



**Becoming a Refugia Church
Welcome Sunday Worship
September 8, 2024**

**Welcome to the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
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: Welcome! Today we begin worship together. After the Time for All God's Children, children are welcome to move to the Craft Corner in the narthex (the entryway at the back of the sanctuary), accompanied by an adult. Worship can be heard through the open door.

There are also clipboards with paper and coloring pages at the back of the sanctuary, for anyone who wants to sit in a pew and draw/color during the service.

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PRELUDE *Dearest Jesus, We Are Here* Bach

WELCOME TO WORSHIP Revs. Alison J. B. Patton and Stephen Savage

Come, Come, Whoever You Are Rumi / Ungar

**Come, come, whoever you are,
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of learning
Ours is no caravan of despair.
Come, yet again, come.**

THRESHOLD MOMENT

CALL TO WORSHIP*

One: We gather as God's beloved children –

All: However glad we are, or however out of sorts.

One: We come as a people called into community by Jesus –

All: So this becomes a place where all are welcome.

One: We come to give thanks, to pray and sing, and to be with each other –

All: Together, let us worship God!

***OPENING HYMN** *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* No. 7

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Creator - Creating God: You make each day new. You set us in community and call us to cultivate greater love and justice. When we turn away from that holy labor, when we fail to till the soil of generosity or to water seeds of compassion, forgive us. Plant in us the creativity and courage we need, to help love and justice to flourish.

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

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

*SUNG RESPONSE

Peace Like a River 

African-American Spiritual

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul. [Repeat]

I've got love like an ocean...
I've got joy like a fountain...

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Unison

Bruce Martel

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

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

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:4b-9

SERMON

Becoming a Refugia Church

Alison J. Buttrick Patton

ANTHEM

We Walk in Love

Witkowski

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:

Hear Our Prayer, O God

Whelpton

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

INVITATION TO OFFERING

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

PRAYERS OF BLESSING

***CLOSING SONG**

You Shall Go Out With Joy

Dauermann/Rubin

**You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the fields
Will clap, will clap their hands!**

**And all the trees of the fields will clap their hands
The trees of the fields will clap their hands
The trees of the fields will clap their hands
While you go out with joy!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

You Shall Go Out with Joy (Reprise)

Following worship, Join us for our all-church picnic
with both meat and vegetarian fare. Everyone is welcome!

Looking for ways to connect with other FCC UCC folks?
Check out the Small Group sign-ups on your way to the picnic.

WORSHIP NOTES

**This morning's call to worship as adapted from content written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'. Used with permission.

☰ 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 atlanticblackbox.com.

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

Flowers on the altar are given by the Rev. Peter and Linda Foss in honor of loved ones.

Many Waters: In the past, we have gathered water on our summer travels and collected it in worship on Welcome Sunday, for us in future baptisms. We did not include this ritual today. The Spiritual Life and Worship Team is exploring ways to reimagine this practice. Would you like to continue this tradition in some form? Are you interested in finding fresh ways to explore our connection to place and to baptism? Share thoughts with Carrie Skeffington: cskeffington@rsu23.org.

SEPTEMBER AT FCC UCC

Bible Study, Tuesdays, 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Davidson Lounge: Join Rev. Steve Savage for a wide-ranging conversation about the previous Sunday's scripture reading. *No formal knowledge required!*

Church School starts, Sunday morning, September 15! We start worship together in the sanctuary, then children and teachers head upstairs to class for stories, crafts and games. They will explore ideas like justice, peace, love, and even to wrestle with questions about who God is in all of our lives. Registration forms are available in the narthex (at the back of the sanctuary). Questions? Contact Pastor Steve at Steve@fccucc.org

Wabanaki Allies Working Group Meeting, Sunday, September 15, 11:30 am - 1 pm - in the Laity Room. All welcome! No expertise needed, just curiosity and passion for justice.

Breakfast at IHOP, Tuesday, September 17, 9 am, 195 Maine Mall Road in South Portland: Join FCC friends for breakfast and good conversation! Hosted by Kathy Sahrbeck: RSVP or questions: outreach@fccucc.org

Take a Walk ☼ - **Tuesday, September 17, 5-6:30 pm, hosted by Heather Hanson.** Route TBD. Mark your calendars, because walking together is good for body and spirit!

