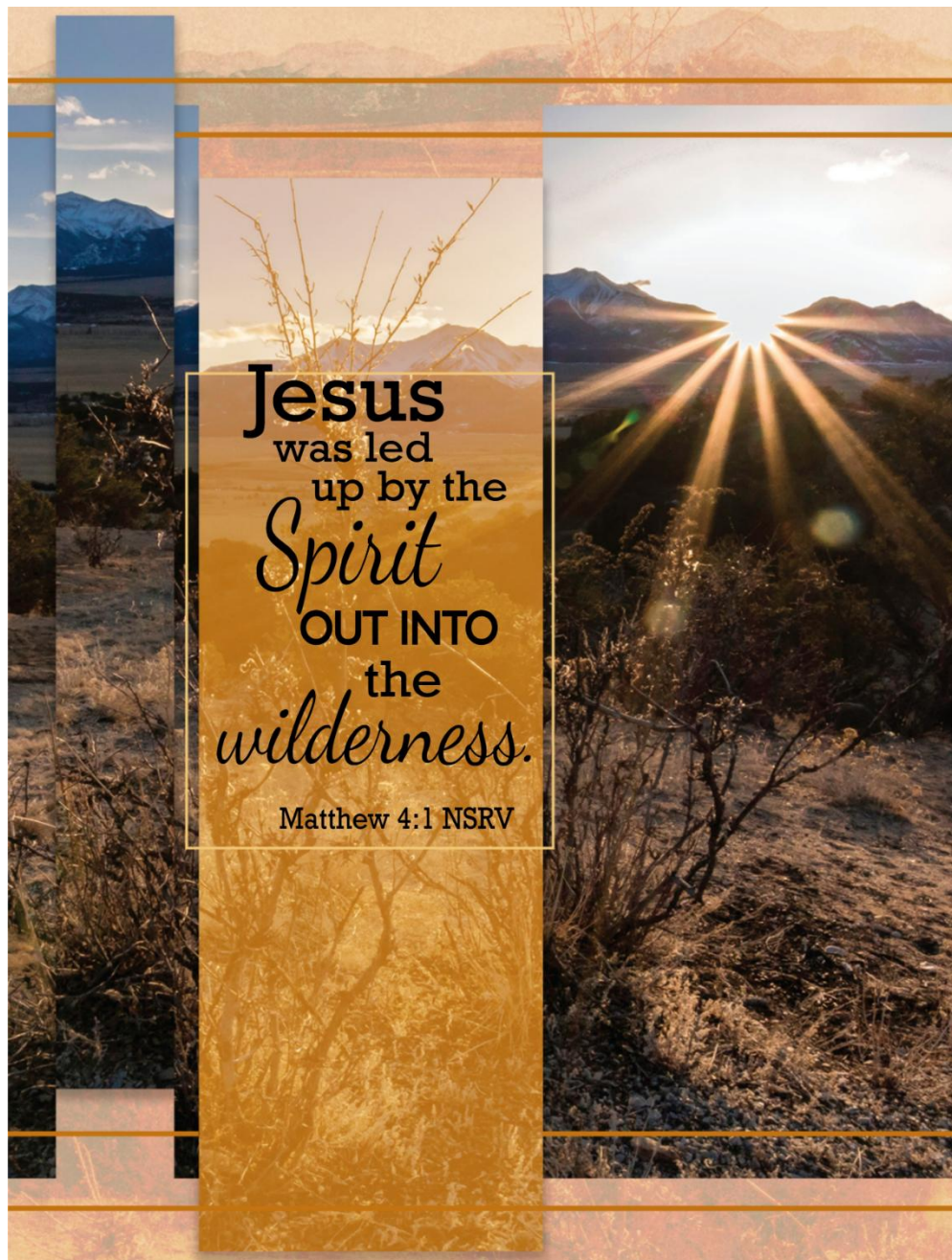




Jesus
was led
up by the
Spirit
OUT INTO
the
wilderness.

