of
praise is fitting.

[2]God builds up Jerusalem;
God gathers the outcasts of Israel.

[3]God heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.

[4]God determines the number of the stars;
God gives to all of them their names. ℟

[5]Great is our God, and abundant in
power,
whose understanding is beyond
measure.

[6]God lifts up the downtrodden;
God casts the wicked to the ground.

[7]Sing to God with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.

[8]God covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
and makes grass grow on the hills. ℟

[9]God gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they
cry.

[10]God has no delight in the strength of the
horse,
nor pleasure in the speed of a runner;

[11]but God takes pleasure in those who
fear God,
in those who hope in God's steadfast
love.

[20]God has not dealt thus with any other
nation; they do not know God's
ordinances.
Praise be to God! ℟

Christmas 2 ABC vs. 12–20 (Alt.); Epiphany 5 [5] B vs. 1–11, 20c.

CCLI# 3034682

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Great God, we confess our weariness. We grow faint with our busyness. We have no energy to help the powerless. We look for strength and find exhaustion. We do not wait for You. Merciful God, forgive us, and lead us back to You, for in You, our strength is renewed. Fill our voices with Your praise, that all might hear!

A time of silence for personal confession

KYRIE 545 *Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us* J. Merbecke
CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING *(1510 – 1585)*

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ have mercy upon us;
Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! God raised the Lord Jesus.
People: God will also raise us by His saving power.
Leader: Friends, believe the good news!
People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

OFFERTORY *O Praise the Lord* J. Rodgers

JOSHUA L. GORE, baritone *(20th century)*

O praise the Lord, O praise the Lord!
For it is a good thing to sing praised unto our God
Yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.
The lord doth build up Jerusalem and gather together
And gather together the outcasts of Israel.

He healeth those that are broken in heart,
And giveth medicine to heal their sickness.
O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving;
Sing praises upon the harp unto our God.

(*Baritone*)
Who cov'reth the heav'n with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth
And maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of men

(*Choir*)
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Sion.

(*Baritone*)
Who giveth fodder unto the cattle, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him.

(*Choir*)
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God O Sion

(*Baritone*)
For He hath made fast the bars of thy gates, and hath blessed thy children within thee.

(*Choir*)
He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end (2x)
Amen.

***THE DOXOLOGY 515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

We give thanks for all we have received, O God: gifts of work and rest, friends and family, sight and sound. With these gifts, we praise You. Bless those who receive them, just as we are blessed in the act of sharing them. Amen.

THE COMMUNION

It is a tradition at First Church that we eat the bread and drink the cup together as the people of God renewing our covenant. We serve grape juice, bread and gluten free bread.

INVITATION, SURSUM CORDA AND COMMUNION PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to God.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
Leader: Let us pray.

SANCTUS 550 S. Wesley
(1766 – 1837)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory:
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. A-men.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

COMMUNION Kyrie & Agnus Dei L. Ciampa
from *"Missa Sancti Ioannis"* *(*1971)*

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING and 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.

***HYMN** *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* MAITLAND

(see next page)

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTUS** *On Us Bestow Thy Blessing* F. R. Lund

POSTLUDE *Deep River* Spiritual
arr. J. Utterback
*(*1944)*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

AV TEAM: Joe Glajch and Lee Hauenstein

LICENSING: CCLI (print) 3034682; CCLI (streaming) 20119862; CCS 12820; OneLicense A-736284

SCRIPTURE: NRSV reprinted by permission of the National Council of the Churches of Christ.

STAFF SINGERS: Janet Poisson, soprano; Brianne Biastoff, alto; Zoe Harper, tenor; Joshua L. Gore, bass

