

The First Church in Swampscott, Congregational
United Church of Christ
September 6, 2026



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES
at the Intersection of Faith & Life



WELCOME!

Special greetings to you who are worshipping with us for the first time. Join us in person or online via Zoom or at our Facebook live video stream at 10am Sunday:
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchSwampscott/>

ABOUT US

We are a community of Christians seeking meaning, purpose, and mission through our participation in the life of this beautiful local church. We believe that God is Still Speaking and has something new and essential to say to us as we live in this ever more complex and challenging world. We don't have all the answers, but we have some great questions. Together, we rely on the rich resources of the tradition of our Christian faith, the Bible, the revelation of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ, and the God given gifts of each person here, to lead us in our daily lives.

The First Church in Swampscott, Congregational is so named because it was the first church established in the town in 1846 as Swampscott was developing into an independent town, separating from nearby Lynn.

If you would like to be added to our weekly newsletter, please send your name and email address to office@thefirstchurch.org

GATHERING

* An asterisk is an invitation for the congregation to stand.

OPENING VIDEO

GATHERING

Rev. Katie Cole

PRELUDE

"Toccata in G Major" William H. Pachelbel

Patricia Clark

CALL TO WORSHIP

(By Steve Garnaas-Holmes)

Orla Delaney

One: Eternal God, you call us into being!

All: Risen Christ, you draw us up into life!

One: Holy Spirit, you radiate your grace in us.

All: We worship you. We praise you. We love you.

One: You make your church as one Being, a community of blessing, the Body of Christ.

All: Alleluia! Come, spirit of grace, and make us one; in love and delight, make us yours. Alleluia!

*OPENING HYMN #392 "Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether" (UNION SEMINARY)

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Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

Draw us in the Spirit's tether,
For when humbly in Thy name,
Two or three are met together
Thou art in the midst of them;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Touch we now Thy garment's hem.

As the brethren used to gather
In the name of Christ to sup,
Then with thanks to God the Father
Break the bread and bless the cup,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
So knit Thou our friendship up.

All our meals and all our living
Make as sacraments of Thee,
That by caring, helping, giving
We may true disciples be.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
We will serve Thee faithfully.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Sadie Anderson & Vivian Horgan

INVITATION TO PASS THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*** PEACE PASSING SONG** *"God Is Still Speaking"* Marty Haugen

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Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

REFRAIN/ALL: God is still speaking, blessed invitation, God is still speaking, Listen and draw near.
God is still speaking, see a new creation. God is still speaking. Stand and do not fear.

SOLO: Open up your ears to hear. (God is still speaking.)
Living Good News strong and clear. (Listen and draw near.)
Through the struggle, grief and pain (God is still speaking.)
God can raise us up again. (Stand and do not fear. **REFRAIN**

HIGH VOICES: Though the nations rage and fight. (God is still speaking.)
Hear God's voice of grace and light. (Listen and draw near.)
Choose the way that leads to peace. (God is still speaking.)
True compassion, sweet release. (Stand and do not fear.). **REFRAIN**

LOW VOICES: Hear the sound of justice ring. (God is still speaking.)
Hear the sound of mercy sing. (Listen and draw near.)
To the ones in deep despair. (God is still speaking.)
Be the sign of hope and care. (Stand and do not fear.). **REFRAIN**

PROCLAMATION

Matthew 18:15-20

Macy Clark

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

SERMON

"Not 'if' but 'when'"

Rev. Katie Cole

***HYMN #623** *"Woke Up This Morning"* Negro Spiritual

Public Domain

Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

Sung in call-response style:

(Oh I woke up this morning with my mind, and it was) stayed on Jesus
Woke up this morning with my mind, and it was stayed on Jesus.
Woke up this morning with my mind, and it was stayed on Jesus.
(Allelu) – Allelu! (Allelu) – Allelu! Alleluia!

(Can't hate your neighbor with your mind if it is) stayed on Jesus....
(Makes you love everybody with your mind when it is) stayed on Jesus...
Walkin' and talkin' with my mind mind, and it is stayed on Jesus...
Singing and praying with my mind, and it is stayed on Jesus...

