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

Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Stewardship Sunday

November 17, 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 "Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe."
-Rev. Andy

PRELUDE *A Little More Faith In Jesus* Spiritual
arr. J. W. Work III
(1901 – 1967)

CALL TO WORSHIP based on Psalm 16

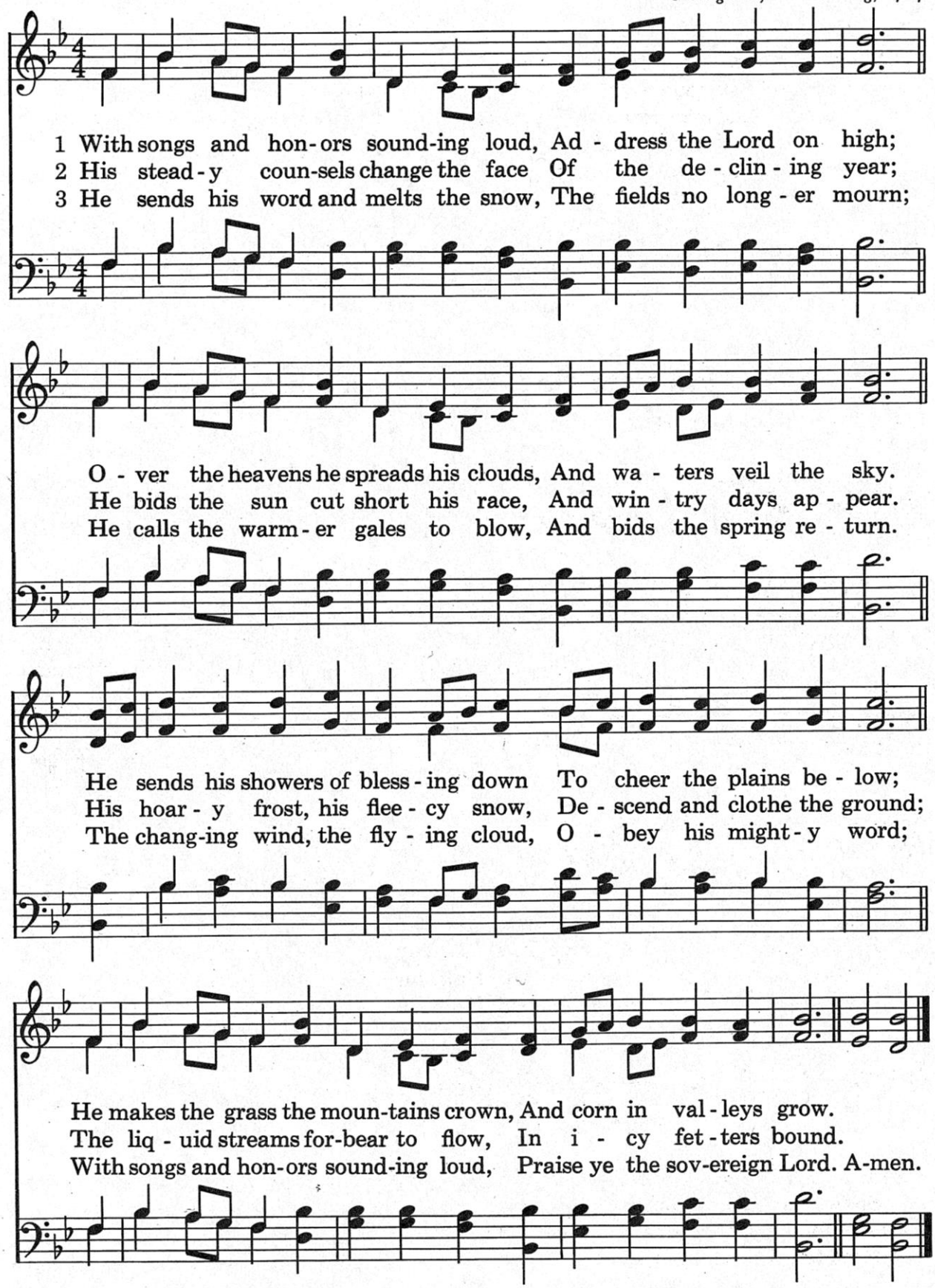
Leader: Come, bless the Lord, in whom we find our refuge and safety.
People: You are our God; all the good things come from You alone.
Leader: Come, bless the Lord, who gives us a rich inheritance, and surrounds us with abundance.
People: You are our God; our lives are in Your hands.
Leader: Come, bless the Lord, who guides us on the path to eternal life, whose presence strengthens and sustains us.
People: You are our God; we will not be shaken.
All: Let's worship God together!

