Welcome to First Congregational Church



***Jitterbugs II,* 1941**

William H. Johnson (1901-1970)

The Jitterbugs series refers to a wide variety of dances including the Charleston, the Shag, and the Big Apple, set to the syncopated rhythms of Southern jazz. Johnson composes the dancers' bodies with simplified planes of color, so that they intersect like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Johnson drew inspiration from vernacular styles—including quilt-patterns, street signs, and folk art – but he also draws from modernist abstraction which he encountered during long periods spent in Europe.
(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 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

Jazz Sanctuary
July 19, 2026
"The Beauty of Skin"

Welcome and Introduction of the Theme

Music Set
Body and Soul (Used with Permission)
You've Got a Friend (Used with Permission)
Summertime (Used with Permission)
The Way You Look Tonight (Used with Permission)
Stand By Me (Used with Permission)

Introduction of Musicians and Jazz Sanctuary Team

Coming Into the Invisible Embrace of Beauty (by John O'Donohue)
The act of love is rich in symbolism and ambivalence.
It arises on that temporary, total threshold between solitude and intimacy, skin and soul, feeling and thought, memory and future.

Sharing our Offerings of Beauty

Scripture in Many Voices: Psalm 139:13-18

Tim: For you shaped me, inside and out.

Renee': You kitted me together in my mother's womb long before I took my first breath.

Congregation on the Right: I will offer you my grateful heart, for I am Your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe.

Congregation on the Left: You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful; I carry this knowledge deep within my soul.

Band: You see all things; nothing about me was hidden from You as I took shape in secret, carefully crafted in the heart of the earth before I was born from its womb.

Jazz Deacons: You see all things; You saw me growing, changing in my mother's womb; Every detail of my life was already written in Your book; You established the length of my life before I ever tasted the sweetness of it.

Renee': Your thoughts and plans are treasures to me, O God! I cherish each and every one of them!

Tim: How grand in scope! How many in number!

All: **If I could count each one of them, they would be more than all the grains of sand on earth. Their number is inconceivable! Even when I wake up, I am still near you**.

Song Someone to Watch Over Me (Used with Permission)

Reading Gospel of Mark 5:25-34 (The Message translation)

Song The Nearness of You (Used with Permission)

Reading "The Beauty of Skin" by John O'Donohue

Song Lean on Me (Used with Permission)

Conversational Time:
While the literal act of love-making is obviously a powerful and beautiful example of the beauty of skin, popular culture has perhaps saturated and narrowed our perspective on this unique example of beauty - skin beauty. Consider for a moment a widened perspective that includes the holiness of embodiment, touch, physical presence, belovedness, and the ways our physical lives become vessels of divine grace. Any examples from your own life you'd care to share…?

Song What a Wonderful World (Used with Permission)

Lord's Prayer (translated from the Aramaic by Neil Douglas-Klotz)
O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos, focus your light within us - make it useful. Create your reign of unity now-through our fiery hearts and willing hands. Help us love beyond our ideals and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures. Animate the earth within us: we then feel the Wisdom underneath supporting all. Untangle the knots within so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back from our true purpose. Out of you, the astonishing fire, returning light and sound to the cosmos. Amen.

Time of Gratitude & Passing the Peace

Invitation to Generosity

Gratitude Music I Wish I Knew (Used with Permission)

Prayer of Thanksgiving
Holy of Holies Who Came to Us Enfleshed as an Infant - We thank you for our skin - for touching, for soothing, for healing, for connecting - for loving. We thank you for our souls, our skin's outer skin where we meet you, one another, and all that is. Bless our skin that we may bless and love all skin. AMEN

Benediction

Sending Music Down by the Riverside (African American Spiritual)

1 I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield,
down by the riverside, (x3)
gonna lay down my sword and shield,
down by the riverside,
I ain't gonna study war no more.

(Refrain) I ain't gonna study war no more, (x6)

2 I'm gonna try on my long, white robe (Refrain)
3 I'm gonna put on my starry crown (Refrain)