



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MIDDLEBORO, MA

PREPARED BY THE SEARCH COMMITTEE
FOR PROSPECTIVE PASTORAL CANDIDATES

2024

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LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE

GREETINGS TO PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES,

First Congregational Church at the Green is at a moment of exciting transition. We are seeking the next man appointed by God to shepherd our congregation.

We are looking for a servant leader who will strongly exposit the Scriptures, help us grow in Christ-likeness, and serve as a model and catalyst for us as we reach out to our community.

Our next pastor should be a careful and diligent teacher. Sound doctrine is foundational. What is more, love for God's Word should fuel love for all people. Our next pastor should be a missional leader who will equip us to engage our neighbors and proclaim Christ to our community.

The following Church Profile sets out "who we are" at First Congregational Church and describes some of the challenges and opportunities ahead. If you would like to apply for this pastoral position or refer an applicant, please email the Search Committee at search@fccmiddleboro.org. You can also visit fccmiddleboro.org to learn more about our church.

Please see page 15 of this church profile for a complete list of our application requirements.

Warm Regards,

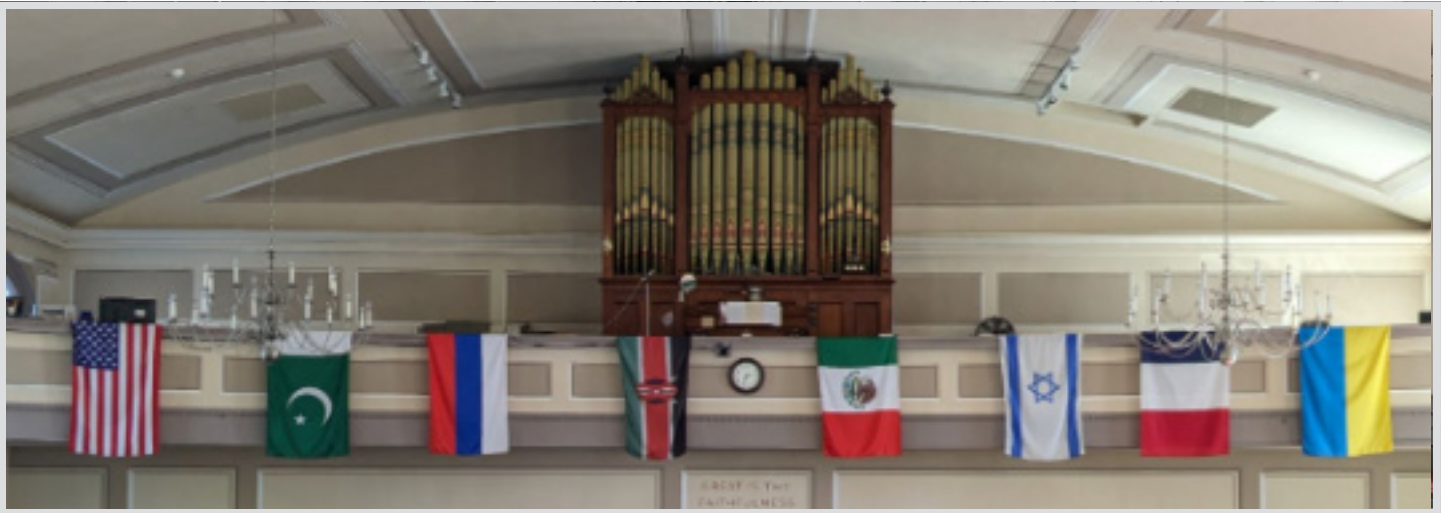
Bob Easterbrooks - Ken Garrell - Kathy Heimerdinger - Carol Lennon
Melissa Letendre - Naomi Luce - Drew McKenna

STATEMENT OF FAITH

AS A MEMBER CHURCH OF THE CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, WE SUBSCRIBE TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF FAITH:

- We believe the Bible consisting of the Old and New Testament, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God written.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling power and fullness the Christian is enabled to live a godly life in this present evil world.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ.

