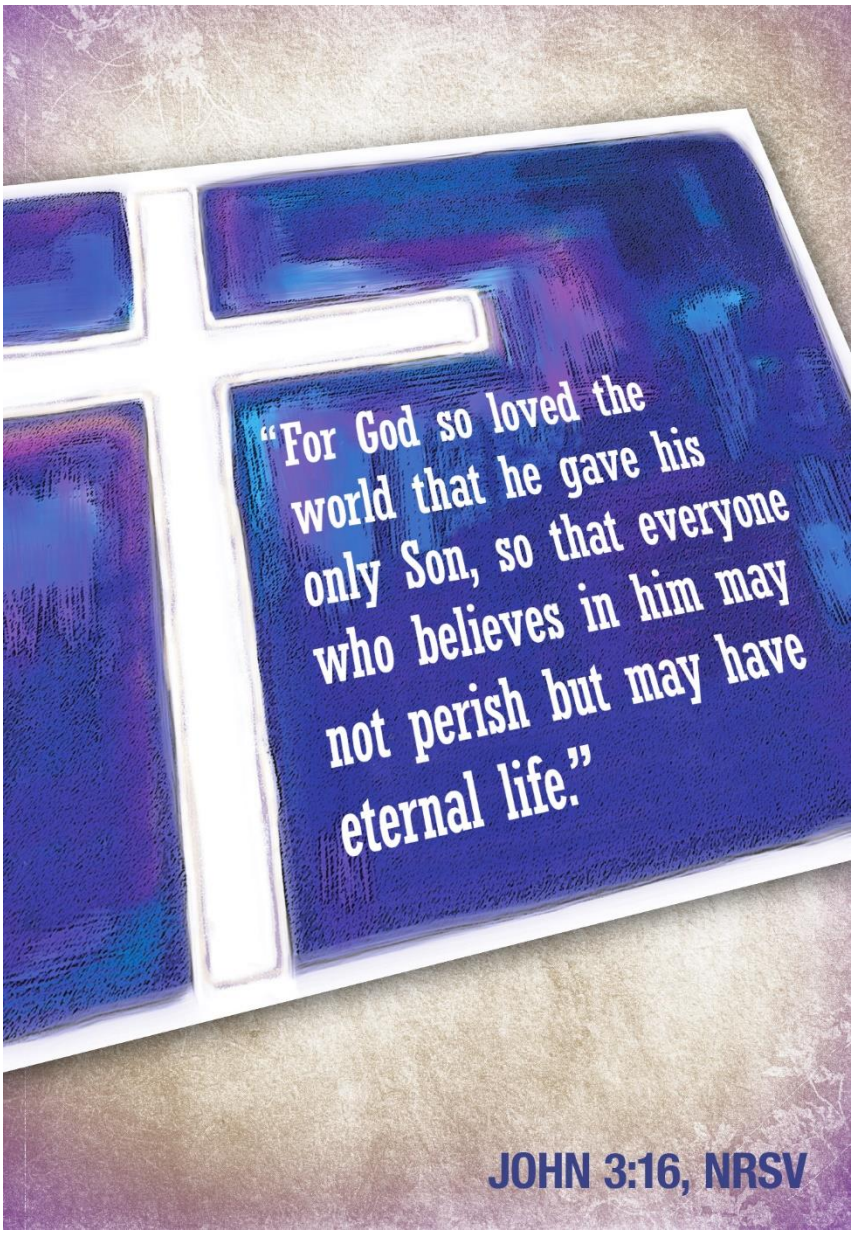

THE FIRST CHURCH

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

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 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 Dale Neth

MEDITATION "You become what you give your attention to." -Epictetus

PRELUDE *24 Ludien für Orgel* B. W. Sanders

vii. *Largo in es* *(*1957)*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We are here not because we are better than others, but because we are called by the grace of God.

People: Give thanks to God who is good, whose saving love endures forever.