***HYMN 459** *With Song and Honors Sounding Loud* ELLACOMBE
(see next page)

With Song and Honors Sounding

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

LACOMBE C.M.D.
"Gesangbuch," Wirtemberg, 1784



CHANGING SEASONS

A lower setting may be found at No. 68

CCLI # 3034682

***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

God of Heaven and Earth, God of the sunrise and the sunset, God of the highest mountain and the deepest valley, hear our prayers as we come before Your throne of glory. Declare Your message to us and grant us the courage to listen. May our listening turn to action. May our actions touch the hearts of those who need to hear Your voice. We put our trust in You knowing that it is well placed in Your gentle and caring hands. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GREETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY *Lead Me, Lord* S. Wesley
CHANCEL CHOIR *(1766 – 1837)*

***DOXOLOGY 515** OLD HUNDRETH LM

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

We have heard You Lord. There is no greater service we can render to You than to Love one another for Your sake. We give these gifts to serve Your loving purposes. Find us worthy of the highest calling we can know in Christ. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **James 3:13-18**

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Matthew 21:28-32

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

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

SERMON "The Witness of Our Lives"
Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

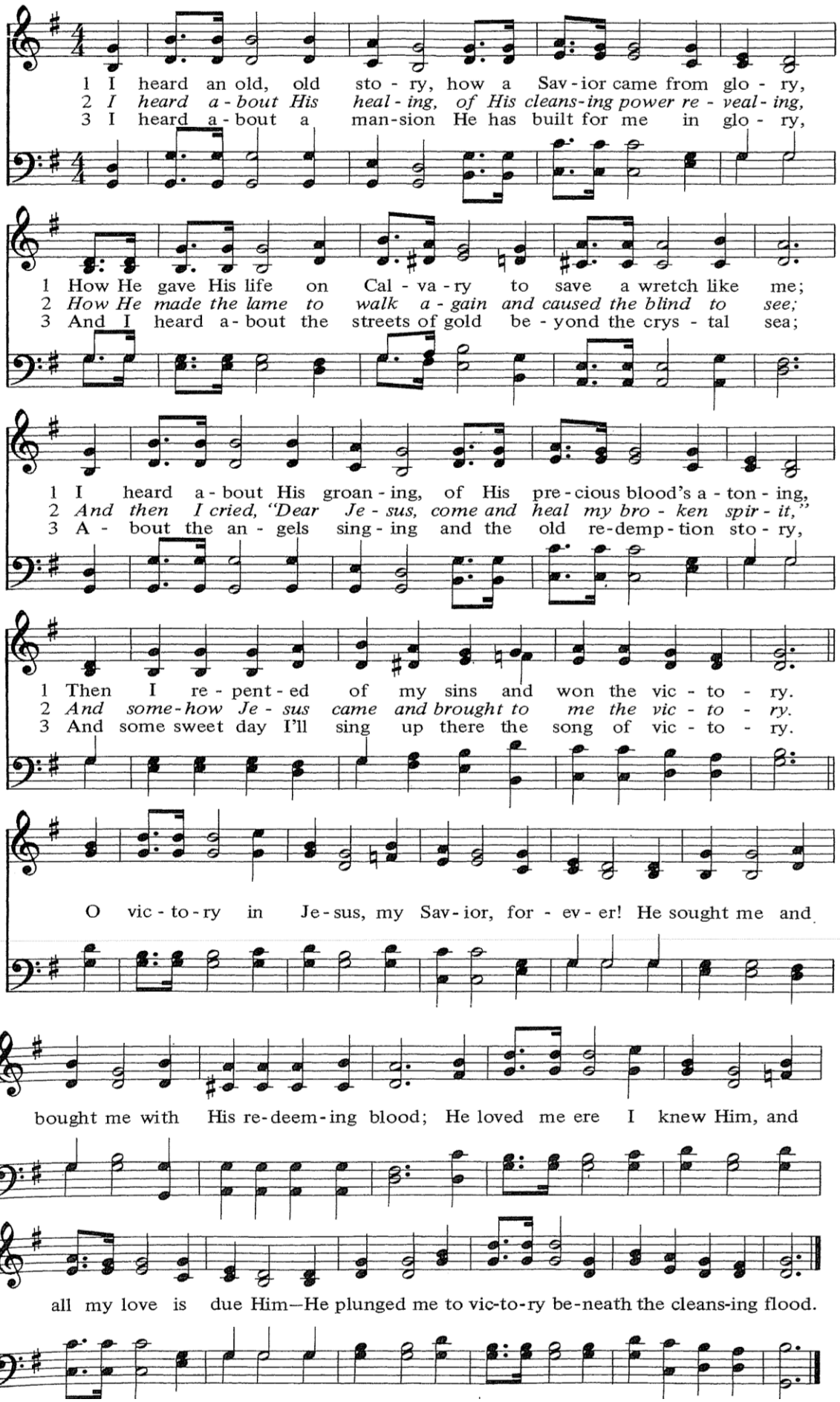
***HYMN** *Victory in Jesus* HARTFORD
(see next page)

