



# FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN

an open and welcoming community church



## Ash Wednesday

**Vespers**

February 18, 2026 at 7pm

# WELCOME TO FIRST PARISH

## Nurturing Spirituality | Building Community | Pursuing Justice

*We are an open and welcoming community church formed in 1942 by the union of the Congregational (1746) and Unitarian (1842) churches in Lincoln. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

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**Land Acknowledgment.** We gather today on the unceded homelands of the Massachusetts and Nipmuc peoples. Let us strive to honor all indigenous peoples by joining their efforts to pursue justice and care for this land. *An action step is included at the back of this bulletin.*



**If you are visiting** this evening, we are so glad you are here! Tell us about yourself or sign up for our mailing list by filling out a Virtual Connect Card.

**Livestream.** You can view past services on our YouTube page. If you don't wish to have your image included in a recording, please contact the church office or a minister.

*One License #A-732063 | CCS # 15261*

**Assistive Listening Devices** are available in the narthex. Please ask an usher for assistance.

**Children's Program.** We welcome children and youth of all ages to our Religious Exploration program. Learn more on our website: [fplincn.org/re](http://fplincn.org/re). Contact Director of Religious Exploration Lora Venesy at [lora@fplincn.org](mailto:lora@fplincn.org).



**Give Online!** Scan the QR code to contribute toward the Sunday Plate, a pledge, or a Special Offering.

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**We thank the following people for their contributions to today's service.**

### Ushers

Steve Johnson  
Sarah Andrysiak  
Rosaline Salifu

*Welcome! Please enjoy the prelude in a spirit of meditation.*

**PRELUDE**

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

*Wayne L. Wold*

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**WELCOME**

Rev. Nate Klug

**\*OPENING WORDS**

One: We come together tonight, a warm scattering of bodies  
in from the cold...

**Many: In from the crazed busyness of the world,  
in from the beauty and confusion of our lives.**

One: We come at a transition point in our journeys,  
each of us starting over in our own way.

**Many: We come seeking the humility of Lent...**

One: Remembering that out of dust and starlight we were created,  
and to dust and starlight we shall return.

**Many: Remembering who we are. Remembering whose we are.**

**\*OPENING HYMN | Red 77**

Be Still, My Soul

*FINLANDIA*

**READING**

“Processional” | Joanna Klink

If there is a world, let me be in it.

Let fires arise and pass. The sky will fill with evening air  
then sink across the woodlots and porches,  
the streams thinning to creeks.

In winter there will be creatures half-locked in ice,  
storms blown through iron gates, a drug of whitest ardor.

Let the old hopes be made new.

Let stacks of clouds blacken if they have to  
but never let the people in this town go hungry.

Never let them fear cold. If there is a world,  
let it not be temporary, like these vague stars.

Let us die when we must. And spinelessness  
not overtake us, and privation,  
let rain bead across tangled lavender plants.  
If there is a world where we feel very little,  
let it not be our world. Let worth be worth  
and energy action—let blood fly up to the surface skin.  
If you are fierce, if you are cynical, halfhearted, pained—  
I would sit with you awhile, or walk next to you,  
and when we take leave of each other after so many years,  
the oaks will toss their branches in wheels of wind  
above us—as if it had mattered, all of it,  
every second. If there is a world.

## INVITATION TO CENTERING PRAYER & SILENCE

### MUSICAL MEDITATION

Wayfaring Stranger

*American Folk*  
Adam Bailey, baritone

### READING

From Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.  
    Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
    to the voice of my supplications!  
If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,  
    Lord, who could stand?  
But there is forgiveness with you,  
    so that you may be revered.  
I wait for the Lord; my soul waits,  
    and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
    more than those who watch for the morning,  
    more than those who watch for the morning.  
O Israel, hope in the Lord!  
    For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
    and with him is great power to redeem.

## UNISON PRAYER

Voice: Converting God, whose face is turned towards us,  
we come this night to be turned...

Voice: Turned from the ways, thoughtless or half-hearted,  
in which we have spent our lives...

Voice: Turned from the violence of our society,  
which we so often take for granted...

Voice: Turned from the inequality  
that breeds resentment and fear...

Voice: Turned from the ways of self-gratification  
that have sold our souls to the idols of materialism...

Voice: Turned from the ways of exploitation  
that have harmed our relationships with others  
and with the good creation you have given us.