CHURCH OVERVIEW



“GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS”

The Mission and Vision of First Congregational Church is that Christ might have preeminence in all things, through:
reverent worship devotion to his word loving fellowship
humble service and clear proclamation of the Gospel.
Making Disciples who make disciples

First Congregational Church at the Green was established in 1694. Today—over 325 years later—we continue to worship God with a passion for the Gospel and its transformative power in our lives.

First Congregational Church is a reformed evangelical church. Our first pastor was Reverend Samuel Fuller, a pious evangelist and son of an original Pilgrim from Plimoth Colony. The church began as an epicenter of community life. “Church at the Green” refers to Middleboro’s original town green.

By the 1950s, the church was almost extinct. As the story goes, only a few gray heads remained. Sunday services were held in a small chapel behind the church. There was no sense in (and no money for) heating up the voluminous sanctuary.

Then in 1969, God led a young pastor to the church with revitalization on his heart. Then came another God-fearing pastor, then another, then another. While neighboring New England churches became increasingly liberal in the 20th century, First Congregational Church developed a strong evangelical base.

Today, we are looking for a pastor who will build on our deep history of worship and forge new connections to our community. We long to be agents of change and renewal in our beloved town. We want our next pastor to follow Christ, preach Christ, and equip us to lead others to Christ.

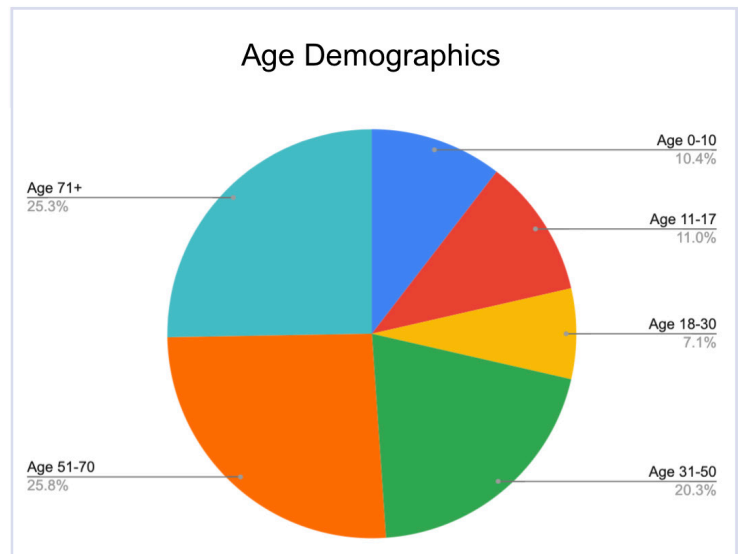
CHURCH OVERVIEW

CONGREGATIONAL

We believe the authority given to Christ has been given to his church. Each local body is fully endowed with power to choose and set apart leaders filled with the Spirit. The body is then willingly subject to its pastors and elders for their mutual benefit. We practice congregational polity but are an elder-led church. We understand that the elders with the pastor are to model Christ-like character as described in I Timothy 3:1-13. Together, their role is to lead the church in Christ's mission to the entire world starting in our own community (Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:18-20).

ABOUT US...

- We preach Christ in all Scripture, Old to New Testament. Expository preaching is a high priority.
- We portray the Gospel through liturgy and music. Corporate confession and assurance of forgiveness prepare our hearts to respond actively to God's Word.
- We love and appreciate classic hymns, yet we regularly incorporate a broader spectrum of current worship music in our services.
- We are a missions-oriented church and enjoy investing directly in the lives of those we support.
- We are a family-oriented church and encourage family worship and discipleship at home..
- There are a number of multi-generational families within the church.
- We are economically-diverse. Our members come from all segments of the financial spectrum. Most are middle income.
- Our current annual operating budget is around \$250,000 and our annual missions budget is approximately \$40,000.



We are members of the Conservative
Congregational Christian Conference and
The Gospel Coalition.

THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

EVANGELICAL

Today, this term is used broadly and includes a number of political views, practices and doctrines. We have been shaped by the Evangelical movement in the following ways, we believe that:

- People must be converted to faith in Christ, whether it be a momentous conversion experience or through a growing understanding which leads to faith.
- The Bible is inerrant and infallible, our authoritative guide for life and godliness.
- It is the church's call to fulfill the Great Commission given by Christ, as a collective body and through personal witness.

