



*Unraveling
the Good News
Lent 2026*

Lent Week 4: Finding Threads of Truth March 15, 2026

We are a progressive community of faith seeking to follow the teachings of Jesus, pursue justice and live God's love.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



A Note for Families / Folks of All Ages: Today we begin worship together. After the Time for All God's Children, young people grades K-8 are invited to follow teachers upstairs to our one-room classroom.

There is yarn for God's Eyes, knitting, and clipboards with paper and coloring pages at the back of the sanctuary, for worshippers of any age to use during the service.

PRELUDE

Be Still My Soul

Finlandia. Jean Sibelius,

Handbell Quartet

arr. Joel Raney

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

THRESHOLD MOMENT

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: What is true? The song of a warbler at dawn, the salty taste of tears and the smell of wet soil.

All: What else is true? Beating hearts, flushed cheeks, aching bellies and deep sighs.

One: Yes! These things are true: human worth, the power of love, the persistence of life, God's grace, Christ's devotion.

All: Jesus said, "Know the truth and the truth will set you free."

One: Let us lift our hearts to the Source of Truth.

***OPENING HYMN**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

#404, vs. 1-3

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

One: Source of Wisdom, Source of Love: Pilate asked Jesus, "what is truth?"

All: We wonder, too. We live in a world where the truth is constantly contested, lies often masquerade as truth, and feelings are confused with facts. When we distort the facts in our favor or fool ourselves into believing that our perspective is the only perspective, forgive us, we pray. When we are too quick to pass along stories that reinforce our views, teach us to prayerfully pause, ask questions, and consider our sources. Help us to be both wise as serpents and gentle as doves. Amen.

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

*Please rise, on your feet or in your hearts.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

All: You are beloved by God:

when you fail and when you succeed,
when you are right and when you are wrong,
when it is easy and when it is hard.

You are loved, forgiven, and set free
to love, forgive and start again.

PASSING OF THE PEACE One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

*SUNG RESPONSE

There Is More Love

Black Spiritual ☰

There is more love somewhere. There is more love somewhere.

And I'm gonna keep on, 'til I find it.

There is more love somewhere.

There is more peace somewhere...

TIME FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Deborah Tomblyn

One: Holy One, the story of Jesus' life is complicated: a tangle of love and betrayal, hope and violence, pain and mystery.

All: Help us to unravel the Good News in this sacred text, to pull at the threads of love and justice, until we can knit together a liberating garment of healing and hope.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 18:28-40

SERMON

Finding Threads of Truth

Rev. Alison J. Buttrick Patton

MOMENT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE

ANTHEM

Andante Cantabile Op. 11

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Andrew Sawyer, Cello

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father-Mother in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kin-dom come; your 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 Yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE *Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying* Ken Medema

Lord, listen to your children praying. Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying. Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

OFFERING INVITATION

Help us to live God’s love and justice. You can make a secure gift by using the QR code, going to fccucc.org/donate, or by adding your contribution to the box at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you!



MUSICAL INTERLUDE

BLESSING THE OFFERING

***CLOSING HYMN** *Spirit of Love* S-22

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Soon He Will Appear* Robert Schumann,
arr. Lani Smith

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WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you to this morning’s ushers: Team B, Peggy Murray, captain.

Livestream: Thank you to Alex Ratta for managing our worship livestream!

Cover Design is by our Community Engagement Coordinator, Kat Roderick.

Flowers are donated by Betsy and Chris Keiter in memory of Betsy’s brother, Perry J. Fowler.

☰ **Royalty for Spirituals:** Historically, the composers of African American Spirituals were neither known nor compensated for use of their songs. The FCC UCC music department has committed to paying forward a ‘royalty’ each time we include a Spiritual in worship. Funds are donated to the Indigo Arts Alliance: <https://indigoartsalliance.me/>. You are invited to contribute, as well. Mark your contribution as “Royalty for Spirituals.” *Thank you.*

WEEKLY @ FCC UCC

Bible Study every Tuesday, 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Davidson Lounge: Explore the scripture from the past Sunday, led by Pastor Steve.

Meetinghouse Choir rehearses on Wednesdays, 6:15 – 8 pm. All singers are welcome. We meet in the Choir Room on the lower level of the church. Questions? Contact choir director Deirdre McClure at dmclure@fccucc.org.

Handbell Choir rehearses every Wednesday, 4:45 pm in Wright Pavilion. To ring or learn more about the choir, please contact bell choir director Sharon Potter: handbells@fccucc.org.

COMING UP @ FCC UCC

Parents of Adult Children group, Sunday, March 15, 6:00 - 7:30 pm All parents of adult children (over 18 years old) are welcome to join us. For more info contact FCC UCC member Jill Saxby at revjillsaxby@gmail.com.

Game Night, Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 pm in Wright Pavilion. The rumor is that cookies are now served and you can still play whatever game you prefer. We would love to have you play games with us.

