

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

“The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn’t have been complete without you.”

~ Frederick Buechner

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

Narcissus, Op. 13, No. 4
Thomas Foster, piano

Ethelbert Nevin

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

Amazing grace — lifting us from despair,

Comforting us in the dark,

Surprising us on sad journeys.

Amazing grace — surrounding us with light,

Holding us when fear hovers close,

Bringing us hope when paths seem lost.

Amazing grace — filling us with joy.

Amazing grace — how sweet the sound!

*Creating God, your fingers trace the bold designs of farthest space;
Let sun and moon and stars and light and what lies hidden praise your might.*

*Sustaining God, your hands uphold earth's mysteries known or yet untold;
Let water's fragile blend with air, enabling life, proclaim your care.*

*Redeeming God, your arms embrace all now despised for creed or race;
Let peace, descending like a dove, make known on earth your healing love.*

*Indwelling God, your gospel claims one family with a billion names;
Let every life be touched by grace until we praise you face to face.*

OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

*God of grace, we bow before your awesome love extended to all creation and every
one of us.*

*Help us now to encounter the magnitude of your love
and the magnificence of your grace more fully than ever.*

*Give us glad hearts to praise you, though your ways remain a mystery,
and your goodness inexplicable in the face of the world's measuring of effort
and merit.*

*It is by faith that we trust you will receive us and our worship in Jesus' name.
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 OURSELVES AND OUR SUBSTANCE

OFFERTORY *Andante grazioso ed espressivo, Op. 139, No. 93* 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

Matthew 20:1-16

REFLECTION

"Amazing (and Exasperating!) Grace"

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.

HYMN NO. 401

*Amazing Grace
Beth Canterbury, Soprano*

New Britain

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved and set me free!
I once was lost; but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

*My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.*

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

12 Variations on "Ah! vous dirai-je, maman

Mozart

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 recording the service at 11:30!

CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 - SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

Sunday, September 13	10:30 AM	Virtual Worship will be live streamed on Pegasus.
	11:30 AM	Post Worship Conversation!
	2:00 PM	Virtual Worship service will be available on the church website.
Saturday, September 19	11:00 AM	FCN Book Club
Sunday, September 20	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.

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 Ralph Peters	Grace Osgood
Isabella	Family & Friends of Bob DiNapoli	Brad Stickley
Rick	Family & Friends of Bob Dutton	Heidi Burger
Stephen	Family & Friends of Chris Peterson	Ed Kinley
David	Family & friends of John Siggins	Joan Hayes
Irene	Family & Friends of Ethel Lois Smith	Natalie Friend
Jenna Hayes	The Rodriguez Cruz family	Connie Sullivan
Abby Robbins	Peter Sinesi & his family	Chris Starks
Jane Hall	Sara Hull & her family	Barbara Dickson
Ronnie	Michelle, Catherine & Noah	Carolyn Sarbello
Kathy	Jen M. & family	Cheryl Gowdy
Susan	Lily Dreher & her family	Barbara Bidwell
Patrick	Shirley & her family	Jayne Hayes
Oliver	Evelyn & her family	Grandma Pat
Emmett	Jose Yadira and family	Peter McKinney
Mitch	Katie and her family	Miriam's Mom
Polina	Jean & Paul Joyce	Tiffany Spigarolo
Jean-Paul	Audra, Nate & Rowan Mackey	Carolyn Aycock
Randall D.	Sari, Andrew & Tyler	Alice Bridinger
Karen	Marcy Bailey-Adams	Mary Cerreto
Bonnie &	Sibyl Waterman Haley	Faye Bishop
George	John & Kay Hartman	Pam Dotter
Hailey	The people of Santa Maria Tzeja	Paul Ladd
John	All those struggling with substances	Gerry Granfors
Don Peterson	All those waiting at the border	Char Hannon
Nicholas	Health Care Workers	Mickey Nieman
Carole	Minimum Wage Workers	Don O'Meara
Kiara	People feeling Isolated and Separated	Mark & Patty
Aphrodite Hoge	People living at home in Difficult Situations	Amanda Sinesi
Canasta	People searching for a Place to Live	Keith Jennings
Solidaria	The families and loved ones who have passed due to the pandemic	Donna Shermerhorn
Anna Hayes		Tim Porter
Stephan Gordon		Federico Perea
Chris Gobron		Peter Cho
John Swaney		Bobby Pelletier
Bob McDonough		Lynne Parker
Deb Evers		

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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