REFORMED

In faith and practice, we incorporate the great doctrines and distinctives established during the Protestant Reformation.

We confess that men are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone.

Our worship is centered on Christ and the preaching of God's Word. We emphasize prayer, confession of sin and congregational singing. We celebrate communion and baptism in keeping with the biblical mandate.

We use the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and portions of the Heidelberg Catechism in corporate confessions of faith, uniting us to the historic church.

WITH RESPECT TO...

Marriage: We believe Scripture clearly teaches that marriage is sacred and reserved for one man and one woman. This covenantal union is primarily reflective of the mysterious union between God and his church. Furthermore, it is the context for multiplying and raising godly children.

Women in ministry: We encourage women to partake in ministry, to teach and to lead. But we believe God's Word reserves the public preaching of Scripture and the role of elder/pastor to godly men, anointed by God for that ministry.

Communion: We believe that all those who put their faith in Christ may partake of the Lord's Supper. Those not in good standing with the Lord or unbelievers are encouraged to pray for faith and reconciliation.

Politics: First Congregational Church is impartial with regard to party allegiance, but we believe it is every faithful Christian's duty to vote and influence government to promote truth and justice.

Baptism and Dedication: We practice both infant baptism and dedication.

Some of our families in keeping with a covenantal understanding of scripture have their children baptized, symbolic of participation in that covenant.

Others choose to dedicate their children to the Lord as part of a community of faith, and believers' baptism, symbolic of death to the old nature and resurrection to new life in Christ, (Rom 6:4) is available for children and adults on their personal profession of faith.

FUTURE GOALS



STEPPING OUT

We believe that God is writing a new chapter in our church history. The Holy Spirit has convicted us regarding some areas of status quo in our congregation. Moving forward, we are convinced that we must deepen our relationships in our community, practice intentional evangelism and continue to listen to the Holy Spirit and follow God's leading for our church.

In the coming years, we want to build new connections to the people around us. We want to meet the needs of our 21st century culture and directly serve our neighbors. We want to encourage and facilitate one-on-one discipleship for the protection and multiplication of the body of Christ. Here are some key areas of growth we have already identified:

- Our church is located at the intersections of Route 44 and Route 105. We don't have any immediate neighbors (residential or commercial). We need to develop authentic and creative ways to draw in our community.
- We want to be good stewards of the resources the Lord has given us and determine how they can serve our vision for the future.
- We want to love and serve weak and marginalized people in our community. We need to create a church culture that will minister to people's complex needs and draw them into the body of Christ.

MINISTRIES



BIBLE STUDY

- Sunday School for children and adults
- Weekly men's and women's Bible studies
- Small group ministry (Gospel Community Mission Group)

FELLOWSHIP

- Coffee Hour once-a-month, year-round
- Soup Sundays in the winter
- Prayer meeting on Sunday after the worship service
- Wednesday women's prayer
- Other events: caroling, campfires, and special outings

SERVICE

- Serving on church boards
- Choir ministry
- Short-term missions trips
- Garden at the Green

CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Children's Church and nursery on Sunday mornings
- Kids Club for grades 1-6
- Youth Group (for students in grades 7-12)
- Vacation Bible School

MUSIC AND WORSHIP



At First Congregational Church we recognize that we were created to glorify God and enjoy him forever. While our whole lives are an opportunity to worship our Creator, Sunday morning is a special occasion to unite in our praise and enjoyment of Him.

We use elements of corporate worship that are rooted in Scripture. In each service we come together before God with prayers of adoration, confession, and intercession. The pastor and the elders lead the congregation in prayer. Music is woven throughout the service as an expression of our worship. Our mission in music is to reflect God's glory and sing out words of praise that mirror what the Bible teaches about God.

We sing traditional hymns, Psalms and some newer songs each Sunday, accompanied by piano or the church's historic 1887 S.S. Hamill organ.



Most Sundays, the choir also participates in worship with special music. Music presented by the organ and choir is wide-ranging in style. We have a worship ensemble that also leads the congregation accompanied by piano and guitar. We want to respect the rich traditions of the past and adapt to the musical styles of the current generation.

