WELCOME

HOME
FIRST 
CHURCH 
NATICK
In this transitional time, we will make weekly decisions about whether programs will be hosted in-person or virtually via Zoom. This brochure presents information with the expectation that programs will be in-person, unless specified otherwise. We will communicate changes to a Zoom platform via the weekly LINK email and announcements in the weekly worship bulletin.

In addition to the opportunities listed in these pages, we also encourage you to check out the titles on a variety of topics in the church library located on level 2 in the Hayes Parlor.

You will find some great selections for adults, youth, and children.
Environmental Action Sunday: Solar / Clean Heat Challenge

Sunday, October 24 @ noon with Jillian Wilson-Martin (via Zoom)

Learn how the Town of Natick is participating in the Metrowest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge. Jillian Wilson-Martin will present everything you need to know about solar and heat exchange units and how your family can join in the effort to reach the Net-Zero goal in Natick.

Environmental Action Sunday: Electric Vehicles

Sunday, November 14 @ noon with Sharon Kirby

Join Sharon Kirby in this overview of environmentally friendly cars--cars that use less fuel or are all electric. We'll look at what those cars are and how they're different from gas cars/internal combustion engines. This is great information if you're in the market for buying a new car or just want to see what's new and improved! There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions.
Social Justice & Environmental Action

Family Promise Hosting Weeks

*Our Next “Host Week” is December 20, 2021*

Family Promise offers hope to homeless families with children through safe transitional shelter, meals and supportive case management as they seek permanent housing. The families will begin staying at their permanent location in Natick in 2022, where our volunteers can do the grocery shopping, prepare meals, and share companionship with the families and offer activities and homework support for the children.

Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath: Vigil and Forum

*December 13 through 17*

Vigil on Wednesday, December 15 @ 7PM; Forum to follow

Each December we remember those lives lost to gun violence in our country and we call for common sense gun legislation to reduce the harm to our families and communities. Join us on the Front Porch for a candlelight vigil to remember those lives, especially those killed this year. Following the brief outdoor vigil, we will move inside for a discussion of the impact of gun violence in our lives facilitated by ‘Moms Demand Action’.
Social Justice &
Environmental Action

Annual Community Opiate Vigil
Sunday, December 19 @ 7PM
The prescription painkiller and heroin crisis is wreaking a devastating effect on young Natick residents and their families. During the holiday season, the Natick community will gather again to remember those we have lost and raise awareness about addiction in MetroWest. The evening will include testimony, inspirational speaking and prayer, as well as an invitation to future action.

Souper Bowl 2022 ~ Penguins vs. Polar Bears
Begins on Sunday, January 9 and concludes at the end of worship on Sunday, February 6
The Polar Bears take on the Penguins in the Souper Bowl of Caring to restock the shelves of the Natick Food Pantry. Contributions of non-perishable food or cash or online donations are tallied at the end of the service on Super Bowl Sunday to see whether those living north or south of Route 135 will win the coveted Campbell-Progresso Trophy!
MLK Community Celebration
Monday, January 17 @ 10AM
Wilson Middle School Auditorium
Gather with the wider Natick community to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and discover how his legacy continues to shape our community and empower our young people to practice justice and compassion for all people. The Johnson Peacemakers, guest speakers from the high school and youth winners of the MLK Essay competition will present. All are welcome to participate in a community gathering to follow where you can meet many of the great people and organizations committed to service and justice and social action who make Natick a great place to live.

Environmental Action Sunday: Climate Advocacy
Sunday, February 13 @ noon with Emma Brewer-Wallin
In this session, we will review some of the basics of engaging in advocacy, discuss environmental justice bills currently up in the Legislature, and ground ourselves in the faith commitments that sustain our action. Emma Brewer-Wallin is the Conference Area Minister for Environmental and Economic Justice for the Southern New England Conference of the UCC.
Social Justice & Environmental Action

Dismantling Racism ~ Brave Conversations on advancing Racial Justice

*Mondays @ 7PM with Myriam Hernandez Jennings*
*3 week session, beginning January 24*

Please join us for a unique three night experience. Each session will build on the last, as we work together and in small groups to create shared language and forge deeper connections by telling our stories and listening to the experiences of others. By the end of the third evening we will have a deeper understanding of each other, and be able to utilize what we have learned to move awareness into action in our own lives.

