



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP
October 1, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

Children are welcome to begin with music and storytelling in the classroom.
Please pick up your communion elements on your way into the sanctuary.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC Peter Frost

PRELUDE Improvisation on Communion Hymns

FRAMING WORDS/WELCOME Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

INTROIT *O for a World* (Azmon), words by Miriam Therese Winter

BRINGING OF THE LIGHT/TIME OF GRATITUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP Jo Ann Levitt

One: This place for us is Holy Ground.

All: The place where we sing songs of praise to the Lord, and repeat the stories of faith that inspire us to respond to Christ's love.

One: God called us here, in whispering winds and in burning flames,

All: God's presence disarms us of the barriers we have placed around us.

One: Instead God meets us in our vulnerability, our fullness, and our humanity.

All: Let us worship the Lord.

– written by Rev. MaryAnn R. Rennie (minister of Corstorphine: St. Anne's Parish Church in Edinburgh) for the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website.

*HYMN *They Did not Build in Vain* See page 6

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

O Lord, hear our prayers:

Prayers for hope for those who feel hopeless

Prayers for healing for those who need healing

Prayers for jobs for those who are jobless

Prayers for community for those who feel lonely

Prayers for peace for those whose lives are filled with conflict.

Prayers for understanding for those seeking to be understood.

Prayers for comfort those who grieve.

Prayers for food for those who hunger.

Prayers for shelter for those who are homeless.

Prayers for clean water for those whose waters are contaminated

Prayers for rain for those who live in drought.

Prayers for a time of drying for those who are facing too much rain.

Prayers for freedom for those who live under dictatorships.

Prayers for wisdom for our leaders.

Prayers for spiritual growth and health for our churches.

Prayers for your Kingdom to reign here on earth.

(Time for Silent Prayers of Joy and Concern)

Amen.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Draw the Circle Wide

Light/Miller

*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

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Exodus 3:1-15

Elizabeth Young

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk

and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you": This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

MESSAGE

Always Becoming

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah verse 1

See page 7

GATHERING AT THE TABLE

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Carl Bradford

Leader: We gather around the Table in places far and near

Side 1: Eating Sourdough, Rye, Tortillas

Side 2: Crackers, Wafers, Gluten Free, and Wonderbread-

All: The body of Christ.

Leader: Drinking the wine or the juice

Side 1: from handmade chalices and silver goblets,

Side 2: golden spoons, and little mini cups-

All: The blood of Christ.

Leader: The bread and the cup unite us with all who would follow Jesus.

Side 1: This meal reaches back through the centuries.

Side 2: This table reaches around the world.

All: Let us eat and drink with joy.

~ written by Joanna Harader, posted on her Spacious Faith blog, spaciousfaith.com

READING

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

BLESSING AND SHARING THE MEAL

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING *Sung Lord's Prayer*, Mark Miller See page 8

ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We invite you to give to your local food pantry. You can also leave canned goods and staples for the People's Pantry and the Pop-Up Pantry in the baskets.

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATION TO THE RAMP DEDICATION

Pastor Brent

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

LITURGY OF DEDICATION

One: Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to them that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

All: We dedicate this ramp answering the call to welcome all the children of this world to this house and home of Christ.

One: For nearly 200 years our sanctuary has welcomed the community through its doors to handle the mysteries of life and death. For 140 years the Jonathan Edwards Room has served as the living room for Stockbridge. For nearly 70 years the John Sergeant Wing has hosted meetings, seminars, twelve step groups, and other gatherings.

All: We dedicate this ramp; opening our spaces and our hearts to any and all seeking truth, beauty, hope, peace, healing, or love.

One: Through our Capital Campaign we have dedicated ourselves to honoring the facilities and spaces of the church left in our care by those who have come before.

All: May this ramp be an enduring reminder of our calling to welcome, love and serve. May it urge us to leave this place as a gift and blessing to those who will follow.

PRAYER OF BLESSING AND DEDICATION

REMARKS

Cathy Clark

INVITATIONS AND BENEDICTION

SUNG SENDING *Bread of the World in Mercy Broken* Heber/Bourgeois

Music Notes ~ Peter Frost

There is some evidence that suggests that the Greek text to "Let all mortal flesh keep silence" (last hymn played during preludes today) dates back to the 5th century. The current text is from the Liturgy of St. James. Originally it was believed that the text came from James the lesser (brother of Jesus) but further evidence has led elsewhere. The tune, Picardy is a book of French folk-songs entitled: Chansons Populaires des Provinces de France.

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.

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They Did Not Build in Vain

Acts 2:1-4, 43-47; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 12:1-2

Alan Luff, 1989; alt.

1 They did not build in vain who found - ed here a church
 2 Those who have loved this place, a cloud of wit - nes - ses,
 3 In ev - ery place our world is storm and tem - pest tossed,
 4 Make this the meet - ing place where doubt finds grounds of faith,

as wit - ness to God's love a - mid a world of pain;
 sur - round and urge us on as we now run our race;
 the flames of fear and hate are e - vil's flags un - furled;
 where hurt finds heal - ing love, our pen - i - tence your grace;

They built up - on the rock that is the ris - en Christ,
 Though the ho - ri - zon's bend con - ceals the way a - head,
 Yet still the Spir - it's power in wind and fire of love
 Where God in Trin - i - ty is bridge from death to life,

the one foun - da - tion laid, that stands each earth - ly shock.
 the foot - prints on the road show Christ waits at the end.
 pours gifts up - on the church for ser - vice in this hour.
 from sin to ho - li - ness, time to e - ter - ni - ty.

Alan Luff, a graduate of the Royal College of Music, has served the Anglican Church as parish priest, precentor of Westminster Abbey, and canon of Birmingham Cathedral. He is also known as the author of *Welsh Hymns and Their Tunes* (1990).

Tune: LEONI 6.6.8.4.D.
 Traditional Yigdal melody
 Adapt. Meyer Lyon, 1770

281 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7

William Williams, 1745

Stanza 1 trans. Peter Williams, 1771

Stanzas 2-3 trans. William Williams, 1772

John Hughes, 1907

verse 1

1. Guide me, O Thou great Je - ho - vah, Pil - grim through this
2. O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, Whence the heal - ing
3. When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but Thou art might - y; Hold me
stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar Lead me
fears sub - side; Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, Land me

with Thy power - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through; Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
safe on Ca - naan's side; Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.
Be Thou still my strength and shield, Be Thou still my strength and shield.
I will ev - er give to Thee, I will ev - er give to Thee.

Sung Lords Prayer

Mark Miller

mp
Our God, in hea-ven, ho-ly is your name, your
reign come, your will done, on earth as in hea-ven.

slower
Give us to-day our dai-ly bread, and help us for-give, as we have been for-giv-en.

mf
In the time of tri-al lead us in-to light, for yours is the kin-dom, and the
po- wer, and the glo-ry, for-e-ver. Our God, in
hea-ven, ho-ly is your name, ho-ly is your name.

f *mp*