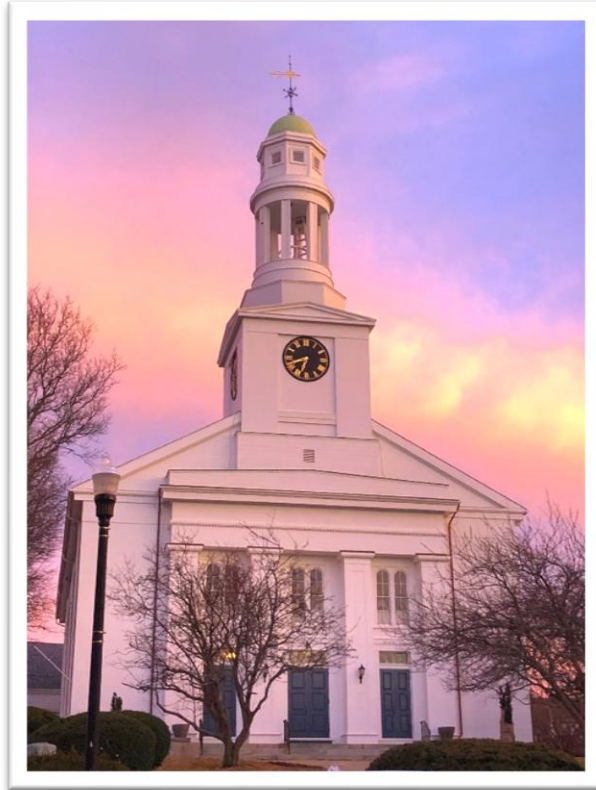


**The First Congregational Church
of Rockport, UCC**

12 School Street ~ Rockport, MA

April 26, 2026



*The First Congregational Church of Rockport is an
Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.
Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith,
you are welcome here for an hour or a lifetime.*

About Us

Our Covenant

We, the members of this congregation welcome you with gladness into our lives. We renew our covenant of faith and offer you our support, encouragement and love to the end that all of us may grow in the boundless mercy of God. By loving and being loved, forgiving and being forgiven, serving and being served, let us go forward together with courage as Christ's disciples, glorifying God by being fully alive.

Our Open and Affirming Statement

We, the members of The First Congregational Church of Rockport are called upon to love each other as God loves us, freely and unconditionally. Therefore, we covenant to become an Open and Affirming congregation, welcoming persons of every age, ability, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, nationality, ethnicity and immigration status into full membership and participation in our community life and ministry. We embrace and support those who experience rejection and exile from spiritual community and commit ourselves to the struggle against injustice.

Serving the Church

The Congregation, Ministers
The Rev. Derek van Gulden, Pastor
Dr. Philip Swanson, Music Director
Kristina Martin, Associate Music Director
Kaitlyn Welch, Director of Faith Formation
Annette Mackin, Office Manager
Phil Bynarowicz, Church Sexton
Daniel Chase, Tech. Person

Contact information

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12 School St., Rockport, Mass. 01966
www.oldsloop.org

Office Hours

Wed., Thurs. Fri.
9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Closed Monday & Tuesdays

Welcome to our Sanctuary! Hearing devices are on a rack by the main entrance, cushions are available in the last pew. Please be at home and comfortable here!



We acknowledge that the land we live on and the water that surrounds us were inhabited by the Pawtucket peoples, members of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

Order of Worship

We Gather as God's People

Prelude Beach Spring Early American/Arr. Don Hustad

Introit God Welcomes All Combined Choirs

Welcome Rev. Derek van Gulden

Hymn* #28 For the Beauty of the Earth

Call to Worship

One: Transformative Creator, you envelop us with examples of community

ALL: We are witness to Jesus' up close and personal attempts to learn about and be with the people

One: You want us to know that what happens outside of our church building matters to God's people.

ALL: Continue to work in and through us to build towards collective flourishing

One: Call us into living.