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

CENTERING PRAYER (Unison)
God our refuge and strength there is no other foundation upon which we can stand. Our health, money and power are a fleeting thing when compared to You and our eternal need. For You alone are our God in whom we trust. When the earth shakes, and the water rises, and the power is out; confirm our faith in you and help us be a source of strength to others when they stumble. We ask this in the Your most Holy name. Amen.

Victory in Jesus

Eugene M. Bartlett

HARTFORD
Eugene M. Bartlett

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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 Thou Who Hearest Prayer* Welsh Melody

RECEPTION OF PLEDGE CARDS

ANTHEM *Portrait of Praise* D. J. Butler
*(*1960)*

***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.

***PRAYER OF GRATITUDE** (Unison)

Lord Jesus, our Savor and Friend, we gather before You, humbled by the faithfulness of these gifts. In each pledge, we see hearts turned toward Your call and hands reaching to build Your kingdom in ways seen and unseen. Thank You for the generosity that flows from this community, for each act of faith that meets our shared vision. May these offerings go forth as seeds furthering Your purposes in the lives of people in places we may never walk ourselves. Guide us in their stewardship, that our lives together might reflect Your boundless grace and courage. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***HYMN 331** *Savior, Thy Dying Love* *SOMETHING FOR JESUS*
(see next page)