TIME OF PRAYER

If you are online, you are invited to add your prayers using the Chat function in the Zoom application.

CALL TO PRAYER:

Stephen Rose

One: Let us prepare ourselves for a time of prayer.
May the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.
Let us pray.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

(From The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition)

Eternal and merciful God, you have loved us with a love beyond our understanding, and you have set us on paths of righteousness for your name's sake. Yet we have strayed from your way; we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, through what we have done and what we have left undone. As we remember the lavish gift of your grace symbolized in baptism, O God, we praise you and give you thanks that you forgive us yet again. Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin, and to rise daily to new life in Christ, who lives and reigns with you, and in whose strong name we pray. Amen.

Spoken Prayer

Stephen Rose

A TIME FOR PRAYERS FROM THE CONGREGATION (CHAT FUNCTION).

Rev. Katie Cole

*****PRAYER SONG "Holy Spirit" Stuart Townsend and Keith Getty**

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Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

HIGH. VOICES: Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the Living God
Renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause your Word to come alive in me,
Give me faith for what I cannot see.
Give me passion for your purity,
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

LOW VOICES: Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made.
Show your power once again on earth,
Cause your church to hunger for your ways.
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise,
Lead us on the road of sacrifice,
That in unity the face of Christ
May be clear for all the world to see.

ALL: Repeat v.1

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Jess Easter & Rev. Katie Cole

Rev. Katie: With you, every transition and new start is a reminder of your goodness, for you are always creating fresh, amazing things in us and through us. Though we are sad about the summer ending, we are grateful for this school year. We appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, knowing it is one of the biggest privileges we have. With thanks and love, we now offer everything we are to you, asking for your blessing.

Jess: We pray for students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for our hearts and all they hold—excitement and nervousness, disappointment and hope. We give you all our loves and fears. We pray for steady self-esteem and deepening resilience.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

Jess: We say a special prayer for parents, as the start of a new school year is always another leap of faith. Wrap them with your reassuring love as they entrust their children and trust in you. When questions remain unanswered, and the realm of control is finite, bless them with peace and the promise you are right there with their child, whether heading to preschool or driving to college.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

Jess: We also pray now for teachers, staff and administrators. Bless these faithful servants with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classroom with a steady hand on their shoulder. Give them peace, patience, and balance in the pressures they face, and bravery to build structures and systems which justly serve all your children. Give them delight in the young ones before them, and recognition of the sweet ways children are also teachers.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

Rev. Katie: We pray for our minds... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our ears... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our eyes... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our mouths... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our hands... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our feet... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**
We pray for our backpacks... **Loving God, hold us and our prayers.**

ALL: We thank you, God, and love you. Amen.

COMMUNION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Rev. Katie Cole

REMEMBERING GOD'S PROMISES

The Children

One: We remember that God meets us here at this table, with this bread and this cup.

One: We remember that we belong to God and are members of God's family

One: We remember that God gives us grace, freely and abundantly

One: We remember that we share in Christ's death and Resurrection.

One: We remember that first feast of love, that this is a feast of love, and that in the end there will be a feast of love.

INVITATION

All: Saint and sinner, believer and doubter, rich and poor, male and female, gay and straight, binary and non-binary, in-crowd and those left out, member of this church and those with no church, baptized and not baptized, if God has brought us together into this moment today, then God has invited us to share in her grace. We are all invited into this holy mystery; all are welcome at this open table, where Jesus Christ is our host. All are welcome to receive the grace of God.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God our thanks and praise. (The prayer continues...)

BLESSING THE COMMUNION ELEMENTS TOGETHER

One: Reach out your hands to bless this meal in the ancient posture of Christian blessing.

All: Come Spirit come,

Dive deep into these cups, bind yourself to this bread.

That this would be for us holy food and sustenance for the journey.

Bless us that we would be holy people. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father/Mother/Creator, who 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

COMMUNION

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY *"In Christ Alone" Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend/arr. Mark Hayes*

COMMUNION HYMN "For Everyone Born" Brian Mann/Shirley Erena Murray

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Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

ALL: For everyone born a place at the table
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead.

REFRAIN: And God will delight when we are creators of justice
and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy!

