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

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 23, 2025 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 "The Word became flesh." – John 1:14

PRELUDE *Variations on* DIX D. P. Dahl *(*1937)*

Introduction and Hymntune
i. Canonic
ii. Duo
iii. Aria
iv. Invention
v. Finale

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Psalm 1)

Leader: With joy and delight we gather to praise our Holy God! With reverence and awe, we approach the throne of life.

People: We give thanks that God understands us and supports us with the promise of unfailing love and faithfulness.

Leader: Creating God, You call us to worship You, as Your children, made in Your image. We give thanks that Jesus understands us and encourages us to grow in love and understanding.

People: Glorious God, You invite us to sink our roots deep into Your life and holiness, and to grow stronger each day in our faith in You.

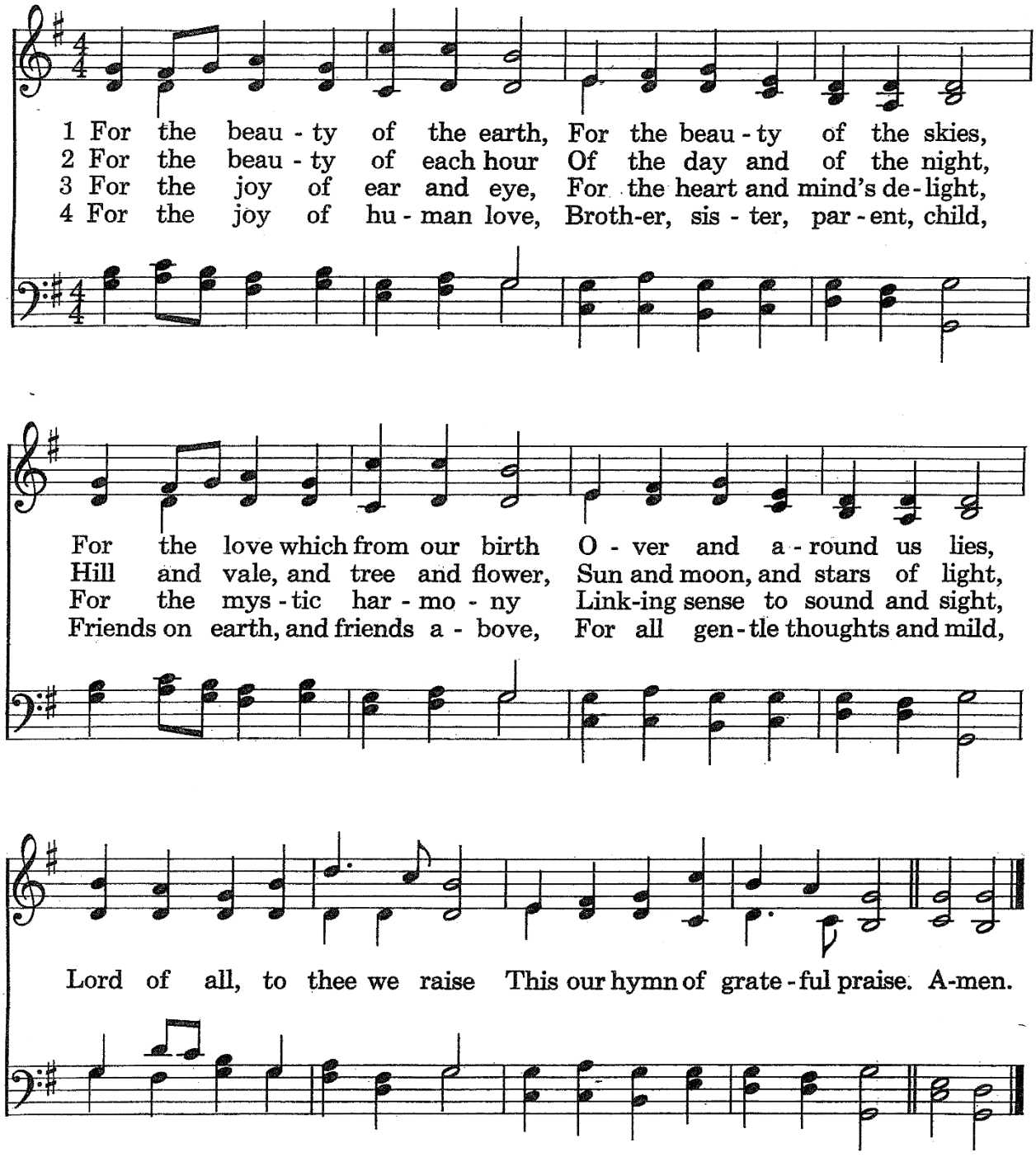
Leader: We give thanks that God strengthens us and that the fruits we bear are consistent with who God created us to become.

