

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 3, 2020

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!”

~ Psalm 133:1

Welcome to our digital worship! In this church we focus on the things that matter. It doesn't matter to us if you grew up in a church or never set foot in one before. You matter to us. We welcome you as you are, because we believe that we are all embraced by God's inclusive and extravagant love.

We invite you to “check in” on the social media of your choice, let them know that you are doing church, even in these uncertain times, ask your networks for prayer requests, or otherwise bring your online self into God’s presence today.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Before the time of the service you will want to prepare some bread, a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread. In some parts of the world tortilla, rice cake, or cassava are used as this element which is defined not as a wheat product but as the most common food of the people. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice – perhaps grape or cranberry – or wine, with or without alcohol.

Set these elements in the living room or kitchen where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Perhaps you want to put them on a lovely cloth or fabric that reminds you of a special time or a person deeply connected with you in the communion of saints. We encourage you to have a candle to light at the time of the Lighting of the Christ Candle which follows the Welcome and Announcements. Perhaps you will place a flower or plant or the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup.

Thank you for your preparation.

SHARING YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS

Because of a few minutes broadcast delay, prayer concerns and celebrations to be shared during worship can be emailed to prayers@firstchurchnatick.org at any time before or during the worship service up to the Reflection.

PRELUDE

Prelude in G. major, HWV 450
Thomas Foster, Piano

Handel

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Dr. Jonathan New

(Following the Announcements, we invite you to have a candle available to light as your worship leaders light the Christ Candle)

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

CALL TO CELEBRATION

Sarallyn Keller, Dir of Spiritual Vitality
& Congregational Care

People of God, we are a tapestry of mystery and meaning, a fine garment of divine blessing and human care.

We are a gentle weave of deep sighs and fervent prayers, a work of art woven with whispers and shouts.

Beloved, we are God's tapestry —

Touched with mystery and filled with meaning, is playing variety yet bound one to another.

Let us worship the God of unity among diversity!

HYMN NO. 258

Morning Has Broken

Bunessan

*Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word.*

*Sweet the rain's newfall sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass.*

*Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!*

OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

*O God in whom we live and have our being,
we come together in your presence to sing your praise.
Accept the words of our mouths and the thoughts of our hearts,
for we are yours.
Gather up the prayer of each heart into one harmony of worship and service,
that we might truly be one body in Christ.
Bind us together, prompting others to join one another in working for the
common good.
Amen.*

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(Reach your hands out in a gesture of blessing or place your hands together over your heart and bow in a sign of Namaste. Once worship is concluded, consider being in touch with someone you know to share Christ's peace.)

TIME FOR CHILDREN

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

OFFERTORY

French Suite No. 5: Allemande

J.S. Bach

SONG OF PRAISE *(Please feel free to use either traditional or inclusive language.)*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, all heavenly hosts, Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SCRIPTURE READING

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 & John 17:20-26

REFLECTION

"Better Together"

Rev. Dr. Jonathan New

HYMN No. 602

One Bread, One Body

One Bread, One Body

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.*

*Gentile or Jew, servant or free,
Woman or man, no more.*

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.*

*Many the gifts, many the works,
One in the Lord of all.*

*One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.*

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

*We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing.
Though we are many throughout the earth
and this church community is scattered, we are one in Christ.
In your many kitchens, and living rooms,
rest your hands lightly upon these elements
which we set aside today to be a sacrament.
Let us ask God's blessing upon them.*

***Gentle Redeemer, there is no lockdown on your blessing
and no quarantine on grace.
Send your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing
upon every table where your child shelters in place,
that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love
and this Cup poured out to give hope to all.
Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you.
Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you.***

WORDS OF REMEMBERING

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.
We are one in Christ in the bread we share.
Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.
We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace,
rejoicing that, by the very method of our worship,
we have embodied the truth that Christ's love
is not limited by buildings made with human hands,
nor contained in human ceremonies,
but blows as free as the Spirit in all places.*

*Spirit of Christ, you have blessed our tables and our lives.
May the eating of this Bread give us courage to speak faith and act love,
not only in church sanctuaries, but in your precious world,
and may the drinking of this Cup renew our hope
even in the midst of pandemic.
Wrap your hopeful presence around all
whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing,
and let us become your compassion and safe refuge.
Blessed in our diversity, make us of one in mind, heart, and spirit,
that we might proclaim and embody well your love for all creatures
and all Creation.
Amen.*

HYMN NO. 368

*Blest Be the Tie That Binds
(verse four adapted)*

Dennis

*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.*

*Before God's gracious throne we 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 the sympathizing ear.*

*Now we are far apart. It gives us inward pain,
But we are yet still joined in heart, and yearn to meet again!*

BLESSING POSTLUDE

Polonaise in C major

J.G. Goldberg

Livestreamed & Recorded Worship

In consideration of the safety of our worship leaders and to demonstrate that everyone should avoid going out into public unless absolutely necessary our worship leaders will continue leading worship from their homes for the foreseeable future. ***During this time, livestreamed and local access cable broadcasting of worship at the usual Sunday 10:30 a.m. worship time will continue as usual.***

Worship is at the very center of our life together as a congregation, as well as being at the heart of our call to proclaim and embody the good news of Jesus in the world. Church leaders remain committed to ensuring that we can do that well. Thanks in advance for your patience and understanding as we seek to do what is best for our worship leaders and right for our community while remaining a church that gives high priority to worship together as the Body of Christ. If you have feedback for our worship leaders please contact Jonathan at pastor@firstchurchnatick.org. We appreciate your input!

