

the first church in chestnut hill

[UNITARIAN]

26 SUFFOLK ROAD OFF HAMMOND STREET



January 2025

SUNDAY SERVICE at 10:30

Rev. Mark J. T. Caggiano, Minister

VERITAS, CARITAS, ET RISUS

Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good...

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Happy New Year. This winter, I will be offering an extended set of sermons on major religious concepts. The origin of this series was a question from someone asking about what we believe at First Church. And this is my attempt to articulate some of that. There are ideas that make up any religion. How one understands the world around us. What is the meaning of life. Why do we do things a certain way. There is theology and philosophy. There are long standing traditions and local idiosyncrasies. I will look to the past and ponder the present. And as always, I will offer my interpretations which are no more than the starting point of a conversation.

In January, I will consider God, baptism, marriage, and Jesus. Of course, a discussion about God could fill a year of sermons while our understanding of Jesus is foundational for why we gather as a congregation. And yet, I surmise that there will be differences in the ways we respectively imagine both God and Jesus—differences, which are uniquely encouraged in a Unitarian community.

Unitarianism began, in part, as an objection to certain assumptions made within traditional Protestant communities. “Unitarian” as a label specifically arose from protesting the formulation of the Trinity. However, Unitarians did not object to the ideas of God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but rather to the prescribed organization of the divine set down centuries ago in the Nicene Creed. The objection was that this accepted version of the Trinity is non-Biblical (we’ll discuss that).

Unitarians also sought to rely upon reason as the basis of their theological musings. I must confess to being of that religious persuasion, for the most part. And so, I will try to reason my way along through various core concepts of Christian thought and how these are expressed in our religious community. I will not get it exactly right, I am guessing. Such a community exists not to be “right” in any final sense, but to move along as a collection of people joined together on a journey of religious curiosity and faithful living. I look forward to our time together for this conversation.

God bless,

~Mark

January 5

Sermon: Epiphany and God
Scriptures: Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12, Psalm 72
Scripture Reader: Bert Dane
Usher: Werner Lohe
Coffee Hour: Sally and Bert Dane
Altar Flowers: The flowers are given in loving memory of Jane Ewell Dane by Bert And Sally Dane.

January 12

Sermon: Baptism and the Trinity
Scriptures: Isaiah 43:1-7, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Scripture Reader: Carol Lohe
Usher: Mark Chadbourne
Coffee Hour: Carol and Werner Lohe
Altar Flowers: The flowers are given in loving memory of Philip and Alice Morss by the Drayton family.

January 19

Sermon: With This Ring
Scriptures: Isaiah 62:1-5, John 2:1-11, Psalm 36
Scripture Reader: Linda Hicks
Usher: Joe Hicks
Coffee Hour: Sarah and Andrew Welch

January 26

Sermon: Who is Jesus?
Scriptures: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Luke 4:14-21, Psalm 19
Scripture Reader: Lisle Baker
Usher: Lisle Baker
Coffee Hour: Pauline Ho Bynum
Altar Flowers: The flowers are given in loving memory of Mary Elizabeth and Lisle Baker by Sally and Lisle Baker.

JANUARY MUSIC

January 5, 2025

Prelude	Toccata	Frescobaldi
Anthem	From the rising of the Sun	Ouseley
Hymn 120	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	
Response	The Only Son from Heaven	Bach
Offertory Anthem	Cantate Domino	Pitoni
Hymn 143	We Three Kings of Orient Are	
Hymn 142	Unto Us a Boy is Born	
Choral Amen	590 Threefold Amen	Traditional
Postlude	Fugue	Seeger

January 12, 2025

Prelude	Ricercare	Palestrin
Anthem	Wade in the Water	Afro-American Spiritual
Hymn 7	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	
Response	Jesus I Will Never Leave	Bach
Offertory Anthem	Down by the River to Pray	Spiritual
Hymn 277	Jesus, Friend, So Kind and Gentle	
Hymn 29	Now Thank We All Our God	
Choral Amen	591 Fourfold Amen	Barrow
Postlude	Offertoire	Franck

January 19, 2025

Prelude	3 miniatures	Peeters
Anthem	Behold, how good and joyful	Clarke-Whitfeld
Hymn 10	Before Jehovah's Aweful Throne	
Response	Deck Thyself with Joy and Gladness	Bach
Offertory Anthem	I sat down under his shadow	Bairstow
Hymn 465	O Perfect Love	
Hymn 228	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	
Choral Amen	592 Twofold Amen	Perischetti
Postlude	Canzona	Buxtehude