Matthew 4:1 NSRV

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

First Sunday of Lent

February 22, 2026

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

Lisa Cleveland

MEDITATION “The biggest human temptation is to settle for too little.”
- Thomas Merton

PRELUDE *Vater unser im Himmelreich* J. S. Bach
Our Father in the Kingdom of Heaven (1685 - 1750)
att. G. Böhm

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 32:1,11)

Leader: May the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: We do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

People: We come to find the Living Word.

Leader: We come seeking Holy Wisdom.

People: We come to worship the Eternal God.

*HYMN 148

Forty Days and Forty Nights

HEINLEIN

George H. Smytlan, 1822-1870

Alt. by Francis Pott, 1832-1909, and others

HEINLEIN 7.7.7.7.

Attr. to Martin Herbst, 1654-1681

1 For - ty days and for - ty nights Thou wast fast - ing in the wild;
2 Shall not we thy sor - row share, And from earth - ly joys ab - stain,
3 And if Sa - tan, vex - ing sore, Flesh or spir - it should as - sail,
4 Keep, O keep us, Sav - ior dear, Ev - er con - stant by thy side;

For - ty days and for - ty nights Temp - ted, and yet un - de - filed.
Fast - ing with un - ceas - ing prayer, Glad with thee to suf - fer pain?
Thou, his van - quish - er be - fore, Grant we may not faint nor fail.
That with thee we may ap - pear At the e - ter - nal East - er - tide. A - men.

CCLI#3034682

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Leader: Gracious and merciful God, we confess to You our reluctance to enter the wilderness places where we are confronted with our true selves, where we are tempted to put our will before Yours. When our hunger for power and wealth is greater than our hunger for seeking and doing Your will:

People: **Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in You.**

Leader: When we are tempted to use the gifts You give us to benefit ourselves at the expense of serving others:

People: **Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in You.**

Leader: When we are tempted to use sensational means to increase faith, rather than being guided by the humility of Christ:

People: **Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in You.**

Leader: When we are tempted to use bribery to influence and control others:

People: **Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in You.**

Leader: When we are tempted to manipulate You, O God, to satisfy our own needs:

People: **Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in You.**

A time of silence for personal confession

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The Psalmist proclaims that when we confess our sins to God, we are forgiven (Psalm 32:5), and the Apostle Paul confirms this by reminding us that just as Adam's sin led to condemnation for all, so Jesus Christ's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. (Romans 5:18) And so I declare to you: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

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." Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRATIA TIBI

Thanks Be to Thee

FIRST CHAMBER

T. Tallis

(1505 – 1585)

ANTHEM

On Eagle's Wings

based on Psalm 91

J. M. Joncas

(1809 - 1847)

arr. Zac Flash (2021)

SERMON

“Welcome to the Wilderness”

Rev. Dr. Andrew W. Armstrong

***HYMN**

God Is Calling Through the Whisper

(see next page)

