



*The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts*

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 24, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

Each week in worship we welcome people to share their prayers. If you like for a worship leader to read your prayer, please fill out a prayer slip.

For those worshipping at home: you are invited to text the names of those attending to 413-644-6435 that we might welcome you. Please also include prayers of joys and concerns as we will name them in worship.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Frost

PRELUDE

Canon by Flor Peeters

FRAMING WORDS

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

*SONG *Gather Us In* (see *The Faith We Sing* #2236 hymnals in pew for tune.)

1 Here in this place new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanish away,
see in this space our fears & our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in – the lost and forsaken,
gather us in the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, lightyears away,
here in this place the new light is shining,
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever,
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in – all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

*CALL TO WORSHIP Based on Genesis 32:22-31, from *Worship Ways*
Reader name

One: We gather here in anticipation,

All: seeking an encounter with our Holy God;

One: a God who comes among us when we least expect it,

All: who invites us to wrestle with our questions and doubts;

One: a God who richly blesses us, and calls us each by name.

All: Come, let's worship God together!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Persistent Struggling*

The Lord's Prayer

Our God, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Children may go to music / story time.

INTROIT *We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder*, arr. by James Pethel

CONTEMPORARY READING From *The Wounded Healer*, Henry Nouwen

“Nobody escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not ‘How can we hide our wounds?’ so we don’t have to be embarrassed, but ‘How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?’ When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers. Jesus is God’s wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed. Jesus’ suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others.”

*HYMN *Just As I Am* See page 6

WELCOME Pastor Brent

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 32:9-13, 22-31

And Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, "Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good", I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children. Yet you have said, "I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number."'

So he spent that night there, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau,

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the

Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.' The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

SERMON

Wrestling

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Come, O thou Traveler unknown vss. 1-2

See page 7

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Remember to place your prayer tags in the offering plates if you would like them lifted. They will be read as written.

OFFERTORY

Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen (Spiritual)

arr. by James Pethel

*DOXOLOGY

Lasst Uns Erfreuen

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low; Alleluia, Alleluia.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; One God, Triune, whom we adore.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE *Nunc Dimittis*, arr. by A.M. Buchanan

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

Pastor Brent

*UNISON PRAYER

**Holy God, your servant Jacob wrestled with your angel and prevailed.
In honor of his persistence, you gave him a new name. Teach us to
persist in the face of struggle and call us by name. Amen**

*HYMN

Praise with Joy the World's Creator

See page 8

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent



POSTLUDE

God of Our Fathers, arr. by David Schack

Music Notes ~ Peter Frost

The music played while you are gathering is a selection of music by Flor Peeters (1903-1986). Peeters was a Belgian composer and teacher. He was the youngest of eleven children. As a pedagogue and organist, Peeters enjoyed great renown concertizing and giving master classes all over the world. Of the over 100 pieces that he composed they were primarily written for organ and/or for choir. In 1971 he was made Baron Peeters by King Baudouin of Belgium.

News and Announcements

Storymapping

The Justice Task Force is delighted that Maggie Bennett, who is visiting her homeland from the Stockbridge Munsee Community in Wisconsin, will be speaking with us after church today. Maggie uses story mapping, a technique which bridges geographic info systems, photography, history, and archaeology, to tell the story of the travels of the Stockbridge-Munsee people. Please join us to learn more about the descendants of the first members of this church.

"Wholehearted Faith"

The Board of Christian Education has postponed the start of this program until the 4th week of October. It is not too late to join us as we read Rachel Held Evans' final book, *Wholehearted Faith*. For more information, contact the church office.

Sopranos Riot for Church

On Saturday, September 30 at 7:30 pm, there will be a Soprano Riot in our sanctuary! Nellie Rustick and Amy Shake will team up with pianist David Anderegg to present a concert of new and improved music for one and two sopranos. The proceeds from the riot will support all the programs of the church.

Volunteers Welcomed!

Roles include: Hospitality – we need both greeters for the front walkway and hosts for fellowship hour. Worship – we would love to identify folks who want to help usher or read. Storytellers and assistants need for our kids in the classroom. Please see the weekly email, the church website, or call the office for more information. Thanks!

