

**The First Congregational Church
of Rockport, UCC
12 School Street ~ Rockport, MA
February 15, 2026**



The First Congregational Church of Rockport, “The Old Sloop,” 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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Office Hours Wed., Thurs., Fri. 9-2

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Order of Worship

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.

We Gather as God's People

Prelude Prelude

Johan Albrechtsberger

Welcome

Rev. Derek

Hymn* #28 For the Beauty of the Earth

Announcements

Mission Moment

Ash Wednesday

Pastor Derek

Call to Worship

One: The Lord lifts us up from mud and mire

All: Think thankful thoughts! Say and sing and shout praise!

One: God gives us a new song to sing - hallelujah!

All: Praise God with all your heart! Sing in the shower! Sing in the car!

One: Sing all the time!

All: God's word transforms us from the inside out. And we will declare God's praise with joy and thanksgiving.

Prayer of Invocation

Jim Schell

Holy one, you invite us to "come and see" where you stay. You challenge us to follow you in service of others, to stand with the oppressed, the fearful, the hungry, the poor, to speak out for the voiceless or the powerless. Join us now as we listen to your words, pray for all, and commit to following you. Amen.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Waiting is not always easy for us, especially while living in a realm where instant gratification is perceived as proof of being blessed. You wait for us and on us often. Help us to remember that we are to be of good courage as we wait on you and for you.

Words of Grace

Passing of the Peace

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture Psalm 40:1-10; John 1:32-47

Jim Schell

Sermon Seeking God where you are.

Rev. Derek

Choral Anthem O Taste and See

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father our Mother 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, now and forever. Amen.

Response #769 Hear Our Prayer

Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God; incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.

We Respond to God's Word

Offering O Rest in the Lord
Soloist Gillian Hurst
Felix Mendelssohn

Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Communion Hymn #332 As We Gather at Your Table

Service of Holy Communion

We Take God's Light into the World

Hymn #539 Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

Benediction Rev. Derek

Postlude All' Offertorio Domenico Zipoli

Today's Worship Service Helpers

Ushers Dorothy Geiser and Kathie McCarthy

Liturgist Jim Schell



The altar flowers today are given to honor Chairperson of Outreach, Jay Reed, for his passionate and tireless commitment to assisting individuals in need of help. He does this through many endeavors and affiliations within and outside our congregation.

Coming to Old Sloop Presents

*Tickets online at oldslooppresents.org
or John Tarr Store, 49 Main St. Rockport or
The Bookstore of Gloucester, 61 Main St, Gloucester*

Fri Mar. 13: RUNA

RUNA breathes fresh life into traditional Celtic music by digging into the songs and tunes to find the universal thread that binds past to present.

Sat Apr. 18: Antje Duvokot and David Berkeley

Two outstanding singer-songwriters, a New Englander originally from Germany and a traveler from New Mexico

Sat May 2: Abbie Gardner – Jenna Nicholls opens

*“Not only a first-rate Dobro player but a songwriter to be reckoned with.”
–John Platt, WFUV*

Sat May 30: The Black Feathers – Nora Meier opens

“The Black Feathers could well be Britain’s answer to Gillian Welch and Dave Rawlings” – Flying Shoes



Send forth a love offering to the world this year with One Great Hour of Sharing. One Great Hour of Sharing is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education,

and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. Now through March 15th



SURELY!

a Musical Celebration

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. . .

~

*Musicians from the First Congregational Church of Rockport,
along with others from neighboring congregations,
will present an eclectic program of vocal and instrumental works,
including a series of spoken reflections and vocal arrangements
based on the 23rd Psalm.*

*Followed by a resplendent display of treats
by the Old Sloop's culinary artists!*

~

*In gratitude for music,
for our vibrant Cape Ann community,
and for the 14-year stewardship
of Reverend Derek Van Gulden
at the Old Sloop*

Sunday, March 8, 4:00 pm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS Feb. 15-22, 2026

Sunday, Feb. 15	10:00 am	Worship Service
	2:00 pm	AA Women's Group (Morgan Room)
	2:30 pm	Pastor service at Oceanside
	7:00 pm	Cabinet meets online
Monday, Feb. 16		Office Closed
	10:30 am	Mission Work Group (Morgan Room)
	6:00 pm	Orchestra rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
Tuesday, Feb. 17		Office Closed President's Day
	11:00 am	Tai Chi (Fellowship Hall)
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon (Morgan Room)
Wednesday, Feb. 18		Church Office Reduced hours today~ call ahead (no 9:15 Yoga class returns Mar. 11)
	3:00 pm	Storytelling Zoom
	5:00 pm	Bible Study Zoom
	6:30-7:30	Ash Wednesday Service with Pastor Derek
	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
Thursday, Feb. 19		Church Office Reduced hours today~ call ahead
	9:30 am	Book Group (Morgan Room)
	4-5:30 pm	Old Sloop Youth
Friday, Feb. 20		Church Office Reduced Hours today~ call ahead
	4:00 pm	Prayer service on Zoom
Saturday, Feb. 21		
	8:30 am	AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)
Sunday, Feb. 22		10 am. Worship Service
	2:00 pm	AA Women's Group (Morgan Room)