



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

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2026

9:00 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

*"Fortunately the Lord is patient and understanding,
and does write straight with our crooked lines."*

Thomas H. Green

PRELUDE

Adagio espressivo, Op.58, No.2
from Triptyque

Louis Vierne
(1870 - 1937)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, people of God. We gather from many places and many journeys, seeking the presence of the One who is always with us.

People: We come to worship the God who meets us in ordinary places and fills them with holy promise.

Leader: The Sower has scattered good seed across the field of the world.

People: We gather to let god's word take root in our lives.

Leader: Though weed of trouble grow alongside the wheat, God's grace remains our constant strength.

People: We come in faith, trust in the One who guides and restores us.

Leader: Let the righteous rejoice and shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father!

People: Let us worship the Lord and grow together in His love.

Edwin Hatch, 1835-1889, alt.

Second Tune

TRENTHAM S.M.

Robert Jackson, 1840-1914

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life a - new,
 2 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Un - til my heart is pure,
 3 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Till I am whol - ly thine,
 4 Breathe on me, Breath of God, So shall I nev - er die,

That I may love what thou dost love, And do what thou wouldst do.
 Un - til with thee I will one will To do and to en - dure.
 Un - til this earth - ly part of me Glows with thy fire di - vine.
 But live with thee the per - fect life Of thine e - ter - ni - ty. A - men.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

CCLI # 3034682

* OPENING PRAYER

Holy One, You love with a father's tenderness, a mother's zeal. Move now in our hearts. Breathe through the words we hear, the songs we share, the burdens we carry until we discover our purpose in Your liberating love, for we long to join creation's praise and to shine with the mercy of Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 28:10-19

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.' Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?"

But he replied, “No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.” Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.’ He answered, ‘The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“A Ladder to Heaven and Wheat among the Weeds”

Rev. Nancy Haynes

*** CENTERING ENTERING PRAYER (Based on Psalm 105)**

God of deliverance, like the people of old we follow in Your way. Remove the obstacles in our path. Part the waters and set us free. Guide us when we are lost in cloud and fire. When we thirst for Your deeper presence, quench our thirst with gushing waters. When we hunger for Your Word, like manna from heaven, feed us. Draw us together in this time of prayer, let our spirits be renewed, and meet us at our deepest need. Amen.

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.

OFFERTORY

Melodia, Op.59, No.11

RICHARD BENEFIELD, organist

Max Reger

(1873 – 1916)

*DOXOLOGY 515

OLD HUNDRETH LM

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Creator God, we humbly offer our gifts this morning as good seed for the growth of our ministry in service to Christ. May these offerings be sown in the best soil to create a harvest for those in need. Help us be faithful disciples who recognize that everything that has life is a gift from You. Inspire us to share all the more in response to Your unconditional love, extending Your redeeming will into this moment in history and into Your world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***HYMN 22**

We Praise Thee, O God

KREMSEK

Julia C. Cory

*Netherlands Folk Song, 1626
Arr. by Edward Kremser, 1838-1914*

- 1 We praise thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator,
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before thee, we kneel and adore thee,
We bless thy holy name, glad praises we sing.
- 2 We worship thee, God of our fathers, we bless thee;
Through life's storm and tempest our guide hast thou been.
When perils o'ertake us, thou wilt not forsake us,
And with thy help, O Lord, life's battles we win.
- 3 With voices united our praises we offer,
And gladly our songs of true worship we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for thy blessing;
To thee, our great Redeemer, forever be praise. Amen.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

CCLI # 3034682

POSTLUDE

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Helmut Walcha
(1907 – 1991)

Have you remembered The First Church in your will?

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED; OUR SERVICE BEGINS

- AV TEAM:** Joe Glajch & Don Smith-Weiss
- 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:** Richard Benefield, guest organist

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

The ministry **did not** release a **SUMMER MUSIC SCHEDULE** for this coming June through early September. This is a 'one off' year, where your *Minister of Music* will be *in-residence* as guest conductor with the **Munich Radio Orchestra** in July, preparing to take them on tour in Germany, as one of the featured orchestras at the massive **Rheingau Music Festival** in Wiesbaden. Over a five-month period, about 130 concerts in 29 (!) different venues are hosted on the festival: mostly classical, jazz and some crossover work. Even "*Kings Return*" who was featured here on FIRST MUSIC a few seasons back, is on the German roster in August, along with violinist Joshua Bell, *Voces8*, *Chanticleer*, the *King's Singers*, *Orchestra of Saint Martin in the Fields*, and many more.

Joseph's double **Open Air** concerts feature an evening of **British Film Music**, followed by a gala of **West End** stars (*London's Broadway*) the very next night. Following these rigorous weeks is vacation during August, with Joseph back on the console on **September 6**.

