



Radical Amazement

Communion Sunday August 3, 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.

PRELUDE

A Change Is Gonna Come

Sam Cooke

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Rev. Marvin Ellison

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Rabbi Abraham Heschel spoke of the spiritual life this way:

“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement, to get up in the morning, and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted.

All: Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible. Never treat life casually.

One: To be spiritual is to be *amazed*.”

All: Together in this sacred space, let us encourage one another to live in nothing less than radical amazement.

***OPENING HYMN**

Enter, Rejoice, and Come In

Louise Ruspini

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.

Open your ears to the song.

Open your ears to the song.

Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.

Open your hearts everyone.

Open your hearts everyone.

Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.

Don't be afraid of some change.

Don't be afraid of some change.

**Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.**

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Enter, rejoice, and come in.

**Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.**

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

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Gentle and holy God, we acknowledge to you, to one another, and to ourselves that we are not what you have called us to be. We have stifled our gifts and wasted our time. We have avoided opportunities to offer kindness but have been quick to take offense. We have pretended that we could make no contribution to peace and justice in our world and have excused ourselves from risk-taking in our own community. Have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and help us to live our lives differently, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose call to follow haunts our every prayer. Amen.

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

***SUNG RESPONSE** *Halle, Halle, Halle* Traditional Caribbean tune/arr. Bell

Halle, halle, halle, lu-u-jah (3 times)

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

FIRST READING "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution" (selected) Rev. Jill Saxby
By Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

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.

SECOND READING Genesis 1:1-5, 26a, and 27-28a

SERMON *Radical Amazement* Rev. Marvin Ellison

MOMENT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE

ANTHEM *Medley of Old-Time Gospel Songs*
Terry Foster, piano

PASTORAL PRAYER

SUNG RESPONSE

Hear Our Prayer, O God

**Hear our prayer, O God. Hear our prayer, O God.
Incline thine ear to us and grant us your peace.**

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!



CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION **

Leader: May God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Open your hearts.

People: We open them to God and one another.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, to stand open in the presence of God and one another as a thankful people, lifting our voices in chorus, with those who have gone before us, and with men and women throughout the world today, saying together:

**People: Holy, holy, holy God,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God!
Hosanna in the highest!**

Leader: Wise and gracious God, Creator of all good things, Redeemer of this broken world, you who bless your people and the earth itself, Holy is your name.

People: You are the source of love in the world, the wellspring of justice in history, the resource of peace on earth. Holy is your name.

Leader: Following Jesus, we call you abba, for you love us. Guiding us, you are insistent, patient, protective, encouraging, comforting. Holy is your name.

People: God our Father, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. We thank you for giving us the bread we need. Holy is your name.

Leader: You hold us in your strong arms like a mother with her newborn infant. You have raised your children from generation to generation, planting seeds, harvesting grain, baking fresh bread, preparing meals, feeding your people, holding us up when we are too weak to stand on our own, teaching us how to walk and empowering us to go forth in the world as your daughters and sons. Holy is your name.

People: We see you in our friends and family, our partners, spouses and children. We know your passion, your intensity, your commitment to right-relation. We experience you, coming with power.

Leader: We see you in the bodies of hungry people, broken people, tortured people, and a tortured earth. We tremble, and we believe that you are coming with power.

People: We believe in you, we love you, we expect you to be with us because we remember the power you revealed to us in the life of Jesus, our brother and Christ. We remember that on the night before he was executed by those who feared both him and you, he ate a Passover meal with his friends, in celebration of your liberation of people from bondage. Remembering your power, he took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take. Eat. This is my body, which will be broken for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me."

Leader: After supper, he took the wine, blessed it, and gave it to them, and said, "Drink this. This is my blood which will be shed for you, and for others, for the forgiveness of sins, to heal and empower you. Whenever you drink it, remember me."

