Welcome to First Congregational Church



Birthday Party, 1957
Margaret Burroughs (1915-2010)

Burroughs was a writer, educator and arts organizer, in addition to being an artist. She co-founded what is now known as the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago. In her art work she often chose themes concerning family, community, and history. 'Art is communication,' she said. 'I wish my art to speak not only for my people - but for all humanity.' In *Birthday Party* both black and white children dance, while mothers cut cake as neighbors and family enjoy time together.
(Art Institute of Chicago)

ANNOUCEMENTS

*[Please send any announcements for the bulletin or weekly Enews to the Secretary (secretary@concordsfirstchurch.org) by **9am Thursday morning**. Please include the exact wording of how you would like the announcement to appear. Any information received after 9am will be included in the following week's bulletin and Enews. Thank you!]*

Upcoming Shows in the Clinton Street Concert Series (Sponsored by FCC and WUMC). All shows are 6:00-7:15 PM

July 22 - Blues Brothers, the Next Generation
August 5 - Electric Praise
August 19 - The Scott Spradling Band

Java & Jazz at William & Sons Coffee Company
Saturday July 18th, August 1st, August 15th, August 29th.



Start your Saturday morning with smooth bossa novas, fresh brews, and a whole lot of soul! From 9:00–11:00 AM, members of the Jazz Sanctuary House Band will be serving up live jazz to pair perfectly with William & Sons' Brazilian-inspired coffee, decadent pastries, and breakfast sandwiches.

Every tip dropped in the jar goes straight to Family Promise of Greater Concord, supporting young families facing homelessness. (Tips optional, good vibes guaranteed!)

Don't miss this chance to sip, snack, and swing along — you might even catch a crowd favorite, "What a Wonderful World."

Website: Please visit and explore at www.concordsfirstchurch.org.

Your **smartphone** wants to know what's happening at First Church!
Scan this QR code with your phone's camera

Welcome to First Congregational Church
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ
Guest Speaker – Rev, Reene` Rouse
July 12, 2026

Welcome & Announcements

PRELUDE Love from Heaven (Shaker hymn) Annie Papinsick

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (Created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)
One voice alone can sing a melody,
Yet many voices together create a song.
One hand alone can offer a gesture,
Yet many hands together build community.
We were not created for isolation,
We were made for connection, compassion, and companionship.
The Holy One calls us into relationship,
Inviting us to love and be loved.
Come, let us worship the God who gathers us together.
Come, let us worship in joy and gratitude.

COMING INTO THE INVISIBLE EMBRACE OF BEAUTY (Created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)
Holy One, from the beginning of creation, you declared that it is not good for us to be alone. You formed us for friendship, community, and love. As we gather into your presence, open our hearts to one another and to you. May this time of worship strengthen the bonds among us and deepen our awareness of You. In the spirit of Christ, we pray. Amen.

OFFERING OUR MOMENTS OF BEAUTY & PRAYERS OF JOY
(*Response to each offering/prayer:*)
O Love of our hearts,
Receive our praise.

OPENING SONG: #58 Spirit of Love
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Spirit of love, you move within creation,
Drawing the threads to color and design:
Life into life, you knit our true salvation,
Come, work with us, and weave us into one.

Though we have frayed the fabric of your making,
Tearing away from all that you intend,
Yet to be whole, humanity is aching —
Come, work with us, and weave us into one.

Continued on next page

Great loom of God, where history is woven,
You are the frame that holds us to the truth,
Christ is the theme, the pattern you have given —
Come, work with us, and weave us into one

Hebrew Scriptures Proverbs 17:17 The Message Jim Wildman

Friends love through all kinds of weather,
and families stick together in all kinds of trouble.
Here ends the Lesson.
Amen.

