

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Serving Atlanta and the World since 1867

August 23, 2026
11:00 am

The Reverend Dr. Dwight D. Andrews, Pastor
The Reverend Andrew Young, Pastor of Global Mission

First Congregational Church, UCC

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost **August 23, 2026**

THE PRELUDE

Frank Hoke, organist

CHIMING OF THE HOUR AND LIGHTING THE WORSHIP CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION Reverend Dwight Andrews

* OPENING HYMN *The Church's One Foundation*

Congregation and First Church Voices

*All who are able please stand and sing.

60TH ANNIVERSARY LITANY Conference Clergy

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WELCOMING OF VISITORS

Reverend Andrews

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY WORDS

"Give and it will be given to you
A good measure, pressed down, shaken together,
Running over, will be put into your lap
For the measure you give,
Will be the measure you get back"
---Luke 6:38 NRSV

OFFERTORY *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

First Church Voices

OFFERTORY PRAYER AND RESPONSE

* We give thee but thine own, what 'er the gift may be
all that we have is thine alone, a trust O Lord from thee

THE PRAYER HYMN *God Will Take Care of You*

The Congregation and First Church Voices

THE PASTORAL PRAYER — Reverend Andrews

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON — Deacon David Demetrius
NEW TESTAMENT: 1 Corinthians 3:5–11 NRSV

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GUEST PREACHER
Reverend Kim Wood

MUSICAL OFFERING *The Blessing of Abraham* — Donald Lawrence
First Church Voices

SERMON Still Growing: *60 Years and God Is Not Finished Yet!*
The Reverend Darrell Goodwin

HYMN OF INVITATION *Just Come* — Joe Pace
First Church Voices

INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP — Reverend Andrews

THE LITANY OF RELEASE — Reverend Goodwin

BENEDICTION — Reverend Gooodwin

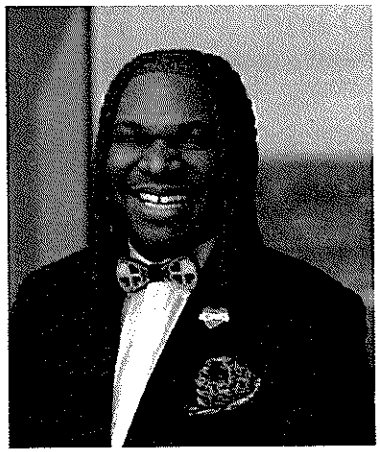
CHORAL BENEDICTION *God Is On Our Side*
First Church Voices

THE POSTLUDE
Frank Hoke, organist

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ANNOUNCEMENTS must be submitted to the Church Office for review and approval by Tuesday at 5pm**. 100 words max please.**

PODCASTS of the weekly sermons are now available on Podbean, Spotify, and Apple Play. You can also go to the church website firstchurchatl.org, then go to PODCAST, select the desired sermon by date or speaker.
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Today we welcome the Reverend Darrell L. Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister and President of the Southern New England Conference, preaching during Sunday's anniversary worship celebration. The RevToday we welcome the Reverend Darrell L. Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister and President of the Southern New England Conference, preaching during Sunday's anniversary worship celebration. The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin serves as the first Executive Conference Minister & President of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, leading nearly 600 congregations across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island in living out a bold, inclusive vision of the Gospel.

A passionate advocate for progressive Christianity, Rev. Goodwin challenges faith communities to become spaces of radical welcome, justice, and renewal. His ministry centers on helping people rediscover faith as a force for healing and transformation in today's divided world. His status as the first openly LGBTQ black person to serve as an Executive Conference Minister in the United Church of Christ has made him a symbol of a version of Christianity where everyone is valued.

Known for his compelling preaching and authentic storytelling, Rev. Goodwin often speaks about hope—hope that empowers people to face uncertainty, bridge difference, and find joy in community. His warmth, wisdom, and humor make him a popular guest on podcasts, in news interviews and on varying social media platforms. He is able to connect with audiences on topics such as inclusive faith, leadership in changing times, and the spiritual practices that sustain courage and compassion.

Rev. Goodwin continues to inspire a growing movement of believers and seekers alike to see faith not as a set of limits, but as an ever-expanding invitation to love, justice, and possibility.. Darrell L. Goodwin serves as the first Executive Conference Minister & President of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, leading nearly 600 congregations across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island in living out a bold, inclusive vision of the Gospel.

Dear Member of First Church,

I hope this note finds you well and in good spirits despite the sweltering heat and many upheavals in our world. As we approach the end of summer and begin the wonders of autumn, I write to encourage you to participate in the new Pledge Campaign for 2026-2027 being initiated on our behalf by the Stewardship Council. The Stewardship Council has been working diligently to engage in a critical assessment of our financial needs and capacity. We believe that now is the right time to initiate a Pledge Campaign in which every member can participate and support. Although formal pledge campaigns have been done before at First Church, it has been several years since we incorporated a pledge campaign into our budget and stewardship process. Please note that the Operations Budget of the church is based on the commitment and generosity of its members.

