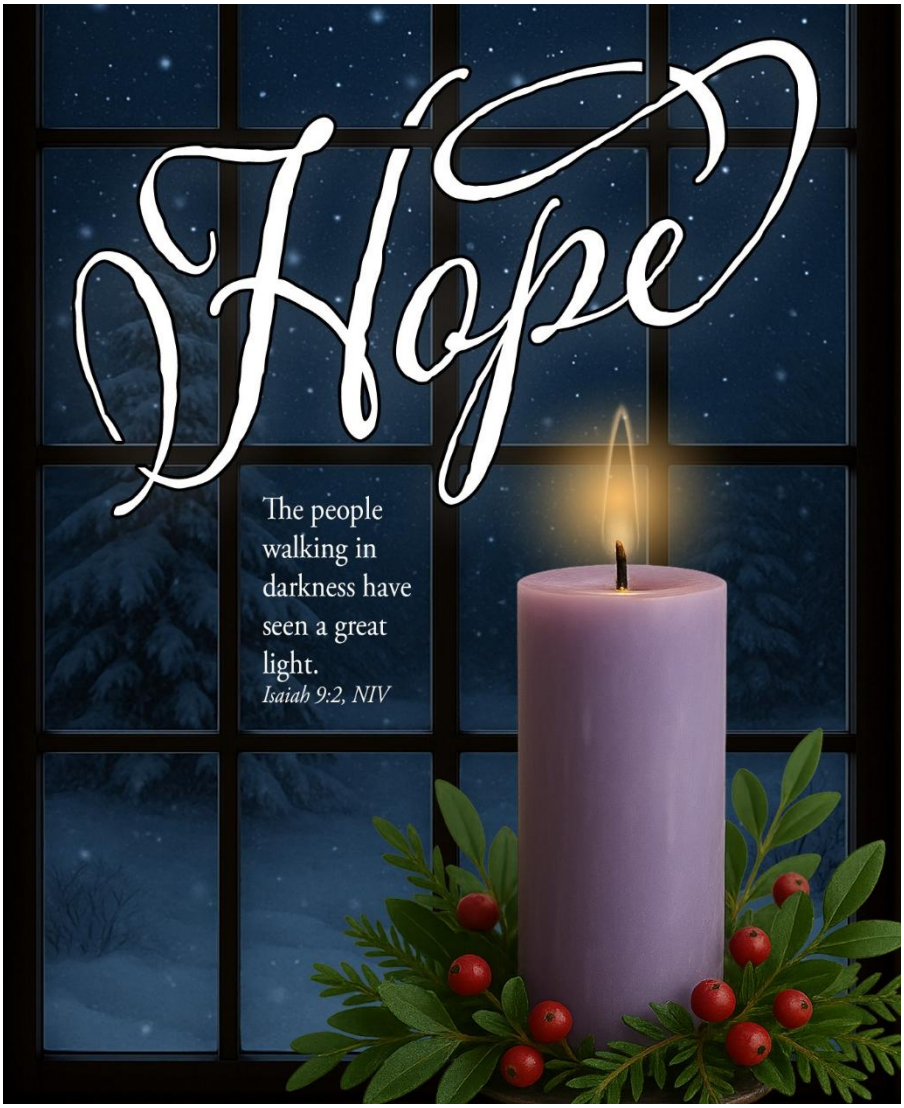

THE FIRST CHURCH

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

First Sunday of Advent

November 30, 2025 10:00 AM

*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 "Repentance is not something God demands of you before He will take you back and which He could let you off if He chose; it is simply a description of what going back is like." -C.S. Lewis

PRELUDE *Two Meditations* C. Callahan

Come with Us, O Blessed Jesus *(1951 – 2023)*

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: May the joy of the Advent season and hope in our Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Advent is expectation. The Christ who came, who comes again to be with us in every age and every place, and will come again to complete His saving work begun at Bethlehem.