W ZŁOBIE LEŻY

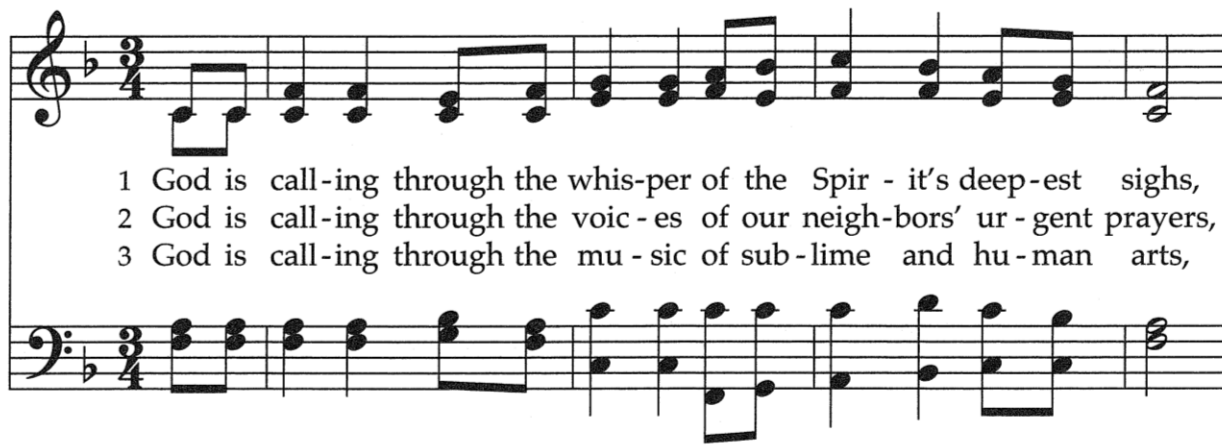
***CENTERING PRAYER (Unison)**

Gracious God, as we embark on this journey through Lent, help us feel Your presence in a wilderness of reflection and repentance. Remind us that in this we are not alone; that the guiding Spirit of Jesus is with us every step of the way. Amen.

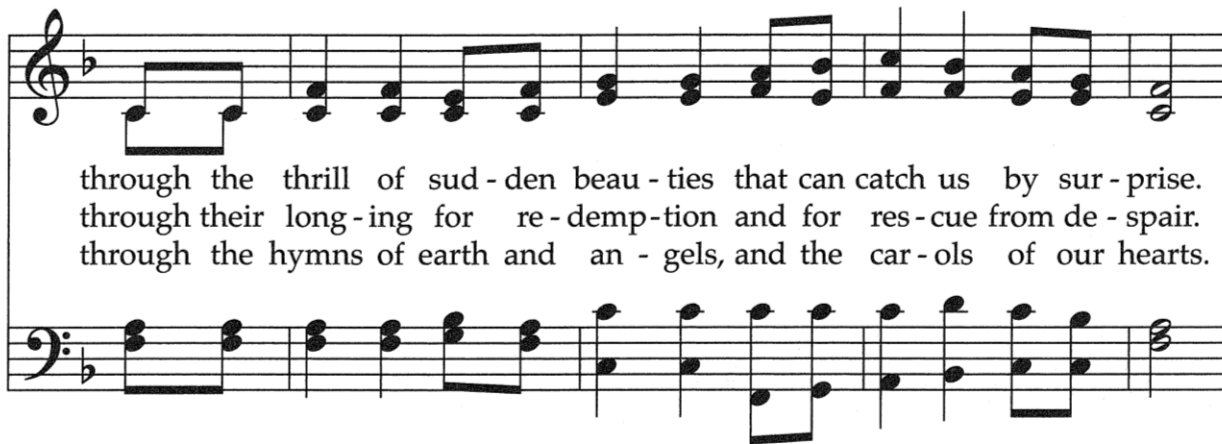
RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER CONCERNS

