



Borders & Belonging

Part 4: The Power of Blessing

Sunday Worship
July 20, 2025

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.*

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST 

A Note for Families / Folks of All Ages: We worship all together this morning. There are clipboards with paper and coloring pages at the back of the sanctuary, for worshippers of any age to use during the service.

“Violence is what happens when we don’t know what else to do with our suffering.”

Parker Palmer (quoted in *Borders & Belongings*)

“[Kindness] is a choice to love in the face of division.”

Borders & Belongings

The Book of Ruth: A Story for Our Time

Pádraig Ó Tuama & Glenn Jordan

PRELUDE

Fa una Canzona (Write a song)

Orazio Vecchi

Abacapella

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Rev. Alison J. Buttrick Patton

SUNG SUMMONS

Spirit of Life

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free;

Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

THRESHOLD MOMENT

SUNG SUMMONS, repeat:

Spirit of Life

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: People of God, let us bless this day!

All: Bless sun-kissed trees, bless rain and coastal breezes.

One: Bless those who race for a cure, who swim, bike and run.

All: Bless, too, those of us who move at a slower pace.

One: Bless leisure time and summer rhythms.

All: Bless, too, those who labor in the midsummer sun.

One: Bless familiar faces, family and kindred spirits.

All: Bless, too, ‘strangers’ and wayfarers, kin we have not yet met.

One: May God who greets us with the dawn, bless this day!

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

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Ever Blessing God, some suggest that there are limits to your love and grace. When we treat wellbeing as a zero-sum game, forgive us. When we cling to what we have, worried that there won't be enough to go around, reassure us and relax our grip. When we draw lines between those who merit our care and those who do not, remind us that you draw the circle wide and pour out your blessings with loving abandon. Teach us to do the same.

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

***SUNG RESPONSE**

Shine, Jesus, Shine!

Graham Kendrick

Shine, Jesus, shine! Fill this land with Creator's glory.

Blaze, Spirit, blaze. Set our hearts on fire!

Flow, River, flow. Fill the nations with grace and mercy.

Send forth your Word, God and let there be light!

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Deborah Sandler

One: This is the sacred story of God's journey with God's people.

All: Holy One, open our ears to hear, our hearts to receive and our lives to be expanded by your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Ruth 4:1-6; 9-21

Hannah Long-Higgins & Deborah Sandler

SERMON

The Power of Blessing

Rev. Alison J. Buttrick Patton

MOMENT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE

ANTHEM

I Will Not Leave You Comfortless

William Byrd

Albacapella

PASTORAL PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father-Mother 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.

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.

TESTIMONY

Signs of Flourishing

Lynne Lanctot

OFFERING INVITATION

You can make a secure online 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

CLOSING HYMN

May the Blessing of God

#346

Albacapella (first time through) and congregation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Reaper's Song: July, from The Seasons, Op. 37, no. 7

Tchaikovsky

* * * * *

Join us for lemonade on the front porch after worship.

WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you to this morning's ushers: Team A, Terry Dallaire, captain.

The flowers on the altar are in loving memory of Rose and Sherwood Lawler, from Heather Payson and Family.

The Mission Globe is placed on the altar today by Rev. Jill Saxby, in celebration and gratitude, on the 30th anniversary of her ordination as a minister.

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

Thank you to this morning's musical guest: *Albacapella*, a vocal octet made up of singers from the Greater Portland area:

Lori Harley

Joy Krinsky

Matt Robbertz

Lise Wagner

Eric Johnson

Peter Woodrow

Michaela Gill

Michael Stoddard

Thank you to our guest accompanist, Josie DiPhilippo, who is substituting for Terry Foster this morning on piano and organ.

WEEKLY @ FCC UCC

Tuesday Bible Study will continue, every Tuesday, 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Davidson Lounge:

While Pastor Steve is on his much-deserved sabbatical, a loyal group of FCC UCC members will continue their Tuesday tradition of worship reflection. All are welcome!

Meetinghouse Choir, Handbells and Handchimes are on summer recess. Rehearsals will resume on August 27.

SUMMER AT FCC UCC

TODAY: Bless Weaving *and* Make-your-own-blessing-oil, July 20, 11:15 – 12 pm: As we conclude our summer series, *Borders and Belonging*, join us for a special fellowship hour after worship. Add fabric to the Bless Weaving and make your own scented blessing oil.