People: He shall judge between nations, and arbitrate between many races; they shall beat the swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

***HYMN 103** *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* STUTTGART

CCLI#3034682

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)**

God of light and life, You ask us to set aside the works of darkness by putting on the light of Christ. You ask us to be watchful and prepared for Your coming. Forgive us when people do not see any evidence in Your life in us. In this season of Advent, remind us that our lives can be a sign of hope to those in the gloom of despair and suffering.

A moment of silence for personal confession

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Merciful God, the one for whom we wait, is the very same who forgives us with His healing Word. In Jesus Christ, our hearts and minds are cleansed from all that hinders us from loving God and loving our neighbor. In His name we are forgiven!

People: Praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF HOPE

Reader 1: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." — Isaiah 9:2

Reader 2: Today we begin our Advent journey, a time of waiting and preparation. We light this candle to symbolize our hope in the coming Christ.

All: As we watch and wait, may our hearts be filled with hope, and may we become bearers of that hope in the world.

UNISON PRAYER:

Loving God, as we light this first candle, ignite within us the flame of hope. Help us to see the light of Christ through the darkness and guide us to share that light with those who feel lost. Amen.

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS **Psalm 120**

In my distress I cry to the LORD, that he may answer me: "Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue."What shall be given to you? And what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue?A warrior's sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree! Woe is me, that I am an alien in Meshech, that I must live among the tents of Kedar.Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace.I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

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

SOLO *Quia respexit humilitatem* J. S. Bach
from *Magnificat,* BWV 243 *(1685 – 1750)*

JANET POISSON, soprano

Quia respexit humilitatem	He has regarded the humble estate
ancillae suae,	of His handmaiden--
ecce, enim ex hoc beatam	behold, from henceforth
me dicent omnes generationes.	all generations shall call me blessed.

SERMON " A "No" that is a "Yes"" Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

***HYMN** *Ubi Caritas/Live in Charity* TAIZÉ

1. & 2. Latin – in unison (all)
3. Add Alto part
4. Add Tenor part
5. Add Bass part
6. Sing English SATB
7. Sing Latin SATB

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RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

***CENTERING PRAYER (Unison)**

O God, as the world grows dark, our advent candle flickers hope in the encroaching shadows. Stir within us a longing for Your coming, a quiet anticipation for the dawn of Your grace. We confess our weariness, our distractions. Still our restless hearts in prayer, that we may recognize Your presence in the quiet moments, in the unexpected grace notes of this season. Awaken us, Lord, to the promise of Emmanuel, God with us. 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.

OFFERTORY *Rejoice Greatly, o Daughter of Zion* G. F. Händel
from *"The Messiah"* *(1685 – 1759)*

***ADVENT DOXOLOGY** OLD HUNDRETH LM

All praise eternal Christ to thee,
Whose Advent sets Thy people free;
Once more upon Thy people shine,
And fill the world with love divine. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

God of the Advent, as we joyfully enter this time of waiting, we long for that great day when everyone will know Your everlasting peace. We wait hushed in anticipation of the coming of Your Son. He serves as the guide of our lives and the shepherd of our souls. We hope to emulate His generosity and compassion as we share these gifts. Use these gifts so others can be blanketed with the warmth of Your unconditional love. Amen.

***HYMN 104** *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People* PSALM 42
(see page following worship order)

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE *Deck Thyself, My Soul* C. Callahan

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

The flowers in the pulpit this morning are given by Bill and Kathie McIntyre celebrating the blessings of 50 years of marriage.

