First Church Messenger

First Church was gathered in 1685 **February 2026**

A Message from Rev. Andy

Resetting Our Souls: Forty Days to Spiritual Wholeness

As we enter the Lenten season, I want to invite you to join our new study, "**Resetting Our Souls: Forty Days to Spiritual Wholeness."** Lent is a season of repentance, reflection, and preparation rooted in Jesus' own life and ministry—His time of testing, prayer, and dependence on God before beginning His public ministry.

In following Jesus' pattern, this study will focus on uprooting the patterns that hold us back, relying on God's grace to bring healing, freedom, and renewed joy. Over forty days we'll explore practical spiritual rhythms, Biblical truths, and honest community that help us identify areas needing change and receive the Spirit's power to grow in spiritual wholeness. Daily devotionals will be available online and there will be additional study opportunities.

In person: Sundays 9:00 am in Nauss Hall, beginning 02/15/2026 through 03/29/2026.

Online: Wednesdays, 12:00–12:30 PM, beginning 02/25/2026 and concluding 04/01/2026.

Join us via this link for all online sessions:
https://calendar.app.google/aepcLCciX159pDPd8

I pray that that you and our community experience the heights and depths of our faith made real for us in the life, death and resurrection on our Lord and Savior.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Andy

STAFF NEWS

The sexton position has been filled by James Halstead.

James and his family have attended worship with us over the years and he has a background in custodial work.

Welcome to our staff, James!

ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH AT 11:30 AM (Following worship, one service at 10 AM)

The Annual Meeting will take place for the following purposes:

1. To receive reports concerning the work of the Church for the year 2025.
2. To elect Officers, Committee Members and Delegate in accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws.
3. To approve a changes The First Church By-Laws :
   A. Define a method to postpone an Annual Meeting (weather).
   B. Reference the New Hampshire United Church of Christ "Granite State Association and remove references to the now obsolete "Hillsborough Association".
4. To transact any other business that may be legally brought before the meeting.

This notice is made pursuant to Article V, Section 2c of the By-Laws.

-John L.Henning, Clerk
The First Church of Nashua, UCC

MEMBERS MUST BE PRESENT TO VOTE.

***childcare available in the nursery**

First Church of Nashua
United Church of Christ
1 Concord St., Nashua, NH 03064

Sunday Worship: 8:15 & 10:00 AM
10:00 AM: Livestreamed

Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong, Sr. Minister
Rev. Nancy Haynes, Assoc. Minister
Joseph R. Olefirowicz,-MA,CAGO, Minister of Music
Dianne Smigliani, Business & Marketing Manager
Tasha Drew, Office Manager
Amanda Steere, Christian Formation Coordinator
James Halstead, Sexton

Pastors Emeriti:
Rev. James S. Chaloner
Rev. Dr. Jeffrey C. Evans

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday: 9am-noon & 1-4pm
Friday : 9 am—noon

Telephone: 603-882-4861
Website: www.tfcucc.org

The Bulletin Board

All Boards meet on **Monday, February 2nd** at 7:00 PM.

Baptism - Any adult wishing to be baptized or to have their child baptized is asked to call the church office to schedule an appointment with one of the pastors.

Bible, Friends and Coffee meets on Mondays (except on holidays) at 9:30 AM in the Ladies' Parlor (next to Fellowship Hall).

Wednesday Morning Men's Study meets at 8:30 AM in the Ladies' Parlor (next to Fellowship Hall).

Hospitalizations - If you or a family member are hospitalized, please contact the church office.

Help Keep our Records Current. If you have a change of name, address, phone number or email address please let the church office know.

Membership - For information about becoming a member of First Church, please call the church office.

Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter- A group of volunteers meets **every Tuesday** at 4:00 PM. To volunteer contact Paula Noeth **paulanoeth@gmail.com**

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is looking for new members. Contact Karen Bianchi or the church office for more information.

The First Church Thrift Shop is open on **Thursdays, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM.** Leave donations - *clean and in good repair* - in the marked bin in the courtyard lobby. Contact Beth Bartlett or the church office with any questions.

