

**The First Congregational Church
of Rockport, UCC
12 School Street ~ Rockport, MA
January 25, 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

office@oldsloop.org

12 School St Rockport, MA 01966

Office Hours Wed., Thurs., Fri. 9-2

978-546-6638

www.oldslsloop.org



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

Introit Sweet By and By J. Webster/arr. Sharon Wilson

Welcome Rev. Derek

Hymn #28 For the Beauty of the Earth

Call to Worship (*Micah 6: 6-8 NRSV*)

One: With what shall we come before God and bow ourselves before God on high?

**Many: Shall we come before the Holy One with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?**

One: Will God be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rams of oil?

Many: Shall we give our firstborn for our transgression, the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls?

One: God has told us, fellow mortals, what is good and what is required of us.

All: But to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God.

Prayer of Invocation

Holy One, you aren't just good, you are The Good. We welcome Your goodness in any way that it desires to manifest throughout this time of worship. May something be preached, prayed, or sung, that changes us for good, and for good. Amen

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

When we do good, challenges are ever present. Sometimes, the challenges can be overwhelming and so we're tempted to retreat or stay silent. Help us to remember all that you do for our good so that we can go forth and do the same.

Words of Grace

In a beginning, God looked at all that was created and called creation "good". In this moment of a new beginning, let us give thanks for the grace that enables us to be doers of good no matter the challenges we face.

Passing of the Peace

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-11

Sermon Moving Forward

Rev. Derek

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer Traditional Response #769 Hear Our Prayer

We Respond to God's Word

Offering Idumea Shape note tune Solo Gillian Hurst

Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

We Take God's Light into the World

Hymn #492 I Would be True

Benediction

Rev. Derek

Postlude Sweet By and By J. Webster/arr. Sharon Wilson
Only Trust Him.....J. Stockton/arr. Sharon Wilson

Soloists Gillian Hurst, soprano

Rise 'N Chime Choir Alison Trott, Lucy Fales Evans, Rick Kasten

Today's Worship Service Helpers

Ushers Susan Lillis and Kevin McDonough



*I plant is given to honor “Our Saint of the Old
in appreciation and gratitude for the many
our life together.*

“Why were the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient; and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable.”

Author Unknown

The Annual Reports 2025 are available at www.oldloop.org

They represent the work of all our Old Sloop members named and unnamed here. Special thanks to Pastor Derek and our church staff, Katie Welch, Phil Swanson and Kristina Martin, Phil Bynarowicz (for keeping us all in order), our Clerk Susan Lillis and man of many hats Jim Schell, Historian Liz Rice Smith, Committee Members and the Chairs, Rick Kasten, Jack Reed, Jill Carter, Ruth Janet Taylor, Joe Chambers and Laurie McKenna, who provided reports of their Committees' work for the 2025 Annual Reports. And thanks to our Treasurer, Bruce Coates, for his work all year and his meticulous reporting on the financial records of the church. Thanks to Jay Reed for tireless support of our ambitious Outreach programs and Celene and Geof Lyon and their devoted volunteers for Old Sloop Presents. Gratitude for our members who worked hard at fun and fun raising events all year led by Amy, Barbara, Louisa , Jack, Michelle and Bill. Wendy, thanks for keeping the kitchen supplied along with all those that got certified and baked all year! Thanks to the Old Sloop Fleet angels led by Wendy and Liz Rice Smith. Thanks to Moderator Kevin Love for shepherding the annual Meeting process. Thanks to Geof Lyon and Juliette Mackin for tech help and Camilla Ayers for her expert proof-reading skills and time. A wonderful giving congregation! Thanks to all and enjoy the coming year 2026!



CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

The First Congregational Church of Rockport

The 272nd Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Rockport, Massachusetts will be held on Sunday, February 1, 2026, commencing at 11:00 AM, to consider and act upon the following:

1. *Reports of the Church Officers and Committees.*
2. *The report of the Nominating Committee and the election of Church Officers and Committee Members.*
3. *The Annual Budget proposed by the Board of Trustees.*
4. *Any other business that may be brought legally before the meeting.*

Because of ongoing health concerns, this will be a hybrid meeting. Instructions for how to participate remotely will be distributed shortly.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan G. Lillis

Clerk of the Church, clerk@oldsloop.org, 978-546-6638

CALENDAR OF EVENTS Jan 25 to Feb. 1, 2026



Sunday, Jan. 25 10:00 am Worship Service
 10:15 Old Sloop Youth Faith Formation
 2:00 pm AA Women's Group (Morgan Room)

Monday, Jan 26 Office Closed
 6:00 pm Orchestra rehearsal Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, Jan. 27 Office Closed
 11:00 am Tai Chi (Fellowship Hall)
 7:00 pm Al-Anon (Morgan Room)

Wednesday, Jan 28 Church Office -Open 9-2
 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, Jan 29 Church Office Open 9-2
 9:30 am Book Group (Morgan Room)

Friday, Jan 30 Church Office Open 9-2
 4:00 pm Prayer service on Zoom

Saturday, Jan 31 8:30 am AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, Feb. 1 10 am. Worship Service, Holy Communion
 10:15 Old Sloop Youth Faith Formation
 11:00 am Annual Meeting followed by our Congregational Luncheon
 2:00 pm AA Women's Group (Morgan Room)