Environmental Action Sunday: This Changes Everything

*Sunday, March 20 @ noon*

We will view and discuss the documentary film “This Changes Everything”. Filmed over 211 shoot days in nine countries and five continents over four years, This Changes Everything is an epic attempt to re-imagine the vast challenge of climate change. The film presents seven powerful portraits of communities on the front lines. Interwoven with these stories of struggle is Klein’s narration, connecting the carbon in the air with the economic system that put it there. Throughout the film, Klein builds to her most controversial and exciting idea: that we can seize the existential crisis of climate change to transform our failed economic system into something radically better.
Environmental Action Sunday: ECO Natick
Sunday, April 10 @ noon with Bill Ramage

In this session we will learn about a new website available to all Natick residents which offers actions, events, testimonials, vendor recommendations, and information about ANYTHING that will help folks get started on the path to a more eco-friendly life in our beautiful town. Come join the conversation about this exciting new resource for the Natick community.

The Road to Freedom: Portraits of People with Disabilities

Date: TBD

The Road to Freedom is an exhibit of photographs and interviews with people who whose lives are affected by the full spectrum of physical, sensory, learning, and mental disabilities, created by Family Diversity Project to challenge the damaging myths and stereotypes about this often-marginalized group of people. This exhibit is brought to us by our ONA team.
Cabell–Lincoln County Work Camp ~ Country Roads Take Me Home!

Saturday, June 18 through Saturday, June 25

Our congregation has a long history with this outreach trip to West Virginia and we hope to return this year. Youth and adults travel to the hollers of Cabell County West Virginia to work on crews from up and down the East Coast to make homes warm, safe, and dry.

Natick is United

Natick is United is a network of a variety of groups in Natick interested in promoting an atmosphere of welcome and inclusiveness. There are many opportunities to get involved from flying a rainbow peace flag at your home to attending an educational event to showing up for a peace rally on the common. Keep your ear to the ground and watch for more information about what this group is planning. Visit their website at https://www.natickisunited.org.

Composting

Pick up by Black Earth Compost every Tuesday, starting September 28

First Church is bringing back our composting program! We will compost food waste from coffee hour, church suppers, and the ACHIEVE program. We also welcome compost from households. Contact the green team if you want a counter top container for your kitchen.
Faith Exploration

Hayes Parlor Bible Study
First Thursday of the month @ 2PM, beginning October 7
We will explore the Gospel of John with the Listen Up! Bible Study series. This Bible study encourages us to listen to the Bible, listen to your own questions and responses, and listen to the honest sharing among participants in the group. Join us in the Hayes Parlor.

Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle
Second Friday of the month @ 7PM, Beginning September 10
The Prayer Shawl Ministry combines the care and love of knitting into a prayerful ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace. Healing prayers are knitted into shawls and blankets and given to those during illness, recovery, at times of loss or in times of joy. We will celebrate our Prayer Shawl Sunday this year on November 14.
Faith Exploration

UCC Basics

*Wednesdays @ 7PM with Rev. Dr. Jonathan New*

*Three-week session, beginning September 22 via Zoom*

Want to know more about this denomination of ours that’s been described as a “heady, exasperating mix”? Come learn about the UCC’s complex history, how its different settings – congregations, Associations, Conferences, and National UCC – relate to one another, and how decision-making happens, as well as about the values, commitments, and beliefs that shape how we do and are Church together. Whether you’re mostly feeling the headiness of the UCC’s high aspirations or exasperation born of how it sometimes fails to reach them, here’s an opportunity for us to ask what surprises, perplexes, or thrills us most about our denominational home.
Meditation and Prayer Circle

*Thursdays @ 6:45PM with Linda Champion via Zoom*

*Beginning September 23*

These quiet, contemplative sessions will last around 40 minutes, beginning with an opening centering prayer, followed by about 12 minutes of silence, a devotional reading, a sharing of prayer requests, another 12 minutes of silence, and a closing centering prayer.

We Make the Road by Walking

*Sunday mornings @ 9AM with Sarallyn Keller*

*Beginning September 26*

We will use the book of this title by Brian McLaren in a year-long quest to seek a fresh way to experience and practice our faith. If you're a long-term Christian seeking new vitality, or if you feel out of place in traditional church circles, this group will inspire and activate you in your spiritual journey through rich study, interactive learning, and personal growth.
Antiracism Circle  
Mondays @ 7:00PM  
Five-week session, beginning October 18  
Are you ready to get uncomfortable? If you are prepared to roll up your sleeves and do some serious reflection to align what you profess to value with your actual practice of antiracist action, this is the small group for you. We will use the book, ‘Me and White Supremacy’ by Layla Saad to guide us on a journey to explore and unpack our relationship with white supremacy. This will at times be a very personal journey, but you will also have a group of loving, hopeful, real people with you on this trek, to expand your intellectual and emotional understanding of racism and white supremacy within a circle.