We believe that a "blended" style of worship is both possible and necessary in this current era to effectively communicate the truth of God's Word through music.

Our Music Committee oversees certain aspects of the Sunday morning worship service.

MISSIONS



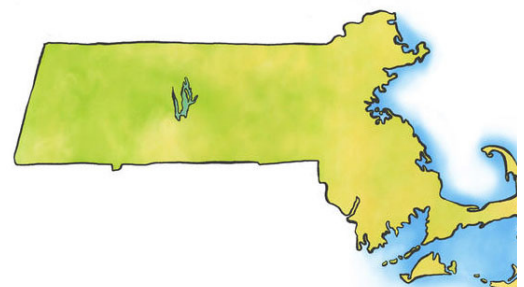
AT HOME AND ABROAD

Our missions program exists to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). We support foreign and domestic missionaries and help to educate and engage our congregation in the work of “making disciples of all nations.”

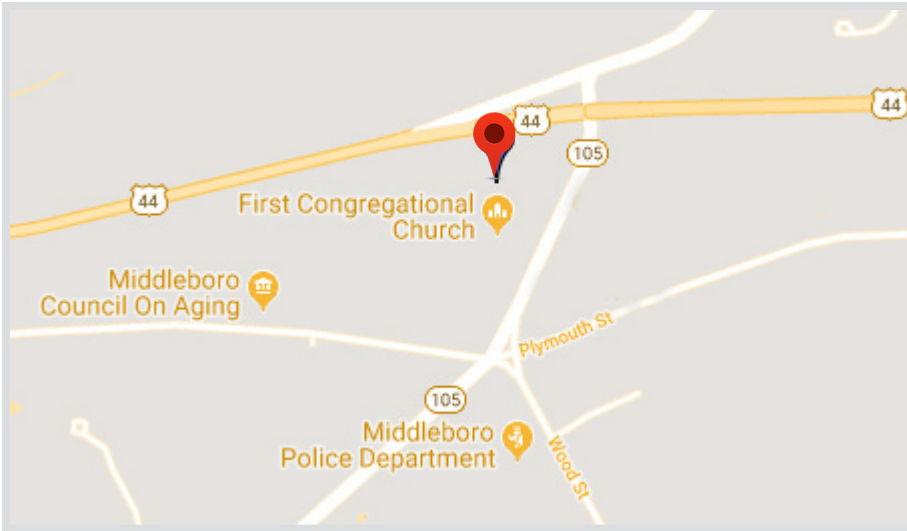
The Missions Committee is comprised of 4-6 members who pray for our missionaries, keep up regular communication with missionaries, present their news and needs to the congregation, and encourage the congregation to support our missionaries.

Our missions budget is sustained by individual giving, not by church operational costs. God has provided generously through the years in this way.

We currently support 6 missionaries in the United States and 5 missionaries abroad in Russia, Mexico, Kenya, Canada and a Muslim country in the Middle East. We enjoy being directly involved with our missionaries. The Missions Committee organizes missionary visits, dinners, coffee hours, pulpit reports and electronic communication. Moving forward, we want to become more deliberate in our mission focus at home. Under the leadership of a new pastor, we want to engage with our community and reach our neighbors here in Middleboro.



LOCATION and FACILITIES



First Congregational Church is located approximately 3 miles outside of downtown Middleboro. Long ago, our church lawn was the town green (hence our nickname, "Church at the Green").

The church owns 20+ acres and maintains four buildings: our historic meetinghouse (1828), a parsonage and barn (1832), our Christian Education Building (1971), and the Cummings Chapel (circa 1828).

Our beautiful, white-pillared meetinghouse is used for worship on Sunday mornings and formal events (weddings, funerals, etc.). Because of its location, available parking space, and overall size, we periodically use the meetinghouse to serve our community by hosting concerts, and other special events.

Our spacious parsonage contains 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 bathrooms and a newly renovated kitchen.

Our Christian Education Building is multi-functional. It contains our church administrative offices and is the main gathering place for church events and adult and youth ministries. To accommodate heavy usage, we recently renovated our kitchen and built a new handicapped bathroom. Samuel Fuller School is currently housed in the building as well and is in the process of vacating the building by the end of the 2025-26 school year.