All: We gather to worship and praise our supporting and caring God. Amen.

*HYMN 66 *For the Beauty of the Earth* DIX

Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

DIX 7.7.7.7.7.7.
Abridged from a chorale by
Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872



5 For each perfect gift of thine
Unto us so freely given,
Graces, human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven,

6 For thy Church that evermore
Lifteth holy hands above,
Offering up on every shore
Her pure sacrifice of love,

A higher setting may be found at No. 119

WORKS IN CREATION

CCLI # 3034682

***OPENING PRAYER** (Unison)

Most wonderful God, foolish and flawed though we are, we have confidence to approach You through Your beloved Son. May the heavens open for us so we can catch a glimpse of that Light and Love that transforms our lives with a beauty not of our making. Through Christ Jesus our Lord, we pray. Amen.

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Genesis 2:15-24**

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Song of Solomon 2:1-7

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens. As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his intention toward me was love. Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love.

O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

Matthew 22:23-33

The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. Last of all, the woman herself died. In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her." Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

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

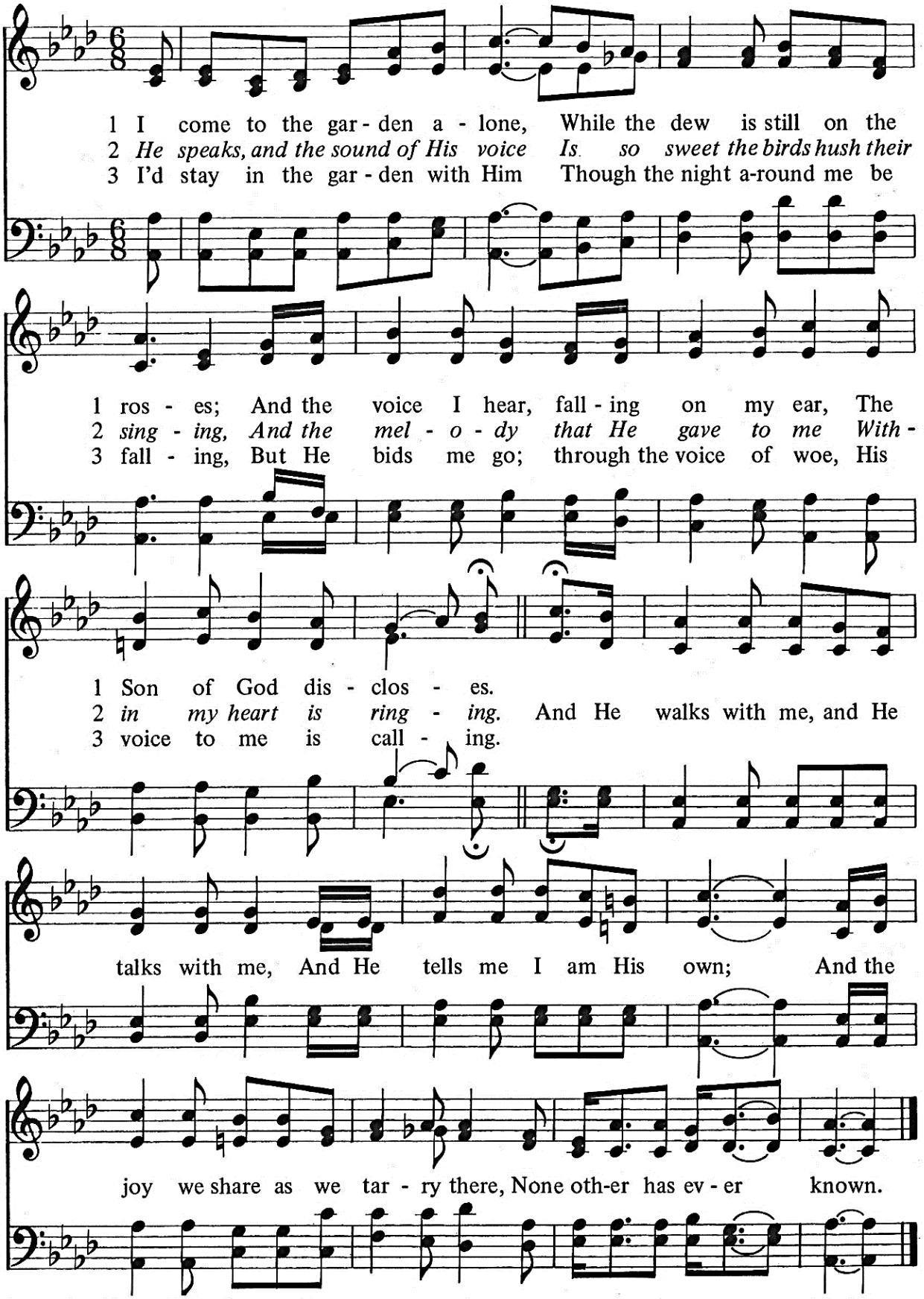
GRATIA TIBI *Thanks Be to Thee* T. Tallis
STAFF SINGER QUARTET *(1505 – 1585)*