Visit our website: www.tfcucc.org to view all the activities and events going on at First Church.

If you would like to receive notification that the newsletter has been posted, sign up at the bottom of the "newsletter" page. If you wish to go paperless, please notify Tasha Drew to have your name removed from the mailing list.

Find us on Facebook at:
https://www.facebook.com/tfc

Hunt Community Service

Services at the Hunt Community are held the **second Friday of each month at 3:00 PM.** Conducted by Rev. Nancy, the services include reading of scripture, sharing of concerns, prayer and communion. All members of the community and their friends are welcomed to join this time of worship and fellowship.

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9th.

PLEASE SEND ITEMS TO TASHA DREW tdrew@tfcucc.org

THANK YOU.

Sympathy is extended to the families of Sandra Stone (Dec. 25, 2025) and Virgina "Ginny" Sipe (Dec. 26, 2025).

Our prayers and care are with you during this time of loss.

2026

02/02 Claudia Hauenstein
02/02 Susan Lajoie
02/05 Ann Corbett
02/05 Bev Mann
02/05 Joyce Potter
02/08 Ginny Kenney
02/10 Malva Bachmann
02/10 Grace McGinnis
02/10 Priscilla Saratora
02/12 Robert Robb
02/14 Jan Hanks
02/14 Marion Hauck
02/15 Richard Laliberte
02/18 Lois Keohan
20/22 Janet Swanson

Last Call for Kathryn Brigham Service Award Nominations

Submit your nominations for this service award. Kathryn Brigham served First Church for over half a century. It is in her memory that we wish to acknowledge the unselfish, loving, and committed Christian service of people in First Church.

The award will be presented at the Annual Meeting on February 8, 2026.

Nomination forms are available at the welcome center or online.

END 68 HOURS OF HUNGER: A DONATION OPPORTUNITY

Nashua's ***End 68 hours of Hunger*** puts nourishing food in the hands of over 200 school children to carry them through the weekend. Each bag of food provides two breakfasts, two lunches, and three dinners for a child with a little left over. Because they are an all-volunteer program working in a donated space, 100 percent of funds and food donations go directly to feeding at-risk children.

First Church has been a strong supporter of this program since its inception in Nashua. You can help by donating items in the bin opposite the Welcome Center at any time during the year.

The following items are particularly helpful:
Peanut Butter/Jelly in plastic containers, Crackers, Cans of Beef Stew, Beefaroni, Ravioli, Soup, Beans, Canned Fruit, Granola Bars, Instant Rice or Noodles, Tuna, Individual Instant Oatmeal, Goldfish, Pretzels, Juice Boxes, Cereal, Pudding Cups, Mac & Cheese, SpaghettiO's and Teddy Grahams.

The Holiday Fair will take place on November 6th-8th, 2026.

Several members have volunteered to take care of various aspects of the fair, such as the baked goods, and an in-house silent auction. Crafty people can make items at home and bring them in. Puzzles are a big hit. Help in planning, setting up, decorating and packing up are needed and definitely desired.

Our first planning meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 10th at 10am in room 15.** Anyone interested in helping to plan, organize and/or assist with the Holiday Fair, please contact Yvonne at 603-321-0923. Thank you!

SPRING RETREAT 2026:

We are getting ready for our Spring Retreat at the Craigville Conference Center, in Cape Cod. This lovely facility overlooking the ocean and area marsh has a long history of hosting retreats in the Massachusetts Conference UCC.

Visit their website at https://www.uccr.org/craigville to explore the Craigville Retreat Center.

The First Church Retreat is scheduled for April 24-26, 2026. The cost for the weekend is $280.36 and includes all meals. You may bring your own linens, or a pack will be provided at the Retreat Center for $15.00/pp.

Please sign up online or at the Welcome Center and secure your spot with a half deposit of $140.18 by Sunday, February 15th, 2026. Scholarships are available.

Contact the office with questions.