Pub Theology  
Most fourth Wednesdays of the month @ 7:30PM  
Beginning October 27  
Some of the most important moments in the history of the church took place in a pub! The tradition continues with “God on Tap.” The format is simple – beverages, munchies, conversation and God. Everything is up for discussion. The more opinions the better! Seating is limited. Watch for pub locations in the weekly bulletins, LINK, and Good Word Newsletter.
Prayer Shawl Knitting Circle
Second Friday of the month @ 7PM Beginning September 10

Natick Day ~ Ring that Bell!
Saturday, September 11 @ 10 AM to 3PM

Lunch Bunch
Third Thursday of the month @ 12:00PM, Beginning on September 16

First Church Book Group
Various dates, Beginning on September 18

Rally Day Cook-out
Sunday, September 19 @ noon

UCC Basics
Wednesdays @ 7PM with Rev. Dr. Jonathan New,
Three-week session, beginning September 22

Prayer Circle
Thursdays @ 6:30PM via Zoom, Beginning September 23

Family Hikes
Last Saturday of the month @10:00AM, Beginning September 25

We Make the Road by Walking
Sunday mornings @ 9AM with Saralyn Keller, beginning September 26

Blessing of the Animals
Saturday, October 2 @ Noon

Antiracism Circle
Mondays @ 7:00PM, Five-week session, beginning October 18

Hayes Parlor Bible Study
First Thursday of the month @ 2PM, beginning October 7

Saturday Dinner with Chef Bob
Second Saturday of the month @ 6PM, Beginning on October 9

Natick Open Studios
Saturday, October 16, and Sunday, October 17

Youth Mental Health First Aid
Saturday, November 6 @8:30AM

Environmental Action Sunday: Solar / Clean Heat Challenge
Sunday, October 24 @ noon with Jillian Wilson-Martin (via Zoom)

Pub Theology
Fourth Wednesday of the month @ 7:30PM, Beginning October 27

Silent Movie Night
Saturday, October 30 @ 7PM

Natick History Night with Steve Evers
Saturday, November 12 @ 7PM

Environmental Action Sunday: Electric Vehicles
Sunday, November 14 @ noon with Sharon Kirby

Living Creche and Caroling with Brass Ensemble
Sunday, November 28 @ 3:30PM

Outdoor Advent Wreath Lighting
Four Sundays in Advent @ 4:00PM, Beginning November 28
First Church Programs 2021-2022

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Victorian Christmas  
**Sunday, December 5 and 12 @ 4PM**

Gun Violence Vigil & Forum  
**Wednesday, December 15 @ 7PM with Moms Demand Action**

Family Promise Hosting Weeks  
**Our Next “Host Week” is December 20, 2021**

Annual Community Opiate Vigil  
**Sunday, December 19 @ 7PM**

New Year’s Brunch  
**Sunday, January 2 @ 10:30AM**

**Souper Bowl 2022 ~ Penguins vs. Polar Bears**  
Begins on Sunday, January 9 and concludes at the end of worship on Sunday, February 6

MLK Community Celebration  
**Monday, January 17 @ 10AM, Wilson Middle School Auditorium**

Dismantling Racism  
**Mondays @7PM with Myriam Hernandez Jennings**  
Three-week session, beginning on January 24

Annual Meeting Luncheon  
**Sunday, January 30 @ 11:30AM**

Lenten Soul Sabbatical  
**Mondays @ 7PM, Five-week session, beginning March 7**

Environmental Action Sunday: This Changes Everything  
**Sunday, March 20 @ noon**

Environmental Action Sunday: ECO Natick  
**Sunday, April 10 @ noon with Bill Ramage**

Maundy Thursday Potluck & Tenebrae Service  
**Thursday, April 14 @ 6:30PM**

Easter Vigil  
**Saturday, April 16 to Sunday dawn, April 17**

Progressive Dinner  
**Saturday, April 23 @ 6:30PM**

Dinner Church  
**Sunday, April 24 @ 5:30PM with Matt Carriker**

Church Retreat  
**Friday, May 27 through Monday, May, 30**

Cabell-Lincoln County Work Camp ~ Country Roads Take Me Home!  
**Saturday, June 18 through Saturday, June 25**

The Road to Freedom: Portraits of People with Disabilities  
**Date: TBD**

Responding to Teen Anxiety and Depression  
**Date: TBD**
Outdoor Advent Wreath Lighting

*Four Sundays in Advent @ 4:00PM*

*Beginning November 28*

We will fill the darkness with light. Join us on the Front Porch for a short service to light the Advent Candles and sing Christmas Carols in preparation for the birth of the Christ child. (December 5 & 12 the wreath lighting will follow the Victorian Christmas Service).