AV TEAM: Craig Neth and Don Smith-Weiss

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

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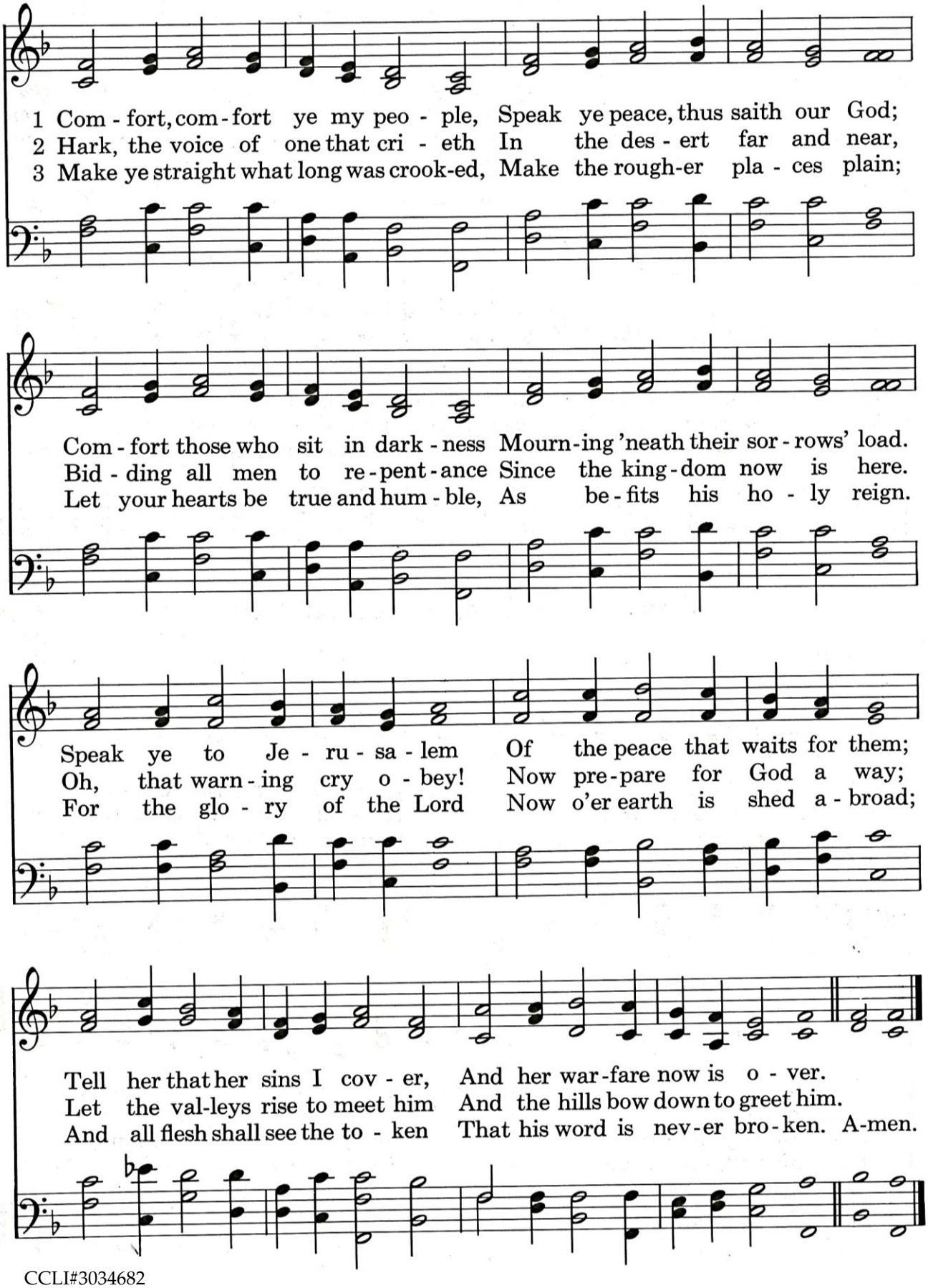
HEARING AIDS AND LARGE PRINT OF HYMNS AND PRAYERS
ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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.

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Based on Isaiah 40:1-8
Johann Olearius, 1611-1684
Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.7.8.8.
"Genevan Psalter," 1551



CCLI#3034682

NOTES FROM THE CHANCEL

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany and worked as a professional organist, *Konzertmeister* and *Kapellmeister* in several German cities. Bach's extraordinary ability to portray spirituality, joy, simplicity, pain and death in his music revealed a consummate master of harmony and melodic construction who humbly offered his gifts as expressions of sincere and utmost devotion to God. Bach begins the story of Christ with the *Magnificat*, Mary's song to the Lord in which she replies to the angel's news of her imminent motherhood with humility and reverence. Even at this very early stage in the journey (before the birth of Jesus) Bach's dissonant chromaticism in *Quia respexit humilitatem* foreshadows the pain and sacrifice Mary's son will ultimately face. It is significant that Bach closes the *Passion According to St. Matthew* with this same theme, indicating that Christ has come full circle from conception to death. *Select references on Bach's life and his Magnificat are provided graciously, through Tricia Oney, DMA.*