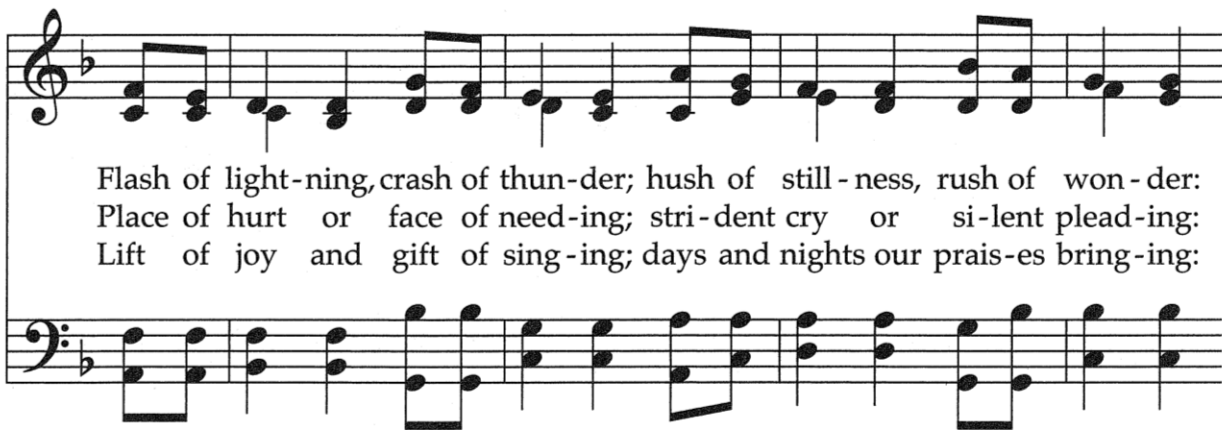
SILENT PRAYERS and PASTORAL PRAYER



1 God is call-ing through the whis-per of the Spir - it's deep-est sighs,
 2 God is call-ing through the voic - es of our neigh-bors' ur - gent prayers,
 3 God is call-ing through the mu - sic of sub - lime and hu - man arts,



through the thrill of sud - den beau - ties that can catch us by sur - prise.
 through their long-ing for re - demp-tion and for res - cue from de - spair.
 through the hymns of earth and an - gels, and the car - ols of our hearts.



Flash of light-ning, crash of thun-der; hush of still - ness, rush of won - der:
 Place of hurt or face of need-ing; stri-dent cry or si-lent plead-ing:
 Lift of joy and gift of sing-ing; days and nights our prais-es bring-ing:



God is call - ing—can you hear? God is call - ing—can you hear?
 God is call - ing—can you hear? God is call - ing—can you hear?
 God is call - ing—and we hear! God is call - ing—and we hear!

Glory to God Hymnal © 2013 Used by permission. CCLI#3034682

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 *Let the Words of Our Mouths*
CHANCEL CHOIR

R. Langdon
(1729 - 1803)

OFFERTORY *Pater Noster* - No. 2 in G-flat

E. H. Lemare
(1865 - 1934)

*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)

Ever-faithful God, we long to be faithful givers, modelling ourselves on You who have given everything to us. May Your Spirit of abundance, which gives more than we ask or imagine, grace these gifts for Your kingdom in Jesus' name, Amen.

Caroline M. Noel, 1817-1877

KING'S WESTON 6.5.6.5.D.

In unison

R. Vaughan Williams, 1872

1 At the name of Je - sus Ev - ery knee shall bow,
 2 At his voice cre - a - tion Sprang at once to sight
 3 Hum-bled for a sea - son, To re - ceive a name
 4 Bore it up tri - umph - ant, With its hu - man light,
 5 In your hearts en - throne him; There let him sub - due

Ev - ery tongue con - fess him King of glo - ry now;
 All the an - gel fa - ces, All the hosts of light,
 From the lips of sin - ners, Un - to whom he came.
 Through all ranks of crea - tures, To the cen - tral height,
 All that is not ho - ly, All that is not true.

'Tis the Fa - ther's pleas - ure We should call him Lord,
 Thrones and dom - i - na - tions, Stars up - on their way,
 Faith - ful - ly he bore it, Spot - less to the last,
 To the throne of God - head, To the Fa - ther's breast;
 Crown him as your cap - tain In temp - ta - tion's hour;

Who from the be - gin - ning Was the might - y Word.
 All the heaven - ly or - ders, In their great ar - ray.
 Brought it back vic - to - rious, When from death he passed;
 Filled it with the glo - ry Of that per - fect rest.
 Let his will en - fold you In its light and power. A-men.

ASCENSION AND REIGN

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

*In reverence to the solemn season, remembering
Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, a postlude will not
be played during Lent.*

Have you remembered The First Church in your will?

