

The Goodness of God

In the Land of the Living



January 25th, 2026

South Congregational Church, UCC

27 Pleasant St. Concord, NH 03301

603-224-2521

www.southchurchconcord.org

*Welcome to South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ!
Whoever you are, whatever your faith tradition, whatever creed you
profess, whatever your age, ability, race, sexual orientation or gender
expression: You are welcome here!*

WORDS OF WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

My Lord, What a Morning

arr. Calvin Taylor

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The psalmist proclaims: “The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?”

Many: “God is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?”

One: So many live in fear these days; so many struggle to find peace.

Many: In our worship, let us lift up the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.

One: Let us rise in solidarity with all who suffer, and all who are caught in the crosshairs of conflict and division.

Many: In our worship, let us remember the power of love, fortify ourselves, then offer it to the world with confidence in its transforming power.

One: Come, let us worship.

All: Let us worship with humble thanksgiving and

praise.

*OPENING HYMN *Come, God, Creator, Be Our Shield*
NCH #69

*UNISON PRAYER

Divine Spark and Eternal Flame, inspire us as we worship. Help us to hear Your invitation to follow, and to find all the possible ways to say “yes.” Forgive us for the ways we have ignored Your nudging love and have imagined that You do not notice us in our everyday lives. Open our senses to perceive and recognize Your presence, and then to understand Your need for our participation in the ways of healing. Help us not only to discover the light of Your grace, but to be that light for others. Help us accept Your invitations with joy and exuberance, we pray. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the Peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

CHORAL ANTHEM *A Giving Place*

by Joseph M. Martin
and Heather Sorenson

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Beth Donaldson

(After the Children's Message, our children are invited to go to Sunday School downstairs.)

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Jill Smart

Isaiah 9:1-4 (Pew Bible: p. 555)

Matthew 4:12-23 (Pew Bible: p. 785)

SERMON

The Goodness of God in the Land of the Living

Rev. Dr. Beth Donaldson

*HYMN

You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore

NCH #173

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father-Mother in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

Wade in the Water

arr. Joel Raney

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*SUNG DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise
God all creatures here below; praise God for all that
love has done, Creator, Christ, and Spirit, one.
Amen.**

*HYMN

Sent Forth By God's Blessing
NCH #76

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Morning Song

arr. Young/Wagner

Transitional Minister: Rev. Dr. Beth Donaldson

Pianist: Abigail Charbeneau

Music Director: Sue Berlenbach

Christian Education Director: Julia Wagner

Memorial Bells Director: Carlene Ruesenberg

Livestream Technician: Walton Irvine

Sexton: Walton Irvine

Today's Participants:

Lay Leader: Jill Smart

Ushers: Cy Sherman and Zib Corell

Worship & Spiritual Life Rep: Wayne Martin

Collections & Deposits: Pegi Frosthalm and Chris Simmers

Assistive Listening: Suzanne Winchester



Flowers this week are kindly donated by

Bonnie Ota

*“In Celebration of all the wonderful people
at South Church.”*

IMPORTANT INFO FOR ASSISTIVE LISTENING USERS:

Please use our new Wi-Fi connection:

Netgear47

Password (all lower-case letters):

sweetwater840

REMINDER:

**When using your hearing aids with the “Listen WiFi”
phone app:**

Some phones work best with the volume on both your Phone & your Hearing Aids turned all the way Up. Other phones work best with your Phone turned all the way Up & your Hearing Aids turned all the way Down.

Need Help? Please speak to the Assistive Listening Assistant at the back of the sanctuary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – January 25th, 2026

LIFT USE OFFICIALLY GREENLIT We're delighted to share that the church lift is officially up and running! This is a wonderful step toward making our building more accessible and welcoming for everyone. If you or someone you know would benefit from using the lift and need assistance, our ushers and staff are happy to help.

Thank you for your patience as we worked to get everything ready. We're grateful for this improvement and excited for the increased accessibility it brings to our community.

FAMILY PROMISE WEEK South Church and Temple Beth Jacob are partnering with Family Promise to host families experiencing short-term homelessness due to an unplanned/catastrophic event in their lives. **During the week of February 8th**, volunteers are needed at South Church to greet and assist families and prepare meals. For more information and to sign up, please contact Peggy Scott at (978)258-8275.

Thank you to everyone who has already committed to volunteering. We appreciate you!

GENESIS CIRCLE WILL BE MEETING on Thursday, February 5 in Classroom 6 at Noon. Bring your own lunch. Speaker to be announced.

NHCUCC CONFERENCE REGISTRATION IS OPEN! This year's theme is *Prepared to Serve 2026*. The conference will take place at Pembroke Academy in Pembroke, NH, on **Saturday, February 28th**.

Enjoy a full day of panels and workshops centered around cultivating personal faith and supporting the wider UCC church mission--individually, locally, and for the wider world.

