



*The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts*
CONSECRATION SUNDAY
November 12, 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

PRELUDES

For All The Saints, Sine Nomine, by R. Vaughn Williams

A Blessing, by Gerald Peterson

Peter Frost, *organ*

Hymn of Thanksgiving Old Dutch Folk Song

Bell Choir

FRAMING WORDS

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

*GATHERING SONG *Jesus Loves the Little Children (sung twice)*

Jesus loves the little children

All the children of the world

They are cause of such delight

They are precious in His sight

Jesus love the little children of the world.

*CALL TO WORSHIP Adapted from the Worship Blogspot

One: Come! Come and worship, you who woke early and you who slept late;

All: You who come often, and you who don't.

One: Whether we are first or last or somewhere in between,

All: there is room for all of us in God's kingdom, and more than enough grace to go around.

One: Come beloved children of God

All: We come to worship God together!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor Brent

TIME WITH CHILDREN

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.

CONTEMPORARY READING from *Life of the Beloved* by Henry Nouwen

Listening to that voice with great inner attentiveness, I hear at my center words that say: "I have called you by name, from the very beginning. You are mine and I am yours. You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knitted you together in your mother's womb. I have carved you in the palms of my hands and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace. I look at you with infinite tenderness and care for you with a care more intimate than that of a mother for her child. I have counted every hair on your head and guided you at every step. Wherever you go, I go with you, and wherever you rest, I keep watch. I will give you food that will satisfy all your hunger and drink that will quench all your thirst. I will not hide my face from you. You know me as your own as I know you as my own. You belong to me. I am your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your lover, and your spouse...yes, even your child...wherever you are I will be. Nothing will ever separate us. We are one."

*HYMN

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

See page 5

WELCOME

Pastor Brent

CALL TO THE OFFERING

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

OFFERTORY

Come Ye Thankful People Come, by Elvey

Bell Choir

*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

Hosea 11:1-11

Ronnie Cunningham

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,
and offering incense to idols.
Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those
who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.
They shall return to the land of Egypt,
and Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
The sword rages in their cities,
it consumes their oracle-priests,
and devours because of their schemes.
My people are bent on turning away from
me.

To the Most High they call,
but he does not raise them up at all.
How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart recoils within me;
my compassion grows warm and tender.
I will not execute my fierce anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and no mortal,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath.
They shall go after the Lord,
who roars like a lion; when he roars,
his children shall come trembling from the
west.
They shall come trembling like birds from
Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria;
and I will return them to their homes, says
the Lord.

SERMON *Fierce Love's Call* Pastor Brent
*HYMN *Great is Thy Faithfulness* See pages 6-7
or pew hymnal #276

OFFERING OUR COMMITMENTS AND OUR GIFTS

ACT OF CONSECRATION *Be Thou My Vision*, Irish Folk Tune

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, by J. Wyeth 1813

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS Pastor Brent

SENDING CHARGE adapted from the Narrative Lectionary

Faithful God, you have continued to love your people despite the times when we are unfaithful. Receive our thanks for never giving up on us. Send us forth with your grace.

*HYMN *Community of Christ* See page 8

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent



POSTLUDE *We Gather Together*, arr. by Krug

Food and drink for Fellowship Hour are in the small conference room.

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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Ps. 36:7-9

Robert Robinson, 1758; alt.

1 Come, O Fount of ev-ery bless-ing, tune my heart to sing your grace;
 2 Here I pause in my so - journ-ing, giv-ing thanks for hav-ing come,
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I am drawn a - new!

streams of mer - cy, nev-er ceas-ing, call for songs of end-less praise.
 come to trust, at ev-ery turn - ing, God will guide me safe-ly home.
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to you.

Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a - bove.
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God,
 Prone to wan - der, I can feel it, wan-der from the love I've known:

Praise the mount; I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un - fail-ing love.
 Came to res - cue me from dan - ger, bless-ed bod - y, pre-cious blood.
 Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your ver - y own.

Converted to Methodism at age twenty, Robert Robinson soon became a Calvinistic Methodist preacher and later gained great popularity. The melody, associated with this text since 1813, is an American folk tune.

Tune: NETTLETON 8.7.8.7.D.
 John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 1813

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

FAITHFULNESS 11.10.11.10 with refrain

Thomas Obediah Chisholm, 1923

William Marion Runyan, 1923

1. *Great is Thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther,
 2. Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring-time and har - vest,
 3. Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,

There is no shad - ow of turn - ing with Thee;
 Sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove
 Thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide;

Thou chang - est not, Thy com - pas - sions they fail not;
 Join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness
 Strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row,

As Thou hast been Thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 To Thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
 Bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain

Great is Thy faith-ful-ness! Great is Thy faith-ful-ness!

Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see; All I have need-ed Thy

hand hath pro-vid-ed; Great is Thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me!

News and Announcements

Health and Mutual Care

As we approach fall and winter, we are providing a space in the west side of the sanctuary where masking is required. Ask a Deacon for assistance or contact the church office with questions.



Office Closed Monday, Nov 13
 Blessing for Rev. Barb Kershner, who
 will be preaching Nov 19
 Thanksgiving Day worship 10:30am
 Thanksgiving Dinner 11:30 (approx.)
 Advent begins, Nov 26
 Advent crafts & potluck lunch, Dec 3

Clergy Wellness Retreat

Wednesday, Nov 15

The entire church building will be in use for a Southern New England UCC pastors meeting.

Christmas Choir!

Would you like to sing Christmas Eve? If you are a chorister who is currently unable to sing in our church choir, but you love to sing Christmas music, please join us. Rehearsals start November 19. See Peter Frost about rehearsal schedule.

Community of Christ

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Shirley Erena Murray, 1985

1 Com - mu - ni - ty of Christ, who make the Cross your own,
 2 Com - mu - ni - ty of Christ, look past the church's door
 3 Com - mu - ni - ty of Christ, through whom the word must sound—
 4 When men-ace melts a - way, so shall God's will be done,

live out your creed and risk your life for God a - lone:
 and see the ref - u - gee, the hun - gry, and the poor.
 cry out for jus - tice and for peace the whole world 'round:
 the cli - mate of the world be peace and Christ its Sun;

The God who wears your face, to whom all worlds be - long,
 Take hands with the op - pressed, the job - less in your street,
 Dis - arm the powers that war and all that can de - stroy,
 Our cur - ren - cy be love and kind - li - ness our law,

whose chil - dren are of ev - ery race and ev - ery song.
 take towel and wa - ter, that you wash your neigh - bor's feet.
 turn bombs to bread, and tears of an - guish in - to joy.
 our food and faith be shared as one for ev - er - more.

Shirley Erena Murray has grown up within the Ecumenical Movement and addresses related themes such as Christian unity and social justice in her hymnody. This text was first sung at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

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