ANTHEM *Ready to Forgive* J. W. Lindh
STAFF SINGER WOMEN *(*1944)*
DEVIN MORIN, flute

SERMON "The Original Blessing" Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

*HYMN *In the Garden*

GARDEN
C. Austin Miles

C. Austin Miles

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LITANY (Inspired by Psalm 1)

Leader: King of all the earth, Creator of the universe, Holy Triune God, from everlasting to everlasting, You are Lord. Your law brings life, O Lord, and we meditate on it day and night;

People: Happy are we when we walk in Your ways, O Lord.

Leader: You are a rich stream of living waters, and we would immerse ourselves in You;

People: Happy are we when we walk in Your ways, O Lord.

Leader: You bring forth fruit in due season and establish the work of our hands;

People: Happy are we when we walk in Your ways, O Lord.

Leader: Who is like our God, the One whose ways are full of life?

People: Happy are we when we walk in Your ways, O Lord.

Leader: This is our God, the Holy One, who in confidence we approach with prayer and thanksgiving through Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

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 *Chorale Prelude on* DIX — D. Sears *(*1945)*

OFFERTORY *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High* — R. Founds *(*1954)*
FIRST FOLK *arr. Wagner*

***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.

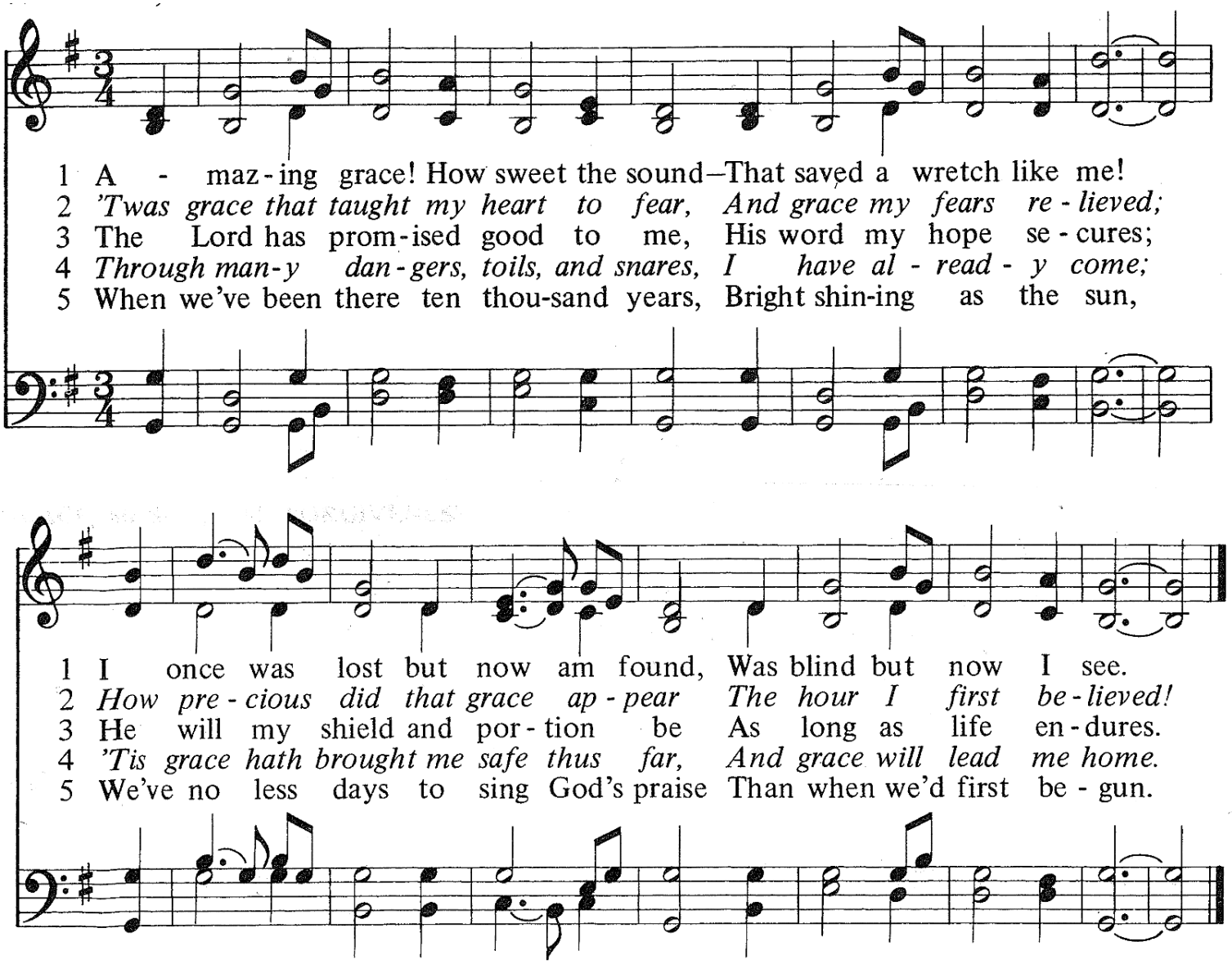
***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (Unison)

You smile at us twice, O God—once for who we are and twice for who we are becoming. We have heard Your conditions for blessedness, and we wonder how this can be. Still, we offer You these gifts, knowing that Your ways and thoughts are not our own. Receive them as our declaration of trust beyond our understanding. May they serve our neighbor and give glory to Christ, our blessed Redeemer. Amen

***HYMN** *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* NEW BRITAIN

(see next page)

