

**The First Congregational Church
of Rockport, UCC
12 School Street ~ Rockport, MA
March 1, 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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12 School St Rockport, MA 01966

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

978-546-6638

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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 Pastoral John Stanley
Introit **Ise Oluwah** Zulu
"Whatever God has created cannot be destroyed."

Welcome Rev. Derek

Hymn* #476 My Life Flows on in Endless Song

Announcements

Call to Worship

One: We are a wilderness wandering people on a journey of the soul.

All: May we find our destination in our longing to be whole.

One: Our Holy God is calling to us.

All: With Jesus by our side may compassion be our compass;

One: may the Spirit be our guide,

All: on The Way, on The Way, on The Way.

Prayer of Invocation Jill Carter

Prayer for the Path God of the Pilgrimage, be with us on The Way. At times, we don't know if we are on the path, you would have us travel. How do we know the direction for our lives? We come seeking your guidance, as Jesus showed us to do. Help us to be at home even in our wanderings, knowing that you are ever with us. Amen.

Cry

by Louise Cloutier

Sometimes you just have to cry. You don't have to hold it in. You don't even have to know why.

Sinner's Hymn

by Henry Hipkens

I was lost in life's cold darkness; I am drifting out at sea. Silently I pray. I believe I will free myself.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Holy Companion of our difficult days, you call us toward what is new even when we feel worn or uncertain. We confess the weight we carry—the fears we nurture, the habits that hold us tight, the moments we turn from compassion, the truths we avoid. Unbind what tightens around our hearts. Lift what has grown too heavy. Make room in us for generosity, justice, and the courage to begin again. Shape us for your healing work as this new day unfolds.

Amen.

Words of Grace**Passing of the Peace****We Listen for God's Word****Scripture** Psalm 37: 23-27; Isaiah 55:1-9

Jill Carter

Homily

Rev. Derek

Love is Little

Shaker melody

Love is little. Love is low. Love will make our spirit grow.

Breaths

by Ysaye Barnwell (Sweet Honey in the Rock)

Listen more often to things than to beings...

Tis the ancestors' breath in the voice of the waters.

Prayers of the People

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

We Respond to God's Word

Offering

Doxology
Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

We Take God's Light into the World

The Storm Is Passing Over Gospel, arr. Barbara W. Baker
Have courage, my soul, and let us journey on. Though the night is dark, the morning light appears. Hallelujah!

Benediction Rev. Derek
Amen

Postlude Deep Peace Gaelic Blessing, music by Bill Douglass

Musicians

'**Leven** ~ Sue Bonior, Pat Maloney Brown, Caroline Haines, Pat Levesh, Kristina Martin, Dawn Pratson, Sheryl Reed

Ushers Jeff Taylor and Chip Kistner

Liturgist Jill Carter

*“The flowers on the altar honor the anniversary of the
March 9, 1991 wedding of
Louisa Casadei and Eric Johnson.
How blessed we were.”*



**Ahoy, Old Sloop! We're looking forward to
hosting singers, instrumentalists, and guests from
neighboring Cape Ann congregations.**

Surely! a Musical Celebration & Reception ~ March 8, 4:00 pm.,

Our choir will be triple in size!

Join us if you like! (call for details 978-509-4995)

Wednesday, March 4, 7:30-8:45. Rehearsal - Chancel Choir

Thursday, March 5, 7:00-8:45. Rehearsal - Combined Choirs (adults)

Saturday, March 7, TBD (afternoon) - Youth Musicians

Sunday, March 8, 3:00 Warmup (all performers) 4:00 Concert

Volunteer help needed for the March 8th event.

Please help us put our best foot forward, if you can!

Please call Kristina Martin if you can help: 978-509-4995

- 1. Set up and/or take down tables and chairs in Fellowship Hall.**
- 2. Greet concert guests with programs at front or back of sanctuary.**
- 3. Serve refreshments.**
- 4. Clean up refreshments**



***~Welcoming all ~to a host of
congregation activities, food, and fellowship
March & April 2026!***

***You are invited by the Old Sloop Fleet, the
Deacons, the Music Dept, Faith Formation,
Old Sloop Youth, and the Cabinet to:***

***1) March 8 4:00 pm The “Surely” Concert & culinary
treats social time afterward to bring the Cape Ann
community together and to honor Pastor Derek;***

***2) March 15, our regular 2nd Sunday Coffee Hour after
worship is rescheduled to the 15th, Deacons host.***

***3) March 29, Palm “Sundae” Coffee Hour hosted by
Faith Formation & The Old Sloop Fleet, together.***

4) April 5, Easter Sunday Coffee Hour, after worship, Old Sloop Fleet hosts.

5) April 12, Coffee Hour after worship hosted by the Cabinet

***6) April 26, Sunday after worship,
Farewell Blessing & Sendoff Gathering Meal to honor and thank Pastor
Derek with his family, with members and friends of the congregation, and
with other invited guests, hosted by the church, as a whole.***



CALENDAR OF EVENTS March 1-8, 2026

Sunday, Mar. 1	10:00 am	Worship Service	10:15	Old Sloop Youth
	1:00 pm	Music Committee meets online		
	2:00 pm	AA Women's Group		(Morgan Room)
Monday, Mar. 2		Office Closed		
	3:45 pm	CAYC rehearsal		(Fellowship Hall)
	6:00 pm	Orchestra rehearsal		(Fellowship Hall)
Tuesday, Mar. 3		Office Closed		
	11:00 am	Tai Chi		(Fellowship Hall)
	6:00 pm	Old Sloop Potluck Supper		(Fellowship Hall)
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon		(Morgan Room)
Wednesday, Mar. 4		Church Office -Open	9-2	
	3:00 pm	Storytelling Zoom		
	5:00 pm	Bible Study Zoom		
	7:30 pm-8:45	Choir Rehearsal		(Fellowship Hall)
Thursday, Mar. 5		Church Office Open	9-2	
	9:30 am	Book Group		(Morgan Room)
	7:00-8:45	Choir rehearsal		"Surely!" combined adult choirs
Friday, Mar. 6		Church Office Open	9-2	
	4:00 pm	Prayer service on Zoom		
Saturday, Mar. 7		AA meeting		(Fellowship Hall)
	9:30-11:00	Rev. Derek		(Morgan Room)
	Time TBA	Youth Musicians rehearsal		for "Surely"
Sunday, Mar. 8		10 am. Worship Service,	10:15	Old Sloop Youth
	2:00 pm	AA Women's Group		(Morgan Room)
	4:00 pm	SURELY! A Musical Celebration		& refreshments