ALL: Call us into being curious, approachable, and loving towards all Your creation

Prayer of Invocation

Jack Reed

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation – You set this world in motion and gave it life. Turn us to you when our steps are not sure. Come and dance with us, engage with us, as we seek you – so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ. Be with us now, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Holy One, We ask ourselves: Who do we say that we are? How do we show up against an oligarchy that allows discrimination, war, genocide, violence, transphobia, and poverty run rampant amongst God's people. When we experience tension, give us the courage to feel into that tension and to invite a feeling of love and kindness and grace the way that Your Son showed us time and time again. Be with us in this and all the hard moments still to come. Amen.

Words of Grace

Youth Offering

Passing the Peace

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture Psalm 133; 1 Corinthians 12:25-26; Mark 12:28-35 Jack Reed

Sermon

A living Mosaic

Rev. Derek

Choral Anthem

The Lord is My Shepherd

Howard Goodhall

The Lord's Prayer *(The New Zealand Book of Common Prayer)*

Eternal Spirit Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all. Loving God, in whom is heaven. The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the earth! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one

another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Response #769 Hear Our Prayer

We Respond to God's Word

Offertory

Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Poem: A Thousand Sunday Mornings Anne Babson Carter
(see insert)

We Take God's Light into the World

Liturgy of Fairwell

Going Forth

Kathy Olmsted: On June 15, 2012, this congregation called The Rev. Derek van Gulden to serve as Pastor of The First Congregational Church of Rockport - "The Old Sloop"

Pastor Derek: I thank The First Congregational Church, its members and friends, for the love, kindness and support shown me these last 14 years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been encouraged and accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

Congregation: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that your time with us is ending. We express our gratitude for your ministry among us. We ask your forgiveness

for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Pastor Derek: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

Vows of Release

Kathy Olmsted: Do, you, the members and friends of First Congregational Church of Rockport, release Pastor Derek from the duties of Pastor of this church?

Congregation: We do, with the help of God.

Kathy Olmsted: Do you offer him your encouragement as his life and ministry unfold in new ways?

Congregation: We do, with the help of God

Kathy Olmsted: Do you, Pastor Derek, release the First Congregational Church of Rockport from turning to you and depending on you?

Pastor Derek: I do, with the help of God.

Kathy Olmsted: Do you offer your encouragement for the continuing ministry here and on the relationship with another who will come to serve?

Pastor Derek: I do, with the help of God.

Kathy Olmsted: On behalf of the Northeast Association of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. The member churches of our association and conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service

Church Leader: Let us pray.

All: O God, we give thanks for remembered times, when we, together, have shared this life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Pastor Derek in worship, in prayer, and in presence. We pray that Pastor Derek will always be aware of your Spirit's guidance in their life and ministry. Help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

Hymn* #451 Be Now my Vision

Special Presentation

Benediction

Postlude Hymn #482 I Will Lift the Cloud of Night Charles P. Jones

The Choir will sing verses 1-3. The Congregation joins in singing verse 4.

Today's Worship Service Helpers

Liturgist Jack Reed

Ushers Lou and Bob Cannon

Northeast Association Representative – Kathy Olmsted



CALENDAR OF EVENTS April 26- May 3, 2026

- Sunday, April 26 10:00 am Sunday Service
Pastor Derek's Blessing and Sendoff! A gathering meal after worship hosted by the Old Sloop Congregation.
- Monday, April 27 Office Closed
- Tuesday, April 28 Office Closed
11:00 am Tai Chi (Fellowship Hall)
7:00 pm Al-Anon (Morgan Room)
- Wednesday, April 29 Church Office Open 9am -2pm
9:15 am Yoga (Fellowship Hall)
3:00 pm Storytelling Zoom
5:00 pm Bible Study Zoom
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
- Thursday, April 30 Church Office Open 9 am-2 pm
9:30 am Book Group (Morgan Room)
4-5:30 pm Youth Group
- Friday, May 1 Church Office Open 9 am-2pm
4:00 pm Prayer Service – Zoom
- Saturday, May 2
8:30 am AA meeting- (Fellowship Hall)
7:30 pm Old Sloop Presents Abbie Garner/ Jenna Nichols
- Sunday, May 3 10:00 am Sunday Service
2:00 pm Women's AA group (Morgan Room)