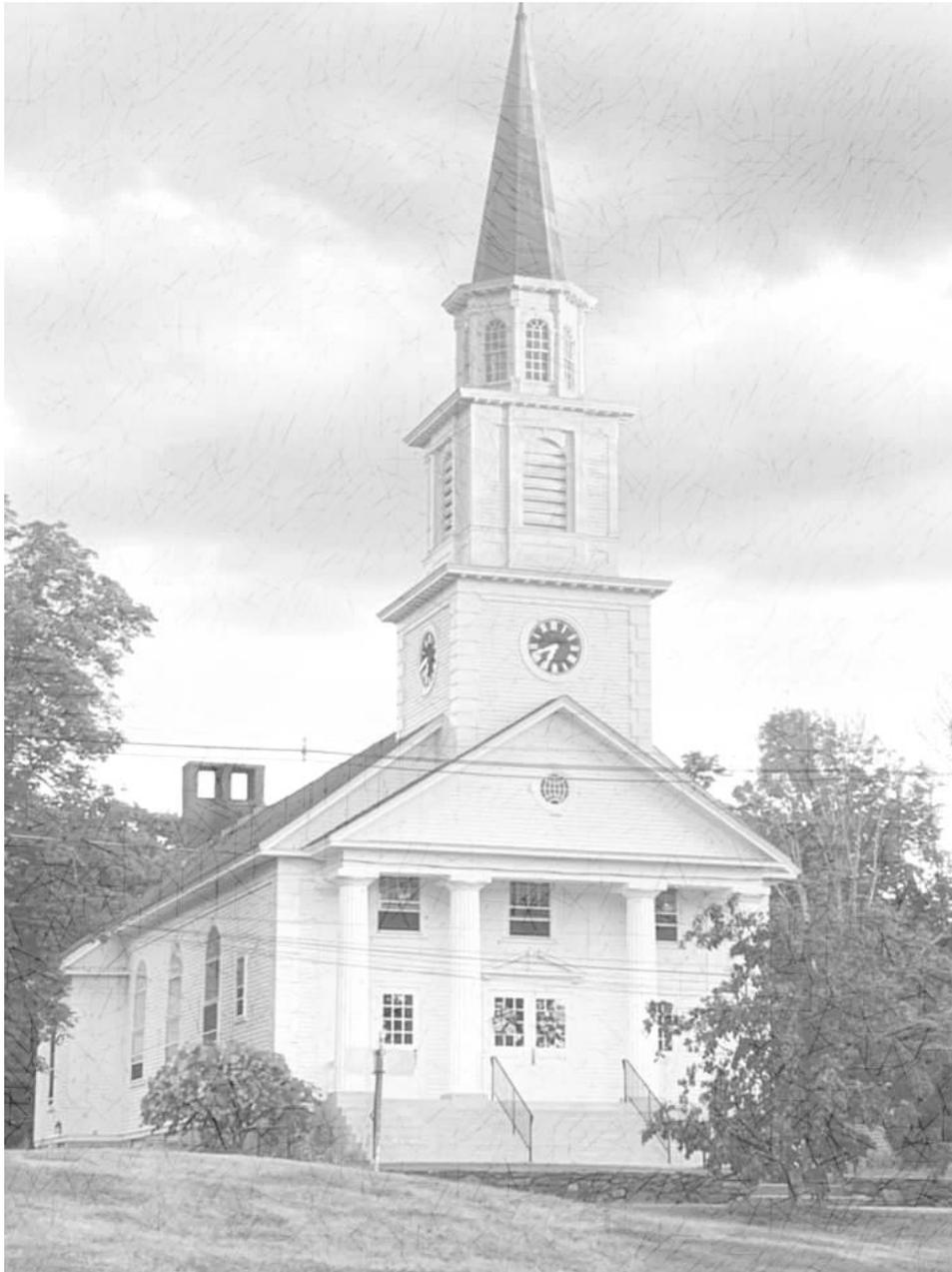


The First Congregational Church

Gathered 1743
Boylston, Massachusetts



March 22, 2026

First Congregational Church
March 22, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Lent

Welcome. Whether you are new to church, returning, or visiting today, we are glad you are here. Please participate as you feel comfortable.