Fellowship Club, Tuesday, April 7 at 6:15 pm: We will be joined by Scott “Smoking Bear” Edwards. Mr. Edwards’ performances at Pow Wows and other events features a variety of flutes. Dinner Reservations are required and can be made by emailing Carolyn Clark at carolyn.clark353@gmail.com no later than noon on Sunday, April 5.

SAVE THE DATE for our Mission Trip Fundraising Dinner and Auction: Saturday evening, May 30.

MISSION AND SOCIAL WITNESS

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS are available on our **website** (www.fccucc.org) under the GROW heading, or by calling the church office at 799-3361. Completed applications need to be returned to the church office by March 22. Direct questions to steve@fccucc.org. Scholarship Sunday is scheduled for May 17.

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Weekly Multi-Faith Vigil on Hiatus. Following the Vigil on March 11, the Multifaith Prayer Vigil Organizing Committee has decided to pause weekly vigils for a period of discernment around what is called for to meet the moment we face in this country and in the world. To receive updates from the planning team, please sign up for this email list: <https://tinyurl.com/ud2tcj97>. Updates by mid-April.

BTS Center Lenten Book Study: *Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You: A Field Guide to the Bible* by Daniel Cooperrider - 5 Tuesdays online, February 24 - March 31, 4-5:30 pm. offered by the BTS Center. Details at: <https://thebtscenter.org/bookstudy-lent2026/>

Showing Up For Our Trans Siblings - A Community Forum, Saturday, March 21, 12:30 pm - 3 pm, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 425 Congress Street, Portland. In partnership with Democracy of Maine, Equality Community Center, Equality Maine. MaineTransNet, Maine Women's lobby, Multifaith Justice Maine and PFLAG. Details at: <https://firstparishportland.org/events/trans-rights-forum-march-21-2026/>

Women in Harmony Benefit Concert, Saturday, March 21, 3:00 p.m., St. Albans Episcopal Church, 885 Shore Rd., Cape Elizabeth. To support community partner organization, Maine Needs, <https://www.maineneeds.org> Details at <https://wihmaine.org> or ask Jill Saxby (WIH member) revjillsaxby@gmail.com

Climate Talk - Flood or Drought: Two Sides of the Same Coin, Wednesday, March 18, 6 pm at the South Portland Public Library, with James, Toxtli, Mellow.- Co-sponsored with the City of South Portland. Take a look at what is causing floods and drought, and explore solutions both broad and in your backyard and home to restore the water cycle and living soil. Learn more at <https://southportlandlibrary.com/>

FIELD TRIP to see *The Malaga Ship* at the Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, ME, Sunday, March 22, 3:30 pm. Beginning at 2:30 pm, guests are invited to enjoy free admission to Maine Maritime Museum's exhibits, including Re|Sounding, a powerful new exhibition centering Indigenous and Black perspectives on Maine's maritime past. Live performance of *The Malaga Ship* begins at 3:30 pm.

1:30 pm carpool (for those who want to see the exhibit). Return about 6:30 pm. Contact Marvin Ellison at mellison122@gmail.com to join the carpool.

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday,
April 2

5:30 - 7 pm in Guptill Hall: Gather for a shared meal, communion, and hand or foot washing.

Good Friday,
April 3

6 am Good Friday Hunger Walk: Meet in Wright Pavilion to walk up to 8 miles to mitigate hunger.

7 pm in the Sanctuary: Mark the final hours of Jesus' life with scripture readings, prayer and music by the Meetinghouse Choir.

Lenten Vigil
Through Easter

8 pm Fri - 6 am Sun in the Chapel: Sign up for two-hour shifts to pray, meditate, read, or reflect.

Easter, April 5
Sunrise Service

6 am at Fort Williams Park: Gather on the hill by the flagpole, to welcome the rising Son.

Festival Worship

10 am in the Sanctuary: Come make a joyful noise as we celebrate the resurrection! Easter Egg Hunt to follow worship.

Maundy Thursday
Dinner Sign-up

Good Friday Hunger
Walk Sign-up

Lenten Vigil
Sign-up

tinyurl.com
/bdfyv7nv



Email: blockwood@
portlandresearch.com

Email:
debgregw@gmail.com

WHAT'S UP?

Want to stay in the loop? Make sure you are on our email list! To UPDATE or ADD your contact info, go to: fccucc.org and select "Contact Us" then select "Contact Info Update Form."

Your positive reviews on social media help others to find us.

Write a review on Google (Thanks!). Like and follow us:





**First Stitches:
Stating our Faith in Urgent Times**

**Three Sundays: March 15, 22 and 29,
11:45 am – 1 pm, Davidson Lounge**

What do you believe – about God or justice or love? What do you trust about Jesus or the Holy Spirit? How might our statements of faith tether or guide us as we respond to the unsettled world around us?

Join Pastor Alison for a three-part conversation informed by the collection, *Stating Our Faith in Urgent Times*, by the UCC Still Speaking Writers.

Curiosity encouraged. All welcome.