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



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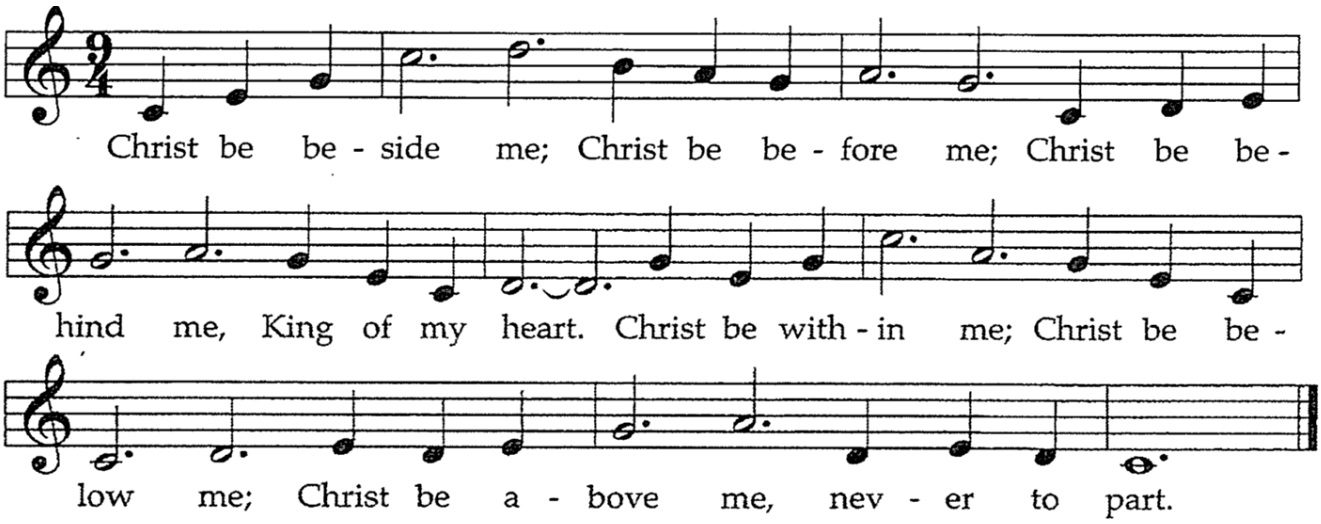
***BENEDICTION**

BENEDICTUS *Christ Be Beside Me* BUNESSAN

THE CONGREGATION SINGS



TEXT: James Quinn, SJ, 1969
MUSIC: Gaelic melody; arr. Dale Grotenhuis, 1985
Music Arr. © 1987 Faith Alive Christian Resources
BUNESSAN
5.5.5.4.D

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POSTLUDE *Adoration* F. B. Price
(1887 – 1953)

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

Have you remembered The First Church in your will?

AV TEAM: Sandra and Roy Rumbaugh

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; Amy Johnson, alto; Zoë Harper, tenor; Joshua L. Gore, bass

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.

NOTES FROM THE CHANCEL

In our **PRELUDE**, we begin our time to hear the *Still, Small Voice* listening to an organ voluntary by **David P. Dahl**. As Professor of Music and University Organist Emeritus at *Pacific Lutheran University*, Tacoma, Washington: he was a member of the music faculty for thirty years. Dahl is also the Director of Music Ministries Emeritus for *Christ Episcopal Church*, Tacoma, where he served as a church musician for forty years. As an organ performer, Dahl has presented many recitals and hymn festivals, including performances at the national conventions of the *American Guild of Organists* and *Organ Historical Society*.

His compositional output for organ dates primarily from the years following his retirement from *Pacific Lutheran University* and includes several suites and numerous hymn preludes and partitas.

Florence B. Price, the African-American composer of our **PRELUDE** this morning, was born in Little Rock, Arkansas on April 9, 1887. She composed over three hundred works and was the first black woman to have a symphony performed by a professional symphony (*Chicago Symphony Orchestra*). During her life, her songs were performed by some of the most admired voices of the day. Price died in 1953. Within this century, her contributions to music history are finally "getting their due" with a resurgence in interest in her work and the work of other female composers of the same era.

Wikipedia writes: "…Even though her training was steeped in European tradition, Price's music consists of mostly the American idiom and reveals her Southern roots…. Being deeply religious, she frequently used the music of the African-American church as material for her arrangements… Her melodies were blues-inspired and mixed with more… European Romantic techniques. The weaving of tradition and modernism reflected the way life was for African-Americans in large cities at the time…"

Worship Schedule

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd

10:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
Radio Broadcast on WSMN FM 95.3 & AM 1590
Sunday School & Nursery Care available
Annual Meeting at 11:30 am following worship

Christian Formation Corner

February 23, 2025 - Today is the Seventh Sunday after Epiphany, and 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

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 "The First Church Nashua". The notifications will read as follows: First Service Cancelled or Sunday School Cancelled, All Services Cancelled, or Online Service Only and will be announced by 6am on the Sunday in question.

