



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

**GIVING SUNDAY**

*March 10, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.*

We welcome people to share their prayers. If you would like your prayer read aloud, fill out a prayer slip. Nursery care is available during worship.

## **PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Frost

PRELUDE

*Meditation*, by Flor Peeters

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Pastor Brent Damrow

## **GATHERING FOR WORSHIP**

TOLLING OF THE HOUR / BRINGING OF THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

\*HYMN

*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

see page 6

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Jon Geldert

One: In a world that cries out, "Fear me!"

**All: We will listen to Jesus' words, "Don't be afraid!"**

One: In a world that wants us to hate the other...

**All: We will live Jesus' call to, "Love God.**

**Love your neighbour, as you love yourself."**

One: In a world that radicalizes...

**All: We, too, will be radical. Radical with our hospitality.**

**Radical with our hope. Radical with our love.**

One: Then come to this place, ready to be who we are called to be.

**All: Let us gather together and worship God.**

KIDS SPECIAL MUSIC

*Shine, Jesus, Shine*

Jill Wheat, director

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

*Cantilena* by John Scriveyner

CONTEMPORARY READING

Liza Catino

Gandhi: "Scientists tell us that, without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate, and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction." (YI, 5-5-1920, p. 7)

SUNG PSALM

Psalm 89:1-4

Rich Geiler, *tenor*

Response Antiphon: Lee Dengler, 1994

*Unison*

Your steadfast love is established forever.

Psalm  
tone

*R*

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of your steadfast love,  
O God, forever;  
with my mouth I will proclaim  
your faithfulness to all generations.

<sup>2</sup>I declare that your steadfast love  
is established forever;  
your faithfulness is as firm  
as the heavens.

<sup>3</sup>You said, "I have made a  
covenant with my chosen one,  
I have sworn to my servant David:

<sup>4</sup>"I will establish your descendants  
forever,  
and build your throne for all  
generations.'" *R*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God, your faithful love toward us never ends!  
It is as sure and dependable as the sky over our heads.  
In the midst of that sureness we gather.  
In that dependability we lift to you the prayers of our hearts -  
To declare who we are to the depth of your love.  
Receive the prayers of our hearts and lives in the silence of these moments.**

\*WORDS OF ASSURANCE / PASSING THE PEACE

TESTIMONIAL

Vicky Cooper

**THE GIFT OF THE WORD**

SCRIPTURE READING	Mark 12:28-40	Charlotte Rodgers
SERMON	<i>Giving</i>	Pastor Brent
*HYMN	<i>We Give Thee but Thine Own</i>	See page 7

**OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS**

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Today we also welcome gifts for *One Great Hour of Sharing*. Please place any gifts for OGH in designated envelopes (see page 8).

OFFERTORY *When Jesus Wept*, arr. by Peter Frost (2023)

\*DOXOLOGY *A Lenten Doxology*, by G.W. Dub Shepherd\* Old 100th  
**Praise God throughout these forty days.  
Praise Christ, our Lord, who God did raise.  
And praise the spirit who imparts  
God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.**

\*Used by permission: Published by The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church, PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003. Web site <http://www.umcworship.org>.

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves; May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen** ~ written by Joanna Harader

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE      *Reflection* by Flor Peeters

**GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD**

\*HYMN                      *Take My Gifts*                      See page 5

INVITATIONS

Church World Service Hygiene Kits

SENDING SONG              *O Savior, Let Me Walk with Thee*, vs. 4

**In hope that sends a shining ray  
far down the future's broadening way,  
In peace that only you can give,  
with you, O Savior, let me live.**

BENEDICTION    Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE                      *Voluntary in d minor* by William Herschel (18thc.)



**The community supper resumes!** All are welcome to a shared meal on March 13 at the church. The food will be ready at 5:30pm, available until 6:45pm. People may arrive whenever is best for them and stay as long as they like. The main course will be chili, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. No one is obligated to bring anything. Those who wish to contribute, help cook, or bring a dish can. We will begin prepping at 4:30, stop by if you would like to help.