Online Registration link 2026:

https://forms.gle/AoCpNJmjMs2N6XX56

Craigville
Retreat Center
ON CAPE COD

Stewardship

Happy Valentine's Day Church
By Susan Testa

Sending a Valentine to your church is admittedly a bit weird. In my defense, First Church and generations of its members, have been a huge presence and influence in my life. I grew up running around Fellowship Hall. My mother was the church secretary and Director of Religious Education. Dad was a Deacon. I was confirmed here and our Sunday School, Youth Choir and Youth groups were all part of my weekly routine. Peter and I were married in the Sanctuary as was our son and his wife. Our son was confirmed and the grandchildren were baptized at the same altar. All those moments of joy were celebrated here. There were times of sadness, too. The sanctuary and our ministers were witness to my tears and broken heart at funerals of dearly loved family members and friends, providing me peace and strength and comfort. It's hard to put into words what First Church means to me.

In one way or another, you have probably been introduced to the wildly popular musical "Wicked", based on a book by Gregory Maguire. I'm a huge fan (read the book at least twice, saw the Broadway show multiple times and both parts of the movie adaptation). The two main characters, Elphaba and Glinda, sing a duet titled "For Good" and its lyrics seem to express my feelings about and for this church and congregation.

"So much of me is made of what I learned from you.

You'll be with me like a handprint on my heart."

With all my heart I hope that my pledge of time, talent and treasure adequately expresses how grateful I am to the First Church and how proud I am to be one of its contributors. The generosity of all its members, both past and present, has molded and is still molding our lives and the lives of the greater community.

God willing, our current and future support will continue the spread of His message of love for many generations to come. On behalf of myself and the entire Stewardship team, I thank you for your participation in our annual pledge drive.

Happy Valentine's Day to you all.

New Member Information

If you are interested in learning more about The First Church and /or would like to become a member, there will Orientation session on **Sunday, March 1st and 8th** (must attend one session).

New members will be received on **Sunday, March 15th during the 10 am worship service.**

Please reach out to Rev. Andy, Rev. Nancy, or contact the office with any questions or to sign-up for an orientation session.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Tender Loving Care

This is a group which gathers, approximately once every 6-8 weeks, to support and offer tips for those caring for people with debilitating issues (dementia, Parkinson and other neurologic deficits) .

It is a confidential group that listens and prays. Contact Rev. Nancy if you have questions or would like to join.

Christian Formation Corner

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FEBRUARY UPDATES

Upcoming Events

- **PARENTS NIGHT OUT February 13th 2026 from 5 - 8 pm.** Parents, drop your kids off in the dining room for a night of fun, food and games while you enjoy a night out! Reserve your spot by emailing asteere@tfcucc.org by **Sunday, February 8th.**
- Calling all families of college students! It's time to send out our Valentine's Care packages. If you would like your student to receive a special treat, make sure the church office has updated address information.

Care Notes and The Upper Room

In the Welcome Center you will find The Upper Room and Care Notes.

Care Notes address a range of topics: dealing with childhood cancer, self-care for care givers, depression and loss (to name a few). Stop by and peruse the Notes.

The Upper Room is a daily devotional that includes a scripture passage and reflection.

These resources are available for congregational reflection. If a topic interests you or would be helpful, please take one home, or share with a family member or friend. If you have a desire to see another topic added or would like to talk to one of our ministers, please reach out to Rev. Nancy.

UPPER ROOM ONLINE

You can access the Upper Room online! Some of the features include: Prayer Wall, Daily Devotionals, Community engagement groups, and other helpful resources. Go to **www.upperroom.org**

HORTON CENTER

Horton Center, the Outdoor Ministries site of the NH UCC, located on top of Pine Mountain in the White Mountain National Forest, is our stunning summer camp and retreat center that offers all who come a place to relax, reconnect, and rejuvenate.