Leader: Let those who are redeemed by God declare it.

People: God has rescued and redeemed all of us from trouble.

Leader: O God, You gather us from many lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

People: We give thanks to God who is always good!

***HYMN 83** *If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee* NEUMARK

(see next page)

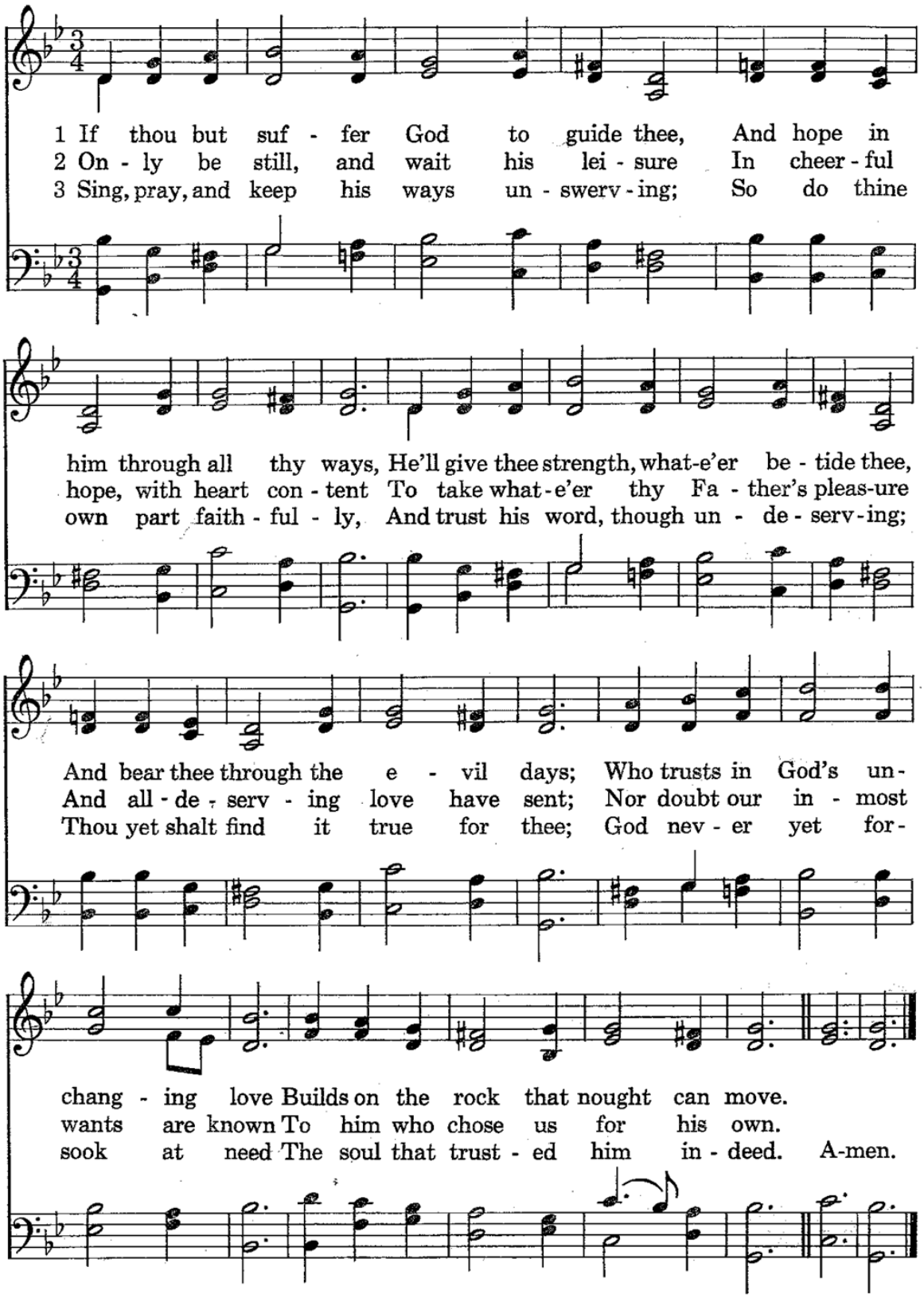
***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

