

**The First Congregational Church
of Rockport, UCC
12 School Street ~ Rockport, MA
March 8, 2026**



Today at 4:00 pm daylight savings time!

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

SURELY!

a Musical Celebration

followed by special treats

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

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

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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 Reflection

K. Beaumont

Welcome

Rev. Derek

Hymn* #497 Guide My Feet

Announcements

Mission Moment Christian Outreach One Great Hour of Sharing

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

Bonnie Gray

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. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

We anticipate our coming journey while at the same time impatient for the end. You ask us to travel with you to experience all that there is on the path. But often we look for short cuts unwilling to take the time to listen, see and feel all that your created world has to offer. Waiting is not always easy for us, especially while living in a realm where instant gratification is perceived as proof of being blessed. Bless with ease of breath, open eyes to see and companions to share the journey with.
Amen

Words of Grace

Passing of the Peace

Communion Hymn # One Bread, One Body (see insert)

Service of Holy Communion (see insert)

We Listen for God's Word

Scripture Psalm 32:1-11; Luke 13:31-34 Bonnie Gray

Sermon The Way Around. Rev. Derek

Choral Anthem The Lord is my Shepherd Howard Goodall

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

Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

We Take God's Light into the World

Hymn # 501 We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle

Benediction

Rev. Derek

The Creator God filled you with breath, inviting you to this journey called Life.

We will follow on The Way.

Jesus, our Guide, showed us what it means to make a new way with Love.

We will follow on The Way.

The Spirit gives us strength to move forward with Courage and Compassion for all we meet.

We will follow on The Way.

May this week be filled with opportunities to let others share with you their journey stories, and for you to share yours so you might come to know each other more fully. May it be so. Amen

Buen Camino!

Choral Amen

Today's Worship Service Helpers

Ushers Jeff Taylor and Janice Ramsden

Liturgist Bonnie Gray

*The altar flowers are given
by Ann and Chip Kistner
In loving memory of our parents
Charles and Doris Kistner
and Roland and Marjorie Early*



Cape Ann Youth Chorus

♥ A Love Song Sampler ♥

Monday, March 9, 5:00 pm.
in the sanctuary.

While the Shalin Liu Performance Center has been under renovations since December, the all-new Cape Ann Youth Chorus, CAYC has been rehearsing weekly in Fellowship Hall.

After this Monday's rehearsal they will offer a casual 1/2 hour performance in the sanctuary.

All are welcome.

Coming to Old Sloop Presents ~ tickets at oldslooppresents.org

Fri Mar. 13: 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.

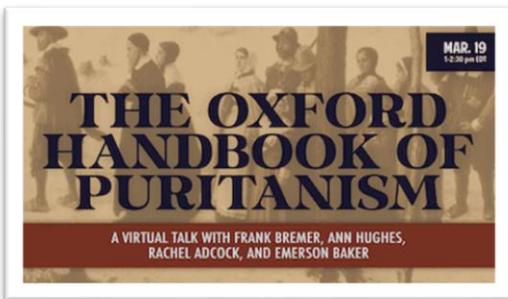
***Sat Apr. 18: Antje Duvekot and David Berkeley
Two outstanding singer-songwriters, a New Englander originally from Germany and a traveler from New Mexico***



**~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, Coffee Hour after worship 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 the Cabinet hosts.**
- 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.**



Church Historian Liz Rice Smith invites you to join this online program from the Congregational Library and Archives. Dr. Frank Bremer, Dr. Ann Hughes, Dr. Rachel Adcock, and Dr. Emerson Baker The Oxford Handbook of Puritanism March 19 @ 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM EDT This event is free and open to all, but registration is required via this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6217714178482/WN_2OuiyOGyQga1t15z4W3T0Q

Message of thanks from the Grace Center Staff

“Dear Ruth & Rockport Congregational,

Thank you so much for your continued support of Grace Center and its guests. Something as simple as socks and underwear can change a guest’s outlook in that moment. We are grateful to have your contributions which enable us to offer this service. Wishing you well in the New Year.”

Thanks to all of you who contributed to our White Sock Tree.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS March 8-15, 2026

Sunday, Mar. 8	10:00 am	Worship Service, Holy Communion
	10:15 am	Old Sloop Youth Faith Formation
	2:00 pm	AA Women’s Group (Morgan Room)
	4:00 pm	SURELY! Musical Celebration (Sanctuary)
Monday, Mar. 9		Office Closed
	3:45 pm	CAYC rehearsal (Sanctuary)
	5:00 pm	Cape Ann Youth Chorus Informal concert (Sanctuary)
	10:00 am	Rockport Garden Club (Morgan Room)
	6:00 pm	Orchestra rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
	7:00 pm	Trustees Meet online
Tuesday, Mar. 10		Office Closed
	11:00 am	Tai Chi (Fellowship Hall)
	7:00 pm	AI-Anon (Morgan Room)
	7:00 pm	Membership Committee online
Wednesday, Mar. 11		Church Office Open 9-2
	9:15 am	Yoga class returns
	3:00 pm	Storytelling Zoom
	5:00 pm	Bible Study Zoom
	7:30 pm	Choir Rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
Thursday, Mar. 12		Church Office Open 9-2
	9:30 am	Book Group (Morgan Room)
	4-5:30 pm	Old Sloop Youth
Friday, Mar. 13		Church Office Open 9-2
	4:00 pm	Prayer service on Zoom
	7:30 pm	RUNA Old Sloop Presents (Fellowship Hall)
Saturday, Mar. 14	8:30 am	AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)
Sunday, Mar. 15	10 am.	Youth lead Worship Service followed by Coffee hour