Whether you're looking for a week of youth summer camp packed with fun, faith, and adventure, or an adult/intergenerational weekend retreat, the 2026 schedule has lots to offer for everyone: **hortoncenter.org/sessions**

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

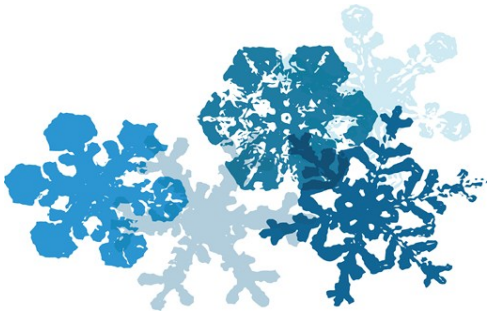
This is an invitation from the Women's Association to all women of the church, member or friend, to our annual Valentine's Day afternoon tea which will take place on **Saturday, February 14th from 2 to 4pm in Fellowship Hall** .

This will actually be held on Valentine's Day this year; and we would love to have you to join us for a special afternoon of tea, tea sandwiches and pastries (gluten-free included) along with wonderful fellowship and heart-felt fun! Several flavors of tea will be offered. We are asking everyone to wear Valentine colors...red, pink, or lavender to really celebrate the day. Please sign up at the Welcome Center.

WEATHER CONCERNS

In the event of inclement weather, a power outage or severe weather advisory, The First Church may cancel the First Service, Sunday School or All Services. Please visit the church webpage (www.tfcucc.org), or our Facebook Page (First Church Nashua UCC) for any cancellation notices. You can also check media outlets WMUR Channel 9, or WZID 95.7 FM 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 6 am on the Sunday in question.

Also be sure to 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. Thank you!



Prepared to Serve 2026
February 28th, 2026 from 8:00am-4:00 pm

The 2026 Prepared to Serve workshops will follow our theme, "Another Way", by focusing on a new pathway system: the Four Pathways of Care: Self, Church, Local Community, and the Wider World. The workshops have been grouped into these four categories. This new system allows you to select workshops based on the Pathways of Care that most interest you.

Location:
Pembroke Academy
209 Academy Rd.
Pembroke, NH 03275

https://nhcucc.regfox.com/2026-prepared-to-serve-attendee-registration

All major credit cards and personal checks will be accepted.
If you have any questions, please call (603) 225-6647 or email Cameron Keller ckeller@nhucc.org

Notes from the Chancel

The **1909 Mason and Hamlin Sanctuary grand piano (Model BB)** of The First Church is a work of art. It was produced at a time when piano building was at the forefront of technology and the center of in-home life and outside use in churches, concerts halls, theatres and civic centers. Our Nashua instrument is a product of the *Golden Era* of piano building which produced the highest quality of manufacture, including the company's patented Tension Resonator® . This American builder was a direct competitor (some argue *superior*) to Steinway & Sons during that particular period. Similar to the 1926 Austin Organ from the last capital campaign: it is time to further and honor the stewardship granted us from generations past; we must renew and preserve this integral part of our musical heritage for the future.

Over time and with age, the piano has lost its proper (original) tone, sustain (resonance) and mechanical responsiveness (touch). After evaluation from one of our region's top piano restorers, a full restoration would be made through the detailed steps listed here:

The scope of this full restoration work would include, but is not limited to:

Replacement of the original sound board	(*several cracks found; tone and sustain compromised*)
A full "re-string"	(*metal strings for all 88 keys and new bridgecaps*)
New pin block, tuning pins, understring felts	(*holds the strings & adjusts tension for tuning*)
Refinishing of the interior plate ("lyre")	(*structural support; tuning stability*)
Refinishing of the cabinet wood stain/lacquer	(*interior and exterior; hand-rubbed finishing*)
Restore the original music rack	(*where the music is placed*)
New keytops to industry standard	(*modern acrylics or ivory, to be determined*)
New hammers, bushings, leather & felt	(*what strikes the strings for tone; mechanics*)
Complete regulation of new action	(*how the piano responds to playing/touch*)
Voicing to the needs of our Sanctuary	(*how the piano sounds/functions in our space*)
Transport caster updating	(*better instrument moving balance in Sanctuary)*

At a time still to be determined: the instrument would be transported off site, taken apart completely, and returned with its mechanics and casework fully restored. This restoration would take an approximate time of 12+ months. (*With of course, a substitute instrument in the Sanctuary during that period.*) The piano would then return to The First Church as good as the day it was built, using the best modern materials for the most accurate duplication.