Cummings Chapel is divided into small offices and is used by Christian counselors who have been affiliated with the church for many years.



MIDDLEBORO AT A GLANCE

Just 20 minutes from the Atlantic Ocean and Plymouth (where the first Pilgrims settled), you will find the typical New England town of Middleboro. In the South Shore of Massachusetts we are just a short trip to Boston, Providence and beautiful Cape Cod.

With a population of 25,000, Middleboro is home to many hardworking trade workers, as well as those commuting into Boston for various businesses. Middleboro has an active town center, a beautiful library, land reserved for walking and enjoying nature, historic sites, and acres of cranberry bogs. We're the hometown of Ocean Spray and are aptly named "the cranberry capital of the world."



Almost 60% of Middleboro residents have no religious affiliation, 30% are Catholic, and 2.7% identify as evangelical Protestants.

There are nearly 30 churches within a 20 minute drive of Middleboro center. Many are Catholic, Unitarian or liberal Protestant. The largest Thai Buddhist temple outside of Bangkok is less than 10 miles away in the neighboring town of Raynham.

Middleboro is invested in its residents. We have an active Council on Aging and various resources for people struggling with low income, poverty, drug addiction, single parenting and other overwhelming challenges. You'll also find a vibrant hometown spirit in Middleboro. From summer parades and fireworks to street festivals, Little League games, autumn cranberry harvests and holiday fairs, Middleboro is a family-friendly, historically-rich community.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

PASTOR

Our pastor is “first among equals” among the Elders. Our candidate profile (page 13) outlines in detail the qualifications and duties of the position.

ELDERS

Men who meet the biblical qualifications for eldership are recommended by the pastor and standing elders and voted in by the church. They serve in the role of shepherds, leading and guiding the congregation spiritually and making decisions about the overall direction of the church.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS

A large component of the lay leadership comes in various roles performed on committees.

- Christian Education Board: Organizes and implements discipleship opportunities for youth and adults.
- Diaconate Board: Serves the needs of people within and outside of the church.
- Missions Board: Oversees the support we give to our missionaries.
- Trustees Board: Oversees the physical structures, plans upgrades and repairs, and manages the assets of the church.

PAID STAFF

- Choir Director and Accompanist (part-time)
- Administrative Assistant (part-time)
- Sexton (part-time)

CANDIDATE PROFILE

QUALIFICATIONS

The candidate for Pastor shall possess qualities as expressed in such passages of Scripture as: I Tim.3:1-7,10; 5:22; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-4. The primary qualification for a spiritual leader is their own life characterized by abiding in Christ (John 15), ongoing transformation into the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:1-2), and personal modeling of spiritual disciplines. If applicable, the candidate will demonstrate godly leadership and shepherding of his wife and family.

Education:

We place a high value on preparation and training. The candidate for Pastor shall have one of the following:

- A Master's level degree in Divinity
- Other theologically-related discipline from an accredited theological seminary.
- An equivalent level of formal or non-formal education with demonstrable skill in Biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, homiletics and pastoral counseling are essential.

Experience:

We place a high value on practical ministry experience. The ideal candidate shall have formal pastoral experience as a Senior/ Solo minister or Associate/Assistant minister, youth ministry, or experience serving with a missions organization. The candidate shall have ordination status, licensure, or be on track to become licensed and ordained, through a denomination or ordination council which shares First Congregational Church's Statement of Faith.

Doctrine:

The ideal candidate shall ...

- a. hold doctrinal beliefs which are in agreement with First Congregational Church's Statement of Faith, refer to page 2.
- b. hold to the major creeds and confessions of historic, orthodox and reformed Christianity, including the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed. Please state any reservations or qualifications you may have in your application.
- c. adhere to the CCCC Code of Ethics for Ministers.
- d. In addition to baptizing infants in accordance with our Articles of Faith, the candidate shall respect those in the church who hold to believer's baptism only and be willing to dedicate their children. Furthermore, the candidate shall be willing to baptize by sprinkling, affusion or immersion, as the circumstances and preferences of the baptismal candidate dictate.

Personal Qualifications:

The ideal candidate shall...

