

First Congregational Church of Natick

United Church of Christ

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter



*An Open and Affirming
Congregation*



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

MAY 2, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

“There is an endless road, a hopeless maze,
who seek for goods before they seek for God.”

~ Bernard of Clairvaux

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 A-flat major, BWV 862
Thomas Foster, piano

J.S. Bach

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(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

Bill Ladd

Something inside, so strong, beckons us:

Some presence in the still of night;

A sense of peace on a frantic day;

A fragment of a dream that bears promise;

Something inside, so strong, calms us:

A quiet confidence that we will make it through;

A growing faith that we are not alone;

A sense of wonder that opens new vistas.

Something inside, so strong, calls us to this worship.

Something inside, so strong, causes us to sing!

HYMN No. 600

Come and Find the Quiet Center
Beth Canterbury, soloist

Beach Spring

*Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.*

*Silence is the friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.*

*In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
In the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!*

OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

Bill Ladd

*God of infinite tenderness and strong compassion,
weave your will into the fabric of our lives.*

*Weave your joy into our songs, your peace into our prayers,
and your justice into our deeds.*

*Let this time of worship be a holy moment where the frayed edges of our lives
are woven into a tapestry that comforts and blesses,
inspires and renews.*

*God of infinite tenderness and strong compassion,
weave your love into our service of praise and send us forth to walk in your ways.
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.)

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR SUBSTANCE

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Etude in D major, Op. 299, No. 56

Carl Czerny

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

2 Kings 5:1-14

Bill Ladd

REFLECTION

"To Walk with 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.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION*

Words of Institution & Invitation to the Table
Prayer of Consecration (together)

*Healing One, 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,
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.*

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.

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, in this moment, at this table, we have touched, we have tasted, and we have heard the signs of your love for us. Grant that we may arise from this shared meal rekindled in our faith, filled with love for you, overflowing with your love for those who are around us and who share our lives, and committed to walking with you and our fellow pilgrims along the Way of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN No. 435

*Within the Maddening Maze
of Things*
Beth Canterbury, soloist

Song 67

*Within the maddening maze of things,
when tossed by storm and flood,
to one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!*

*No offering of my own I have,
nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts you gave,
and plead your love for love.*

*I know not where my islands lift
their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
beyond your love and care.*

*And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
no harm from you can come to me
on ocean or on shore.*

*I know not what the future holds
of marvel or surprise,
assured alone that life and death
your mercy underlies.*

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Etude in A major, Op. 299, No. 50

Carl Czerny

*Online Communion (adapted) was written by the Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi. ©2020 Maren Tirabassi, all publishing rights reserved. Permission for congregations to use in worship or educational settings, including streaming.

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.

Join Zoom Meeting

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 live-streaming the worship.

CALENDAR FOR MAY 2, 2021 - MAY 9, 2021

Sunday, May 2	10:30 AM	Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus
	11:30 AM	Post Worship Fellowship via Zoom
	11:30 AM	Godly Play LIVE! 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	Sr. Youth Group via Zoom
Tuesday, May 4	5:30 PM	Grades 5/6 via Zoom
Wednesday, May 5	12:00 PM	Mid-week Connection via Zoom
Thursday, May 6	1:00 PM	Lunch Bunch Returns on the Common
	4:00 PM	In-person worship working group via Zoom
Saturday, May 8	5-7 PM	Pick up time for take out Bob’s Dinners!
Sunday, May 9	10:30 AM	Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus
Mother’s Day	11:30 AM	Post Worship Fellowship via Zoom
	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.

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

Abby Robbins
Andi
Anna Hayes
Aphrodite Hoge
Becky Sherman
Canasta Solidaria
Chris Gobron
Connie Sullivan
Don Peterson
Eileen
Emma
Grandma Pat
Ian
Jamie Polk
Jane Hall
Jenna Hayes
Joe
John
John Swaney
Judy Hamdi
Liam Schmitt
Margarita Ralios
Mark & Patty
Mark Crouch
Miriam's Mom
Nicholas
Oliver
Randall D.
Ronnie

Friends & Family of Linda Babin
Friends & Family of Richard Keller
Friends & Family of Bobby Pelletier
Friends & Family of Tom Zinck
Friends & Family of Stephan Gordon
Friends & Family of Irene Moran
Friends & Family of James S. Urda
The Rodriguez Cruz family
Tim & his family
Sara Hull & her family
Michelle, Catherine & Noah
Jen M. & family
Peter Sinesi & his family
Evelyn & her family
Jose Yadira and family
Katie and her family
Jean & Paul Joyce
Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey
Marcy Bailey Adams
John & Kay Hartman
Char & Tommy Hannon
Kenny and Ann Hoffman
Brian & Silvia Blackman
Jennifer & Michael McCormick
The people of Santa Maria Tzeja
Health care and frontline service workers
Educators and students of all ages
Those seeking asylum and safe places to live
Alzheimer's patients, families, and caregivers
All who struggle with physical and
emotional challenges
Those experiencing grief, isolation, and
other losses

Alice Bridinger
Amanda Sinesi
Audra Teague Mackey
Barbara Dickson
Beverly Newell
Carolyn Aycock
Carolyn Sarbello
Chris Starks
Donna Shermerhorn
Ed Kinley
Faye Bishop
Federico Perea
Grace Osgood
George Hijar
Gerry Granfors
Heidi Burger
Jayne Hayes
Joan Hayes
Josh Stackhouse
Keith Jennings
Lynne Parker
Mary Cerreto
Natalie Friend
Pam Dotter
Palma Casadio
Paul Ladd
Peter Cho
Roger Hanson
Tiffany Spigarolo
Tim Ferrell

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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