



**First Congregational Church**  
**Our Church in Worship**

March 16, 2025 10:00 AM

Second Sunday in Lent & Scout Sunday

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PRELUDE *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word* - Dieterich Buxtehude Adam Peithmann

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Christopher Stevens

\*OPENING HYMN NO. 542 *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) Rev. Barbara Papagian

Leader: Come home; home to the embrace of God.

**People: We are walking the Lenten path from past errors to future possibilities.**

Leader: We are walking from difficult memories to a new day.

**People: We are walking from troubling fears to a new hope.**

Leader: Come home, taste the goodness of God, hear the love of God, feel God's tender grace.

**People: We are walking toward wholeness.**

Leader: We are on the path of joy, and our hearts are filled with thanks and praise.

**All: Come home this day; dwell with Christ in this holy place and in God's amazing grace.**

OPENING PRAYER (Unison) Rev. Christopher Stevens

**O Divine Whisper, we listen best with our hearts. We hear the wisdom of the trees and the truth that whistles through the canyons. We hear the tears of a hurting friend and feel the joy of a kind word. We walk in Lent quietly so as to hear your holy whispers. We journey with hearts open wide to receive your tender grace. We sojourn in Lent with hands outstretched to grasp your pull toward a future of justice and peace. With all our senses and with an open heart, we travel in the springtime of your love and follow the path to Easter joy. Amen.**

MUSICAL OFFERING *Simple Praise* – Craig Courtney Chancel Choir

For a canvas of colors, for a concert of sound; for the unfolding seasons, the earth spinning round. For the birth of each sunrise, for the sky set ablaze; for these simple gifts, we give simple praise. Simple praise for the Giver, and thanks to the One who has given us breath and given His Son. To the Giver of blessings for all of our days, for

these simple gifts, we give simple praise.

For the love of a mother, for the touch of a hand; for the deeper emotions we can't understand. For the lessons we learn from the trials we face; for these simple gifts, we give simple praise. The heart of the Giver, the hand of the One from whom ev'ry blessing of living has come; for measureless mercy and limitless grace, for these simple gifts we give simple praise.

PASTORAL PRAYER Rev. Barbara Papagian

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS Response... "Hear Our Prayer"

SILENT MEDITATION

OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

**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. 612 *O Jesus, I Have Promised*

OUR MORNING OFFERING Rev. Barbara Papagian

OFFERTORY MUSIC

\*DOXOLOGY (Hymn No. 46)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

**Merciful God, as we offer these gifts, we remember the longing of Jesus to gather us under his wings like a hen gathers her chicks. May these offerings be a sign of our desire to follow Christ's example of compassion, seeking the lost and caring for the vulnerable. We give to spread your love and peace to all who are in need, drawing us closer to your embrace. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS Luke 13:31-35; Romans 8:35, 37-39 Barbara Brawley

SERMON "Being in the Moment with Your Future Self" Rev. Christopher Stevens

\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 619 *My Life Flows On*

**BENEDICTION**

Friends, nourished by your presence here, go boldly in the way of Jesus. Receive the blessings of God, and be sustained by the Holy Spirit, today and always.

**POSTLUDE**

*Praeludium in g minor* - D. Buxtehude

\*You are invited to stand if you wish.

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Luke 13:31-35 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>31</sup> At that time some Pharisees said to him, "Get away from here if you want to live! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!" <sup>32</sup> Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. <sup>33</sup> Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem! <sup>34</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me. <sup>35</sup> And now, look, your house is abandoned. And you will never see me again until you say, 'Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

**Romans 8:35, 37-39 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>35</sup> Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?... <sup>37</sup> No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. <sup>38</sup> And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. <sup>39</sup> No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

# First Congregational Church



**March 16, 2025**

**Manchester, New Hampshire  
United Church of Christ**

508 Union Street · Manchester, NH · 603-625-5093

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

*You are welcome here! An Open & Affirming Congregation*