Welcome! We are an Open and Affirming Church which means that we invite persons of every sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, racial and cultural identity, age, physical ability, economic circumstance, faith background and family structure to share fully in the ministry, leadership and fellowship of this congregation's life in Christ.

The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor

Peter Frost, Minister of Music

Will Garrison, Administrator | Marion Pomeroy, Financial Secretary

Will Curtiss and Will Pohl, Livestream Technicians

(413) 298-3137 | office@stockbridgeucc.org | stockbridgeucc.org

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Just as I Am, Without One Plea

370

WOODWORTH LM

Charlotte Elliott, 1834

William Batchelder Bradbury, 1849
Harm. *The Hymnbook*, 1955

1. Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
2. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
3. Just as I am, Thou wilt re - ceive, Wilt wel - come,
4. Just as I am, Thy love un - known Has bro - ken

blood was shed for me, And that Thou biddest me
con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with -
par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; Be - cause Thy prom - ise
ev - ery bar - rier down; Now to be Thine, yea,

come to Thee,
in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
I be - lieve,
Thine a - lone,

Music: Harmonization copyright, MCMLV, by John Ribble; renewed 1983; from *The Hymnbook*, published by Westminster Press.

Come, O thou Traveler unknown

Vernon 88 88 88

HEAVY

Verses

1 & 2

Slow, stern $\text{♩} = 42$

1. Come, O thou Trav - el - er un - known, whom_

2. Wilt thou not yet to___ me re - veal thy___

3. 'Tis Love! 'tis Love! thou___ diedst for___ me, I___

4. My prayer hath power with___ God; the___ grace un -

still I hold but can - not___ see. My com - pa - ny be -

new, un - ut - ter - a - ble___ name? Tell me, I still be -

hear thy whis - per in my___ heart. The morn - ing breaks, the___

spea - a - ble I now re - ceive. Through faith I see thee___

fore is___ gone, and___ I am left a - lone with___ thee. With

seech thee,___ tell, to___ know it now re - solved I___ am. Wres -

shad - ows___ flee: pure___ u - ni - ver - sal Love thou___ art. To

face to___ face, I___ see thee face to face and___ live. In

thee all night I mean___ to___ stay, and wres - tle till the___ break of day.

ting I will not let___ thee___ go, till I thy name, thy___ na - ture know.

me, to all thy mer - cies___ move, thy na - ture and thy___ name is Love.

vain I have not wept___ and___ strove, thy na - ture and thy___ name is Love.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1778

Tune: *Genuine Church Music*, 1832; attr. Chapin

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Praise with Joy the World's Creator

273

The Iona Community, 1985; alt.

1 Praise with joy the world's Cre - a - tor, God of jus - tice,
 2 Praise to Christ who feeds the hun - gry, frees the cap - tive,
 3 Praise the Spir - it sent a - mong us, lib - er - a - ting
 4 Praise the Mak - er, Christ, and Spir - it, one God in Com -

love, and peace, Source and end of hu - man knowl - edge,
 finds the lost, Heals the sick, up - sets re - li - gion,
 truth from pride, For - ing bonds where race or gen - der,
 mu - ni - ty, Call - ing Christ - ians to em - bod - y

grace be - stow - ing with - out cease. Cel - e - brate the
 fear - less both of fate and cost. Cel - e - brate Christ's
 age or na - tion dare di - vide. Cel - e - brate the
 one - ness and di - ver - si - ty. Thus the world shall

Ma - ker's glo - ry, power to res - cue and re - lease.
 con - stant pres - ence— Friend and Strang - er, Guest and Host.
 Spir - it's trea - sure— fool - ish - ness none dare de - ride.
 yet be - lieve when shown Christ's vi - brant un - i - ty.

The Iona Community works and worships in a tenth-century abbey on the remote island of Iona, Scotland. Their output of hymns and songs includes this one written for the anniversary gathering of the World Student Christian Federation in Edinburgh in 1985.

Tune: LAUDA ANIMA (PRAISE MY SOUL)
 8.7.8.7.8.7.

John Goss, 1869

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