



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 1, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

Each week in worship we welcome people to share their prayers. If you would like for a worship leader to read your prayer, fill out a prayer slip. Nursery care is available during the worship service; please ask an usher.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Tracy Wilson

PRELUDE

There is a Balm in Gilead, arr. Pam Gervais

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

INVOCATION

*GATHERING SONG *Holy Ground*

See page 5

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Genesis 1)

Elizabeth Young

One: In the beginning God created all things,

All: and God saw that they were good.

One: At our beginning, God created us

**All: unique and irreplaceable, loved and wanted by God,
known and treasured by God even before He created us.**

One: In all our new beginnings, God creates something new

**All: so we will seek God in the freshness of this morning,
in the laughter of friends, in the colors of creation,
and in this beautiful place.**

continued

One: Lord God, King of Creation,

**All: open our eyes to see your presence, our souls to sense your presence,
and our hearts to love your presence,
ever here in your creation, and ever beyond it in eternity.**

~ Adapted from Liturgy of Creation

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

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.**

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

CONTEMPORARY READING

Drea Pecor

"I don't think it is enough appreciated how much an outdoor book the Bible is. It is a "hypoethral book," such as Thoreau talked about - a book open to the sky. It is best read and understood outdoors, and the farther outdoors the better. Or that has been my experience of it. Passages that within walls seem improbable or incredible, outdoors seem merely natural. This is because outdoors we are confronted everywhere with wonders; we see that the miraculous is not extraordinary but the common mode of existence. It is our daily bread. Whoever really has considered the lilies of the field or the birds of the air and pondered the improbability of their existence in this warm world within the cold and empty stellar distances will hardly balk at the turning of water into wine - which was, after all, a very small miracle. We forget the greater and still continuing miracle by which water (with soil and sunlight) is turned into grapes."

~ Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*

*HYMN

Morning Has Broken

**Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
Fresh from the Word!**

**Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's recreation
Of the new day!**

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 2:15-17; 2:25-3:8 (NRSV)

Gary Cilley

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.' And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

SERMON

Beginnings

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped vss. 1, 2, & 4

See page 6

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Pastor Brent

OFFERTORY *Love is Love is Love is Love*, words and music by Abbie Betinis

*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 Amen from *A Year of Amens*, by David Anderegg

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*HYMN *God the Sculptor of the Mountains* See page 7

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

*SENDING SONG *Lord, Make Us More Holy*, verse 1 See page 8

POSTLUDE *Horns of Hyfrydol*, arr. Penny Rodriguez

Music Notes ~ Tracy Wilson

Thank you to today's singers: Amy Shake, Liza Catino, Rich Geiler and Jack Brown. The offertory anthem comes from the Justice Choir Songbook which is a recent compilation of original songs by people from across this land and curated and co-edited by Abbie Betinis, Ahmed Anzaldúa and Tesfa Wondemagegnehu. This collection is designed to help us sing toward the time when all will live in a just, peaceful and sustainable world. We sing for justice to create community and animate courage, and you will hear several selections from this collection in the next few months. Every piece of music in this songbook is used free of charge, as long as we print the following information:

2272

Holy Ground

We are stand - ing on ho - ly ground, _____
 _____ and I know that there are an - gels all a -
 round; _____ let us praise _____
 _____ Je - sus now; _____ we are
 stand - ing in his pres - ence on ho - ly ground. _____

Welcome! We are Open and Affirming, 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.

As followers of Christ and committed to Isaiah's charge to "maintain justice and do what is right," we acknowledge with gratitude and humility that we are learning, speaking, gathering, and worshiping on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

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

All hymns reprinted under OneLicense.net A-723107

Verses

Ps. 68:4, 32; Ps. 105

Joachim Neander, 1680

Transl. Madeleine Forell Marshall, 1993

1, 2, & 4

1 Sing praise to God, who has shaped and sus - tains all cre -
 2 Praise God, our guard - ian, who lov - ing - ly of - fers cor -
 3 Sing praise to God, with sin - cere thanks for all your suc -
 4 Sing praise, my soul, the great name of your high God com -

a - tion! Sing praise, my soul, in pro - found and com -
 rec - tion, Who, as on ea - gle's wings, saves us from
 cess - es. Mer - ci - ful God ev - er loves to en -
 mend - ing. All that have life and breath join you, their

plete ad - o - ra - tion! Glad - some re - jice— or - gan and
 sin - ful de - jec - tion. Have you ob - served, how we are
 cour - age and bless us. On - ly con - ceive, what god - ly
 notes sweet - ly blend - ing. God is your light! Soul, ev - er

trum - pet and voice— join - ing God's great con - gre - ga - tion.
 al - ways pre - served by God's pa - ren - tal af - fec - tion?
 strength can a - chieve: strength that would touch and car - ess us.
 keep this in sight: a - men, a - men nev - er end - ing.

Joachim Neander was a dedicated, caring pastor of the Reformed Church in Düsseldorf, Germany. This was the most familiar of his fifty-six hymn texts, which were published along with many of his original tunes in 1680, the year of his death.

Tune: LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.4.7.8.
 Erneuerten Gesangbuch, Stralsund, 1665
 Adapt. and harm. William S. Bennett, 1863

2060 God the Sculptor of the Mountains



1. God the sculp - tor of the moun - tains,
2. God the nui - sance to the Pha - raoh,
3. God the dress - er of the vine - yard,
4. God the un - ex - pect - ed in - fant,



God the mill - er of the sand,
God the cleav - er of the sea,
God the plant - er of the wheat,
God the calm, de - ter - mined youth,



God the jewel - er of the heav - ens,
God the pil - lar in the dark - ness,
God the reap - er of the har - vest,
God the ta - ble - turn - ing proph - et,



God the pot - ter of the land:
God the bea - con of the free:
God the source of all we eat:
God the re - sur - rect - ed truth:



You are womb of all cre - a - tion,
You are fount of all de - liv - 'rance,
You are host at ev - ery ta - ble,
You are pres - ent ev - ery mo - ment,



we are form - less; shape us now.
we are sight - less; lead us now.
we are hun - gry; feed us now.
we are search - ing; meet us now.

WORDS: John Thornburg
MUSIC: Amanda Husberg

JENNINGS-HOUSTON
87.87.87

Words © 1993 John Thornburg; music © 1996 Abingdon Press, admin. by The Copyright Co.

The Faith We Sing (2000)

6.6.6.6.6

African-American spiritual

African-American spiritual

1. Lord, make us more ho - ly, Lord, make us more ho - ly,
 2. Lord, make us more lov - ing, Lord, make us more lov - ing,
 3. Lord, make us more pa - tient, Lord, make us more pa - tient,
 4. Lord, make us more faith - ful, Lord, make us more faith - ful,

Lord, make us more ho - ly, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Lord, make us more lov - ing, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Lord, make us more pa - tient, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Lord, make us more faith - ful, Un - til we meet a - gain.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Lov - ing, lov - ing, lov - ing, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Pa - tient, pa - tient, pa - tient, Un - til we meet a - gain.
 Faith - ful, faith - ful, faith - ful, Un - til we meet a - gain.