Our **MIDDLE HYMN** will be a meditative short piece sung together, coming from the reflective **TAIZÉ** tradition. This is a 20th century ecumenical Christian movement, founded in the Burgundy region of France. Over 100,000 young people from around the world make pilgrimages to Taizé each year for prayer, Bible study, sharing and communal work. Key to this movement, is the offering of simple expressions of praise through song, mostly repetitive short works and with an element of improvisation and spontaneity. *Source: Wikipedia. Accessed 10 November 2025.*

An excerpt from the beloved Oratorio *Messiah,* by **Georg Friedrich Händel**, rounds out celebration of the First Sunday in Advent. Taking an excerpt from the book of Zechariah (mirrored in later writings of Matthew), Händel crafted an exciting piece for soprano which inspires us to look towards the coming of the Messiah through the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas. - *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Savior. And he shall speak peace unto the heathen.*

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH

8:15 am Worship (Shaw Chapel)
10:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream
In-person Worship and Livestream
WSMN 95.3 FM, 1590 AM
Sunday School and Nursery Care available

Christian Formation Corner

November 30, 2025 - Today is the First Sunday of Advent and the liturgical color is purple.

Nursery news – The nursery is open and staffed! We encourage families of children 6 weeks to 3 years old to take advantage of our space downstairs. The Welcome Center staff can assist in providing information.

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

WHITE DOVE/SILVER DOVE PROGRAMS 2025- We will be following the same protocol that we have been for the past couple of years for the White Dove/Silver Dove programs. There are two gift options for the White Dove/Silver Dove program (gift cards and gift cards with presents). **White Dove/Silver dove Christmas program are needed by December 11th**. Contact Carol Butler (information in the directory) with any questions or to sign-up.

FRIDAYS AT FIRST DECEMBER 5TH AT 12:15 PM: JUAN A. MESA, a Boston-based organist - will offer an Advent-themed 30-minute contemplative organ recital on our charming Greene Memorial 3-stop chamber pipe organ (Andover Organ Company Opus 79 from 1976) in the Shaw Memorial Chapel. **FREE ADMISSION.**

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION- It's time for the annual Women's Association Christmas potluck and Yankee swap. Come join us for an evening of fun... good food and lots of laughter. Bring an appetizer, salad, main dish or dessert to share and head to the dining room on **Monday night December 8 at 6 PM**. Bring a Yankee swap gift with a value of no more than fifteen dollars. Sign up at the welcome center.

OPEN POSITION – CHURCH SEXTON- We are in the process of seeking someone to fill our Church Sexton position. The job description will be posted soon on various bulletin platforms. If you are interested or know someone who might be looking for such a position, please contact the office tdrew@tfcucc.org or (603) 882-4861.

ADULT LEARNING CENTER - Every Thursday at 11:00 a.m. in the Beve and Pete Tucker Community Room of the Adult Learning Center at 4 Lake Street, Tea & Talks is hosted by Crossway Church. It is a chance for our ESL students to practice their speaking skills, in a relaxed environment over a cup of tea or coffee and snacks. The group has plenty of students but is in need of volunteers to chat with students. If you can spare an hour for conversation with our delightful adult students, please consider attending Tea & Talks. If interested, reach out to me cbaldwin@nashuaalc.org or to the person in charge, Merejo, at designbuildteam@gmail.com. Thank you! -Carol Baldwin, Executive Director

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COOKIES FOR A CAUSE- All are invited to bring cookies to enjoy following the **Christmas Pageant at the 10 am service on December 14th.** . We'll enjoy the cookies (and hot chocolate) with our Sunday School students and volunteers. Afterwards, a team will gather the remaining cookies into gift baskets to share with local organizations in need of holiday cheer. Among them will be Family Promise, The Front Door Agency and The Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter. Please bring your cookies to fellowship Hall and place them on the designated tables.

