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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
November 2025

NORTH STAR



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UCC

November 2025

**Gathered Since 1730**  
**Serving, Welcoming,**  
**Growing in Christ**

79 Clinton Street

Concord, NH 03301

Phone: 603-225-5491

Email:

[secretary@concordsfirstchurch.org](mailto:secretary@concordsfirstchurch.org)

Website:

[www.concordsfirstchurch.org](http://www.concordsfirstchurch.org)

Office Hours: In-Person,  
Monday and Thursday  
9:30am-12:15pm  
Worship: Sunday 10:30am

**Senior Minister**

Rev. Emilia Halstead

**Musician &**

**North Star Editor**

Annie Papinsick

**Church Secretary**

Kathleen Akerman

**Historian**

**Treasurer**

Terry Blake

**Financial Secretary**

**Council Chair**

Susan Lauze

**Council Vice Chair**

Phil Kimball

**Council Recorder**

Sara Nichols

**Technology Integrator**

Jock Irvine

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**FROM THE PASTOR**

Greetings Beloved in Christ,

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread, for the Lord your God moves with you. The Eternal will not leave you or forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)*

*For you know the saying, "We live in God; we move in God; we exist in God." And still another said, "We are indeed God's children." (Acts 17:28)*

On Sunday, November 9th we will begin the next section in *The Invisible Embrace of Beauty* with John O'Donohue in worship: "The Joy of Shapes that Dance." This section will take us through to the first Sunday in January. The specific forms of movement that we will be reflecting on include water, wind, animals, dancing, and even sculpture and architecture. I hope you will join us for worship either in person, on Zoom, or Live on YouTube.

In the introduction to the section, John highlights the importance of stillness being a sister to movement, just as he described silence as a sister to sound in the chapter on music/sound. In the coming months, I invite you to pay attention to the stillness and the movement in your life. Are things that look still actually moving? In my home, with cars, trucks, and motorcycles rumbling along on Route 3 with regularity, my home is RARELY still. The larger the truck that rumbles by, the more I can feel the vibration through the whole house. Most of the time I don't consciously notice it. However, when there is a longer than "normal" stretch of time when nothing is driving by, my body does register the stillness and makes note of it.

So - what does it mean to "live, and move, and exist" in God? God calls us to both stillness and movement, just as we are called to both silence and sound. In this, the season of leaf-fall, I delight in the dance between the leaves and the wind. The wild, whirlwind AND the soft, gentle rustling of leaves. Sometimes I feel life is tossing me about in a wild swing dance. Sometimes I feel life holding me tenderly in the gentlest waltz.

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Yet, no matter the pace or pattern, I can feel God as my dance partner. If I allow God to lead, the dance is effortless and beautiful. When I try to lead, well... sore toes come to mind.

As we continue in the season of leaf-fall, I invite you to ponder: where is God calling you to movement? And where is God inviting you into stillness?

Blessings,  
Pastor Emilia



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**FROM THE COUNCIL**

The FCC annual donation to the NH Council of Churches has been increased from the budgeted \$200 to \$240. This increase entitles any member of First Church to attend, at no additional fee, to the Granite State Jubilee on Saturday, November 8 between the hours 9:00 and 12:00. The Jubilee will be held at Wesley United Methodist Church, 79 Clinton Street.

Phil Kimball for Council



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**Ministry of Outreach**

**Kid Kits And Clean Up Buckets:**

Please consider sewing or purchasing a bag for the kids kits. Directions for sewing the bags can be found on the bulletin board or at [cwskits.org](http://cwskits.org)

Don't forget to take a sticky note from the bulletin board for the clean up buckets.

**Zimbabwe:** \$90 was raised for the Daisy Dube Orphanage. Thank you for helping raise money to rebuild the orphanage. They plan to rebuild and instead of one large orphanage, they will construct four cottages on the original site. Each cottage will house eight children and a caretaker. The cost of each cottage, including labor and materials is estimated at \$80,000. They hope to complete at least three cottages before November, when the rainy season could delay construction.

**Strengthen the Church:** We raised \$115 for Strengthen the Church. Thank you for your donations. This is one of UCC "five for five" offerings which we support. The money goes towards expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations.