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 car.

ANNUAL MEETING RESCHEDULED (TODAY) - Our Bylaws require that the annual meeting be held each year without exception on the second Sunday in February. Due to the lack of a quorum on February 9th (we were just 8 people short of the 75 required), the annual meeting was suspended at the start and has been scheduled to resume on **Sunday February 23rd at 11:30 AM** in the sanctuary. Please make plans to attend on the 23rd. As a UCC church in the congregational tradition, the annual meeting is the only means we have to elect committee members for 2025 and approve changes to the By-Laws. Thanks for your continuing participation!

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION- The Women's Association's annual tea will be held on Saturday March 22nd from 2-4 pm in Fellowship Hall and the theme this year is Springtime. Please come dressed for Spring including a Spring be-decked hat or bonnet (yes you may be creative!!). We are asking each of you to bring a toy, book, memory or other special item from your childhood to share. Special teas and fancy tea sandwiches and tea desserts including gluten free will be served. Please sign up at the Welcome Center between February 23rd and March 16th. This is always such a wonderful occasion and we encourage those of you who have come each year to invite new women to join us.

ADULT LEARNING CENTER (ALC) THANK YOU!! - I am writing to once again thank the First Church members who donated mittens, gloves, and hats to our childcare, the Early Childhood Adventures Program. Your timing was amazing! As I type this thank you it is 8 degrees outside, and there are only 2 pairs of mittens left on the table. They are the larger size and will be used by our teachers when they can, again, take the children outside to play. Our parents are surprised when they see the items and are told they may take what they need. They always express their gratitude to us and we are careful to let them know the items come from First Church Nashua. At this time, we are caring full-time for 64 children from 52 families, who range in age from 6 weeks to 5 years, so their parents can work knowing their children are safe and secure. We collaborate with the Front Door Agency and Family Promise so some of our children are from these agencies. Nashua is a remarkably caring and collaborative community, as is The First Church, and we are all grateful for your support. – Carol Baldwin

MITTEN TREE UPDATE – Thanks to the generosity of this wonderful church community, 224 pairs of mittens and 38 hats were distributed to our three neighborhood schools (Amherst St., Mt. Pleasant, The Adult Learning Center). The staff are always so grateful that we have thought of them and given them the ability to help their students stay warm and dry. Heartfelt thanks to all who were able to participate in this outreach to our community.

Choirs in Worship Next Week

Sunday, March 2, 2025 – Transfiguration Sunday, Communion Sunday

8:15 Staff Singers Quartet

10:00 Chancel Choir

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN FEB 23	9:00 am	First Folk
	10:00 am	Worship, Livestream
		Radio Broadcast, Sunday School
	11:30 am	Annual Meeting
MON FEB 24	9:30 am	Bible, Friends & Coffee (Ladies Parlor)
TUE FEB 25	2:00 pm	Huntington Service
	4:00 pm	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
WED FEB 26	8:30 am	Men's Group (Ladies Parlor)
	6:45 pm	Chancel Choir
THU FEB 27	10:00 am	Thrift Shop
SAT MAR 1	11:00 am	Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)

FIRST MUSIC

FM

CONCERT SERIES 2024 – 25 SEASON

SEASON XVII

Bach to Broadway and Beyond

BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

CELLO MASTERS II

RORIC CUNNINGHAM, CELLO

NADIA YAMAUCHI AZZI, PIANO

SUNDAY MAR 09

FREE ADMISSION

ALL ARE WELCOME

3:00 PM

THE FIRST CHURCH

1 CONCORD STREET • NASHUA, NH

FIRST-MUSIC.ORG • 603.882.4861

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 are 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