***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTUS *God Be in My Head* H. Walford Davies
(1869 – 1941)

POSTLUDE *Wade In Duh Waddah!* Spiritual
arr. W. F. Smith

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

AV TEAM: Lee Hauenstein 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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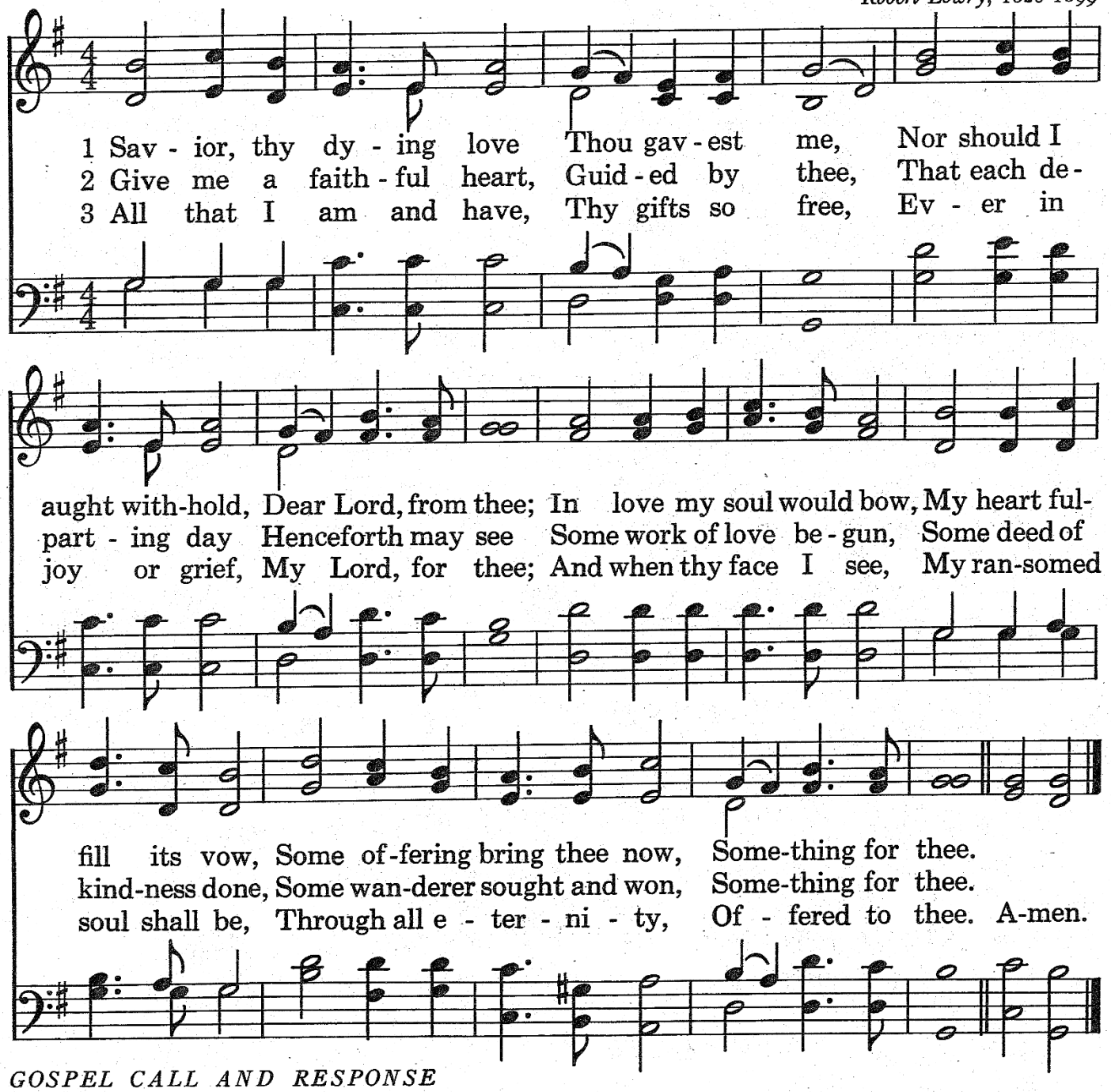
HEARING AIDS AND LARGE PRINT OF HYMNS AND PRAYERS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Flowers in the pulpit this morning, are given in celebration of Stewardship Sunday, with gratitude from the Stewardship Committee.

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.

Savior, Thy Dying Love

S. Dryden Phelps, 1816-1895, alt.

SOMETHING FOR JESUS 6.4.6.4.6.6.6.4.
Robert Lowry, 1826-1899

GOSPEL CALL AND RESPONSE

CCLI # 3034682

NOTES FROM THE CHANCEL

This morning in Worship, on **Stewardship Sunday,** we contemplate how to give to our church for the coming year, with the best offerings we can provide! These "best offerings" allow the church community to plan for all ministries for a healthy 2025, reaching out in the various ways which make our worship, outreach, and education a beacon of light for Nashua and beyond!

Inspired by giving our best: music in worship this Sunday crafts its music offerings around the best contributions of our **African-American Heritage** during our **Prelude** and **Postlude,** handed down from the generations to the modern church. Henry Thacker Burleigh is credited with being responsible for writing down most of the aural tradition Spirituals into "western" classical notation, preserving their melodies for generations to come. This morning's solo organ literature is penned by African-American composers, some known and some neglected through the point in history which their contributions were made.

John W. Work, III penned our **Prelude** this morning. He was born on June 15, 1901 in Tullahoma, Tennessee and was chairman of the Fisk University Department of Music, where he conducted the Fisk Jubilee Singers for ten years. He was a gifted author, lyricist, choral conductor, educator and ethnomusicologist. Work died in 1967.

William Farley Smith created our **Postlude** this morning. Born June 27, 1922, he is the first African-American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music *(for "Lilacs" in 1996).* His doctoral degree was earned from the Eastman School of Music; he has since been awarded six honorary doctoral degrees. His work has been commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony, among others. Smith died in 1997.