Holy God, we confess that we are an impatient and selfish people. When You offer us the promise of a new future, we want it now. When You provide for our needs, we complain that it isn't enough. And when our own actions and attitudes cause us to stumble, we blame You. Holy God, forgive our foolish ways. Teach us to be patient. Instruct us to be grateful. Guide us to be responsible and humble. As we turn ourselves around and look to the cross, let us experience Your grace and Your gift of new life. In the name of Christ our Savior, we pray. Amen.

If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee

Georg Neumark, 1621-1681
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878

NEUMARK 9.8.9.8.8.8.
Melody by Georg Neumark, 1621-1681



PROVIDENCE CCLI # 3034682

GREETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT OF INTEREST Susan Testa

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Numbers 21:4-9**

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

John 3:14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

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

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

SERMON "Look Up!" Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

***HYMN 420** *O Holy City, Seen of John* MORNING SONG
(see next page)

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

CENTERING PRAYER: (Unison)
Loving God, giver of all light and life, You sent Jesus Christ into the world not to condemn, but to save. Help us to lift up the light of Christ so that the world might believe in Him and receive the gift of eternal life; through Christ, the light of the world. 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 *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded* PASSION CHORALE

O Holy City, Seen of John

W. Russell Bowie, 1882-

MORNING SONG 8.6.8.6.8.6.
Melody, "Kentucky Harmony," 1816
Harm. by C. Winfred Douglas, 1867-1944

4 Already in the mind of God
That city riseth fair:
Lo, how its splendor challenges
The souls that greatly dare,
Yea, bids us seize the whole of life
And build its glory there.

CCLI# 3034682

OFFERTORY *Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs* G. F. Händel
From "The Messiah" *(1685 – 1759)*

***LENTEN DOXOLOGY** 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)

What more can we asked for, Creator God, that You have not already given? We ask for one more thing. May the gifts we give increase our gratitude and help us share more of Your love. May it be so according to the promises of Christ alive in us by the Spirit. Amen.

***HYMN** *Amazing Grace* NEW BRITAIN
(see next page)

***BENEDICTION**

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

AV TEAM: Brenda Smith-Weiss and Craig Neth
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.

Amazing Grace

"Amazing Grace" Words: John Newton, 1779
Music: 19th cent. USA melody, Harm. By Edwin O. Excell 1900
Copyright 1989 United Methodist Publishing House
Used by permission
CCLI# 3034682

The flowers in the pulpit this morning are given in loving memory of his grandmother, May J. Leach, by Dennis Webster

The flowers on the table this morning are given in loving memory, of her mother, by Kristin Hallee

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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 FROM THE CHANCEL

In our **PRELUDE** this morning, we hear a reflective work for the Lenten season, penned by **Bernard Wayne SANDERS**, whose compositions have received wide recognition in the international organ scene, has a very unique writing style. Although some may say his works are reminiscent of early writings by German organ great Paul Hindemith *(1895 – 1963),* Sanders has achieved his own voice in composition; writing without any keyboard or instrumental assistance: melding his American background with a strong German influence in liturgical writing. Bernard lives in southern Germany, and it is a pleasure to count him as a friend and colleague, having served together in years past on the Executive Board with the European Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Our opening hymn's tune NEUMARK has a bit of a remarkable history. Named for its 17th century composer Georg Neumark: "within 100 years after its [first] appearance no less than 400 hymn texts had been written to be sung to it" (*Guide to the Pilgrim Hymnal*; Ronander & Porter 69). Even the great J. S. Bach utilized the melody in no less than 7 of his cantatas and 4 different organ works! The original German opening line translates to:

Whomever allows the loving God to guide them and hope to Him at all times:
Will behold His wonders in all times of despair and sorrow.
Whomever trusts in the highest God, has not built (his house on fleeting) sand.

