



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

WORD SUNDAY

March 17, 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 *What Wondrous Love Is This*, American Folk (19th c.)

Arr. by Peter Frost

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

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

*HYMN *O Sing a Song of Bethlehem* See page 6

*CALL TO WORSHIP Cathy Clark

One: The impossible blossomed in, of all places, a stable.

All: The light of the world entered beneath a glimmering star

One: Creation held its breath as the word was spoken and dwelt among us

All: Full of grace and truth; in him was life.

One: Jesus came into his own home

All: And yet the world received him not.

One: As he approached Jerusalem, the people welcomed him

All: Until the powerful did not.

One: As he approaches again this Lent, what will we do?

All: Let us prepare to receive him as the Children of God.

continued

One: Come let us worship, let us greet the word made flesh.

All: For even now, Christ comes to meet us too.

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Jesus the Word*

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 *Adagio* by Tommaso Albinoni (17th c.)

CONTEMPORARY READING *Bethlehem Down* (see page 5) Rich Geiler

SUNG PSALM Psalm 102:12-17

Response *Unison* *Antiphon: Jane Marshall, 1994*



O let us ex - alt God's name for - ev - er.

Psalm tone



¹² But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; *
your name endures to all generations.

¹³ You will rise up and have compassion on Zion, *
for it is time to favor it; the appointed time has come.

¹⁴ **For your servants hold its stones dear, *
and have pity on its dust.**

¹⁵ **The nations will fear the name of the LORD, *
and all the kings of the earth your glory.**

¹⁶ **For the LORD will build up Zion; *
he will appear in his glory.**

¹⁷ **He will regard the prayer of the destitute, *
and will not despise their prayer.**

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Powerful and enduring God, we know that your compassion is boundless. In the sureness of your mercy and favor we come to you in prayer. We ask you to regard our confessions with your pity. Hear now the silent prayers of your people.

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*PASSING THE PEACE

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING John 1:1-18

SERMON *Receiving Him* Pastor Brent

*HYMN *Of the Father's Love Begotten* See pew hymnal, #309

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY Air by J.S. Bach, arr. E. Broughton

*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.**

*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE *Cantique* by F. Peeters

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*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>.

*SENDING CHARGE Adapted from Christine Sine Drea Pecor

One: Come and see!

All: The light of God has come into our world to proclaim God's justice and love; It has overcome the darkness and brought new life.

One: Come and follow!

**All: Christ our companion is almost in Jerusalem
He beckons us on to learn, become, and serve.**

One: Come and witness!

**All: Christ, the suffering servant models true power through
Offering love, practicing peace, and showing compassion.**

One: Come and see, come and follow, come and witness

All: In God's spoken Word of Love, we put our hope.

*HYMN *God Loved the World* See page 7

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE *Voluntary VI* by John Stanley (18th c.)



Music Notes ~ Peter Frost

Tomaso Giovanni Albinoni (1671-1751) was a contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). The Adagio being played for the Introit today is one of his works. He composed operas, concertos, sonatas, symphonies, and cantatas. During his life he was best known for his operas. Today he is best known for his concertos.

Bethlehem Down

When He is King we will give him the King's gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
"Beautiful robes", said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

~ "Bethlehem Down" is a Christmas carol composed in
1927 by British composer Peter Warlock (1894–1930).
It is set to a poem written by poet Bruce Blunt (1899–1957).

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.

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

All hymns reprinted under OneLicense.net A-723107

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

51

Louis F. Benson, 1899; alt.

Luke 2:8–20, 25–32; Matt. 14:22–33; Mark 4:39; 6:47–52;
John 6:16–21; Acts 5:30–31; 10:39–43

1 O sing a song of Beth-le-hem, of shep-herds watch-ing there,
2 O sing a song of Naz-a-reth, of days of joy and sun,
3 O sing a song of Gal-i-lee, of lake and woods and hill,
4 O sing a song of Cal-va-ry, its glo-ry and dis-may,

and of the news that came to them from an-gels in the air:
O sing of fra-grant flo-wers' breath, and of the sin-less One:
of One who walked up-on the sea and bade its waves be still:
of One who hung up-on the tree, and took our sins a-way:

The light that shone on Beth-le-hem fills all the world to-day;
For now the flowers of Naz-a-reth in ev-ery heart may grow;
For though, like waves on Gal-i-lee, rough seas of trou-ble roll,
For Christ who died on Cal-va-ry is ris-en from the grave;

of Je-sus' birth and peace on earth the an-gels sing al-way.
now spreads the fame of Je-sus' name on all the winds that blow.
when faith has heard the Sav-ior's word, falls peace up-on the soul.
God's sov-ereign Child, who rec-on-ciled, is might-y now to save.

Using four biblical locations important to the story, the American hymnwriter Louis F. Benson has summarized the life of Jesus and related it to the present. Benson edited several Presbyterian hymnals and wrote a number of books on hymnody.

Tune: KINGSFOLD C.M.D.
Traditional English melody
Arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

John 3:16-17

Heiliges Lippen und Herzens Opfer, Stettin, 1778
Transl. August Crull, 1845; alt.

1 God loved the world, and lov - ing gave
2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith,
3 If you are sick, if death is near,
4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ

a won - drous gift, the lost to save,
who was made flesh and suf - fered death;
this truth your trou - bled heart can cheer;
for - gives the flock, by sin en - ticed,

That all who would in Christ be - lieve
All who con - fide in Christ a - lone
Christ Je - sus saves us all from death;
And jus - ti - fied by Je - sus' blood,

should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
that is the firm - est ground of faith.
your bap - tism grants the high - est good.

Edward Miller, a skilled flutist in G. F. Handel's orchestra,
adapted Rockingham from the tune Tunbridge. Miller named it
for the Marquis of Rockingham, a patron and friend, and prime
minister of Great Britain.

Tune: ROCKINGHAM L.M.
Anon.

Adapt. Edward Miller, 1790

Holy Week & Easter 2024

Palm Sunday – March 24 – 10:00am

Join the crowd to welcome Jesus as he enters the holy city of Jerusalem. A Palm Processional will kick things off as we honor Christ and look forward to the Holy Week that follows.

Maundy Thursday – March 28
7:00pm

Gather with the disciples in the upper room to share the Last Supper with Jesus. Go to the Garden of Gethsemane to join in the story of love, prayer, betrayal, and denial. The service will conclude with a service of light and include Communion and beautiful music.

Good Friday – March 29

Lunchtime Service 12:15pm – 12:45 pm

Take our places at the foot of the cross to bear witness to the fateful events of the trial, beating, crucifixion, and burial. We will have the chance to confess the ways we continue to betray or deny Christ. We will face truth in love.

Good Friday, *continued*

Evening Guided Meditation 5:30 p.m.
(we will keep the sanctuary open until 7:00 p.m.)

This contemplative self-guided time of prayer bathed in soft piano music will bring each person likewise to the foot of the cross with the same chance to confess and reflect. We will livestream this time and provide the guide on-line as well.

Easter Sunday – March 31

Sunrise Service 6:30am

The Sanctuary Balcony

Christ is Risen! Using a beautiful text from Isaiah we will gather facing the sunrise to celebrate the Easter truth of life and resurrection. A time of simple food and fellowship will follow.

10:00am – Festival Worship

With special music and cries of Alleluia we will sing, pray, and celebrate Easter! Following worship will be the **Egg Hunt for children** and a time of **food and fellowship**.