Welcome to First Congregational Church



***Elizabeth Grant Bankson Beatty (Mrs. James Beatty) and Her Daughter Susan*, 1805**

Joshua Johnson, (1763-1824)

Joshua Johnson was the first known professional Black painter in the United States. Apparently self-taught, he had been freed by his enslaver (and father) around 1782 after apprenticing as a blacksmith. Johnson's patrons, both Black and white, were primarily from the artisan and middle classes in Baltimore.
(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!]

Outreach: Crop Walk is Oct 10.
We have 54 kid kits completed. We need the 2 pocket folders and bags.
We have one clean up bucket filled. Let's fill another.
Neighbors in Need is one of our UCC Five for Five offerings and is collected in October.
Ukama Sunday is Oct. 18. Congregational missionaries founded the church there on Oct. 19, 1893. Please help food insecurity and schools there.

Circle Gatherings for 2026/2027: Beginning Sunday, September 27, and continuing on most fourth Sundays through May, we will gather after worship from approximately 11:45–12:45 for conversation and shared discernment. As we approach our 300th anniversary, our gatherings will center around one important question: How is God calling us to live with intention into the next season of life as First Congregational Church of Concord?

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
September 20, 2026
"The Jazz of Parenting"

Welcome and Introduction of the Theme

Jazz Music Set
A Child Is Born (Used with Permission)
Isn't She Lovely (Used with Permission)
The Most Wondrous Time of the Year (Used with Permission)
Cat's In the Cradle (Used with Permission)
Coat of Many Colors (Used with Permission)
Just the Two of Us (Used with Permission)

Introduction of Musicians and Jazz Sanctuary Team

Coming Into the Invisible Embrace of Beauty (by John O'Donohue)
To be a parent is to be invited into the natural depths of divine creativity.
Mothers and fathers inhabit the secret heart of God's heart. They open a sacred door in the soul for a most vulnerable and intimate stranger to enter and inherit the earth.

Sharing our Offerings of Beauty

Song God the Spirit, Guide, and Guardian

God the Spirit, Guide and Guardian, Carl P Daw
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1. God the Spirit, guide and guardian, windsped flame and hovering dove,
breath of life and voice of prophets, sign of blessing, power of love:
Give to those who lead your people fresh anointing of your grace.
Send them forth as bold apostles to your church in every place.

2. Christ our Savior, sovereign, shepherd, Word made flesh, Love crucified,
teacher, healer, suffering servant, friend of sinners, foe of pride:
In your tending may all pastors learn and live a shepherd's care.
Grant them courage and compassion shown through word and deed and prayer.

3. Great Creator, life bestower, truth beyond all thought's recall,
fount of wisdom, womb of mercy, giving and forgiving all:
as you know our strength and weakness, so may those the church exalts
oversee its life steadfastly, yet not overlook its faults.

4. Triune God, mysterious being, undivided and diverse,
deeper than our minds can fathom, greater than our creeds rehearse:
help us in our varied callings your full image to proclaim,
that our ministries uniting may give glory to your name.

Scripture in Many Voices: Luke 2:41-52
Congregation**: Every year during Jesus' childhood, his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. When Jesus was twelve he made the journey with them. They spent several days there, participating in the whole celebration. When his parents left for home, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem, but Joseph and Mary were not aware. They assumed Jesus was elsewhere in the caravan that was traveling together.**

Band: After they had already traveled a day's journey toward home, they began to search for him among their friends and relatives.

Deacons: When no one had seen the boy, Mary and Joseph rushed back to Jerusalem and searched for him.

Congregation**: After three days of separation, they finally found him - sitting among a group of religious teachers in the temple - asking them questions, listening to their answers. Everyone was surprised and impressed that a 12-year-old boy could have such deep understanding and could answer questions with such wisdom.**

Band: His parents, of course, had a different reaction.

Pastor Emilia (Mary): Son, why have you treated us this way? Listen, your father and I have been sick with worry for the last three days, wondering where you were, looking everywhere for you!

Tim (Jesus): Why did you need to look for me? Didn't you know that I must be working for My Father?

Deacons: Neither Mary nor Joseph really understood what He meant by this.

Congregation: **Jesus went back to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. His mother continued to store these memories like treasures in her heart. And Jesus kept on growing - in wisdom, in physical stature, in favor with God, and in favor with others.**

Song Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child (Used with Permission)

Reading: "The Pure Cry That Encircles the Ripple of Being" - John O'Donohue

Conversational Time:
Traditional commentary regarding today's story about Jesus as a boy has understandably focused on his remarkable spiritual acuity for one so young.
As a parent, though, don't we each have a moment in time of realizing that our child is truly his or her own person - separate from us - with a unique perspective we hadn't seen before. Do you remember such a moment as a parent - or from when you were a child-becoming-an-adult?

Song I Will Always Love You (Used with Permission)

Pastoral Prayer (Created by Emilia Halstead using ChatGPT)

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 (Created by Emilia Halstead using ChatGPT)

Gratitude Music God Bless the Child (Used with Permission)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Created by Emilia Halstead using ChatGPT)
Generous God, receive these gifts as signs of our willingness to participate in what you are bringing to life. May they create room for discovery, belonging, courage, and growth. Bless what we give, bless those who give, and bless the lives that will be touched through our generosity. Amen.

Benediction (Created by Emilia Halstead using ChatGPT)

Sending Music I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry
I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry, John Ylvisaker
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"I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.
I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;
I’ll be there in case you wandered off and find where demons dwell."

"When you heard the wonder of the Word I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord, to whom you now belong.
Should you find someone to share your time and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk 'till rising sun."

In the middle ages of your life, not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night, complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in, and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise."

"I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold."