

The organ and choir music today is in observance of the birthday anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach, who was born on March 21, 1685 in Eisenbach, Germany.

To attach your hearing aids to our assisted listening system, download the Sennheiser Mobileconnect App and scan this code:



First Church of Christ Congregational
12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 233-9605
www.whfirstchurch.org

To Give Online: <http://www.whfirstchurch.org/giving/give>

First Church's worship services are live streamed every Sunday downstairs in our church library, the John P. Webster Library. Watch church while your toddler plays in our children's area or if you need a separate place to worship for any other reason.



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026
10 o'clock

Rev. Fredd Ward, Senior Pastor
Jim Boratko, Director of Worship Arts
Amanda Bethune, Director of Faith Formation

PRELUDES *Shepherd of Israel, from the Magnificat* J. S. Bach
Wo Soll Ich Fliehen Hin, BWV 646 J. S. Bach
("O Whither Shall I Flee?")

WELCOME

†CALL TO WORSHIP Kelly Shea
 One: Come, Spirit of God.
 Many: **We await your presence in this place.**
 One: We trust in your abiding promises
 Many: **We pray to receive your power during this time of worship.**
 One: Breathe on us, breath of God.
 One: **The story of Lazarus assures us that life – not death – has the last word!!**

†HYMN 108 [*Lift High the Cross*](#) CRUCIFER

†OPENING PRAYER

Life-giving God, it is easy to be overwhelmed with all that is happening in the world. Everywhere we look, we see struggles and sorrows and strife. At times, hope is hard work. But where we see endings, you breathe new life and bring new beginnings. Where we see failure, your forgiveness changes everything. You alone have the power to create unlikely opportunities and undreamed possibilities. Be with us as we wait for you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING (PART 1) [John 11:1-15](#)

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES AMANDA BETHUNE

SCRIPTURE READING (PART 2) [John 11:20-29](#)

ANTHEM *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* J. S. Bach
 The First Church Choir

SCRIPTURE READING (PART 3) [John 11:30-45](#)

†RESPONSE [Lord Jesus, Think on Me](#) SOUTHWELL
**Lord Jesus, think on me, and purge away my sin,
 From worldly passions set me free, and make me pure within.**

† Please stand in body or spirit as you are able.

SERMON *Take Away the Stone.* Rev. Fredd Ward

HYMN 254 [Breathe on Me, Breath of God](#) TRENTHAM

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

God breathes new life into us and gives us hope. With gratitude for God's presence and trust in God's promises, let us offer our gifts.

OFFERTORY *Bless the Lord, O My Soul* J. S. Bach
 The First Church Choir

†DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heavenly hosts:
 Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

†OFFERTORY PRAYER

Spirit of God, you breathe new life into the stuck and stagnant places of our daily living. We are grateful for the power of your transforming love. We bring these gifts, hoping that they will revitalize the barren spaces of our world. We also offer our best selves with readiness to serve all your creation. Amen.

†HYMN 250 [O Breath of Life](#) ST. CLEMENS

BENEDICTION AND RESPONSE *Our Darkness* Taize Chant
 The First Church Choir

POSTLUDE *Tocatta in D Minor, Dorian, BWV 538* J. S. Bach

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments following the service!