# Take My Gifts

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Shirley Erena Murray, 1991

1 Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,  
2 Take the fruit that I have gathered from the tree your Spirit sowed,  
3 Take whatever I can offer— gifts that I have yet to find,

gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free,  
harvest of your own compassion, juice that makes the wine of God,  
skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind,

now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,  
spiced with humor, laced with laughter— flavor of the Jesus life,  
things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be:

now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!  
tang of risk and new adventure, taste and zest beyond belief.  
take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

Shirley Erena Murray recounted that Colin Gibson composed this tune for her stewardship text "almost instantaneously." Gibson has served as professor at the University of Otago, as well as organist and choir director in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Tune: TALAVERA TERRACE 8.7.8.7.D.  
Colin Gibson, 1991  
Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA

## God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

*Robert L. Edwards, 1961; alt.*

1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and  
 2 Skills and time are ours for serv - ing, that your will on  
 3 Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through powers your  
 4 Lend your joy to all our giv - ing, let it light our

end - less store, Na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's  
 earth be done: All at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the  
 grace con - ferred; Ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the  
 pil - grim way; From the night of anx - ious keep - ing, loose us in - to

shat - tered door: Gift - ed by you, we turn to you  
 Church made one. Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor,  
 gos - pel Word. O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing  
 gen - erous day. Then when years on earth are o - ver,

of - fering up our - selves in praise; Thank - ful song shall  
 lest we strive for self a - lone; born with tal - ents,  
 as we heed Christ's age - less call, Heal - ing, teach - ing,  
 and we've lived our hu - man span, God, ful - fill be -

rise for - ev - er, gra - cious do - nor of our days.  
 make us ser - vants fit to an - swer at your throne.  
 and re - claim - ing, hon - oring you by lov - ing all.  
 yond our dream - ing, all our stew - ard - ship be - gan.

## We Give Thee but Thine Own

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1. We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;  
 2. May we thy boun-ties thus as stew-ards true re - ceive,  
 3. To com-fort and to bless, to find a balm for woe,  
 4. The cap-tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,  
 5. And we be-lieve thy Word, though dim our faith may be;

1. all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.  
 2. and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first-fruits give.  
 3. to tend the lone - ly in dis - tress, is an - gels' work be - low.  
 4. to teach the way of life and peace— it is a Christ-like thing.  
 5. what - e'er for thine we do, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

WORDS: William W. How, c. 1858  
 MUSIC: Mason and Webb's *Cantica Laudis*, 1850

SCHUMANN  
 SM

## Music Notes ~ Peter Frost

When I set the beautiful William Billings (1770) canon *When Jesus Wept* for piano, I focused primarily on the opening line; *When Jesus wept the falling tear, in mercy flowed beyond all bound*. In two sections of the music you will hear descending scales in the bass as I attempt to bring out this text. Some discordance towards the end might harken the second and last phrase: *When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear seized all the guilty world around*.

## News and Announcements

### Easter Flowers

The sanctuary will be filled with beautiful pots of flowers for Easter. You may order a plant in memory of or in honor of a loved one; the deadline is March 24. The recommended donation is \$20 per plant. There are forms and a drop-box in the JE Room.

### "One Great hour of Sharing"

**Offering and CWS Kits:** Today we will be taking an offering for OGHS, one of the UCC's special mission offerings. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United

Church of Christ. Checks may be made payable to First Congregational Church, memo line: OGHS. At coffee hour we will put together hygiene kits which Church World Service uses around the world to help those facing natural disasters, homelessness, or other difficult situations. A free will donation basket will also be available to help defray the costs.

### Children's Special Music

Rehearsals most Sunday mornings from 9:15-9:55. Children from around age 6 and up through middle school are welcome to raise up sweet music together! After today, CSM's next appearance is at Easter. Questions? Contact Jill Wheat (413-274-5108).

*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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