Of note: to replace this instrument- a 7-foot concert grand- as a *new* purchase, would be in the range of **$100,000+** in order to emulate the quality of this instrument's heritage, tone and musical ability.

The Campaign will eventually propose instead, to execute a <u>full restoration</u> of our historic 1909 "BB" Mason and Hamlin concert grand at a restoration cost *well under* the pricing of new purchase. **Look for more detailed information in future Capital Campaign materials.** – *Soli Deo Gloria!* (JRO)

FEBRUARY 2026 MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Sunday, February 1
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
8:15 Staff Singers
10:00 Chancel Choir

Sunday, February 8
(Annual Meeting, one service)
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
10:00 Chancel Choir, Decibells

Sunday, February 15
Transfiguration
8:15 Organ
10:00 Chancel Choir

Sunday, February 22
First Sunday in Lent
8:15 Staff Singers
10:00 Chancel Choir, First Chamber

ASH WEDNESDAY

We will have **two Ash Wednesday worship services on Wednesday, February 18th**. Both services will be held in Shaw Chapel. The first service takes place at **noon (Imposition of Ashes)**. Our second service takes place at **7:00 pm (Communion)**. Both services feature our Minister of Music—Joseph R. Olefirowicz, baritone.

We welcome you to worship with us as we enter into the Lenten season.

AN UPDATE FROM THE FIRST CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TEAM

At the end of the 2014 Capital Campaign, the First Church Property Management Team commissioned a 30 year maintenance plan from a local Engineering company. The purpose of this study was to catalog every mechanical, electrical, heating device and more in our church and surrounding campus buildings. If it is driven on, sat on, turned on, plugged in, it was included in the study. This study recommended times to failure, when maintenance and/or replacement needed to be done, as well as estimated costs. When all those costs were added up, it was over $4m in upcoming money (based on 2014 cost/expense) that needed to be paid out over the next 30-year period. Some of these items will sound familiar as the church needed to replace them rather quickly – the elevator, the boiler at 3-5 Concord St, parts of the Church slate roof, the Tower. These were very urgent and we have tended to all of them

We are now at the point that we must seriously consider this long list of replacements and improvements. Not only for the sake of our cherished Church building itself but for our tenants and the greater Nashua community that depends on our buildings being in their best condition possible. This is part of our outreach to the community. This will now be the focus of our next Capital Campaign.

As in previous campaigns, there is also a broader Outreach and a Music Ministry component to this work. The First Church Outreach Committee will be very involved in working with area non-profits to make recommendations as to how to distribute funds raise. The concert piano in the sanctuary is also on the schedule to be rebuilt.

A Team of volunteers has been planning this project for nearly a year. The Campaign will officially be kicking off in March of 2026. We will be holding a special gathering at the Nashua Country Club on March 12th – be on the lookout for an invitation! We are blessed to have a solid community within our Church to make this campaign be a success. Information will be forthcoming on a regular basis as the months go by so that you are all kept up to date.

Yours in Christ,

The Capital Campaign Team- Charlie Morris, Caryl Sullivan, Susan Testa, Peter Chaloner, Dianne Smigliani, Joe Glajch, Roy Rumbaugh, Rev Andy, Rev Nancy and all the volunteers on these various committees.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The First Church of Nashua, New Hampshire
Annual Meeting will be held in the sanctuary on

Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 11:30 AM

immediately following the worship service.