**All:** In dust and ashes, we confess our sin  
and our complicity in the sins of our society,  
and we come to be turned:  
turned to follow the road that leads to Jerusalem,  
turned to follow the way of love,  
that we may share in the new life of resurrection, when it dawns.  
Amen.

## HYMN

Nada Te Turbe

St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

Na - da te tur - be, na - da te es - pan - te. Quien a Dios tie - ne  
*Noth - ing can trou - ble, noth - ing can fright - en. Those who seek God shall*

na - da le fal - ta. So - lo Dios bas - ta.  
*nev - er go want - ing. God a - lone fills us.*

## READING

From *Learning to Walk in the Dark* | Barbara Brown Taylor

What if I could learn to trust my feelings instead of asking to be delivered from them? What if I could follow one of my great fears all the way to the edge of the abyss, take a breath, and keep going?

Isn't there a chance of being surprised by what happens next? Better than that, what if I could learn how to stay in the present instead of letting my anxieties run on fast-forward?

By day I can outfox questions like these—racing from one appointment to the next, answering e-mails with red exclamation points by them, taking the suddenly sick dog to the vet, rummaging through the freezer for something to thaw for supper.

By day, I am a servant of the urgent. Nothing important has a chance with me. But in the middle of the night, I am a captive audience.

There is that strange thing [Jesus] says at the end of a long healing story in John's Gospel. "I came into this world for judgment," he says after healing a man who has been blind from birth, "so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

I always heard that as a threatening judgment. Now it sounds more promising to me. At the very least, it makes me wonder how seeing has made me blind—by giving me cheap confidence that one quick glance at things can tell me what they are, by distracting me from learning how the light inside me works, by fooling me into thinking I have a clear view of how things really are, of where the road leads, of who can see rightly and who cannot.

I am not asking to become blind, but I have become a believer. There is a light that shines in the darkness, which is only visible there.

## INVITATION TO CENTERING PRAYER & SILENCE

# Values & Vision

## \*IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who wish to come forward but have ashes on their forehead or the back of their hand

## SPRITUALITY

One: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

To be a spiritual home for

## \*CLOSING HYMN | Gray 205

Amazing Grace!

## \*BENEDICTION

each person can find help and inspiration to foster personal growth on their own journey while in community with others

## POSTLUDE

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

To be an open and inclusive community that learns to trust and work with each other as we celebrate, grieve, grow, support, and serve together.

## PURSuing JUSTICE

To be a source of hope and positive impact in our communities, our region and beyond by affirming the dignity of all peoples and caring for the living earth.

AMAZING GRACE

Rev. Nate Klug

Karl Osterland

Feel free to depart or remain seated during our postlude.



Please recycle this program.

Bins are available in the hall at the end of service.

## Open & Welcoming

First Parish in Open and Welcoming community church, affirming the dignity of all people. We welcome all persons to full participation and belonging regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, age, ability, sexual orientation, Indigenous Peoples. There are currently five bills being considered in the 2025-6 session that reflect the key concerns of local tribes. Scan the QR code to learn more about these bills and write your representative to express your support.



Having fulfilled the requirements to be recognized as an Open and Affirming Congregation (UCC) and Welcoming Congregation (UUA), First Parish is intentional about celebrating the presence and participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons in all aspects of congregational life, fully and equally. **ALTERNATIVE EVENING SERVICES now offered monthly.** **Heath & Hope** Sunday, March 15 at 5:00pm in the Parish House

Contact CandW-TP@fplincn.org for more information.

## FIRST PARISH IN LINCOLN

(781) 259-8118 | www.fplincn.org

**Rev. Kit Novotny** (she/her)

Co-Minister | kit@fplincn.org

**Sarah Klockowski** (she/her)

Ministry Associate | sarah@fplincn.org

**Miranda Loud** (she/her)

Music Director & Organist | miranda@fplincn.org

**Silvia Dieckow** (she/her)

Parish Administrator | silvia@fplincn.org

**Rev. Nate Klug** (he/him)

Co-Minister | nate@fplincn.org

**Lora Venesy** (she/her)

Director of Religious Exploration | lora@fplincn.org

**Debby Adams** (she/her)

Nursery Director

**Chris Lehmann** (he/him)

Audio/Visual Coordinator | chris@fplincn.org