

NORTH STAR
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
March 2024

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UCC
March 2024

Gathered Since 1730

**Serving, Welcoming, Growing in
Christ**

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Council Recorder
Sara Nichols

Technology Integrator
Jock Irvine

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From The Pastor

Greetings Beloved in Christ,

"For Lent, 1966" by Madeleine L'Engle
It is my Lent to break my Lent,
 To eat when I would fast,
To know when slender strength is spent,
 Take shelter from the blast
When I would run with wind and rain,
 To sleep when I would watch.
It is my Lent to smile at pain
 But not ignore its touch.

It is my Lent to listen well
 When I would be alone,
To talk when I would rather dwell
 In silence, turn from none
Who call on me, to try to see
 That what is truly meant
Is not my choice. If Christ I'd be
 It's thus I'll keep my Lent.

This year, March bears the brunt of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter! Most years, March shares the load with its siblings February and April. However, this year, while February had more to carry (especially with an additional day thrown into the mix) by March 31st the season of Lent will be complete with our Easter morning service.

I share all this, because if you're anything like me, you weren't ready for the start of Lent this year. It came fast and early, leaving little space for rest following the celebrations of Christmas, New Year's, and

Epiphany. If you're anything like me, you're feeling "religiously" out of breath and saying, 'Wait... March 3rd is the third Sunday in Lent already? Can we hit pause for a moment?

It doesn't help that feeling of being rushed when, on March 10th, we "spring forward" once again, even though most folks are calling out, 'Enough! It's time to be done with "daylight savings" in this post-modern era!' The temperatures are already warming, and as I write this there is already a fly buzzing inside the office AND one in my home!

Perhaps, however, you aren't feeling this way. Perhaps you are delighted that Lent ends on March 31st this year and you've got the whole month of April, plus some of May, to rest into Easter-tide before Pentecost on May 19th. Perhaps you are thrilled with the warming of the season already and the fact that the crocus and daffodils are likely to bloom by the end of March this year. Perhaps, like Madeleine L'Engle, this year you feel that, "It is my Lent to break my Lent."

However, Lent is living in you this year, know that you are not alone. It is highly likely that someone else is living into Lent in a similar way, regardless of what, where, when, and how that "way" is feeling this year.

Lenten Blessings, Pastor Emilia

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From the Council

Council further refined the requirements for the new FCC logo. This information will be given to our website designer, Emma. Pastor Emilia and Jock are still working on the wording for the various parts of the website.

In preparation for a day in late spring when the pods at Starving Artists containing our stored goods are opened, Carol Hovey looked for other storage sites in the Concord area. We need a site with one climate-controlled pod, especially for the archived material. Possibly the Concord Historical Society would like to take possession of some of the archived materials. The other Pod would have less stringent storage requirements.

While in the process of taking inventory and transferring our material to new, less expensive pods, we plan to discard some things and donate others. We hope to hear from members who wish to take some things that are no longer needed. The Clavinova now in storage will be put to use somewhere in 79 Clinton Street, after it and the two instruments currently in the building are evaluated.

Council hopes for a large turn-out at the March 9 (Saturday) **"Dreaming Forward: Building a Budget for Who We Are Today"** meeting, where we will redesign our budget to reflect where we are today and where we are heading. The meeting

will start at 10:00 and end at 12:00 followed by a potluck lunch.

Phil Kimball, Council

Technology Corner

Holy Week Text Experience

Are you looking for a deeper way to experience Holy Week? Through a project of the Virginia Theological Seminary and Try Tank Research Institute you can sign up to receive text messages from Palm Sunday (March 24) to Easter Sunday (March 31). You'll receive these text messages in real-time so you can walk with Jesus during his final days. "Real-time" means that some text messages will arrive early in the morning or late at night as you walk with Jesus and experience the events leading to His death and resurrection. The hope is that you will live the Easter story as if it were happening in the moment.