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

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.
FIRST CHAMBER:	Laura Amrein, Anne Oglesby, Scott Oglesby, Eric Ruthenberg, Katie Weiss, Cindy Whitney and the Staff Singers of The First Church of Nashua
STAFF SINGERS:	Janet Poisson-soprano; Abra Mueller-alto Joshua L. Gore-tenor; Mark A. Cleveland-bass

HEARING AIDS AND LARGE PRINT BULLETINS
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.

NOTES FROM THE CHANCEL

On our **First Sunday of Lent**, the theme of prayer through music underscores all organ and choral offerings of the morning. The **PRELUDE** offers a contrapuntal study on the German Chorale “*Vater Unser*” (Our Father) which is attributed to Georg Böhm, though often credited to Johann Sebastian Bach. There are so many settings of this beloved hymn tune that this particular version does not seem to be assigned an official “Bachwerkverzeichnis” (BWV) number, which catalogues all of Bach’s works.

The **ANTHEM** this morning resurrects, for the first time in several years, the former **FIRST CHAMBER** choir, which allows a select group of our congregation members to work several weeks on a more difficult choral offering. Although “*On Eagle’s Wings*” is a beloved work across many denominations, it is rare to find a choral treatment more complex in its writing than the offering we bring to you this morning with **eight-part singing and piano**. Young composer **Zac Flasch**, shows immense promise with the writing voice he brings to God’s praise in this arrangement of the Michael Joncas’ “Catholic” contemporary song classic.

Penned in memory of Zac’s mentor **Jim Satay**, “a faithful servant of God” (*as the dedication in the choral Octavo states*), it is Zac’s grief response to his friend succumbing to brain cancer in 2021. Its spirit is penned in the *ecumenism* which his friend lived his life, and it is an honor to bring this unpublished work to the congregation this morning. The complexity of the writing is truly unique, and brings elements of complex contemporary harmony, some vocal jazz voicing, and that “right combination” of chords to stir the soul. It is a pleasure to bring some of our church members together with our **Staff Singers** for this special moment, praising God through the comfort and solace promised to His people, within **Psalms 91**.

Contrasting this offering is the **Chancel Choir OFFERTORY** anthem, penned by legendary 19th century organist and composer **Edwin Henry Lemare**. From the official Lemare website we read that:

(Lemare) was an organist and prolific composer of the late Romantic period. He was highly regarded as a concert performer and was the highest paid organist of his generation. He is most remembered for his technical wizardry, his transcriptions of orchestral works, and his ability to uplift the spirits of the masses. - Accessed 15 February 2026; <https://edwinlemare.com>.

The monophonic texture of the choral writing allows the listener to concentrate on the **Great Prayer** of the Christian tradition.

As we enter the Lenten season, carrying on the tradition of many of the European churches, the **POSTLUDE** is kept *silent during Lent* to honor the solemnity of the season and underscore, even more the great return of *Christ Resurrected* on Easter Sunday. – *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Christian Formation Corner

February 22, 2026 - Today is the first Sunday of 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.

Children's Bulletins are available at the welcome center for when children choose to remain in worship.

Worship Schedule

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd

8:15 am Worship in Shaw Chapel

10:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary & Livestream

Radio Broadcast on WSMN FM 95.3 & AM 1590

Sunday School and Nursery Care available

FROM THE FIRST CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We are having a Capital Campaign kickoff event, and you are invited! Please join us on **Thursday, March 12th, at Sky Meadow Country Club in Nashua, 6-8pm**, to really launch our Capital Campaign. You will see and hear about the projects that we are planning on doing. You will also hear from various folks within the Church as to why they are giving and are involved. Please sign up at the Church Welcome Center or online on our website so we will know how many are coming. There will be hors d'oeuvres, desserts and a cash bar, and need to know our headcount. Please join us!

Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current

WINTER REMINDERS - 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 cars! Cancellation notices can be found on the church webpage (www.tfcucc.org), WMUR Channel 9 or WZID 95.7 under the heading "First Church Nashua".