Words in bold are spoken together. Please stand or sit as you are able.

PRELUDE

Charles Nwachukwu

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

The mercy of the Lord is everlasting,

O come, let us adore him.

* SONG — *God So Loved*

PRAYER FOR PURITY:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

* SONG — *All Glory Be To Christ*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pam Haynes

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT:

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

CONFESSION OF SIN

Silence is kept for personal confession

**Most merciful God,
We confess that we have sinned against you
In thought, word, and deed,
By what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart:
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
Have mercy on us and forgive us;
That we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
To the glory of your Name. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PASSING THE PEACE

* HYMN 342 — *Rock of Ages*

SPECIAL MUSIC:
All Creation Speaks His Name
by Sally DeFord

Soloist: Abby Borchelt

SCRIPTURE READING:

Reader: Our teaching for this morning is from John 11:1-7; 17-44:

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ² This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair.^[a] Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. ³ So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

⁴ But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." ⁵ So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, ⁶ he stayed where he was for the next two days. ⁷ Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was only a few miles^[d] down the road from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. ²⁰ When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

²⁵ Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life.^[e] Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. ²⁶ Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” ²⁸ Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” ²⁹ So Mary immediately went to him.

³⁰ Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹ When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there. ³² When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, ^[f] and he was deeply troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Then Jesus wept. ³⁶ The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” ³⁷ But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

³⁸ Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹ “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

⁴⁰ Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?” ⁴¹ So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they

will believe you sent me.”⁴³ Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God!

SUNDAY TEACHING: “The Long Way of Love — Part 5”

Pastor Zac Stephenson

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. 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 324 — *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Charles Nwachukwu

* congregation stands as each is able

You are invited to join us for Coffee and Community following our service. This is a great place to grab some food and make new friends. Coffee and Community is located in the Fellowship Hall.

342 Rock of Ages

They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them; that rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4



1. Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee;
2. Could my tears for - ev - er flow, Could my zeal no lan - guor know,
3. While I draw this fleet - ing breath, When my eyes shall close in death,



Let the wa - ter and the blood, From Thy wound - ed side which flowed,
These for sin could not a - tone; Thou must save, and Thou a - lone.
When I rise to worlds un - known And be - hold Thee on Thy throne,



Be of sin the dou - ble cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.
In my hand no price I bring; Sim - ply to Thy cross I cling.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in Thee.



TEXT: Augustus M. Toplady
MUSIC: Thomas Hastings

TOPLADY
7.7.7.7.7.

324 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

They will look on the One they have pierced. John 19:37

1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sor - row and
4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a

Prince of Glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God. All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and
pres - ent far too small. Love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God in Honor of my Daughter Dayna Stahl. Happy belated Birthday by Gigi Zepp.



Easter Lilies & Tulips – If you would like to purchase a memorial Easter lily or tulip for our Easter Services, order forms are available near the offering plates. The cost is \$15 per plant, and forms must be received by **today** (March 22nd).



Memorial Scholarship Applications are now [available](#) from the First Congregational Church Scholarship Fund. Please look on the bulletin board or email the church office for a form. Scholarship recipients must be students who are both active in the church and church members. Applications are due back in the church office no later than April 12, 2026.



The Sunday School teachers will be needing 1 volunteer a week to help with the younger class of Sunday Schoolers. We thank the 7 volunteers who have offered to help, but would appreciate having a few more volunteers to help fill in the weekly schedule. If you would like to help, please fill out a CORI form and give your name to one of the Sunday School teachers. The sign up calendar will be sent to you.





Buy-A-Brick Campaign - We are still selling engraved bricks to be set into a memory garden beside the walkway at the rear of the church.