To sign up, simply go to <http://trytank.org/holyweek.html> and enter your mobile phone number. You will need to agree to receive automated text messages and your cell phone plan's message and data rates will apply. You can reply STOP at any time to cancel. I've already signed up for this and I hope some of you will try it, too!

Jock Irvine, Technology

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Ministry of Spiritual Life

Epiphany Sunday marked the introduction of Pastor Emilia's new lectionary which she is developing based on John Donahue's book: "Beauty: The Invisible Embrace - rediscovering the true sources of Compassion, Serenity and Hope". With news of wars, disasters, violence that weigh us down, it will be a blessing to hear messages of beauty and how beauty can lift our spirits by offering positive, hopeful perspectives.

We will continue our journey through Epiphany Season —the Season of Light— until Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14. For Ash Wednesday, Pastor Emilia will offer a noon service. An alternative is a 7:00pm service with Wesley United Methodists in their sanctuary. This meaningful service will begin the period of Lent.

The Racial Justice Covenantal Restoration Video Series, began with the new year and will continue through Lent, as a combined Lenten/Racial Justice series. Impressive speakers offer insightful perspectives on Racism. Our discussions have been thoughtful. Pastor Emilia is offering these videos at noon on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday following Sunday's service in case you missed the video or would like to watch it again. We encourage everyone to view the videos and participate in the discussions.

We are including African American Spirituals in our worship services, introduced by members of the Racial Justice Steering Team. The intention is that they will increase our

awareness of the contributions Blacks have made to American worship music, and increase our insight into Black theology. Our bulletin covers, videos and spirituals are important elements of the process of increasing our understanding of the need to move toward Racial Justice as a society.

Page Turners are reading "The Ministry for the Future." It is a science fiction/non-fiction novel about global warming. It stimulates one's thinking about possible disasters but also about possibilities for alleviating or preventing them. Everyone is welcome to sit in on the discussion the 4th Monday at 2:00, even if you haven't read the book.

Jazz Sanctuary continues to draw a following. Tim Wildman announced themes for the coming months, including Mardi Gras in February, Celtic Music for St. Patrick's Day in March, and a Good Friday Service: The Vigil of Mary Magdalene — Songs of Sorrow and Loss. Watch for further details, these programs can lift our spirits and deepen our spirituality.

We wish you well on your Lenten journey. May the services and special events lift your spirits as we move toward the joy of Easter.

Eleanor Kimball for the SLMT
Susanne Driscoll
Brenda Placenti
Sheila Swenson



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Ministry of Outreach

School Kits and Clean Up Buckets:

Please continue to sew bags for the school kits. A recent distribution in the Republic of Georgia handed out school kits. One first grade girl loved her school bag so much, she wanted to be sure she didn't have to share it with her brother! Let's assemble enough bags so they don't have to be shared!

Thank you for the contributions of pump spray air freshener, sponges and scouring pads. Please watch to see what the next item to add to your shopping list will be.

Super Bowl Sunday:

Did you enjoy the super bowl? It was an exciting game even though the Patriots weren't playing. Even more exciting, was the fact that we raised \$105 for the Friendly Kitchen. Thank you to everybody who contributed!

One Great Hour of Sharing:

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of the "five for five" offerings of the UCC. The money collected goes to supporting disaster relief efforts, refugees, and development ministries of the UCC. The theme this year is "Share the Light". "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...Let it shine, let it shine..."

A simple song with a simple message, our light is to shine and share. On any given day, light is shining because we are there through our gifts to OGHS.

Lent:

Hopefully you picked up a purse or a box to use to put money in every time you are so moved by something of beauty in this world. Bring in your purse on Easter and the money collected will go to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Zimbabwe:

Nolian Mapfumo has sent even more pictures. Please take time to have Sara Nichols show them to you.

An article in the WSJ says that Polio cases spark inoculation efforts. Zimbabwe began an emergency campaign to inoculate more than four million children against polio. Read the article posted on the bulletin board in front of the chapel.