Post Worship Fellowship

11:30AM – 12:30 PM, on Zoom following livestream worship

Join us for an informal virtual gathering where we can greet one another, and – if the spirit strikes us – talk about the day’s worship experience.

Follow this link for the videocall: <https://zoom.us/j/314817921> or,

To join by phone: call in at (929) 205-6099, then enter 314817921# (and don’t forget the # at the end!).

NOTE: Please be patient for the arrival of your Zoom host since he may still be transitioning from recording the service at 11:30!

CALENDAR FOR MAY 3, 2020 - MAY 10, 2020

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| Sunday, May 3 | 10:30 AM Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus. |
| | 11:30 AM Post Worship Fellowship via Zoom |
| | 2:00 PM Virtual Worship service will be available on the church website. |
| | 5:00 PM Jr. Youth Group via Zoom |
| | 7:00 PM Confirmation Class via Zoom |
| Monday, May 4 | 10:00 AM Spirit Connect via Zoom |
| Tuesday, May 5 | 3:00 PM Spirit Boost via Zoom |
| Sunday, May 10 | 10:30 AM Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus. |
| | 11:30 AM Post Worship Fellowship Zoom Call |
| | 2:00 PM Virtual Worship service will be available on the church website. |

Together, We're Making A Difference!

Our church is responding to the current health crisis in innovative ways, by continuing to gather on Sundays in live-streamed worship, and being in fellowship and shared ministry through videoconferencing. Now we're also exploring how to further live into our identity as Natick's *Digital* Front Porch. Far from putting our mission on hold, this is the time when Spirit-led people can tend the spirits of others in our community feeling anxious and isolated. There's never been a more important time to proclaim and embody the Good News of God's abiding love given to us by Jesus!

We need your generous support of our shared ministry during this time when the offering plate isn't being passed during in-person worship. The average congregation receives only 16% of its household contributions from mailed, online, or auto-bill paid giving. Most comes through the offering plate. We're pleased that 63% of our giving is now coming in alternative ways. But, while this is a terrific shift, it still means that we're only seeing about two-thirds of our regular giving from church members and friends. If you haven't done so already, here's how you can shift your in-person offering plate giving to other giving means:

- Mailing in donations to: 2 East Central Street, Natick, MA, 01760.
- Making one-time or recurring gifts online through our church website and its secure giving platform: <http://firstchurchnatick.org/give-online>.
- Setting up auto-bill pay with your bank (usually be done online), just the same way you would for paying utility bills.
- Considering making at least some portion of your contribution earlier in the year if you are an annual or semi-annual giver.

The world needs what FCC Natick can be and do, particularly in this time that is challenging all of us in unprecedented ways. Thanks for doing your part to make sure we can keep our unique and vibrant ministry going at just the moment it's needed most!

PRAYER LIST

Liam Schmitt	Family & Friends of Mike Keedy	Grace Osgood
Isabella	Family & Friends of Bill Mayer	Brad Sticklely
Rick	Family & Friends of Bruce Wharton	Chris Gobron
Stephen	Family & Friends of Bob McDonald	Richard Keller
David	Family & Friends of Jack Gobron	Heidi Burger
Irene	Family & Friends of Fernando Morales	Ed Kinley
Juan Mercado	Gonzalez	Bob Steen
Gerry Carlson	Family & Friends of Jeff Holgate	Joan Hayes
Carolyn Kennan	Family & Friends of Charlotte Figi	Natalie Friend
Jack Gobron	Family & Friends of Robert Nason	Connie Sullivan
Jenna Hayes	Family & Friends of Dr. Jeff Bolton	Chris Starks
Brad Jennings	Family & Friends of Betty Hollis	Barbara Dickson
Abby Robbins	Peter Sinesi & his family	Carolyn Sarbello
Jennifer	Michelle, Catherine & Noah	Cheryl Gowdy
Jane Hall	Ellen, Jim & daughter	Barbara Bidwell
Regan Lynch	Jen M. & family	Jayne Hayes
Brian	Bryan & his unit	Kim Palmer
Ronnie	Lily Dreher & her family	Grandma Pat
Kathy	Shirley & her family	Peter McKinney
Savannah	Evelyn & her family	Miriam's Mom
Allison	Judge Shelley Joseph	Tiffany Spigarolo
Susan	Jean, Kathy & Paul Joyce	Carolyn Aycock
Patrick	Chris Leigh Manuell	Alice Bridinger
Oliver	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey	Mary Cerreto
Alex	Sari, Andrew & Tyler	Faye Bishop
Emmett	Jose & family	Pam Dotter
Mitch	Yandow family	Paul Ladd
Polina	Marcy Bailey-Adams	John Sullivan
Amelia	Sibyl Waterman Haley	Gerry Granfors
Jean-Paul	John & Kay Hartman	Char Hannon
Randall D.	Gigi Sniffin	Mickey Nieman
Karen	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja	Don O'Meara
Bonnie & George	All those struggling with substances	Stuart
Hailey	All those waiting at the border	Elizabeth Godrick
John	Health Care Workers	Mark & Patty
Don Peterson	Minimum Wage Workers	Christopher Gobron
Nicholas	People feeling Isolated and Separated	Amanda Sinesi
Carole	People living at home in Difficult Situations	Mo Carriker
Kiara	People searching for a Place to Live	Eric Carriker
Amanda	The families and loved ones who have passed	Keith Jennings
Aphrodite Hoge	due to the pandemic	Juan Mercado

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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