THE FIRST CHURCH THRIFT SHOP is open on **Thursdays, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM (Will not be open on Saturdays in Jan/Feb)**. Donations of women's and children's clothing is being accepted. Leave items in the bin at the courtyard entrance. All proceeds go to community outreach. Thank you for all of your support!!

THE FIRST CHURCH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY- The First Church Nashua is seeking a proactive, creative, and organized Marketing and Communications Coordinator to be the driving force behind our on-line presence. This role is crucial for engaging our community and expanding our reach through the creation and distribution of all digital content, management of our website, and coordination of our social media and marketing efforts. This person may also provide periodic administrative support to ensure smooth daily operations. The position is approximately 12 to 15 hours per week, mostly hybrid, but will require Tuesdays to be in the office. For a complete job description please see Reverend Nancy Haynes.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION- Winter is a perfect time for a cozy get together and the Women's Association will once again be holding a "Chick Flick" afternoon. Bring your snuggly fleece blanket and join us in the dining room on **Saturday March 7th at 2:30 pm** for popcorn, candy, beverages and, of course, a good movie and lots of friends!! Speaking of friends, why not bring one!?! Sign up at the Welcome Center. You are welcome to come that afternoon even if you don't get a chance to sign up and decide to come at the last minute. We encourage all women to join us....we are adding new members all the time and are excited to have new members join.

LENTEN STUDY- Resetting our Souls: Forty Days to Spiritual Wholeness

Sunday mornings at 9 am in Nauss Hall (between worship services), through March 29th. There will also be online sessions on Wednesday at noon, starting February 25th – April 1st. Link for online sessions: <https://forms.gle/gW1fo3o4aTFa15Kk9>

MESSAGE FROM OUTREACH - End 68 Hours of Hunger: Provides nourishing food to over 200 school children that will carry them through the weekend. Each bag of food provides them with 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners, with a little leftover. Items can be left in the bin in the Welcome Center. The following items are needed: **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 oatmeal, Goldfish, pretzels, juice boxes, cereal, pudding cups, mac & cheese, Spaghetti O's and Teddy Grahams.**

MITTEN TREE UPDATE On behalf of all the caring, generous and talented members of our congregation, 260 pairs of mittens (including some hats and scarves) were delivered to our 2 neighborhood schools and The Adult Learning Center. As always, the staff at each location was thrilled to receive them, particularly during this cold/snowy period. Your outreach to the greater Nashua community is greatly appreciated and does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

FRIDAYS AT FIRST- March 6th at 2:15 PM -Adam Peithmann, director of music at *Christ Church Episcopal* in Exeter, New Hampshire, will offer a 30-minute FREE contemplative Lenten program of organ music in the Shaw Chapel. Join us for the chance to hear our charming *Andover Organ Co.*, Opus 79 from 1976. The 2024 acquisition of the **Greene Memorial Organ** is such a blessing to our Sunday Chapel ministry, and to offerings outside of Sunday morning. Take a break in your week and come **sit, reflect, and relax** in the contemporary beauty of the “*vine and branches*” stained glass.

SPRING RETREAT 2026- Rev. Andy leads our upcoming retreat guided by insights from Christopher Lowney’s “Heroic Living.” We’ll enjoy spring time on **Cape Cod at Craigville Retreat Center from April 24-26th**. Visit their website at <https://www.uccr.org/craigville> to explore the Craigville Retreat Center. 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. <https://forms.gle/AoCpNJmjMs2N6XX56>

Choirs in Worship Next Week

Sunday, March 1, 2026 – Second Sunday in Lent

8:15 Staff Singers

10:00 Chancel Choir

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

- SUN FEB 22** 8:15 am Worship (Chapel)
 9:00 am Lenten Study (Nauss Hall)
 10:00 am Worship, Livestream
 Radio Broadcast, First Church Kids
- MON FEB 23** 9:30 am Bible, Friends & Coffee (Ladies Parlor)
- TUE FEB 24** 10:00 am Holiday Fair Meeting (room 15)
 2:30 pm Huntington Service
 4:00 pm Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
- WED FEB 25** 8:30 am Men's Group (Ladies Parlor)
 12:00 pm Lenten Study (online)
 6:45 pm Chancel Choir
- THU FEB 26** 10:00 am Thrift Shop
 6:45 pm Decibells
- SAT FEB 28** 11:00 am Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)