Sara Nichols, Outreach



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Jazz Sanctuary

“The Jewell within the Fleeting Moment”

March couldn't be more “action-packed” (maybe not a term you associate with Lent!) for our Jazz Sanctuary Ministry. We've been thinking about the ways First Church is “in the world” in ministry, and although most Jazz Sanctuary music and liturgy is physically located in our church building, with Jock Irvine's help as Tech. Integrator, this ministry is increasingly in the online world AND this month in the local and state-wide communities.

We will start as always with our First Sunday Jazz Jam on March 3 at 2:30 in Hannah Hall. Some really great music has been happening at this event, always with horn players, guitarists, pianists, and even occasional vocalists jumping into the improvisational waters. If you play, sing, or LOVE TO LISTEN, please join us - It's really fun!

The Monthly Jazz Sanctuary gathering will happen on the third Sunday, March 17 (ACTUAL St. Patrick's Day) at 2:30 also in Hannah Hall. “The Jewell within the Fleeting Moment,” a theme that beautifully captures the lingering grief and joyous celebration that the Irish American experience of immigration as captured in

song and story has interwoven into the American experience. The spirituality that IS “being in the moment” will guide our Conversational Time, and Jock Irvine's arrangements of Irish music for Pastor Emilia and The Jazz Sanctuary House Band will be featured musically. Search your closet for the “wearin' o' the green” and join us for this St. Patrick's Day celebration!

Good Friday - “The Jazz of Vigil”

Occurs on March 29th this year, and, as we have done for the past few years. Jazz Sanctuary will have an additional gathering, “The Jazz of Vigil,” in which Emilia and the band will perform jazz standards of love and loss to commemorate Mary Magdalene's vigil at Jesus' tomb from Good Friday until Easter morning. This is a truly beautiful, soulful, rich setting of the Good Friday story in the context of that deeply loving human relationship between Jesus and Mary

Magdalen that is imagined as contributing to Jesus work in those three days healing and saving creation. This year we will gather for this service at 6:30 IN THE CHAPEL (Not in Hannah Hall).

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**"Celebrating African-American
Spirituals
Music of Faith and Hope Forged in the
Rupture of Crucifixion and Death."**

Finally, on Saturday, March 30 (Holy Saturday), at 1:00 in the Wesley Sanctuary, Jazz Sanctuary and The Racial Justice Steering Committee will present, "Celebrating African-American Spirituals - Music of Faith and Hope Forged in the Rupture of Crucifixion and Death." This musical celebration will be the culmination of our First Church three-month journey that has included two African-American pieces of music in every worship service, weekly depictions on our bulletin covers of art by African-American artists curated by art historian, Inez McDermott, and the video series, "Covenantal Restoration" each week after worship. The celebration will include original jazz arrangements of 10 pieces of African American Music by jazz arranger and trumpeter, The Rev. Dr. Bob Maccini, played by the 7-piece Prodigals Jazz Ensemble with vocalists, Rev. Renee Rouse and Emilia Halstead. The works of art from the bulletins as well as additional African-American art chosen by Inez will be viewed on the screens in the sanctuary during the concert, and she will also give a brief presentation about the art.

A member of the Steering Committee will speak as well. This will be a WONDERFUL musical celebration that we will publicize in Concord and also around the state through the NH Conference of the UCC. Please come and bring some family and friends!

Like I said, ACTION-PACKED!! Thanks as always for your support of the Jazz Sanctuary Ministry and the people who bring it to you:

Joey Placenti
Brenda Placenti
Ed Raczka
Jean Donahue

Rev. Tim Wildman, Jazz Sanctuary



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Birthdays

Philip Kimball – 3/5
Michael Lauze – 3/10
Terry Blake – 3/26
Shirley Colby – 3/29



PRAYER CONCERNS

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

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

Elizabeth Hardy – Hope
Nancy Sanborn – Healing
Dot Cassady – Hope
Marjorie Colby – Healing
Carol Emery – Healing
Carol Hovey – Healing
Matt Wildman – Healing
Family of Jon Huntington – Peace
Phil Kimball – Healing
Sammy Holland – Healing
Family of Linda Strand – Peace