Meet the Pastors, Sunday, September 22, 11:30 am - 12:30, Davidson Lounge - Are you new to FCC? Curious to learn more? Join the conversation with Revs. Alison Patton and Steve Savage. Connect with other newcomers and learn more about what makes FCC tick!

We're starting a Games Group! Tuesday, September 24, 7 pm, Wright Pavilion: This month, we'll play Rummikub together, then we will discuss other games we'd like to play and how often we will meet. Questions? Contact Kathy Sahrbeck at outreach@fccucc.org

Voting with Love? Challenges and Opportunities in Fraught Times, Sunday, September 29, 11:30 am in Davidson Lounge: As we approach the November elections, how do we gain our bearings as people of faith who are also citizen-voters? What does "voting with love" ask of us? Marvin Ellison will offer some reflections and lead a discussion. Your convictions -- and your vote -- matter, so grab coffee and join the conversation.

☼ **Host a Walk: Do you have a favorite walking route? Consider hosting an FCC UCC Walk!** Here's what 'hosting' means:

1. Choose an easy to moderate walking route that will take 75 - 90 minutes.
2. Choose a date and time that you are available to host, and a meeting place.
3. Consider including a brief (5 minutes) reading: a quote, poem or prayer to share on the walk, to help us tune into the world around us and the spirit within us.

Sign up to lead one of our walks between October 2024 and May 2025 by scanning the QR code.

NOTE: Feel free to repeat a favorite route. Questions? Contact Rev. Alison Patton at revalisonpatton@fccucc.org



MUSIC CORNER

Meetinghouse Choir rehearses Wednesdays, 6:15 - 8pm. 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.

Bell Choir & Chimes Choir rehearse on alternating Wednesdays, 4:45 - 5:45pm in Wright Pavilion. Questions? Contact bell choir director Sharon Potter: handbells@fccucc.org.

MISSION CORNER

CLYNK Bags are available in the Narthex: Did you know that you can collect your returnable cans and bottles to support our mission and outreach efforts? Save up your bottles and cans to turn in at participating grocery stores. Scan the code on the bags and the refunds will automatically be donated to our FCC mission team. It's easy!

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! To learn more about how to volunteer, see the Weekly Word or contact Danna Wiggins at dannawig2@gmail.com .

IN THE COMMUNITY

BTS Center's Convocation 2024 - Hope in Small Places: Becoming People of Refugia Faith, September 26-27, 2024: Keynote by Debra Reinstra, author of *Refugia Faith*, will help us consider ways for churches to be places of nurture and flourishing in an unsettled, climate-changed world. Learn more at <https://thebtscenter.org/convocation-2024/>

In-person registration is now full, but you can still register to participate online!

Concert for Climate, October 27, 2:30 pm, St. Luke's Church, 143 State Street – A multimedia celebration of our livable world for all ages, Concert for Climate is an “entertaining, educational, and soul-filling afternoon of music and message to inspire climate action.” Keynote speaker: Briana Warner, CEO of Atlantic Sea Farms, working to diversity coastal incomes with kelp. Hosted by the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Learn more: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/concert-for-climate-tickets-936499624587>

Want to carpool/drive? Please contact Jess at 207-671-1366, jessdeeproctor@gmail.com

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Also, look for us on Facebook: facebook.com/fccucc



On Instagram: instagram.com/fccucc_s.portland



And on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@FCCUCCSouthPortland

SAVE THE DATE!

All-Church Visioning Retreat

Saturday, September 28

9:30 am - 2:30 pm

FCC UCC members and friends are encouraged to join us for a day of:

- Play and connection
- Creative thinking
- Reflection on FCC's gifts and direction.

We will be led by the Rev. Susan Townsley, Pastor of South Congregational Church in Kennebunkport, ME.

Rev. Townsley is a skilled facilitator, pastor, preacher and community leader who has served the United Church of Christ at the local, conference and national levels.

She will invite us to practice playfulness and out-of-the-box thinking, as we consider the ways that God is leading us to make a difference in the world.



All are welcome. Mark your calendars. You don't want to miss this!

To help us plan for lunch, please RSVP to Rev. Alison Patton:

revalisonpatton@fccucc.org