For his period away, three different organist colleagues (**Richard Benefield**, **Brett Greene**, and **Scott Bergendahl**) will cover all the worship Sundays, and our Staff Singers will be featured soloists on a regular rotation for this special summer season.

Christian Formation Corner

JULY 19, 2026 - Today is the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, and the liturgical color is green.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CARE- There is no Sunday School and Nursery Care through the summer months. Children are welcome to attend worship with their family. Busy bags are available at the Welcome Center for children attending worship. See you at **Rally Day, on Sept. 13th**.

<i>Church Happenings and Outreach - New/Current</i>

MESSAGE FROM OUTREACH- One of our neighboring agencies, The Tolles Street Mission, is looking for volunteers. They provide a weekly food pantry and community resource center serving those in need. Volunteers are needed to assist in filling food bags on alternate **Wednesdays 10:15 am – 12:15 pm**. **Contact Maureen, the Food Pantry Coordinator at (603) 820-1114** if you are interested. Thank you!

NASHUA SOUP KITCHEN AND SHELTER (NSKS) BACKPACKS- It's Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter (NSKS) Backpack time again! Outreach invites you to donate any amount of money to assist with the purchase of the needed school supplies. Our goal is \$2500.00, so all contributions will greatly help as we fill 84+ backpacks this year. **Please send a check or drop it in the offering plate by July 30th with "NSKS BACKPACK PROGRAM" in the memo line.** If you would like to help fill the backpacks with us on **Thursday July 30th at 6:00 in the dining room, please contact Kathie McIntyre.** Also, if you would like to fill an entire backpack on your own, you may bring it to the NSKS the first week of August. Any questions, please contact Kathie McIntyre or the church office.

NEW LOCATION FOR DONATIONS- A collection bin has been placed in the courtyard foyer to the left of entrance doors. We are currently accepting donations for the **NSKS and End 68 hours of Hunger**. This location will replace the baskets located next to the elevator and near the welcome center. Many thanks to Joseph Towle who designed and constructed the collection bin for his Eagle Scout project. **Requested items for NSKS:** Food Items-peanut butter, Mac & Cheese, Rice & Pasta, Cereal (hot & cold), Canned Tuna or Chicken), Beans (dried or canned), Baby food & formula, Nutritional drinks i.e., Boost). **Personal Hygiene:** Travel Sizes accepted - Shampoo, conditioner, body wash, bar soap; toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss; deodorant, body lotion; razors, shaving cream; menstrual care products; bladder protection pads & disposable underwear; diapers (sizes 3-6, pull ups), wipes; baby care (lotion, shampoo, diaper cream); toilet paper, tissues, paper towels. **Requested items for End 68 Hours of Hunger:** Box/Bag of Nutritional Cereal, Canned Soup/Pasta, Peanut Butter 18 oz. plastic, Jelly 20 oz. Plastic, Canned Tuna/Chicken, Cans of Fruit, Crackers, Mac & Cheese (boxes), Ramen Noodles (No Cups), Nutrition Bars.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF NASHUA- We are seeking a **Christian Formation Coordinator**: If you love working behind the scenes to make good things happen, this part-time role is all about team work. You will be a coordinating presence on Sunday mornings and will be a key helper and partner to our ministers, the Board of Christian Formation, and our dedicated volunteer Sunday School teachers. The main goal will be to support the people who teach our kids, keep our programs organized, and help our families feel connected and cared for. For more information and to apply visit the website: <https://tfcucc.org/>, Facebook page or speak with Rev. Nancy.

We welcome **RICHARD BENEFIELD as Guest Organist** this Sunday. Joseph, our Minister of Music is on tour with the Munich Radio Orchestra in July and on vacation for the month of August. He returns to the music office on August 31 and to the console on September 6.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF NASHUA has two new windows in the Courtyard main entrance. Please check them out. The windows look *FANTASTIC*!

THE FIRST CHURCH OF NASHUA- effective **August 2nd**. we're moving the Sunday Worship to a two (2) service format: **8:00 am Courtyard and 9:00 am Chapel**. These service will be only during the August Sundays, starting **August 2nd. until August 30th**. For more information, please contact our Church Office.

MUSIC IN WORSHIP NEXT WEEK

Sunday, July 26, 2026 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 am Abra Muller, alto

Richard Benefield, guest organist

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

SUN JUL 19 9:00 am Worship, Livestream, Radio Broadcast

MON JUL 20 11:00 am TLC (library)

TUE JUL 21 12:00 pm Chamber of Commerce (dining room)

4:00 pm Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter

SAT JUL 25 11:00 am Sisters in Sobriety (dining room)



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

Communication/Copyright/Marketing Coordinator, *Jim Ferguson III*, jferguson@tfcucc.org

Office Manager, *Migdalia Castro-Marin*, mcastro@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 The 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 Tuesday. 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.

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.*