Our **CHANCEL CHOIR** offers a fresh contemporary anthem with pipe organ based on Psalm 40 (during our collection of Pledge Cards)**.** Its joyous introduction gives way to a unison proclamation of singing a song of praise unto the Lord, for our heart has been given a new song.

A gentler *a cappella* (without accompaniment) section speaks of the search of God in our lives, commanding us to proclaim how great is the Lord. That proclamation is achieved with each of the four vocal parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) each having their own rhythmic treatment of shouting the greatness of God, as if all creation is giving praise simultaneously.

After a recap of the opening theme, we transition to a more meditative section of waiting patiently for God. As we praise God for turning to us and hearing our cry, drawing us "up from the desolate pit" and "out of the miry bog" – we are set with our feet on the Rock of our Salvation to proclaim praise once more, with the main theme in the soprano and tenor, echoed by a countermelody in the alto and bass. – In this *"ABA"* form of music (where the opening sections repeat again) we transition to a brief *Coda* (ending extension) where the new song also is sung in a new rhythm, but with full-voiced chords from both organ and choir. - *Soli Deo Gloria!*

We have developed a new opportunity for our K through Grade 7 children to participate specifically as a choir in our **4PM** (note **new** time) **CHRISTMAS EVE service on December 24**.

Eric Ruthenberg *leads our "**Christmas Kids!**" 30-minute rehearsal sessions on Sundays at 9:15AM in the Shaw Chapel (lower level Walker Building) on:*

- NOVEMBER 17, 24
- DECEMBER 1, 8, 15
- DECEMBER 22 (10:15am)
- DECEMBER 24 (3:30pm warm-up for church).

"Christmas Kids" choir will sing on December 24 at the 4PM service. The Chancel Choir *will sing* ***at the 8PM service*** *this season. (New service times).*

Parents, please register your child by calling the music office (603) 882-4861 X15 or through email at jolefirowicz@tfcucc.org

Christian Formation Corner

November 17th, 2024 - Today is the Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost and Stewardship Sunday. The liturgical color is green.

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

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

MORNING BIBLE STUDIES – We have two morning Bible study sessions each week. Bible, Friends and Coffee meets on Monday mornings at 9:30 am. The Men's Group meets on Wednesday mornings at 8:30 am. We look forward to seeing you there! Bible Studies do not meet on holidays.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT- Join in the fellowship event on November 23rd, at 9:00 AM to do some sprucing up of the grounds around our lovely First Church. Bring rakes and other garden tools that would be helpful in this effort. As an additional treat you'll get to see, or perhaps participate in, the raising of the Christmas wreath during our time together. Oh yes, donuts and coffee will be there as well. Contact Lee Hauenstein with any questions.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION- It's that time of year again when we have the Women's Association's Fan Favorite Christmas Potluck and Yankee Swap. Come join us on Monday, December 9, at 6 PM in the dining room as we enjoy our traditional evening of sharing good food, laughter and fellowship. Bring a dish to share (no need to sign up as to what you will bring…it's a true potluck!), a wrapped $10 gift (yay for Dollar Tree Store!!) and your sense of humor. Who knows….maybe our little mascot Bellissima will join us again dressed in her Christmas finery!! Sign up at the Welcome Center beginning November 17th.

NOVEMBER OUTREACH- The Outreach Board focus for November is the Front Door Agency. They assist single mothers and their children in achieving stability and independence. Their mission is to deliver comprehensive services that empower clients to set and meet objectives, fostering self-sufficiency. Some of their needs include: paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, large size diapers (size 4 and up), wipes, high efficiency laundry detergent and fabric softener. During November a basket for donations will be available near the Welcome Center.

NASHUA SOUP KITCHEN – food delivery helpers needed. On Saturday mornings two teams from First Church pick up surplus groceries from Hannaford's in Nashua and Hudson for the Soup Kitchen. Additional helpers are needed. Check with Curt Potter or Jay Darrin for details.