Both are made possible through the *Bless Project* at South Congregational Church, UCC in Kennebunkport. As part of their summer-long project, they have invited other congregations to join them in exploring the power and meaning we find in blessing each other. *See the back page of this bulletin* to learn more and request a daily blessing.

Handbell Workshops coming this summer: The FCCUCC handbell director will be presenting two workshops this summer. Each hour-long workshop will be presented twice [continued next page]:

Bell Basics

Wednesday, July 23, 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Wednesday, August 13, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

For those who want to learn how to ring handbells and play in the choir or are just curious about how the instrument works.

Advanced Ringing Techniques

Wednesday, July 23, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

Wednesday, August 13, 11:00 am-12:00 pm

For ringers with at least one year of ringing experience who would like to learn more advanced techniques.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Sharon Potter at handbells@FCCUCC.org.

Open Air Worship and Lawn Games, Sunday, July 27, 10 am at Bug Light: We're taking our worship outside! Join us at Bug Light for our regular Sunday service followed by a Tailgate social hour and lawn games! Bring your own chair (and an extra to share, if you have one).

☛ *We will not be livestreaming, but we will post a recording of worship on Sunday afternoon.*

Pop-up Handchime Choir on Sunday, August 10. Come at 8:30 am to learn a song or two to play during 10 am worship.

Game Day, Sunday, August 10, 11:30 am – 1 pm: 14 people attended Games Day after church on Sunday, July 13. With such a great turnout, and all the fun we had, we are planning another one! Come to Wright Pavilion for a light lunch and play any of an assortment of board games - from the silly to the strategic. Please RSVP, so we can plan to feed you: outreach@fccucc.org.

FCC UCC Goes to the Theater! For those of you who love the theater, we have one more opportunity to take in a show together this summer:

- *Grease* - Hackmatack Playhouse on **Thursday, August 14** at 2:00 pm.

Want to join us? Contact Kathy Sahrbeck to let her know you are interested (or if you have questions) at outreach@fccucc.org.

MISSION CORNER

Volunteer for Preble Street Food Hub: On the last Friday of each month, we prepare meals at the Food Hub, 75 Darling Avenue, South Portland, for delivery to Preble Street satellite sites. See the Weekly Word or email Danna Wiggins at dannawig2@gmail.com

BUILDING UPDATES!

Small Parking Lot: The small church parking lot adjoining Mitchell Road is about to be repaved. The town is also scheduled to repave Mitchell Road sometime during the month of July. Please plan accordingly.

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."

Also, look for us on Facebook: facebook.com/fccucc,
on Instagram: instagram.com/fccucc_s.portland
and on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@FCCUCCSouthPortland



IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Community Sing, July 20 and every other Sunday, 3:30 pm (2:45pm for anyone looking to get organized around singing at demonstrations and public events): A bi-weekly gathering to find hope in singing together. Sign up to learn about future events or to opt-in to the Response Team to sing at resistance and change events:
<http://www.emiliadahlin.com>

Ideal Maine Band, Tuesdays at 6 pm, Ocean Gateway: Sing along with the Ideal Maine Band during their weekly rehearsals. It's joyous and raucous! Come for the music, the camaraderie, and the community singing. And if you're up for it, get ready to sing at upcoming protests. <https://www.idealmaineband.org/>

A DAILY BLESSING: Need a spirit-lift? Sign up to receive a daily blessing in your inbox, each morning between now and September 15. Offered as part of the **Bless Project** at South Congregational Church, UCC, in Kennebunkport.

Sign up here:

<https://www.southchurchucc.org/blessproject#daily-blessing>



It's Summer! Help FCC UCC to *Flourish*

By making a Summertime Gift!

In January, our congregation approved an aspirational budget, because we believe that the Church is more important than ever!

These past six months, we have been:

- 🌸 gathering the community 🌸 making music
- 🌸 declaring God's extravagant love
- 🌸 Pursuing justice 🌸 blessing and
- 🌸 cheering each other on!

In short, we are striving to cultivate more compassion, joy and justice in God's world.

But we need *your* help.

Gifts and pledges we have received to date won't cover all our 2025 costs.

Join our flash appeal to raise \$20,000!

Please prayerfully consider making a new or additional gift today. Thank you!

Go to fccucc.org/donate

OR

Mail your donation to:

First Congregational Church, UCC
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106



Draw the Circle Wide

Words and Music: Gordon Light

Chorus



6

Fine



12

Verses



16