God continues to bless First Church in countless ways and the possibilities of a bright future are all around us. The arrival of our new assistant minister for youth and young families and better utilization of the gifts of our other clergy, inspiring worship services which uplift our members and friends both in-person and online, and a strategic plan that will help guide us for years to come--- all these represent signs of promise and purpose.

As you know we have encountered many challenges this year, including the Truist bank fraud, the HVAC system and parking lot retaining wall failures, and our own decline in membership giving. Our promise and purpose rely on God's grace as well as *our* Christian witness.

You may submit your pledge card electronically as follows: download the attachment, fill in the blanks with your name, contact information and the amount of your pledge. After completing the card, save the card on your device and identify it with your full name, then attach it to an email sent to info@firstchurchatl.org. Alternatively, you may mail your completed card to the Church Office at 105 Courtland Street, Atlanta, GA 30303. The Stewardship Council requests that all pledge cards be submitted by Sept. 13th.

I am extremely grateful and proud to be a part of the purposeful ministry and mission of First Church. Please join me in acknowledging God's blessing with a pledge.
May God Bless You and Keep You!

Rev. Dwight

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Congregational UCC Atlanta is pleased and honored to host the **Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ's 60th Annual Meeting** this week. The worship service today is the culmination of the celebration. We thank the many volunteers who served to welcome and guide the many clergy, delegates, guests, and visitors from across the Southeast Conference. Special thanks to Pamela Cook and Reverend Ginnie Ferrell for coordinating the First Church effort.

The flowers on the altar today are "A Legacy of Love:" In Recognition on August 20th, the 54th Wedding Anniversary of Rosalind Harris Brown and Cecil, Sr. A testament to love, faithfulness, and a life woven with devotion, God's Grace and immeasurable love. Through every season, you've remained steadfast in our commitment to one another, this family and the Lord.With heartfelt gratitude, we give you praise, thanks and deepest love - from all of us here who would not be here - without you!!Cecil, Sr., Cecil Jr., Soli, Viana,Christopher, Shireen, Kayhan Rose, Sahar Nova.

The Celebration of Life for Cedric Jordan will be held on Saturday, August 29th, at 11:00 am at First Church. Cedric passed away last Sunday after a long illness. He was courageous to the end. Please keep his wife Carol and children Taylor, Rachel, and Jacob in your prayers.

The Celebration of Life for Erma Jean Thomas will be held on Friday, September 11th, at First Church. Mrs. Thomas passed away last Sunday. Please keep the Thomas and Cheese families in your prayers.

Congratulations Reverend Andrews! On July 29th he received the WABE Lois Reitzes Award in the Arts. Dr. Andrews accepted the Lois Reitzes Leader of the Arts Award "in recognition of his accomplishments as a musician, scholar, and faith leader whose ministry has had far-reaching impact on many people in Atlanta and beyond." The program will air on **WABE TV on August 26th at 9:00pm**.

The Board of Missions is restarting and we need your vision and energy. If you're interested in helping the board plan upcoming activities and partnerships or if you want to know more, please contact John Blevins, the committee chair, at john.blevins@emory.edu or 404-213-8514.

On Sunday, August 30th, immediately following worship service, a Special Call meeting will be held to vote on several important revisions to the 2026 Operations Budget. Please make every effort to participate in this important Congregational meeting. The items to be considered were affirmed by the Church Council and presented to the membership at the Summer Quarterly Meeting. They include:

1. Grant Income (CASA UCC Grant)
2. College Ministry Coordinator
3. Assistant Minister - Digital Strategy and Membership Services
4. Assistant Minister - Congregational Life and Community Engagement
5. Chief Executive Associate
6. Cornerstone Mortgage Loan Payments
7. Arts and Education Initiatives

For more information contact any member of the Budget Committee.

ALL MEMBER ALERT! Good Communication is essential to any church ministry. We need EVERY MEMBER to allow us to communicate with you via our Text Msg system, Newsletter, and the Instant Church Directory. These social platforms allow you to know what's going on at First Church from your mobile device. For the next three Sundays in August, we will help you sign up for these essential services. Please visit the Minister Myles at Help Desk in the atrium after service today and let us help you get fully connected with the ministries and blessings of First Church.

Virtual Bible Study will gather on Monday, August 24, at 6:30pm. The discussion will focus on **Acts 17: 16-34, and Acts 18 - 19.** Discussion leaders will be Mae Morgan, DeeDee Seek, and Jack Williams. All are welcome. Feel free to invite others to join the conversation. **Meeting ID: 815 2035 8883 Passcode: 108214**

ALTAR FLOWERS Altar Flowers are a wonderful way to remember a loved one or celebrate some good news. Scan the QR code to place an order or contact the church office. Altar flower announcements for the bulletin must be submitted by Tuesday at 5pm.