

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MAY 24, 2020

“My profession is always to be on the alert to find God in Nature, to know his lurking-places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, of nature.”

“Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.”

~ Henry David Thoreau

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.

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

Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2

Chopin

Thomas Foster, Piano

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

Lane McDonough

As the breezes of spring breathe new days and its sun intensifies,
*The dance begins within us, and laughter bears promise,
and the warmth of a new day brings hope,*

We come to receive your renewal, O God.

*May this worship give us eyes to see the signs of the new life you offer.
Come Easter in us, Living Christ!*

HYMN NO. 54

For the Beauty of the Earth

Dix

(Versus 1-3, and 5)

*For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

*For each perfect gift of thine unto us so freely given,
Graces, human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

*Holy One, as the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing,
you have fashioned us for joy.*

Share with us the vision that shall find it everywhere:

*in the leafing out of trees; in the blooming of lilacs;
in the robin's flight; in a friend's face; in a child's smile;
in a parent's love; in the resurrection of Jesus.*

*Be with us in this hour and open us to your eastering Christ by every work of your
creation.*

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

VIDEO PRESENTATION

“Together, We’re Strong”
Written and performed by Tracy Howe Wispelwey

Created by United Church of Christ National Youth Event Leaders
as a message by youth and to youth
of their wisdom, purpose, and resilience in this extraordinary time

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

OFFERTORY *Sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3: III. Menuetto* Beethoven

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 *Psalm 104*

REFLECTION “*Nature and the Nature of God*” Rev. Dr. Jonathan New

GATHERING OUR COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

THE MORNING PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER (TOGETHER)

Our Father, 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.

*God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place,
Flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space;
We, your children, in your likeness, share inventive powers with you;
Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.*

*We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race;
Known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space;
Probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power,
Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.*

*As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew,
Children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor, well begun;
Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.*

BLESSING**POSTLUDE**

*Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 47
No.2: III. Assai allegro*

Clementi

More About Today's Video Presentation – “Together, We're Strong”

This video features the faces of youth and young adults, as well as some of the adult volunteers and staff from the United Church of Christ's Justice and Local Church Ministries Team, who were planning the UCC's National Youth Event (NYE) for 2020. This denomination-wide gathering of youth usually takes place every other year but this year's event was cancelled because of COVID-19.

“Together, We're Strong” is an original song, written for NYE, as an uplifting symbol of unity in these extraordinary times. In it, youth are reminded: “We have wisdom, purpose, and youth. We are here for a time such as this. We may not be able to gather in person this year, but we know without a doubt that God's love for us remains and we are stronger than we have ever been.” “Together We're Strong” is written and performed by Tracy Howe Wispelwey. Instrumental performance and production are by Aaron Strumpel.

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 24, 2020 - MAY 31, 2020

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| Sunday, May 24 | 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. |
| Tuesday, May 26 | 7:00 PM Coordinating Council Meeting via Zoom |
| Wednesday, May 27 | 7:00 PM Pub Theology via Zoom |
| Sunday, May 31 | 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 Bruce Wharton	Brad Sticklely
Rick	Family & Friends of Bob McDonald	Chris Gobron
Stephen	Family & Friends of Jack Gobron	Richard Keller
David	Family & Friends of Fernando Morales	Heidi Burger
Irene	Gonzalez	Ed Kinley
Juan Mercado	Family & Friends of Jeff Holgate	Bob Steen
Gerry Carlson	Family & Friends of Charlotte Figi	Joan Hayes
Carolyn Kennan	Family & Friends of Robert Nason	Natalie Friend
Jack Gobron	Family & Friends of Dr. Jeff Bolton	Connie Sullivan
Jenna Hayes	Family & Friends of Betty Hollis	Chris Starks
Brad Jennings	Family & Friends of Juan Mercado	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
Allison	Evelyn & her family	Miriam's Mom
Susan	Judge Shelley Joseph	Tiffany Spigarolo
Patrick	Jean, Kathy & Paul Joyce	Carolyn Aycock
Oliver	Chris Leigh Manuell	Alice Bridinger
Alex	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey	Mary Cerreto
Emmett	Sari, Andrew & Tyler	Faye Bishop
Mitch	Jose & family	Pam Dotter
Polina	Yandow family	Paul Ladd
Amelia	Marcy Bailey-Adams	John Sullivan
Jean-Paul	Sibyl Waterman Haley	Gerry Granfors
Randall D.	John & Kay Hartman	Char Hannon
Karen	Mary & Jim Howard	Mickey Nieman
Bonnie & George	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja	Don O'Meara
Hailey	All those struggling with substances	Stuart
John	All those waiting at the border	Elizabeth Godrick
Don Peterson	Health Care Workers	Mark & Patty
Nicholas	Minimum Wage Workers	Christopher Gobron
Carole	People feeling Isolated and Separated	Amanda Sinesi
Kiara	People living at home in Difficult Situations	Mo Carriker
Amanda	People searching for a Place to Live	Eric Carriker
Aphrodite Hoge	The families and loved ones who have passed	Keith Jennings
Canasta Solidaria	due to the pandemic	Juan Mercado

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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