

Welcome to First Congregational Church



Woman on a Bridge
#1 of 5: *Tar Beach*, 1988
Faith Ringgold
Acrylic paint, canvas, printed fabric, ink, and thread,
Guggenheim Museum

Ringgold was a painter, sculptor, performance artist, author and activist. She is best known for her narrative quilts which combine historical and fictional tales that often highlight African American history and culture.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*[Please send any announcements for the bulletin or weekly Enews to the Secretary (secretary@concordfirstchurch.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!]*

Reminder: We will no longer be live-streaming our worship services on Facebook. Go to **Youtube.com/ConcordFirstChurch** to watch the services live.

Next Circle Gathering - SAVE THE DATE: Our next Circle Gathering will be Sunday, October 26th before worship from 9:30-10:15am

Delegates Needed!!! Dear First Church Members and Associate Members, the Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, UCC, and the FIRST annual meeting of the newly formed Granite State Association is:

Saturday, October 25th, 9-4:30 pm at Geneva Point Center (108 Geneva Point Rd, Moultonborough, NH 03254). -Or you can attend virtually.-

There are important topics being discussed and voted on that will have an impact on us at the local church, association, and conference level. You are invited to prayerfully consider volunteering to represent First Church, Concord either in person or online (Pastor Emilia will be attending online), so that we can be informed about the changes that are coming and foster community and reconnect with the wider church.

NEW Website: Please visit and explore at www.concordfirstchurch.org.

Crop Walk: Crop Walk is Oct. 11th. The 2.5 walk starts at 10:00AM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Please consider walking or supporting a walker.

Weekly Prayers for the Nation: Join Rev. Renee' for a weekly hour of prayer for our nation on Zoom. Wednesdays at 1pm. Zoom link is in the weekly E-News and in the calendar on the website.

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
Rev. Emilia Halstead
World Communion Sunday—October 5, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Na pantaluin ghorma (the Blue Pantaloons) (trad. Irish) Annie Papinsick

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP: (written by John O'Donohue)

The messenger comes from that distant place

Beside us where we cannot remember

How unlikely it is that we are here

Keepers of interiors not our own

Strangers in whom dawn and twilight are one.

COMING INTO THE INVISIBLE EMBRACE OF BEAUTY: (written by John O'Donohue)

Twilight is a fascinating threshold for it is then that light finally falls away and the dark wraps its cloak around the world. This is a frontier of tension; it is at once night and day, origin and completion. [...] Blue seems to be the colour of the infinite—an endless expanse where darkness and brightness dwell together in blue light.

OFFERING OUR MOMENTS OF BEAUTY

SONG: #379 Come, We Who Love God's Name

SONG: #379 Come, We Who Love God's Name

Come, We Who Love God's Name, Isaac Watts

Text: © 1993, Pilgrim Press, The

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved

Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known;
Together God's great love proclaim, and thus surround the throne.

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God;
But we our thanks and praise will bring for love so deep and broad.

God's grace on earth is found, seeds of glory sown;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground from faith and hope have grown.

The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields, or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;
We're traveling through Emmanuel's ground, to greater worlds on high.

Hear now our modern lesson, "Human Family" by Maya Angelou...
Here ends the lesson.

Amen.

Hear now from the book of Genesis...
Hebrew Scriptures

Rev. Renee` Rouse
Genesis 1:3-5 (The Living Bible)

Then God said, "Let there be light." And light appeared. And God was pleased with it and divided the light from the darkness. He called the light "daytime," and the darkness "nighttime." Together they formed the first day.

Here ends the lesson.

Amen.

Hear now from the book of Ezekiel...
Hebrew Scriptures

Rev. Renee` Rouse
Ezekiel 1:22-28a (The Living Bible)

The sky spreading out above them looked as though it were made of crystal; it was inexpressibly beautiful.

The wings of each stretched straight out to touch the others' wings, and each had two wings covering his body. And as they flew, their wings roared like waves against the shore, or like the voice of God, or like the shouting of a mighty army. When they stopped, they let down their wings. And every time they stopped, there came a voice from the crystal sky above them.

For high in the sky above them, was what looked like a throne made of beautiful blue sapphire stones, and upon it sat someone who appeared to be a Man.

From his waist up, he seemed to be all glowing bronze, dazzling like fire; and from his waist down he seemed to be entirely flame, and there was a glowing halo like a rainbow all around him. That was the way the glory of the Lord appeared to me. And when I saw it, I fell face downward on the ground and heard the voice of someone speaking to me:

Here ends the lesson.

Amen.

Hear now from the book of Matthew...
Gospel Lesson

Rev. Renee` Rouse
Matthew 13:10-15 (The Message)

The disciples came up and asked, "Why do you tell stories?"

Jesus replied, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn't been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward a welcome awakening. In their present state they can stare till doomsday and not see it; listen till they're blue in the face and not get it. I don't want Isaiah's forecast repeated all over again..."

Here ends the lesson.

Amen.

PAUSING FOR MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

SONG: #571 O God of Love, O God of Peace (Public Domain)

O God of love, O God of peace, make wars throughout the world to cease;
The wrath of human wrong restrain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Remember, God, your works of old, the wonders that our people told;
Heal every malice, harm, and pain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Whom shall we trust, O God, but you? For you are constant, strong, and true.
None ever called on you in vain: Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Global Ministries Weekly Prayers: Costa Rica

(Written by Karla Ann Koll, Professor of Theology and Facilitator of the Green Team, Latin American Biblical University)

Mission Moment with Costa Rica

Responsive Prayer with Costa Rica:

Creator God, we give you thanks this day for the beautiful country of Costa Rica, where the Latin American Biblical University is based. We give thanks for its beaches and forests filled with diverse forms of life. Behind this beauty, there are struggles.