- a. have the heart of a Shepherd, reflecting the character of our Lord and Savior Himself – a humble spirit (Phil.2), and a willingness to serve rather than to be served (Mark 10:45).
- b. be able to clearly articulate, both verbally and in written form, his personal testimony, describing the course of his personal pilgrimage of faith and entrance into God's Kingdom.
- c. display a love for God, His Kingdom, and His Righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
- d. demonstrate a love for God's people, and a love for the "lost" in our local community and throughout the world, and a passion for proclaiming the Gospel message to the unconverted while living out its truth in their midst.

CANDIDATE PROFILE



Character

A man after God's own heart.

1. Heart of a Shepherd
2. Integrity
3. Humility

PASTORAL PRIORITIES

1. Maintain his personal walk with Christ
2. Cast vision and lead the church
3. Effectively communicate, especially God's Word
4. Disciple and develop leaders
5. Model personal evangelism and service to others

PASTORAL DUTIES

1. Preach God's Word and administer the ordinances of the church.
2. Report to and be accountable to the elders, serve as an ex-officio member of the Elder Board, and work with the elders to establish a vision for the church.
3. Equip the congregation to serve and evangelize our community.
4. Initiate and provide support for prayer meetings and small group ministries.
5. Teach and train the congregation in areas such as one-on-one discipleship, stewardship, church membership and church leadership.
6. Visit those who are hospitalized or shut-in and make pastoral calls (and train others to participate in visitation).
7. Provide counseling and crisis intervention.
8. Perform weddings and funerals.
9. Provide administrative leadership and staff supervision (in accordance with bylaws).

APPLICATION PROCESS

The First Congregational Church at the Green Search Committee fully respects each candidate's need for complete confidentiality in the application process. Be assured that all details, including interest expressed in applying, will not be discussed with anyone beyond the Search Committee without the candidate's prior consent.

HOW TO APPLY

1

Prepare the following:

- Resume and Education History
- Personal Statement of Faith
- Personal Testimony/Story of Faith
- Please Answer: What attracts you to the position of Pastor at First Congregational Church?
- Links to past sermons
- Three or more references

2

Submit materials:

- Email all required documents (PDFs preferred) and sermon links to search@fccmiddleboro.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding your application, you may email the Search Committee via our private email address: search@fccmiddleboro.org

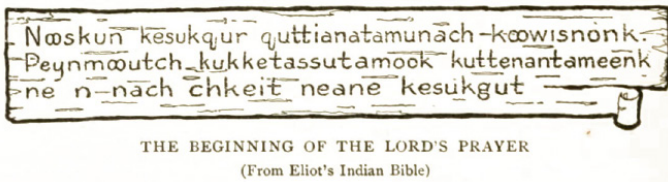
Our committee will work diligently to process the applications. We will provide regular updates to keep you apprised of our progress. It may take us a few months to make a first-round decision. If your application is selected, the Search Committee will personally contact you by letter or email.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

First Congregational Church has a rich and storied history. It's preservation from generation to generation is a tremendous ballast to our congregation. When storms pass our way, we remember God's faithfulness. Truly this is his church.

Mid-1700s

Church attendance climbs to more than 400 members. The church has many distinguished visitors, including: Daniel Webster, Benjamin Franklin, Judge Peter Oliver, Lieutenant Governor Andrew Oliver, and the last Chief Justice under the King of England. Evangelist George Whitefield preaches at First Church in 1746. Local American Indians and slaves also worship at the church.



1968

From the 1950s to the late 1960s, church attendance dwindles. In 1968, a young German-American pastor named Manfred Kohl reinvigorates the church and gives it a new evangelical, missions-minded vision, which has continued until this day.

1694

Our church is founded by the sons of Pilgrim fathers from the Plymouth Colony. It is called the First Church of Christ of Middleboro. Samuel Fuller serves as the first pastor.

1828

Our current sanctuary or "meetinghouse" is built. It is the fourth structure to house the church. Parishoners also build a parsonage and small fellowship hall. Daniel Webster calls it "the most beautiful church in New England."



2024

Three hundred years later, 100+ people gather to worship Christ and proclaim the gospel each week. God has been faithful in sustaining our mission to covenant in Christ to disciple our families and the world.