New Year’s Brunch

*Sunday, January 2 @ 10:30AM*

At First Church, we ring in the New Year by turning back the clock to the way that the first followers of Jesus gathered to celebrate communion. We gather for worship around tables instead of in pews and share a common meal. There is something for all ages and stages – songs and stories and lots of food and laughter!
Lenten Soul Sabbatical
Mondays @ 7:00PM
Five-week session, beginning March 7
You are invited to set aside a short time for reflection every day for 28 days during Lent and gather four times in facilitated small groups to share conversation and connections. Soul Sabbatical offers suggested spiritual practices and reading to go deeper in your faith journey and create space for Spirit to move in your life. We will follow an Environmental theme this year.

Maundy Thursday Potluck & Tenebrae Service
Thursday, April 14 @ 6:30PM
A family-friendly intergenerational potluck dinner and worship service marks Maundy Thursday. We gather around the table for fellowship and a creative worship experience. The service focuses on the last Passover that Jesus celebrated with his friends on the night before he died and features leadership from members of our youth groups. The entire evening is designed to be accessible to all ages.
Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 16 to Sunday dawn, April 17

On the Saturday night before Easter, we make our sanctuary available for prayer and reflection. Participants describe a sense of peace and holiness in this time of waiting in the presence of God in the candlelit sanctuary. You are invited to sign up for 30-minute segments throughout the night in the candlelit sanctuary. Normally, two people are at prayer in the sanctuary at a time. Prayer lists and reflection resources are available to help guide your prayer time.

Dinner Church

Sunday, April 24 @ 5:30PM with Matt Carriker

Explore an alternative worship experience with Matt Carriker in our vestry. We gather for worship around tables instead of in pews and share a common meal. There is something for all ages and stages. This is particularly welcoming to children and families!
Church Retreat

*Friday, May 27 through Monday, May, 30*

Set aside a long weekend to relax and engage with each other. Retreats, as time and space set apart from the everyday demands of life, offer the possibility of renewing ourselves and renewing our relationships with God and others. This retreat promises participants a time and space to be fully present; to do work that is hard to accomplish, or to partake in reflection that eludes us in the regular rhythm of our lives. Location TBD.
Mental Health Series

Youth Mental Health First Aid  
**Saturday, November 6 @ 9am - 1pm via Zoom**

In this 2-day virtual workshop you will learn how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. This training gives adults the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to children and teens who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and connect them to the appropriate care.

Gun Violence Vigil & Forum  
**Wednesday, December 15 @ 7PM with Moms Demand Action**

Each December we remember those lives lost to gun violence in our country and we call for common sense gun legislation to reduce the harm to our families and communities. Join us on the Front Porch for a candlelight vigil to remember those lives, especially those killed this year. Following the brief outdoor vigil, we will move inside for a discussion of the impact of gun violence in our lives facilitated by ‘Moms Demand Action’.
Responding to Teen Anxiety and Depression

Date: TBD

Join facilitators from ‘Families for Depression Awareness’ for a workshop providing practical education and actionable advice to equip parents and caring adults know how to help a teen, and teens know how to ask for help, all to improve teen mental wellness and prevent teen suicides.
Just for Fun

Natick Day ~ Ring that Bell!

*Saturday, September 11 @ 10 AM to 2PM*

Once again First Church Natick will enliven the annual Natick Day celebration by awarding opportunities to ring our 2,531-pound steeple bell. All ages are welcome!

Lunch Bunch

*Third Thursday of the month @ 12:00PM*

*Beginning on September 16*

Everybody is welcome at “Lunch Bunch!” Just bring along a brown bag lunch. There is no particular agenda – just a great group of people, great goodies and great conversation.
First Church Book Group

Various dates

Beginning on September 18

The First Church Book Group gathers together to discuss books from a variety of genres, both fiction and non-fiction. The group is always looking for great book recommendations. All are welcome to join in the conversation, whether you had time to read the book or not!