This day, we lift up the people in different communities working to defend water sources from contamination by agrochemicals and deforestation.

We especially pray for the leaders of the Bröran, Bribri, and Cabécar peoples as they defend their territories and their ancestral wisdom from outsiders despite threats and physical violence. May their cries for protection and justice be heard in the halls of power and in the churches.

Fill us with a vision of abundant life for all living beings. May our hearts and hands be moved by your Spirit to join in efforts to renew creation here in Costa Rica and around the world. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(Response to each verbal prayer:)

God of Night and Day,

Receive our prayer.

PASTORAL PRAYER (written by Rev Abi)

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:

This Is My Song

This Is My Song, Lloyd Stone

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved.

This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine.

This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;

But other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on clover-leaf and pine.

But other lands have sunlight too and clover, and skies are everywhere as blue as mine.

Oh, hear my song, O God of all the nations, A—a song of peace for their land and for mine.

Offertory

INVITATION ("Prayer for Unity" written by Thomas Merton)

GRATITUDE MUSIC

Julion, Contributors: David Hurd

Tune: © 1983, GIA Publications, Inc.

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved

HYMN TUNE: JULION

Annie Papinsick

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION (cont. "Prayer for Unity" written by Thomas Merton)

O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you, and we love you with our whole being, because our being is in your being, our spirit is rooted in your spirit.

Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world, and makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious. Amen.

COMMUNION

WORDS OF PREPARATION

"Guests Among Guests" (Do This, pg. 22)

COMMUNION HYMN

"Christ of Food and Every Pleasure" [Hymn Tune: Julion]

Julion, Contributors: David Hurd

Tune: © 1983, GIA Publications, Inc.

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved

Christ of food and every pleasure, you have longed to eat this feat!

Now we're gathered here together, high and mighty, low and least,

To receive your joy unmeasured and to make your joy complete.

No one owns this great partaking, no one's higher than the rest;

Every privilege here forsaking, even you, O Christ, a guest:

All are one in Love's inbreaking at this table manifest.

In this circle of God's dreaming boundless welcome comes to earth.

Free of coveting and scheming, free of worried rank and worth,

Guests alike here, glad and gleaming, eat and drink to our rebirth.

INVITATION

Jesus accepted invitations from everyone
and ate at many tables.
He was not often the host,
He was a guest among guests.
At this table where we remember him,
We too are not hosts.
We are all guests,
All invited by Mercy, all summoned by Love.
Come, then, everyone, and enjoy Love's hospitality.
Lay aside any need you have to be first or best,
Or to decide who is worthy to come and eat.
Just be grateful to be here,
And open your hearts to praise:

THANKS AND PRAISE

God most generous and kind,
The reach of your mercy is endless.
You find us all, wherever we are,
And bring us to your table.
Your guest list is as unrestricted as your love.
For the gracious welcome we have all received,
Whether we came first or last, early or late,
With hands full of gifts, or with nothing at all,
We praise you, singing your glory, this day and forever:

SANCTUS

REMEMBERING JESUS

Now, O God, we remember Jesus.
**We remember that he ate with Simon the Pharisee,
With Zacchaeus, the tax collector,
And in Peter's house after making his mother well.**

We remember that he ate in Bethany with Mary and Martha,
And their brother, Lazarus, whom he summoned from the grave.
**We remember that he ate with rich and poor,
Righteous people and sinners,
Friends, deniers, doubters, and betrayers.**

He told us not to take the best seats at banquets,
But to defer to others; to be good guests.

THE STORY OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP
**And we remember that on the night of betrayal,
He ate again with his disciples in an upper room.**

He shared blessed bread with them
And poured out wine, signs of his coming death,
Signs of a life determined to love despite the risk.

**Whenever we eat, with whomever we eat,
As guests among guests, we remember him.
He is with us always, to the end of the age.**

PRAYERS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

**Bless this bread and this fruit of the vine.
By our eating and drinking, open our hearts
To other guests you are always inviting,
So that one day everyone who hungers
Will have an honored place in your house,
The best seats at your table.**

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

THANKSGIVING

Thank you God,
For inviting us to this Banquet of Life.
And feeding us with the good news of Jesus
And his wondrous bread and cup.
You are always glad to have us here
Around your family table.

**Help us notice who is missing.
Make us everybody's neighbor.
Send us to them as friends
With your standing invitation to come,
To eat, to now love, and be in peace at home.**

CLOSING SONG: #581

Lead Us From Death to Life

World Peace Prayer, Marty Haugen

© 1985, GIA Publications, Inc.

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved.

Refrain: Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace; let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world, let peace fill our universe.

Still all the angry cries, still all the angry guns, Still now your people die, earth's sons and daughters. Let Justice roll, let mercy pour down, come and teach us Your way of compassion. **(Refrain)**

So many lonely hearts, so many broken lives, longing for love to break into their anguish. Come, teach us love, come, teach us peace, come and teach us Your way of compassion. **(Refrain)**

Let justice ever roll, let mercy fill the earth, let us begin to grow into your people. We can be love, we can be peace, we can still be Your way of compassion. **(Refrain)**

SETTING OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

GREATEST COMMANDMENT

RESPONSIVE SENDING:

God's children still suffer—whether from famine, natural disaster, poverty or violence.

Like Moses, we too are called by God:

To speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

To stand against injustice and inequality,

To move against the political and economic powers of this world, which continue to enslave the impoverished and the powerless.

And, like Moses, we do not go alone, but in the strength of God who calls and sends us.

BENEDICTION (written by the World Council of Churches)

POSTLUDE

Blue Mountain Waltz (trad. North American)

Annie Papinsick