The purposes of the meeting shall be:

1. To receive reports for the year 2025.
2. To elect Officers, Committee Members and Delegates in accordance with the provisions of the First Church Bylaws.
3. To approve changes to the First Church Bylaws:
   a. Define a method to postpone an annual meeting (for example, due to inclement weather).
   b. Reference the New Hampshire United Church of Christ "Granite State Association" and remove references to the now obsolete "Hillsborough Association".

   Details of the changes are at http://tinyurl.com/Bylaws26 and printed copies will be available at the meeting.
4. To transact any other business that may be legally brought before the meeting.

This notice is made pursuant to Bylaws Article V, Section 2(c).

John L. Henning, Clerk
First Church of Nashua, UCC
January 10, 2026

FIRST MUSIC
FM
CONCERT SERIES 2025 – 26 SEASON

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

SEVEN LAST WORDS
A LENTEN VESPERS

CHANCEL CHOIR OF THE FIRST CHURCH
POISSON • WILSON • CLEVELAND • OLEFIROWICZ

SUNDAY
MAR 22
FREE ADMISSION
ALL ARE WELCOME
3:00 PM

THE FIRST CHURCH
1 CONCORD STREET • NASHUA, NH
FIRST-MUSIC.ORG • 603.882.4861

FEBRUARY 2026

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sunday Worship

8:15 am Worship. Shaw Chapel: FEB. 1, 15, 22
10:00 am Worship, Livestream & Radio Broadcast
Sunday school, Childcare: FEB. 1, 8, 15, 22

Choirs

TUE: FEB. 3,10,17: 4:30 pm – Joyful Noise
WED: FEB. 4, 11, 25: 6:45 pm - Chancel Choir
THU: FEB. 5, 19, 26: 6:45 pm - Decibells
SAT: FEB. 21 : 10:00 am—Chancel Choir

Small Groups

SUN FEB. 1: 9:00 am – Confirmation, Fireside Rm
MON FEB. 2, 9, 23: 9:30 am – Bible, Friends, & Coffee
WED FEB. 4, 11, 25: 8:30 am – Men's Group

Other Groups

TUE: 4:00pm – First Church at NSKS
THU: 10:00am-2:00pm – Thrift Shop
SAT FEB. 7, 21, 28: 11:00am – Sisters in Sobriety, (Dining Room)
SAT FEB. 14: 11:00am – Sisters in Sobriety, (Nauss Hall)

MONTHLY EVENTS

MON FEB. 2: 7:00 pm - All Boards
WED FEB. 4: 11:45 am, - BNI, Dining Room
TUE FEB. 10: 2:00 pm – Caring Connections, Room 15
TUE FEB. 10: 7:00.pm - Thank You Project, Room 10
THU FEB. 12: 6:30 pm - Quilters Guild, Dining Room
FRI FEB. 13: 3pm - Hunt Community Service
THU FEB. 19: 12:00 pm - Chamber of Commerce, Dining Room
TUE FEB. 24: 2:30 pm - Huntington Service

LENTEN STUDY

SUN FEB. 15– MAR. 29
9:00 AM (NAUSS HALL)

ONLINE SESSIONS
WED FEB. 25– APRIL 1 @NOON
(Online link provided by office)

SPECIAL EVENTS

SUN FEB. 8: 11:30 am – Annual Meeting; One worship service at 10 am
FRI FEB. 13: 5-8 pm – Parent's Night Out (Dining Room)
SAT FEB. 14 – 2:00-4:00 pm— Women's Association's Tea, Fellowship Hall
MON FEB. 16 – OFFICE CLOSED; President's Day Observance
WED FEB. 18, Noon: Ash Wednesday, Chapel (Imposition of Ashes)
WED FEB. 18, 7:00 pm: Ash Wednesday, Chapel (Communion)

First Church, United Church of Christ
1 Concord Street
Nashua NH 03064-2303
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February 2026 issue

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Return Service Requested

Information on pg. 3

OFFICE CLOSED: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 8th, 2026
@ 11:30 AM
(Immediately following worship)
In-person in the sanctuary
Members must be present to vote!
One Worship Service at 10:00 AM
***childcare available during meeting**