WHITE DOVE/SILVER DOVE PROGRAMS 2024- Thank you to all who participated in the Thanksgiving Basket program. Once again our families' needs were more than addressed and I express my gratitude for each one of them. Now on to White Dove. Several of you have already stepped up and said you want to take part and I will be in touch shortly with your family assignments but there is still a need as we take on more families for Christmas than we do for Thanksgiving. If you are interested in helping supply gift cards for either (1)-grocery stores for those families who will be receiving gifts from the Santa Fund for their children but not food or (2)- for both grocery store and gift cards to two retail stores so families may buy for their children (they are given a choice of 5 stores from which they make select two), please contact Carol Butler. Once all the families are taken, she will contact you with the family assigned to you**. All gift cards need to be to Carol by December 4th. The gift cards will then be delivered to the agency on December 9th which will give the families time to shop.**

FAMILY PROMISE-The First Church Team who prepare Family Promise dinners monthly could use some extra helping hands. We prepare dinners for the third week of every month at Family Promise. We are looking for helpers who can cook, drop off part of a meal and/or help serve meals. If you think you would like to learn more or to help out, please contact Beth Raymond 603-595-0053. Thank you!

FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE - A sincere thanks to nearly 50 of you who agreed to stay on a board or committee for 2025! We still have some openings though. If you'd like to know more about what each committee does, you can pick up a briefing at the Welcome Center and talk to Jocelyn Henning, Charlie Morris, or Todd Whitney about current openings. Thanks!

NASHUA AREA INTERFAITH COUNCIL (NAIC) - invites you to an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 26th at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 4 Watson Street, Nashua at 7 pm. Readings. songs, and prayer will be followed by fellowship and fresh pies. Any questions, contact Jocelyn Henning.

Choirs in Worship Next Week

Sunday, November 24, 2024 – Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, Thanksgiving Sunday

8:15 Organ

10:00 Chancel Choir, Decibells

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN NOV 17		Stewardship Sunday
	8:15am	Worship (Chapel)
	9:00am	Curious Minds Study (Nauss Hall)
	9:15am	Christmas Kids (Chapel)
	10:00am	Worship, Livestream
		Radio Broadcast, Sunday School
MON NOV 18	9:30 am	Bible, Friends & Coffee (Ladies Parlor)
	11:00 am	Caregivers (room 15)
TUE NOV 19	4:00 am	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
WED NOV 20	8:30 am	Men's Group (Ladies Parlor)
	10:30 am	NAIC Board (room 10)
	6:45 am	Chancel Choir
THU NOV 21	10:00 am	Thrift Shop
	10:00 am	Pastoral Counseling Service (room 10)
	12:00 pm	Chamber of Commerce (dining room)
	6:45 pm	Decibells
SAT NOV 23	9:00 am	Property Management Fall Clean-Up/Fellowship
	10:00 am	Chancel Choir
	11:00 am	Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Featuring

ANDOVER ORGAN COMPANY's

Opus 79 from 1976

in the SHAW MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Join us this season for *continued*

FRIDAYS at FIRST

during Advent and Lent

A 30-minute contemplative organ recital

on our charming Greene Memorial 3-stop chamber pipe organ

starting at 12:15PM. - FREE ADMISSION.

DECEMBER 13, 2024 – Janet HUNT

MARCH 14, 2025 – Leonardo CIAMPA

ENTRY through the rear COURTYARD
TURN LEFT on the GROUND FLOOR
Proceed inside the WALKER BUILDING

FIRST MUSIC
FM
CONCERT SERIES 2024 – 25 SEASON

SEASON XVII

Bach to Broadway and Beyond

BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

4th ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

CHRISTMAS at FIRST

CHANCEL CHOIR OF THE FIRST CHURCH
FIRST MUSIC CHAMBER STRINGS

POISSON • MASTERSON • GORE • OLEFIROWICZ

SUNDAY
DEC 22

OPEN TO THE **PUBLIC**
ALL ARE WELCOME

9 & 11 AM

THE FIRST CHURCH

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THE FIRST CHURCH

NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

STAFF

Senior Minister, *Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong*, aarmstrong@tfcucc.org
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
Christian Formation Coordinator, *Amanda Steere*, asteere@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 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 The 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 The 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. The 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 a 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 Tuesday. All information for the monthly newsletter must be in the office by 4:00 PM on the second Monday of the month (August through May).

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

THE FIRST CHURCH

One Concord Street * Nashua, New Hampshire 03064 * 603-882-4861

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:00am-noon and 1:00-4:00pm,Friday 9:00am-noon

www.tfcucc.org