MITTEN TREE – Christmas season is also **MITTEN TREE** season!! I hope all the knitters and crocheters have been busy throughout the year with this greatly appreciated project. If you have never acquired those talents do not worry. We also love purchased items and they are going to be on sale for the season, so put them on your list! Our warm hearts provide warm hands to the children who attend one of our neighborhood elementary schools (Amherst St. and Mount Pleasant) or The Adult Learning Center. We've distributed hundreds of mittens and even some hats to these schools every year and they are always gratefully received. The tree will be up for a collection point until Sunday, January 18th. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Testa.

POINSETTIAS – If you would like to help decorate the church for Christmas, red and white poinsettias will be available to purchase for $14.00 per plant. Please make your check payable to: The First Church with flowers in the memo line. Stop by the table in Fellowship Hall after church on Sundays**, December 7th and December 14th or mail in the form with your payment to the church office by December 16th, 2025**. Forms are available in Fellowship Hall, on the church website (Newsletter) and in the office.

NEWS FROM PROPERTY MANAGEMENT- The lead abatement work at the 3-5 Concord St. apartments has been successfully completed and the tenants are back in the building. The work included all new exterior windows (more than 70 in total), most interior doors, and baseboard and walls remediation. This work (which is part of the upcoming capital campaign) was completed early since $360K of the $380K cost was funded using Federal and City of Nashua, NH grants. We are pleased to now have an updated and safe apartment building for our tenants, including children who are most susceptible to lead exposure.

Music in Worship Next Week

Sunday, December 7, 2025 – Second Sunday of Advent, Communion Sunday

8:15 Organ

10:00 Decibells

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN NOV 30	8:15 am	Worship (Chapel)
	10:00 am	Worship, Livestream
		Radio Broadcast, First Church Kids
MON DEC 1	7:00 pm	All Boards Meeting
TUE DEC 2	4:00 pm	Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
	4:30 pm	Joyful Noise
WED DEC 3	11:45 am	BNI (dining room)
	6:45 pm	Chancel Choir
THU DEC 4	10:00 am	Thrift Shop
	6:45 pm	Decibells
FRI DEC 5	12:15 pm	Fridays at First (Shaw Chapel)
	5:00 pm	Parents Night Out (dining room)
SAT DEC 6	10:00 am	Chancel Choir
	10:00 am	Thrift Shop
	11:00 am	Sisters in Sobriety

December 2025 Worship Schedule

Sunday, November 30
First Sunday of Advent
8:15 AM: Worship (Shaw Chapel)
10:00 AM: Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast
Sunday School & Nursery Care

Sunday, December 7
Second Sunday of Advent
8:15 AM: Worship (Shaw Chapel)
10:00 AM: Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast
Sunday School& Nursery Care

Sunday, December 14
Third Sunday of Advent
8:15 AM: Worship (Shaw Chapel)
10:00 AM: Worship, Christmas Pageant & Nursery Care
Livestream, Radio Broadcast
Cookies for a Cause, following 10 am worship

Sunday, December 21
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Christmas Sunday/ Christmas at First
9:00 AM: Worship
11:00 AM: Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast
No Sunday School
Childcare Care (infant-grade 2)
provided at both services

Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve
4:00 PM
Service for Families and Children of all Ages
7:00 PM
Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, Livestream

Sunday, December 28
First Sunday after Christmas
10:00 AM: Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast
Childcare Care (infant-grade 2)
***Chapel worship resumes Jan. 11th at 8:15 am**

FIRST MUSIC
FM
CONCERT SERIES 2025 – 26 SEASON

SEASON XVIII
100th Birthday Bash
BRINGING the JOY of MUSIC to the GATE CITY

4th ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

CHRISTMAS at FIRST

CHANCEL CHOIR OF THE FIRST CHURCH
MUDDY BROOK CHAMBER PLAYERS
POISSON • PLUMMER • SOKOL • CLEVELAND

SUNDAY
DEC 21

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
ALL ARE WELCOME
9 & 11 AM

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

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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