People: Remembering Jesus and the power of your love revealed through him, we ask you, Father and Mother and Friend of all, to bless this bread and this wine, making it for us the Body and Blood of Jesus the Christ. Bless us also, that we may be for you living members of Christ's presence in the world, people who are in love with you and your creation. All this we ask in your holy name, that with Christ and in Christ and by the power of your Holy Spirit, we may live forever as your people, O gentle God of power and grace.

Distribution of the elements

You are invited to come forward by the center aisle to receive communion. All bread is gluten free. The juice is non-alcoholic. There are pre-wrapped communion elements for those who prefer, on the communion table.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: We give thanks, O God, because in your own free gift of love you have reached out to us.

People: You have refreshed us at your table, touched our deepest needs, and called out to a life shared in memory and hope. Send us forth with courage and joy in the name of Jesus Christ, that we too may become bread and peace for one another and the world.

CLOSING HYMN

All the Colors of the Rainbow

Carl P. Daw, Jr
Tune: Abbots Leigh

All the colors of the rainbow
live unseen in daily light,
but their splendors find expression
when released to human sight;
so the church reveals most beauty
where diversity is real:
breadth of race and class and gender,
room for doubt, and space to heal.

Every language gains more music
when the words for peace appear:
Pax, Salaam, Eirjini, Heiwa,
Pace, Santi, Frieden, Mir.
Though our tongues make sounds that vary
all bespeak a common home:
longing for the end of conflict
and new life in God's Shalom.

All the body's parts are wanted,
nor can one despise the rest:
head and hand must work together,
as must eye, ear, throat, and chest;
so the church needs all its members
for a range of ministries:
varied gifts with one great mission,
"Do this for the least of these."

Teach us, God, our need of others;
through them help us fully live.
Wean us from our selfish habits;
let us listen, learn, forgive.
May we see your longed-for image
in each human heart and face,
and behold how those around us
can be channels of your grace.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

All of God's Children Got Shoes

African American Spiritual 𐄂

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Join us for lemonade on the front porch after worship.

WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you to this morning's ushers: Team C, Bill Campbell, captain.

The flowers on the altar are given by Sue Farris in memory of her parents, Bill and Eloise Farris, married for 57 years; and for her wife of 4 years, Ann Dorian.

Thank you to Rev. Marvin Ellison, FCC UCC member, for serving as our guest preacher and worship leader this morning, and to Rev. Jill Saxby for co-presiding at communion. Come back next Sunday, August 10, when Rev. Saxby will be our guest preacher.

☐ **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. We are now donating funds to the Indigo Arts Alliance. You are invited to contribute, as well. Donate by check or online, with "Royalty for Spirituals" in the memo. Thank you.

**** The Communion prayer** is adapted from Carter Heyward, *Our Passion for Justice* (The Pilgrim Press, 1984), 148-50.

Livestream: Thank you to Alex Ratta for managing our worship livestream, this week and every week!

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

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. You can also find Kathy after worship, at Lemonade on the Porch, most Sundays.

Handbell Workshops coming this summer: The FCCUCC handbell director will be presenting two more workshops in August.

Bell Basics

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, 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.

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.

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. Please join us! Contact Danna Wiggins at dannawig2@gmail.com

Clynk Bags are available in the narthex (inside main entrance). Fill with returnable bottles and cans and return it to a Clynk collection site near Hannaford to support FCC!

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 this summer.

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



Help Love and Justice to *Flourish*

Make a Summertime Gift!

In January, our congregation approved an aspirational budget, because we want ministries that spread God's love and justice to *flourish*.

We need your help to make that happen.

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

Join our flash appeal to raise \$20,000 by August 15!

Why? When you invest in this community of faith, you help us to:

- 🌸 Gather Community 🌸 Nourish Spirits
- 🌸 Make Music 🌸 Pursue Justice
- 🌸 Care for Vulnerable Neighbors
- 🌸 Declare God's Extravagant Love
- 🌸 Equip, Bless and Cheer Each Other On!

Please make a new or additional gift today. Go to:
fccucc.org/donate ("Summer Appeal" in memo)

OR

Mail your donation to:

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

