

NORTH STAR

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
January 2022

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UCC

January 2022

**Gathered Since 1730**

**Serving, Welcoming, Growing in  
Christ**

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**Interim Musician**  
Annelise Papinsick

**Church Secretary**  
Kathleen Akerman

**Historian**  
Everett Sims

**Financial Secretary**  
Carolyn Andrews

**Council Chair**  
Susan Lauze

**Council Vice Chair**  
Sheila Swenson

**Council Recorder**  
Sara Nichols

**Technology Integrator**  
Jock Irvine

**North Star Editor**  
Linda Sims

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**From The Pastor**

Beloved in Christ,

*How enduring is God's loyal love; the Eternal has inexhaustible compassion.*

*Here they are, every morning, new! Your faithfulness, God, is as broad as the day.* - Lamentations 3:22-23

Here we are, stepping into 2022 with just as much uncertainty about the future as when we stepped into 2021 (even before the vaccine for Covid was made available). As much as it might feel like it, we are not stepping into this new year alone. We are always accompanied by our God of Love, Compassion, and Faithfulness as shared by the authors of the book of Lamentations.

Having just come through another Advent season, in which we were once again reminded of the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that Christ brought and brings into the world, we are invited - encouraged - to unwrap those gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love every day; "Here they are, every morning, new!"

Hope - "You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have. History has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

- Michelle Obama

Peace - "If you are depressed you are living in the past, if you are anxious, you are

living in the future, if you are at peace, you are living in the present." - Lao Tzu

Joy - "Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day." - Henri Nouwen

Love - "Love is such a powerful force. It's there for everyone to embrace-- that kind of unconditional love for all of humankind. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others, to take risks for what they believe in." - Coretta Scott King

In Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and with the Creator we can be changemakers in the world - spreading hope, peace, joy, and love. But we have to intentionally choose to move forward, resisting the powerful urge to run back to the past in fear. Being present to God's invitation for us, today, causes ripples of change, just like dropping a pebble in a pond.

*"Together we defy the darkness by being the Light. We make violence tremble by being peacemakers. When chaos and trauma cause distress, we counter by reaching for love and remembering joy. This year, when people are going hungry, give us bread to share. This year, when people are angry and hurtful, give us forgiveness to offer. When there is so much temptation to be selfish and careless, this year give us the strength to be kind and intentional. Remind us that we are all born holy and deserve love and tenderness. In the many names of Love, may it be so."*

(Written by Rev. Mak Kneebone, 2020)

Blessings,  
Pastor Emilia

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**Spiritual Life Ministry Team**

The Work of Christmas:

"When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone, When the  
kings and princes are home, When the  
shepherds are back with their flock, The  
work of Christmas begins: To find the lost,  
To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To  
release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others, To make  
music in the heart."

(Howard Thurman, 2009)

The Spiritual Life Team would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Pastor Emilia for her moving messages of hope, peace, joy and love during the Sundays of Advent and the beautiful Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. During this season all Advent/Christmas hymns and carols in the New Century hymnal were played or sung. Our choir sang during two Sundays of Advent which was appreciated. Members of our congregation that are attending worship services are able to gently sing with our face masks in place and socially distancing as the ongoing pandemic continues.

The Spiritual Life Ministry team would also like to thank Jonathan Huntington for the lovely poinsettia plants for outreach-visitiation to our members who are not able to attend worship, and for beautifying the sanctuary during the Christmas season.

In the Christian church, Christmas is celebrated as a season and not just one

day. The climax of the Advent and Christmas season is the Season of Epiphany (January 6- Feb 27, 2022). The focus of epiphany is that Jesus is the Light of the World, and His Light reminds us that God's love is for all people. The season of Epiphany begins with the Baptism of Jesus and ends with the Transfiguration on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

You may have noticed that our bulletins look a bit different since October, in regards to the copyright notations next to each piece of music that is played and/or sung. In October we signed up for 2 different music licenses, one of sacred music and one of secular music. Both licenses require different citations to be added to any printed material next to the music that the license covers. For this reason, in the bulletin, you will see one of the 4 following different citation formats:

- "Song" (Used with permission)
- "Song"  
Title, Composer/Author Name  
  
© 2003, ABC Music Co., All rights reserved.  
  
Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-739671. All rights reserved.
- "Song" (Public Domain)
- "Song" (African-American Spiritual)

If you have any further questions about our music licenses, don't hesitate to contact Jock Irvine or Pastor Emilia.

*Sheila Swenson, Spiritual Life Ministry*

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**Technology Corner**

In December we tried something new on our YouTube channel. Instead of releasing the Jazz Sanctuary Christmas songs all at once, I pre-scheduled them to be released one each day from December 13 through the 25th. We received several comments from people who said they liked watching a new video each morning, and we gained seven new subscribers during the thirteen days, so it seems to have been a success! Our videos were watched for a total of 34 hours during this time.

An important aspect of any organization's online presence is "branding." This isn't the kind of branding done on a cattle ranch, however. Online branding is the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products. For First Congregational Church our online brand is "Concord's First Church" and our logo is the blue circle with a white cross that you can see here. Because we reached the threshold of 100 subscribers on YouTube we're now able to create our own custom address:  
[YouTube.com/ConcordsFirstChurch](https://www.youtube.com/ConcordsFirstChurch).

*Jock Irvine, Technology*



**UPDATED First Church Covid Protocol**  
**(November 10, 2021)**

Based on the total Concord population of approximately 44,000 residents, here is the First Church protocol for worship moving forward:

- *If there are 1-440 active cases in Concord - there will be an option for in-person worship with everyone wearing masks, as we are now closing the windows for the cooler season.*
- If there are 441 or more active cases in Concord - worship will ONLY be online (at that point more than 1% of the population of Concord has Covid).

Here are the guidelines we will be following for in-person worship:

- "Gentle" congregational singing (with masks & social distance)
- Contact tracing every week
- Every other pew is taped off to maintain 6ft distances
- Offering plates will remain stationary on pedestals
- Communion will be offered "to-go" after the benediction



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**Ministry of Outreach**

**School Kits and Clean Up Buckets:**

We have 5 more scissors donated! Thank you! Keep the items coming and take time to sew a bag when you are bored this winter. Remember the people recently devastated by tornadoes, CWS is meeting immediate needs by providing blankets, cleanup buckets, hygiene kits and school kits. Their supplies will be depleted; so, let's help replenish the supply.

**Veterans of the Cross:**

It is too soon to have the total amount donated to the Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross) but thank you to everyone who donated to our retired ministers.

**Christmas Eve Offering:**

Thank you to all who donated Christmas Eve to Family Promise.

**Salvation Army Angel Tree:**

Without a tree with attached angels, there is no way to tell how many gifts were purchased. Please consider making a donation to the Salvation Army if you didn't have time to shop online at Walmart for the Salvation Army Angel tree program.

**Heifer International:**

A perfect solution to gift giving. Thank you to those who chose this alternative for gifts.

*Sara Nichols, Outreach*

**Church Council**

The Church Council would like to thank all the members of our congregation who attended the Revisioning Gathering via Zoom on Sunday, Dec 12th to share their thoughts and feelings on the topics on Participation, Worship, Music, Outreach, Fellowship, and Sustainability. We appreciate the efforts of Tim Wildman and Pastor Emilia in informing the whole congregation of the discussion. The council will also reflect on this information as we continue to search for our new church home in these challenging times.

*Sheila Swenson, Council*



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## Happy Birthday

*Douglas King – 1/8*

*Judith Fillion – 1/26*

*Susanne Driscoll – 1/28*

*Roger Tasker – 1/30*

*Cedric Dustin III – 1/31*



### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

If you would like your name included in the weekly bulletin prayer list, please contact our church administrator, Kathy. ([secretary@concordfirstchurch.org](mailto:secretary@concordfirstchurch.org))

*The Prayer Circle asks you to keep in prayer for the following members and friends:*

Elizabeth Hardy – Hope  
Roger Lyon – Hope and Health  
Deborah Goodwin - Healing  
Eleanor Stokes - Hope  
Faith Clark - Healing  
Kellie Heath - Healing  
Nancy Sanborn – Healing  
Dot Cassady - Hope  
Carol Hovey – Healing  
Eleanor Kimball - Healing  
Family of Rev. Johanna Young - Peace  
Pam Spain – Healing  
Doug King – Healing  
The family of Margaret Sellar - Peace  
The family of Rev. Marilyn Bushnell - Peace  
The family of Roberta Young - Peace