HIGH VOICES: For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong. **REFRAIN**

LOW VOICES: For all who have breath, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,
a rainbow of race and gender and color,
for all who have breath, the chalice of grace. **REFRAIN**

ALL: For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free. **REFRAIN**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Rev. Katie Cole

GOING FORTH

BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Katie Cole

This Sunday, we will end the Facebook stream and say goodbye to our friends on zoom during the instrumental verse in the parting song.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Katie Cole

* PARTING SONG "Lead Me, Lord" John D. Becker

Words and Music - ©1987 Oregon Catholic Press

Rita Looney, Dale Orzalli, and Patricia Clark with Congregation

HIGH VOICES: Blessed are the poor in spirit longing for their Lord.
For God's coming Kingdom shall be theirs.
Blessed are the sorrowing for they shall be consoled,
And the meek shall come to rule the world.

REFRAIN: Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth,
To seek and to find the narrow way.
Be my way, be my life, be my truth, my Lord,
And lead me, Lord, today.

LOW VOICES: Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall be theirs.
And the pure in heart shall see their God.
Blest are they whose hunger only holiness can fill,
For I say they shall be satisfied. **REFRAIN**

INSTRUMENTAL VERSE

(Facebook stream ends, zoom greetings, Breakout rooms)

ALL: Blest are they who through their lifetimes sow the seeds of peace.
All will call them children of the Lord.
Blest are you, though persecuted, in your holy life,
For in heaven, great is your reward. **REFRAIN**

CLOSING REFRAIN: Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth,
To seek and to find the narrow way.
Be my way, be my life, be my truth, my Lord,
And lead me, Lord, today.

POSTLUDE: "Prelude in C Major from 'Eight Little Preludes and Fugues'" by J.S. Bach **Charlie Sokolov**

MUSICIANS: RITA LOONEY, DALE ORZALLI, VOCALISTS; PATRICIA CLARK, PIANIST AND ORGANIST; CHARLIE SOKOLOV, ORGANIST

USHERS: SHARON SCOFIELD AND CONNIE ZIMMERMAN

REFRESHMENTS: SUE BURGESS AND HEIDI WHEAR



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Web Site	thefirstchurch.org
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First Church Council: Clerk: Melissa Foye. Treasurer: David Foye. Members: Janet Fischer (Chair), Rebecca Kinchley, Katie Day, Andrew Steingiser, Stephen Rose, Julia Wistran, Betty McNeil

Open and Affirming Covenant

We, The First Church in Swampscott, Congregational, declare ourselves to be an open and affirming church. We are called by God through Jesus Christ to follow the Great Commandment "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27)

We joyfully welcome everyone of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, ages, races, and ethnicities, economic and social statuses, physical, mental and emotional abilities, faith backgrounds, marital standings and family structures into our community, to share in the full life, leadership and ministry of First Church.

We celebrate the wonderfully rich and diverse world God has created and embrace the joy and growth this diversity inspires. All who seek to know God are encouraged to join with us as we work to live out our mission in faith and love.



GRATITUDE FOR NEGRO SPIRITUALS: “A nationwide movement has developed over the past several years to recognize that Negro spirituals are the creative product of a people whose work was never compensated...We have enjoyed spirituals in our hymn books and choir arrangements and have listened to them in concerts for decades without just compensation. The time has come to recognize this injustice...” *United Church of Christ Musicians Association*

First Church is joining this initiative and will be exploring Negro spirituals as a community. Our wish is to educate ourselves and ultimately discover how best to demonstrate our gratitude for this incredible musical treasure. Our intention is to determine concrete actions to help repair the injustices surrounding spirituals' creation and use. Keep your eyes, ears, and hearts open as we embark on this musical journey together!

******“Woke Up This Morning”*** is sung in call-response form, a style characteristic of many Negro spirituals as well the African music of their forebearers. Call-response allows a leader to continually develop lyrics (call), while the group responds with a repeated phrase (response), in an almost conversational style. No need for songbooks, song sheets, or screens! This form lent itself well to its origins in the lives of the enslaved, most of whom lacked the tools and opportunity to learn to read and write. Want to know more? [Call and Response: the Heartbeat of African Music](#)