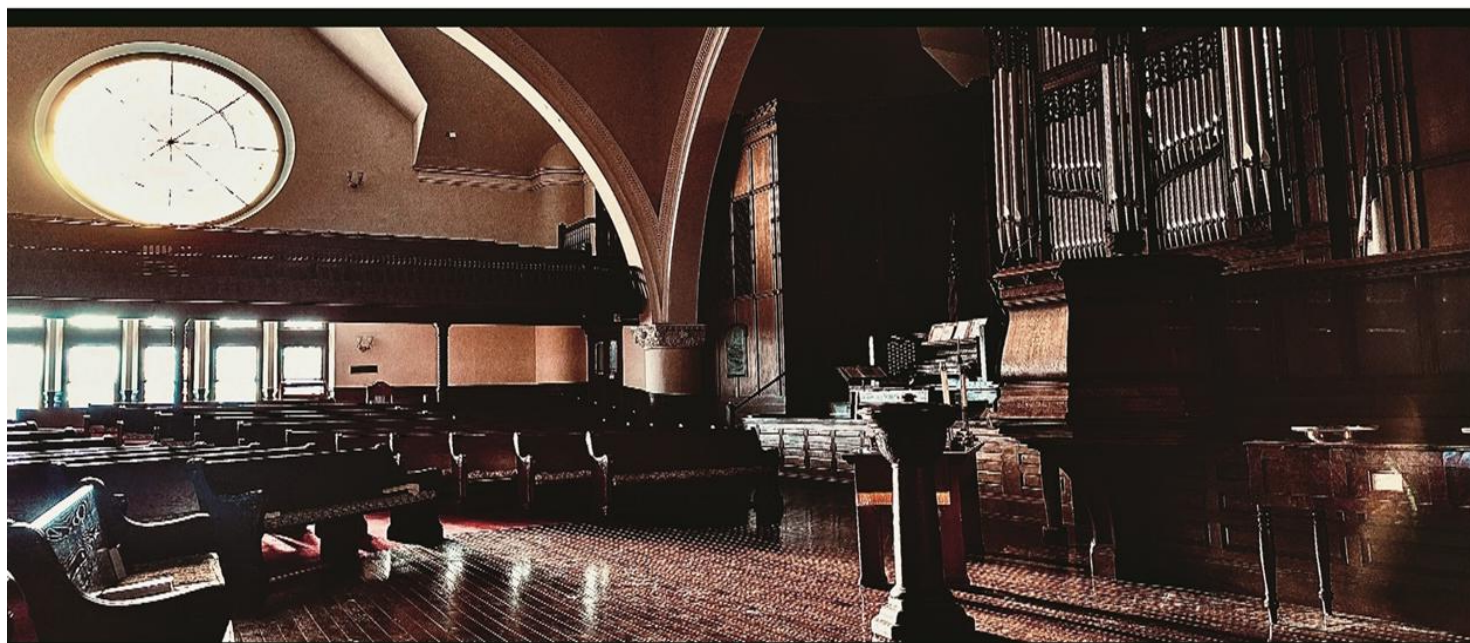
FIRST MUSIC
F M
CONCERT SERIES 2025 – 26 SEASON

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



Lenten 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.

IN PERSON

Sundays 9AM
between Services
FEB 15-MAR 29

ONLINE

Wednesdays 12-12:30
FEB 25-APR 1

THE FIRST CHURCH

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, *James Halstead*, jhalstead@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 worshipping 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

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-Thursday, 9:00am-noon and 1:00-4:00pm

Friday 9:00 am - noon

www.tfcucc.org

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