**Neighbors in Need:** Offering amounts received will be reported in the next North Star.

**Salvation Army Christmas Angels:**

Looking ahead to Christmas, we plan to work with the Salvation Army and help ensure that children experience the joy of Christmas morning. Please plan to take an "angel" from the bulletin board and purchase the requested gift for a child. Watch the bulletin board for the angels.



*Sara Nichols, Ministry of Outreach*

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**Spiritual Life Ministry**

The harvests are in. We've had a hard frost which has wilted fall flowers. The golden and rust leaves are nearly gone from the trees. Sunset is happening earlier and earlier. It seems we're in a kind of downward spiral.

The good news is that we do have something to brighten the days ahead. The light just beyond the fall woods in our altar hanging symbolizes that light—and hope.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. It's a time for remembering and giving thanks for the many blessings of the past year. It's a time for gatherings—family and friends. Perhaps you will be a part of a gathering where each person present names something for which they are thankful. It can be a lovely tradition. Or perhaps we can make our own lists of blessings. Either way will enrich our Thanksgiving celebration.

We will be celebrating Thanksgiving as a church community on November 23. You can look forward to harvest decorations and traditional Thanksgiving hymns as part of our special service.

Pastor Emilia continues to follow John O'Donohue's book on Beauty. We'll be beginning the chapter on the Beauty of Movement and Dance, with the first section's focus on Stillness.

We are ordering new communion liturgy books and hope to have them for our next Communion Service.

And then, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, the traditional period of Advent begins.

Despite all the events to which we can forward, many of our church members and friends are experiencing health issues and need prayers of healing.

The Racial Justice Steering Committee has suggested that we read "Black Portsmouth". There will be a meeting Tuesday, November 11, from 1 - 2:30, with a discussion of the first two chapters of the book at the beginning of the meeting. These meetings are rich in thoughtful discussion. You are welcome for the book discussion, and for the entire meeting.

May the blessings of Thanksgiving enrich your life.

Eleanor Kimball for  
Spiritual Life Ministry Team  
Kellie Heath  
Brenda Placenti  
Sheila Swenson

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**SANCTUARY**  
First Church, Third Sunday

**Jazz Sanctuary**

Incredibly, to someone of my age, it's been over 60 years since the Beatles first broke onto the American music scene with their Sunday night performance on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964. I still remember the "buzz" in first period English class on that Monday morning - senior year - an indescribably different new musical vibe in the air - anything could happen!! All these years later, the music created by that band in relatively few years continues to defy easy categorization. But there is unquestionably a restless ongoing beauty about that music!

On Sunday, November 16th at 2:30 PM in Hannah Hall, Jazz Sanctuary will present "The Restless Beauty of the Beatles," pairing their music with John O'Donohue's "Restless Beauty of the Ocean" from Pastor Emilia's lectionary based on The Invisible Embrace of Beauty. Charlie Pouliot, the guitarist from the Scott Spradling Band who joined us for our Motown Jazz Sanctuary last year, will be joining the Jazz Sanctuary House Band as a Musical Guest to create the music.

We've been doing a Beatles Jazz Sanctuary nearly every year for awhile now, and the freshness of the music as we choose some pieces we've performed before and some we haven't is amazing. Artists like the Beatles who create a unique body of work surely tap into the Spirit, as there is something wonderfully mysterious and lasting in their work. Come experience it with us in person or on YouTube at "Concord's First Church."

By the time you read this, the Musicians Flea Market will have already occurred on November 1. It grows in size and impact each year thanks largely to our own Jock Irvine who puts so much of himself into it. Thanks also to all of you who volunteered your time and resources to make it happen!! A shout out from WMUR's Chronicle may even emerge from the Musicians Flea Market - we'll see!

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December will feature a bit of a “new wrinkle:” with Jazz Sanctuary, as we are combining our Jazz Sanctuary at 2:30 PM on December 21, with the “Christmas Special” we’ve been doing each December in recent years. We will hold the gathering in the cozy confines of the church parlor, looking out on the church’s courtyard, and the “Jazz Set” portion of the service will consist of congregational requests for favorite Carols and other Christmas musical faves. These requests can come from folks in the room or from our online audience on YouTube. This will also be the 4th Sunday in Advent, so that will be a part of our liturgy as well. The intimacy of this is something you won’t want to miss in your observance of the Christmas season!