Rally Day Cook-out

Sunday, September 19 @ 12:30PM

Not ready to say goodbye to summer? Everyone is invited to the Church Family Picnic with games and activities for kids of ALL ages. Sit down, relax, and enjoy tasty picnic treats and great company!
Family Hikes
*Last Saturday of the month @10:00AM*
Come explore a variety of local hiking trails with us. Dogs and children welcome too! Watch the LINK weekly email for details on locations and meet-up spots.

Blessing of the Animals
*Saturday, October 2 @ Noon*
We will PAWS on the front steps of the church to em-BARK on this celebration. Bring your beloved pet, stuffed animal, or even a picture of a beloved animal for this PURR-fect opportunity to give thanks to God for the comfort and joy they give us each day. The brief blessing service will be followed by pet treats and cider and donuts, depending on your preference!

Saturday Dinner with Chef Bob
*Second Saturday of the month @ 6PM*
*Beginning on October 9*
An evening of excellent food – with a different menu each month, you may eat in or pick up your meal to take home.
Natick Open Studios

*Saturday, October 16, and Sunday, October 17*

Now in its 21st year, Natick Artists Open Studios is comprised of over 70 artists who live, work or show in Natick, as well as guest artists. You can engage in conversations about the experience of creating art, learn about how it is made, and buy local art directly from the artists. On October 16th & 17th you can enjoy the exhibits of many of these talented Natick artists both in our vestry, as well as traveling around town to the many locations where other artists are exhibiting their work.

Silent Movie Night

*Saturday, October 30 @ 7PM*

In this classic MGM silent film from 1926, the demon Mephisto has a bet with an Archangel that he can corrupt a righteous man's soul and destroy in him what is divine. If he succeeds, the Devil will win dominion over earth. Feel the plot's twists and turn as the amazing Rob Humpreville improvises the movie "soundtrack" on our grand piano in the sanctuary, on the spot as the plot unfolds. Experience time before the "talkies". It is a great Halloween family night out!
Natick History Night with Steve Evers

Friday, November 12 @ 7PM

Our Curator and historian, Steve Evers, will present an overview of First Church as it was founded and as it changed as did Natick over the past 370 years. Historic maps, woodcuts and photos help to tell the many stories of our past. Learn more about the amazing stories that have shaped our church and enjoy some refreshments and conversation with those who live here now. Adults only.

Living Creche and Caroling with Brass Ensemble

Sunday, November 28 @ 3:30PM

Our Living Creche has become a town event! Families in the area come back year after year. It’s fun, it’s easy and it’s the reason for the season – just a quick costume change and you can be the Word made flesh! You won’t want to miss the brass quintet and carols on the front porch either! We will close with the lighting of the first Advent Candle at dusk.
Victorian Christmas

Sunday, December 5 and 12 @ 4PM

Step out of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and step back to a time when our church building was brand new – 1875. Across the ocean, it was the reign of Queen Victoria, but the influence of that reign leap-frogs to our shores to bring us all the traditional elements of the season – Christmas trees and cards and carols, wreaths and ribbons and candles. Join us on December 5th and 12th in our candlelit sanctuary, side by side with those in period costumes, for 45 minutes of carols and brass, favorite music and readings, and experience again the peace and joy and warmth of Christmas. The Advent Wreath lighting will follow the Victorian Christmas Service outside on the front porch at 5pm.

The Souper Bowl 2022 ~ Penguins vs. Polar Bears

Begins on Sunday, January 9 and concludes at the end of worship on Sunday, February 6

The Polar Bears take on the Penguins in the Souper Bowl of Caring to restock the shelves of the Natick Food Pantry. Contributions of non-perishable food or cash or online donations are tallied at the end of the service on Super Bowl Sunday to see whether those living north or south of Route 135 will win the coveted Campbell-Progresso Trophy!
Annual Meeting Luncheon  
**Sunday, January 30 @ 11:30AM**
Following worship on January 30th we will gather in the vestry to celebrate another year in the life of First Church, with friends and food, with stories and laughter and with great gratitude as we remember 2021 and look ahead to the challenges and opportunities that await us in 2022.

Progressive Dinner  
**Saturday, April 23 @ 6:30PM**
An evening of good food shared with good friends! We start with hor d’oeuvres at the church ad then venture out in smaller groups to various homes for salad and then to another home with a different small group for the entrée course. We return to the church to share dessert together. It is a chance to sample both food and stories, savory and sweet!