New Testament Lesson 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 The Voice Jim Wildman

13 What if I speak in the *most elegant* languages of people or in
the *exotic* languages of the heavenly messengers, but I live without love? Well
then, anything I say is like the clanging of brass or a crashing cymbal. **2** What if I
have the gift of prophecy, am blessed with knowledge and insight to all the
mysteries, or what if my faith is strong enough to scoop a mountain *from its
bedrock*, yet I live without love? If so, I am nothing. **3** I could give all that I have
to feed the poor, I could surrender my body to be burned *as a martyr*, but if I do
not live in love, I gain nothing *by my selfless acts*. **4** Love is patient; love is kind.
Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, *brag, or strut about.* There's no arrogance in
love; **5** it's never rude, crude, or indecent—it's not self-absorbed. Love isn't easily
upset. Love doesn't tally wrongs **6** or celebrate injustice; but truth—*yes, truth*—is
love's delight! **7** Love puts up with anything and everything that comes along; it
trusts, hopes, and endures no matter what. **8** Love will never become obsolete.
Now as for the prophetic gifts, they will not last; unknown languages will become
silent, and the gift of knowledge will no longer be needed. **9** Gifts of knowledge and
prophecy are partial at best, *at least for now,* **10** but when the perfection *and
fullness of God's kingdom* arrive, all the parts will end. **11** When I was a child, I
spoke, thought, and reasoned in childlike ways *as we all do.* But when I became a
man, I left my childish ways behind. **12** For now, we can only see a dim and blurry
picture of things, as when we stare into polished metal. I realize that everything I
know is only part of the big picture. But one day, *when Jesus arrives,* we will see
clearly, face-to-face. In that day, I will fully know just as I have been wholly
known *by God*. **13** But now faith, hope, and love remain; these three *virtues must
characterize our lives*. The greatest of these is love.
Here ends the Lesson.
Amen.

SERMON "The Love that will carry us through"

Rev. Renee' Rouse

PAUSING FOR MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

SONG: #393 Blessed Be the Ties that Bind (Public Domain)

Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The sharing of a common life Is like to that above.

Before our God we come and pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear;
And often for each other flows a sympathizing tear.

When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - MOVING PAIN TO POSSIBILITY
(*Response to each prayer:*)
Divine Attraction,
Receive our prayers.

PASTORAL PRAYER (created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)

Lord's Prayer:
Our Father, which 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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sung Amen: #678 Psalm 89 (vs 1 & 2)

Response: Your steadfast love is established forever.

I will sing of your steadfast love, O God forever,
With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

Response: Your steadfast love is established forever.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
Your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Response: Your steadfast love is established forever.

Offertory

Global Ministries Weekly Prayers: France
(Written by Ulrich Rusen Weinhold, Secretary for International Relations of the United Protestant Church of France)

Mission Moment from France

Prayers with France:
God-Eternal, you cause all kinds of seeds to germinate and grow: a seed becomes a stalk of wheat another a mustard tree, Your word becomes love and hope under multiple gestures of sharing and solidarity. We thank you for your power that knows how to transform the world.
We pray that you will give us courage to share the hope that carries us and to be witnesses of your Good News. Sow creativity, courage and perseverance in us to always find new ways to proclaim the life you promise to seekers of meaning.
We thank you for the bonds between us, the sibling churches, with whom we share the same mission; Who inspire each other, exchange our new ideas, and pray for one another. We thank you, because all new expressions of faith that we are trying to put in place are borne by your promise:
That the seed will fall into the good soil. What an encouragement to dare new paths to be your witness to the Gospel. Amen.

INVITATION TO GIVE (created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)

GRATITUDE MUSIC I am loved as I love (Shaker hymn) Annie Papinsick

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)
Generous God, bless these gifts and those who give them. Use them to strengthen communities, deepen relationships, and extend your love into the world. May what we offer today help create places where people are welcomed, valued, and connected. In gratitude and hope, we pray. Amen.

CLOSING SONG: #61 Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost
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Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost, taught by you we covet most,
of Thy gifts at Pentecost, holy, heavenly love.

Love is kind, and suffers long; love is meek, and thinks no wrong;
love than death itself more strong; therefore give us love.

Prophecy will fade away, melting in the light of day;
love will ever with us stay; therefore give us love.

Faith and hope and love we see joining hand in hand agree;
but the greatest of the three, and the best, is love.

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

GREATEST COMMANDMENT

BENEDICTION & SENDING (created by Pastor Emilia using ChatGPT)

POSTLUDE Little children, gather love (Shaker hymn) Annie Papinsick