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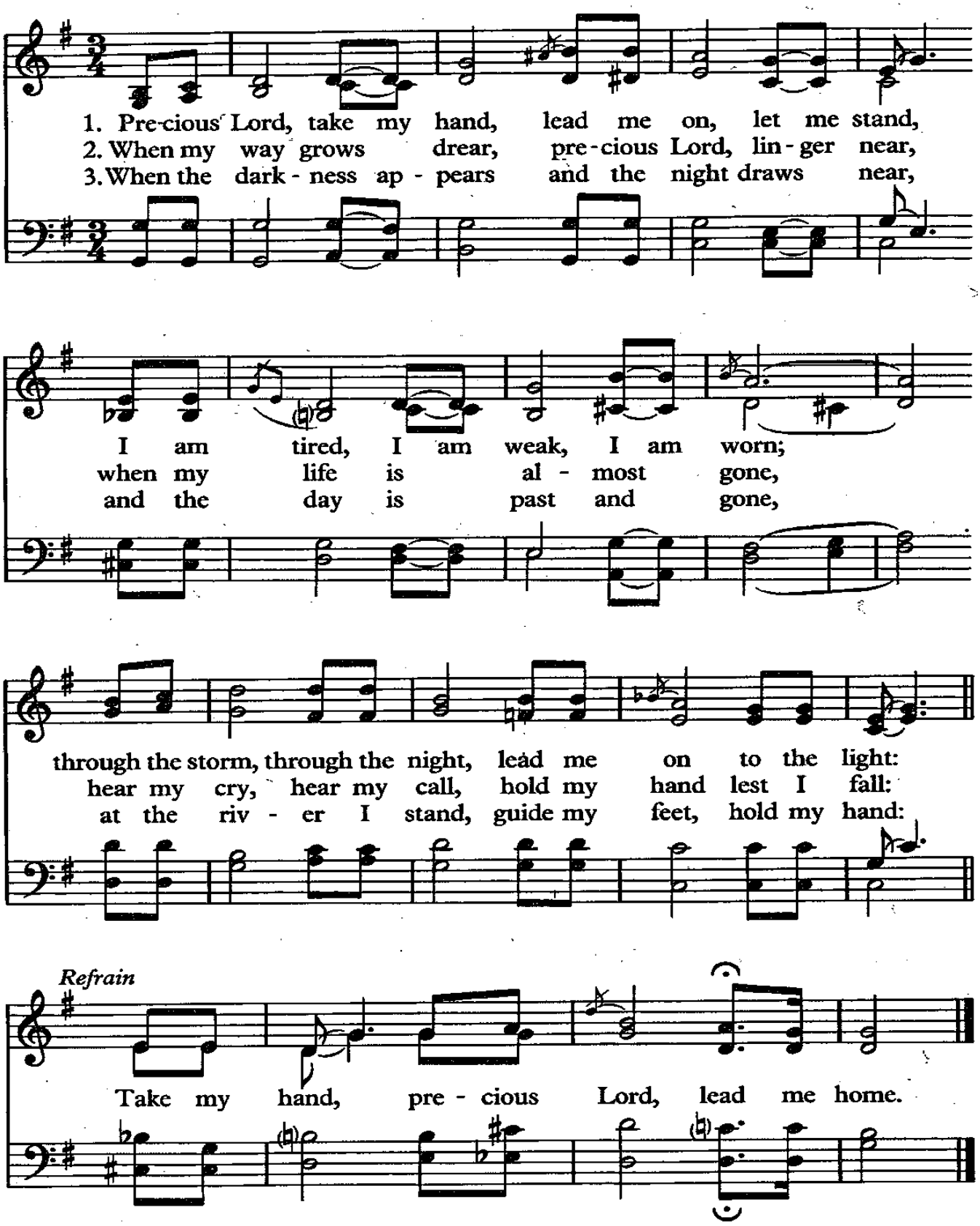
HEARING AIDS AND LARGE PRINT OF HYMNS AND PRAYERS
ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Flowers in the pulpit are given by Jeanne and Peter Chaloner in loving memory of Tommy Chaloner.

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

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PLEASE USE THE VARIOUS CARDS IN THE PEW RACKS TO HELP KEEP THE STAFF INFORMED OF YOUR PASTORAL NEEDS. YOU MAY ALSO SUBMIT PRAYER CONCERNS ONLINE. FIND THE 'PRAYER REQUEST' BUTTON ON THE WORSHIP PAGE FOR ANY PRAYER CONCERNS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH REV. NANCY.

Worship Schedule

8:15 AM Worship (Shaw Chapel)
10:00 AM: Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
Sunday School & Nursery Care
Radio Broadcast on WSMN AM 1590 & FM 95.3

NOTES FOR THE CHANCEL

This morning in worship, we hear a beloved piece of organ music in the **Prelude** to still our minds to hear the *Still Small Voice*, and close our Sunday morning with a **Postlude** acknowledging the start of **Black History Month**.