To see the full slate of events and to register, please visit <https://www.nhcucc.org/events/pts-2026>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE NH IMMIGRATION VISITATION PROGRAM The NH Immigrant Visitation Program (NHIVP) is looking for volunteers to join their team at the Strafford County Department of Corrections in Dover, NH. NHIVP visitors provide emotional and spiritual support for immigrants in the custody of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We also share information to support their self-advocacy within the immigration legal system.

For details, please contact Maggie Fogarty (mfogarty@afsc.org), or Ron Schneider or Carolyn Morse-Finn with the UCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group (irsg.nhcucc@gmail.com).

TALK SERIES IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH The Black Heritage Trail has invited Rev. Bishop Michael Curry for his talk "**A Knock at Midnight: Black Preacher as Orator.**" Exploring the importance of African American oratory throughout our history, this dialogue explores how the pulpit evolved into both a sanctuary and a platform for liberation, influencing the moral and political discourse within communities.

Where - Temple Israel, Portsmouth, NH (also via Zoom)

When - **Saturday, February 7th @ 5pm**

Cost - Free!

RSVP at www.blackheritagetrailnh.org/events/tea-talk-26-2

PANEL ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW: The Threat and the Opportunity Nuclear war is just one person's decision away. We need to seize the moment to take action and pull us back from the brink. Learn more from world renowned expert, peace advocate, physician and a joint winner of 2 Noble Peace Prizes, Dr. Ira Helfand.

Joining Dr. Helfand on the panel is Carleigh Beriont, PhD, a historian on US nuclear testing, and teacher and Hampton select board vice-chair. Hear, discuss and learn what you can do on **Sunday, February 8th at 1 PM** at the Community Church of Durham in Durham, NH. Hosted by the Peace with Justice Advocates of the NH Conference UCC.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/HelfandPanel2026>

PHOTO EXHIBIT: DIFFERENT ROOTS, COMMON DREAMS

Becky Field's color photographs of NH's immigrant communities will be on display in the Williamson Gallery, 4th floor, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH, from **Jan 4 through Mar 31**. Her work, "Different Roots, Common Dreams," documents the vitality and diversity of our immigrant neighbors. Her 34 photos show families, children, workplaces, and traditional ceremonies.

MOMENT FOR MISSION: The Faith in Action (FIA) Moment for Mission for January is **Waypoint NH** and its annual diaper drive to help families in need.

South Church will be collecting diapers of all sizes during the month of January to give to Waypoint NH to distribute to families for free. Waypoint NH supports an average of 65-75 families each month with free diapers and wipes, making them available for any family with children 5 and under. Donations can be left in the large boxes in the church's side entry. Thank you for your support!

VIRTUAL OFFERING PLATE To make an online donation, please use the "Donate" button on the front page of our website (www.southchurchconcord.org) to reach the current donation link, or mail/drop off a check at the office. Thank you for your continued generosity!

SAFE CHURCH TRAININGS FOR YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS Beginning **January 4th and continuing through June**, South Church will offer Safe Church Trainings on the first Sunday of each month. These sessions are required for anyone interested in volunteering with any of our youth programs. Trainings will be held at 9:00 AM, just before worship, and will last approximately 30–45 minutes. If you feel called to support our children and youth, we'd love to have you join us!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES Do you enjoy spending time with kids and helping them grow in their faith? We're looking for **Sunday School teachers, nursery attendants, and youth group advisors** to join our amazing team! The only requirements are:

- A love for children
- Completion of our Safe Church compliance training

Whether you can help weekly or just occasionally, we'd love to have you involved. If you have any questions or are interested, please contact Julia Wagner at cedirector@southchurchconcord.org. Thank you for supporting the next generation of our church family!

JANUARY OFFICE UPDATE **Michelle Johnson**, our part-time Church Bookkeeper, is continuing as our acting **Office Manager**; **Mariah** has returned to the Administrative Assistant's chair part-time with aspirations to come back full time as she heals; and we extend a warm welcome to **Victoria**, who is providing invaluable assistance in the office during this time of transition and renewal for the church!

Office hours will vary based on availability--we appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Michelle at bookkeeper@southchurchconcord.org or by calling the Church's main number, 603-224-2521.

PASTORAL CARE

If you have a death in the family, a sudden hospitalization or other significant life crisis, please leave a message at the Pastor's extension line at 603-224-2521 ext. 106.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a transition in life and would like a visit with one of our trained Lay Ministry Volunteers, please call and leave a message at the office (603-224-2521) or give Toni Callahan a call. Her number can be found in the Church Directory.

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USHERS & LAY LEADERS NEEDED

The 2026 signup sheet for worship volunteers is now live at <https://volunteersignup.org/F48LL>

Thank you for contributing to these essential parts of worship!

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have Prayer Requests, please fill out the yellow bookmarks in the pews and place them in the basket on the Altar.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to contribute to worship by purchasing a flower arrangement for the Altar, please contact Linda Gray at RevLinGray@yahoo.com to choose a date.