

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

Today's service is inspired by Illustrated Ministry's "Work of Imagination."

We Gather as God's People

Prelude

Welcome

Welcome to church. You belong here. All are welcome. This is a place of kindness — not judgment. God is not angry with you. Jesus is here with you now. And when you walk out these doors, Remember: You may leave this building, but God never leaves you. He is always with you. (written by the youth group)

Hymn "The Work of Imagination"

Illustrated Ministry

Led by Brian Lynam & Nicole Girard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTnuoUqk7Ok>.

Announcements

Flower Moment

Flowers Committee

Call to Worship

Leader: Can you imagine a world without hate, where we see God in every face?

People: Yes! God helps us love everyone!

Leader: Can you imagine a world without fear, where everyone feels safe, and peace is near?

People: Yes! God is with us and makes us brave!

Leader: Can you imagine having enough food and clothes? So no one has to go without?

People: Yes! God teaches us to care for everyone!

Leader: Can you imagine a world where everyone is free-to be the wonderful person God made them to be?

People: Yes! God made each of us unique!

Leader: Let's come together and worship God—

People: The God who loves us, cares for us, and shows us how to love the world!

All: Let's worship God with joy!!

Prayer of Invocation Gracious and Eternal God, Awaken in us the holy work of imagination— the courage to envision a world made whole, the faith to believe that wrongs can be rewritten, the hope to see beauty rise from broken places. Amen.

Words of Grace

Passing of the Peace

Jugglers

Poems, prayers, and shares from friends and members of the congregation

“You didn't notice me noticing” By Debbie Gline Allen

We Listen for God's Word

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father and 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, for ever and ever. Amen

Response: #769 Hear Our Prayer

Musical score for "Hear Our Prayer" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "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**

Musical score for "Offering Doxology" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, you heavenly host: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost."

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

We Take God's Light into the World

Hymn #539 Won't you let me be your servant

Benediction

In the work of imagination, make us co-creators of justice, bearers of mercy, and witnesses to Your transforming grace—until the song of heaven and earth is one. Amen.

Postlude "Golden Slumber" by the Beatles

***All are invited to coffee hour after the worship service,
hosted by the Deacons.***



Ushers today Jeff Taylor and Rich Lorigan

*The altar flowers are given
by Michelle and Bill Elwell
To all caregivers—
Thank you for your patience, your strength,
and your endless kindness.*

One Great Hour of Sharing

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 through March 15th.



Holy Week and Easter Services 2026



Sun., March 29- 10 am *Palm Sunday Service*

Wed., April 1- 7 pm *Vespers in the FCCR Morgan Room*

Thurs., April 2- 7 pm *Maundy Thursday Service FCCR Sanctuary*

**Fri., April 3- 6 pm *Ecumenical Good Friday Service*
at Trinity Congregational Church, Gloucester “Meditation on the last seven words from the cross.”**

Sun., April 5- 6 am *Easter Sunrise Ecumenical Service, Good Harbor Beach*

April 5- 10:00 am *Easter Service FCCR Sanctuary*

Welcoming all to:

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



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

April 12, Coffee Hour after worship, the Cabinet hosts.

April 26, Final Service with Rev. Derek

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 15-22, 2026

Sunday, Mar. 15	10:00 am Youth led Worship Service followed by Coffee hour hosted by the Deacons
2:00 pm	AA Women's Group (Morgan Room)
Monday, Mar. 16	Office Closed
3:45 pm	CAYC rehearsal Fellowship Hall
6:00 pm	Orchestra rehearsal (Fellowship Hall)
Tuesday, Mar. 17	Office Closed St. Patrick's Day
11:00 am	Tai Chi (Fellowship Hall)
7:00 pm	Al-Anon (Morgan Room)
Wednesday, Mar. 18	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. 19	Church Office Open 9-2
9:30 am	Book Group (Morgan Room)
4-5:30 pm	Old Sloop Youth
7:00 pm	Diaconate meet online
Friday, Mar. 20	Church Office Open 9-2
4:00 pm	Prayer service on Zoom
6:00 pm	Community Brown Bag discussion Fellowship Hall
Saturday, Mar. 21	8:30 am AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)
Sunday, Mar. 22	10:00 am Worship service Rev. Susan Moran
	10:15 Faith Formation Old Sloop Youth

Coming to Old Sloop Presents ~ Tickets at oldslooppresents.org

Sat Apr. 18: Antje Duvekot and David Berkeley

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