Our worship this morning is blessed with the wonderful sounds of the **Chancel Choir**, who have been preparing some pretty intense choral music for the coming weeks of corporate worship. (*They are already rehearsing Easter anthems*!) This Sunday is no exception, and the **Offertory** in particular is one of those 'classic' choral anthems of the mainline Protestant and American choral traditions, penned in 1959. The *tour-de-force* takes us through the imagery of **Psalm 147**, in a dialogue between organ, choir, and solo baritone (our staff singer, **Joshua L. Gore**). From triumphant to meditative, through a bombastic culmination glorifying the Trinity: this anthem- penned for the "11th Community Choir Festival in Ridgewood, New Jersey" has it all, lifting praise to God through music.

Today's choral music heard during our **Communion Service**, is penned by local composer and organist Leonardo Ciampa in 2018. This writing has a unique combination of an attractive sound of contemporary classical choral writing, a hint of "Mendelssohn" and 19th century harmonic technique, and a unique "accessibility" which allows the piece to be learned in a relatively short timeframe! Solid treatments of the text- *specifically* penned in English- allow the 4-part choral harmonies to bloom and develop, as our minds are brought to reflecting on the elements received during Communion together, offering aspects of contemplative praise to God.

Leonardo Ciampa was born in Boston in 1971. He has served as Director of Music at *Emanuel Lutheran Church* in Worcester, MA and is Maestro di Cappella Onorario of the Basilica in Gubbio, Italy, and as artistic director of organ concerts (2009-2016) at *MIT*. As a recitalist, Ciampa has made a dozen European tours. His work is particularly admired in Italy, where he has played in the *Festival Perosiano, Festival Biellese, Organi Storici della Valsesia, Le Voci della Città, Festival Organistico Lauretano,* and *Reate Festival,* among others. Ciampa's compositions have been heard throughout metro Boston, the *Mormon Tabernacle* (Salt Lake City), at cathedrals in Vienna, New York, Altenberg, Brandenberg, Tortona and Biella, and at basilicas in Rome, Turin, Loreto, Rieti and Gubbio.

Christian Formation Corner

February 4, 2024 - Today is the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany and the liturgical color is white.

Nursery News - The nursery school is open and staffed. Parents can check in at the welcome center and then proceed to the nursery. The Welcome Center staff can also assist in providing directions.

Busy Bags - remain available at the welcome center for when children choose to remain in worship.

Care Packages for College Students-The Make a Difference (MAD) class will be assembling mid-winter/Valentine care packages for our church students who are away at college. Candy (and monetary/postal cost) donations are gratefully accepted. There are marked donation buckets in the Welcome Center and at the courtyard entrance. Cut off for donations is February 11th. Thank you!

Update your student's college address- Parents of college students, please make sure that the office has the most recent address for your young adult. An updated list will be generated for the February mailing. Send addresses to Tasha Drew at tdrew@tfcucc.org.

Save the date for Pretzels – March 10, 2024

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

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Church Cancellation Policy - In the event of inclement weather, a power outage, or severe weather advisory, First Church may cancel the First Service, Sunday School, or All Services. Please visit the church webpage (www.tfcucc.org), or Facebook Page (First Church Nashua UCC) for any cancellation notices. You can also check media outlets WMUR Channel 9, or WZID 95.7 under the heading First Church Nashua. The notifications will read as follows: First Service Cancelled or Sunday School Cancelled or All Services Cancelled and will be announced by 6am on the Sunday in question.

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Winter parking reminder - Use caution when parking along the north side of the church building. Heed the posted signs. Falling snow and ice can cause damage to your cars!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES – Wednesday, February 14th there will be two Ash Wednesday services offered. Noon service in Shaw Chapel, led by Rev. Andy, with the imposition of ashes, and 5:00 pm in the Sanctuary, led by Rev. Nancy, with communion. Our Minister of Music, Joseph Olefirowicz will provide music for both services.

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The Women's Association will be putting on an elegant Valentine Tea on Saturday, Feb. 10, in Fellowship Hall from 2-4. Come dressed in your Valentine finery….red, white, lace, hearts…please bring your own special tea cup and a handmade Valentine with a kind sentiment, unsigned. We will be serving tea and special tea refreshments and all women of the church are invited to attend. Please sign up at the Welcome Center (today is the last day).