In the “Outreach Department,” Joey, Jock, Eddie, and Tim continue to appear as the Jazz Sanctuary House Band every other Saturday morning from 9:00-11:00, doing “Jazz and Java” at William and Sons Coffee Co. at 72 Washington St. to benefit Family Promise of Greater Concord. We’ve been gradually building a genuine sense of community at these gatherings - come check us out! The First Sunday Jazz Jam at 2:30 PM in Hanna Hall continues each month, and we are still planning to get a date to perform at The Friendly Kitchen.

Finally, I have a “Coming Attraction” for you to put on your calendar for Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 2:30 PM - “Emmy Sings Ella!” This will be a fabulous musical tribute to the woman most of us consider the greatest jazz vocalist of all time, Ella Fitzgerald, by our personal favorite jazz vocalist, Pastor Emilia Halstead. You DEFINITELY don’t want to miss this!!

*Rev. Dr. Tim Wildman, Jazz Sanctuary*

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**Technology Corner**



**Digital Journaling: Keeping a Gratitude Journal on Your Phone**

As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, many of us like to reflect on what we're most thankful for. A gratitude journal is a wonderful way to do this. Keeping a journal can boost your happiness and well-being, reduce stress, encourage mindfulness, and

help you develop positive habits. Best of all, it creates a lasting record you can revisit anytime. You may have kept a traditional paper journal in the past, but this year, consider keeping your gratitude journal on your phone.

**Why Digital Journaling Works**

Keeping a journal on your phone is convenient. Most of us have our phones with us all the time, so you can jot down a thought the moment it comes to you—no need to wait until you can sit down with your paper journal. You can also add photos, either from your camera roll or taken in the moment. For example, if you have lunch with a friend, you might write, “I’m grateful for lunch with my good friend, Claude,” and include a selfie of the two of you smiling together.

**Keeping It Simple**

Start small. Use the default note-taking app on your phone—“Notes” on an iPhone or “Google Keep” on Android. Plan for just one or two entries a day. If you feel inspired to add more, that’s fine. Be specific in your entries: instead of “I’m thankful for my family,” try “I’m thankful for the phone call with my granddaughter today.” Adding one photo a day can make your journal even more meaningful.

**Making It a Habit**

Choose a regular time to write, like during your morning coffee or before bed. You can set a gentle reminder on your phone to help you remember. Over time, this simple routine can become a regular part of your day.

Digital journaling is easy, convenient, and spiritually uplifting. Try it for just a week and notice how it can brighten your perspective and deepen your sense of gratitude.

*Jock Irvine, Technology Integrator*

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**Social Media Engagement for October**

YouTube

Subscribers: 186 (2 new subscribers)

Views: 500 (About the same as usual)

Watch Time: 14.5 hours (About the same as usual)

Subscribers = The number of people who have subscribed to our channel, indicating they want to receive updates and see our content

Views = The total number of times a person intentionally plays one of our videos and watches it for at least 30 seconds.

Watch Time: The total amount of time people spent watching our videos

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Facebook

Views: 3,941 (Up 34%)

Interactions: 75 (Up 92%)

Followers: 579 (No change)

Views = Total number of times our content was played or displayed, including repeat views

Interactions = The total number of times someone interacts with one of our posts including likes, comments, shares, reactions, etc.

Followers = The number of new people who have chosen to receive updates from our Facebook profile

*Jock Irvine, Technology Integrator*



## Birthdays

Kellie Heath – 11/2

Irene Park – 11/2

Nancy Sanborn – 11/13

## PRAYER CONCERNS

If you would like your name included in the weekly bulletin prayer list, please contact our church administrator, Kathy. ([secretary@concordfirstchurch.org](mailto:secretary@concordfirstchurch.org))

***The Prayer Circle asks you to keep in prayer for the following members and friends:***

Carol Hovey - Healing

Matt Wildman - Healing

Family & Friends of Howard "BJ"

Steinberg - Peace

Franklin Richardson Rouse—Healing