Choral music this morning includes a staple anthem from a major Oratorio. The **OFFERTORY** excerpt from the beloved *Messiah* uses a French Baroque style of dotted rhythm, unrelenting in its jarring nature. This is to represent Christ being given the many lashes, as found in the Gospel story, prior to His crucifixion. The prophetic text taken from the King James' version of **Isaiah 53:4-5** states:

Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows
He was wounded for our trangressions
He was bruisèd for our iniquities
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

Christian Formation Corner

March 10, 2024 - Today is the fourth Sunday in Lent and the liturgical color is Purple.

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.

Why support **Heifer International?** They are the ultimate "Teach a Man to Fish …" agency. Their gift of livestock along with training helps families become self-reliant. The practice of passing on of gifts expands the benefits throughout the recipient's community. On March 17th our First Church Youth will reach out to our entire congregation with an opportunity to join them in joyous giving. Please plan to participate then and in the follow-up celebration on Palm Sunday.

TODAY IS PRETZEL DAY FOR OUR YOUTH!!

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

MEMBERSHIP ORIENTATION – Today, following the 10 am worship service in room 15. If you are interested in membership or learning more about The First Church, join us.

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FRIDAYS AT FIRST- A 30-minute contemplative organ recital by Joseph R. Olefirowicz, CAGO on the charming 3-stop *"positive"* pipe organ. **March 22nd at 12:15 pm.** Free admission.

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EASTER FLOWER ORDERS March 17th and March 24th- In Fellowship Hall following worship. Order forms can be found on the website under "Newsletter" and are also available at the Welcome Center. Order forms can be placed in the offering plate, in the depository at the front of the Welcome Center desk, or mailed to the office.

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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.

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The Connection Café with Monica Gallant- What we learn and experience in church is as important as the relationships we build together in faith. Monica Gallant will share with us her insights and expertise in The Connection Café. This is an opportunity for us to grow in our capacity for self-reflection, practice positive communication skills, and build a foundation for healing and increased well-being. The Connection Café will be held between services (9 AM) **on 17th in Nauss Hall at 9 AM**. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Choirs in Worship Next Week

Sunday, March 17, 2024

8:15 Staff Singers

10:00 First Folk, Staff Singers

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN MAR 10	8:15am	Worship (Chapel)
	9:00am	Talk Back/Talk Forward, Nauss Hall
	10:00am	Worship, Livestream
		Radio Broadcast, Sunday School
	10:00am	Pretzels (dining room, kitchen)
	11:30am	First Folk (music room)
	11:30am	Member Orientation (room 15)
	3:00pm	First Music Concert
MON MAR 11		Newsletter Deadline
	9:30am	Bible, Friends & Coffee
TUE MAR 12	2:00pm	Visitation
	4:00pm	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
	7:00pm	Thank You Project (room 10)
WED MAR 13	8:00am	Men's Group
	6:30pm	Decision Time Virtual Study
	6:45pm	Chancel Choir
THU MAR 14	10:00am	Thrift Shop
	6:30pm	Quilt Guild (dining room)
	6:45pm	Decibells
SAT MAR 16	10:00am	Chancel Choir
	10:00am	DAR (room 10)
	11:00am	Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)

First Folk Upcoming Dates:

March 10th at 11:30am (rehearse)

March 17th at 9:15am (rehearse); sing at 10 AM worship

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THE FIRST CHURCH

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
Acting Associate Minister, *Rev. Nancy Haynes*, nhaynes@tfcucc.org
Minister of Music, *Joseph R. Olefirowicz-MA,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 with us 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 nametags; they are members of the various boards and committees.

INFORMATION

The 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 4:00 PM on the second Monday of the month.

All use of the building must be scheduled by the Office Manager.

THE FIRST CHURCH
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

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