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FAMILY PROMISE WELLNESS DONATIONS- Can you help? Cold-Flu season is here! Family Promise needs over-the -counter medications and health care products: Adult, child and infant cough medicine, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, multi symptom cold medication, antihistamines, rubbing alcohol, peroxide, Tums, Rolaids, and ice packs. A collection bin will be in Fellowship Hall through February 11th . Family Promise thanks you!

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Parent Café- Conversations to Keep Your Family Strong- The Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley is extending an invitation to the upcoming *virtual* Be Strong Families Parent Café. This is a fun opportunity to connect with other parents, share ideas or strategies that help you keep your family strong. In addition to meeting other people, you may even learn a new tip that you can use! Please join us for this **FREE opportunity on Thursday, February 15th from 6 – 7:30 pm** from the comfort of your home! If you have any questions, please contact Monica Gallant at mgallant@svbgc.org. Register here to receive the ZOOM link: https://bit.ly/3RWAls4

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Prepared to Serve 2024 - February 24th, 2024 from 8:00am-4:00 pm
Prepared to Serve is back, and we're ready to take your learning experience to new heights! This annual event, proudly organized by the New Hampshire Conference UCC, is dedicated to equipping our congregations with invaluable tools and resources to empower your local faith communities. Both in-person and virtual options are available. Join us for a day of growth, transformation and empowerment. Together, let's create new possibilities and explore new horizons!
For more information go to:
https://nhcucc.regfox.com/prepared-to-serve-2024

First Church Scholarship- The 2024 First Church Scholarship application has been emailed directly to our High School Seniors and their parents . If you did not receive an email, please reach out. The 2024 First Church **Continuing Education Grant** application is available to any member of the church pursuing further training or education. Please contact **scholarships@tfcucc.org** with any questions or to request an application. Scholarship applications are due no later than **April 15, 2024**. Late scholarship applications will not be accepted. First Church Scholarships are awarded on Children's Day in June.

Choirs in Worship Next Week
Sunday, February 11, 2024
10:00 Joyful Noise
Chancel Choir

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 11th 2024
Immediately following worship

You must be present to vote.
There will be one worship service at 10 am.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN FEB 4	8:15am	Worship (Chapel)
	9:00am	Decision Time Study (Nauss Hall)
	10:00am	Worship, Livestream
		Radio Broadcast, Sunday School
	11:20am	Joyful Noise
	11:30am	Confirmation
MON FEB 5	9:30am	Bible, Friends & Coffee
	7:00pm	All Boards
TUE FEB 6	4:00pm	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
WED FEB 7	8:00am	Men's Group
	11:45am	BNI (Dining Room)
	12:00pm	NAIC
	6:45pm	Chancel Choir
THU FEB 8	10:00am	Thrift Shop
	6:30pm	Quilt Guild (Dining Room)
	6:45pm	Decibells
FRI FEB 9	3:00pm	Hunt Community Service
SAT FEB 10	11:00am	Sisters in Sobriety (Nauss Hall)
	2:00pm	Women's Association Tea (Fellowship Hall)

First Folk Upcoming Dates: Feb. 18th 11:30am (rehearse);
Feb. 25th 9:00am (rehearse); sing at 10 AM worship

FIRST MUSIC

FM

CONCERT SERIES 2023 – 24 SEASON

SEASON XVI
SWEET SIXTEEN!

BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

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ISABELLE DEMERS, ORGAN

SUNDAY MAR 10

FREE ADMISSION

ALL ARE WELCOME

3:00 PM

THE FIRST CHURCH

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FIRST-MUSIC.ORG • 603.882.4861

THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Interim Associate Minister, *Rev. Nancy Haynes*, nhaynes@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO*, jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org
Church Business and Marketing Manager, *Dianne Smigliani*, dsmigliani@tfcucc.org
Office Manager, *Tasha Drew*, tdrew@tfcucc.org
Sexton, *Steve Buck*, sbuck@tfcucc.org

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 Chapel 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. New members are received during worship in November, February and May. 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 Office Manager.</u>

THE FIRST CHURCH
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 603-882-4861
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00am-noon & 1:00-4:00pm
Visit our web site at tfcucc.org - Find us on Facebook

Give online. Scan the QR code to view one of the giving options available.