January 26, 2025

Prelude	Chaconne	Couperin
Anthem	Psalm 23	McFerrin
Hymn 414	In Christ There Is No East or West	
Response	Jesus, Priceless Treasure	Bach
Offertory Anthem	Let There be Peace on Earth	Miller
Hymn 335	What a Friend We Have in Jesus	
Hymn 435	Judge Eternal, Throne in Splendor	
Choral Amen	593 Threefold Amen	Persichetti
Postlude	Allegro	Handel

FCCH IN THE COMMUNITY

Thanks to the generosity of many donors, the Fifth Thanksgiving Phantom Fair raised \$12,000, matching the amount that was raised in 2023. So once again, we have donated \$6,000 each to The Brookline Food Pantry and the Centre Street Food Pantry in Newton. Both pantries appreciate our support, because food insecurity remains a pressing issue in both communities.

As the Centre Street Pantry reports, “This year we hosted 11,900 household visits, which was a 3.5% increase from 2023. But the number of people we fed increased by 9.5% due to the need of families that include children as well as large combined households who now live together due to the high cost of housing.”

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Fifth Phantom Fair, enabling us to continue to support both local food pantries.

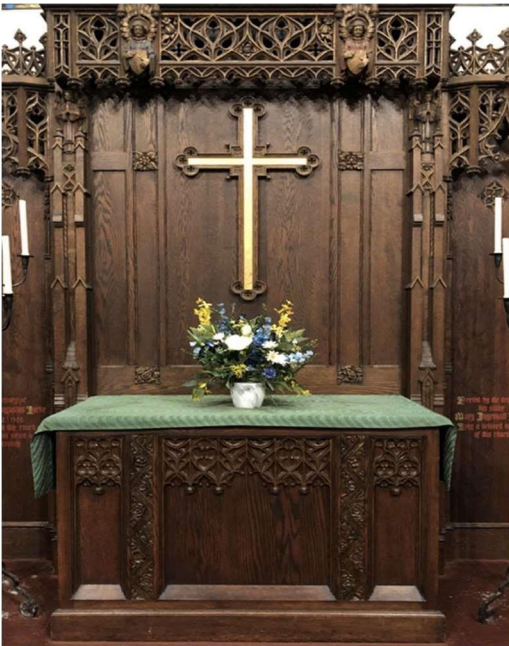
ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Rev. Mark hosts bible study at 1:00 PM on Wednesdays on Zoom. We are studying the Book of Genesis. Contact Rev. Mark at mjtcaggiano@gmail.com to be included on the Zoom invitation list. All are welcome.

DONATIONS

Collection has returned to its traditional format during the service. If you wish, you may also make your donation via Zelle or mail a check to the church, Attention: Treasurer, 26 Suffolk Road, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467. Many thanks for your anticipated generosity.

ALTAR FLOWERS



Attention flower donors: please contact Dana Flynn (617-680-0702) to coordinate the delivery of your flower donation. He will meet the florist (or you) at the church on the Saturday prior to your date. If you prefer, we also have tasteful silk arrangements which can easily be placed on the altar.

If you would like to donate flowers, multiple dates are still available for the year. Please contact Victor Strama if you are interested at 26suffolk@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER SCRIPTURE READERS

If you would like to join the group of volunteer scripture readers, please contact Carol Lohe (ctryoen@mfa.org). This is a rewarding opportunity to be part of our Sunday services.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

.....
to
grow spiritually
foster community
serve others

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CHOIR

Kathryn Rosenbach, 617-821-0385

Christina Grandy de Oliveira, Soprano

Becca Allen, Mezzo Soprano

MinSun Im, Tenor

Guanghao Yu, Baritone

SEXTON

Dana Flynn, 617-680-0702

ADMINISTRATOR

26Suffolk@gmail.com

FOR THOSE IN NEED THIS MONTH

Please contact Rev. Mark at the church or via email

[\(mjtcaggiano@gmail.com\)](mailto:mjtcaggiano@gmail.com)



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Parsonage Telephone 617-232-0011

www.firstchurchchestnuthill.org