Proceeds will go into our Capital Account to continue many projects in and around the church. This is the perfect way to honor a person or event or to memorialize that person, event or memory. Forms are available at church on the table near Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Jan Fuller at 508-868-4879 or by email at janlfull@aol.com.



We keep in our prayers — Ruth E. Coyle, Donna Kelleher, Max

Lariviere, Adam Brunt, Dick Martino, Ginny Felch, Karl Nelson, Brady, Shelly, Brian Strand, Maureen Anderson, Travis & Lori Rotti, Austin, Brenda & Tim, Jen, Carter Bean, Paula Sylvester, Jeff Sears, Carole Szwarc, Roz Franzen, David Rice, Bill, Patty, Rachel Thomas & family, Bob & Judy Brousseau, the Erickson family, David Carlson, Michael Hoefling, Kelsa Zereski, Jim Deal, Mike Staras, Barry Mechem, Ed Desrosiers, and Melissa Pierce.



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~ Memorial Easter Lilies & Tulips ~



The Sanctuary Committee is planning to decorate the church for the Easter Services on April 5, 2026. We will be offering the choice of either lilies or tulips again this year. Please select your preference on the form below.

The cost of each plant will be \$15.00. Checks should be made payable to the First Congregational Church. **All orders must be received no later than Sunday, March 22nd.**

If you would like to purchase a lily or tulip, please fill in the form below and return it with your remittance to First Congregational Church, 10 Church St, Boylston, MA. 01505 or it may be placed in your offering envelope.

We are requesting that you PLEASE TAKE YOUR LILY OR TULIP AFTER THE SERVICE so that you may enjoy it at home. Any plants that are left will be given to an ill or shut-in person.

MEMORIAL EASTER PLANTS

I wish to give a memorial Lily Tulip
for the Easter Service on April 5, 2026.

I would like it printed in the bulletin as follows:

In memory of:

Given by:

Small Groups Survey

Roughly between the week of April 26 and the week of June 14

Please place your survey in the offering plate, get to church office, or hand to George Kohl as soon as you have thought it through. Got questions? Need help making a decision? Contact George at 774-312-4966 or gakohl@gmail.com.

Name: _____ Phone _____

Email: _____

I AM ALREADY PART OF A GROUP AND PLAN TO CONTINUE WITH MY GROUP.

I AM NOT CURRENTLY IN A SMALL GROUP BUT WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH ONE.

I WOULD APPRECIATE A CALL TO HELP ME DETERMINE WHICH GROUP WOULD BE A GOOD FIT FOR ME.

See reverse side. Which groups listed below might meet you where you are at in your spiritual development? Place a check (✓) in front of it.



_____ NEW! *How to Get What You Pray For–The Keys to Answered Prayer*. Led by George Kohl. Thursdays at 6:30 P.M.

_____ NEW! *Overview of the New Testament -the Gospels, Acts, the Letters, and the book of Revelation*. Led by George Kohl. Mondays at 6:30 P.M.

_____ NEW! *Friendship Group*. Highly social. Bible-lite. Led by Cindy Sears. Fridays at 6:30 P.M.

_____ *Men's Bible Study*. Studying the book of Acts. Led by Pastor Zac. Thursdays at 9:15 A.M.,

_____ *Senior Ladies Bible Study*. Sundays after brunch. Discussing book: *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*. Led by Gigi Zepp.

_____ *Gen X Ladies Bible Study*. Led by Jennifer Smith. Meets on Sundays after the brunch. The subject of study is yet to be determined.

_____ *Men's Bible Reading Group*. Reading through the Bible and discuss. Facilitated by Josh Martin. Meets on Monday nights at the church at 6:30 P.M.

_____ *Sunday Morning Bible Study Group*. For men and women. Led by Kim Thomas. Meet in church library at 9:00 A.M.. Studying the book of Ezekiel.

_____ *Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible Study*. has been meeting for years but always has room at the table for another. Brenda Hollands coordinates this group. They meet at 10 AM. The next study is yet to be determined.