



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

RALLY SUNDAY

September 8, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

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 *Fairest Lord Jesus*, arr. Rodriquez

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

*INTROIT (Congregation invited to join.) *Gather Us In*, verse 1

**Here is this place new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away,
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light
of this day.**

**Gather us in the lost and forsaken, gather us in the blind and the lame;
Call to us now, and we shall awaken.**

We shall arise at the sound of our name.

*CALL TO WORSHIP Thom Sherman

Gary Cilley

One: Each day is a gift from God,

**All: each moment is that opportunity to reach out
in service to all creation.**

One: Each day is a reminder of the new covenant:

**All: not written on stone tablets easily broken,
but inscribed on our hearts filled with joy and hope.**

One: Each day we draw closer to God:

**All: who has forgotten more than we ever learn;
who has forgiven us more than we ever acknowledge.**

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Susan Moor

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

Exodus 6:2-8 God also spoke to Moses and said to him: ‘I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name “The Lord” I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens. I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the Israelites, “I am the Lord, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.” ’

Jeremiah 31:31-34 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

SERMON

A Covenant People

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Deep in the Shadows of the Past

See page 5

OFFERING OURSELVES

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

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.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Amen, by David Anderegg

GATHERING AT THE TABLE

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor Brent

MUSICAL INVITATION

Taste and See, by Vaughn Williams

SHARING THE STORY AND BLESSING THE FEAST

We will be using the practice of intinction. You may come forward to receive the bread and cup. If you cannot come forward we will bring the meal to you.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We invite you to support our neighbors in need. You may leave canned goods and staples in the baskets at each exit. This month we are supporting the Pop-Up Pantry.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Be Thou My Vision tune: Slane; arr: A. Parker

*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

CONTEMPORARY READING

To be of use, by Marge Piercy

Holland Brown

*BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN, THE TEACHERS, AND THE CHOIR

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

*INVITATIONS Pastor Brent

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

*SENDING SONG *God Be in My Head* See page 8

POSTLUDE *May the Mind of Christ My Savior*, arr. Rodriquez

Music Notes ~ Tracy Wilson

Welcome back, choir! Our offertory anthem is a beloved hymn tune, Slane, set to music by Alice Parker. We will continue to use Amens composed by David Anderegg from his collection, "A Year of Amens."

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.

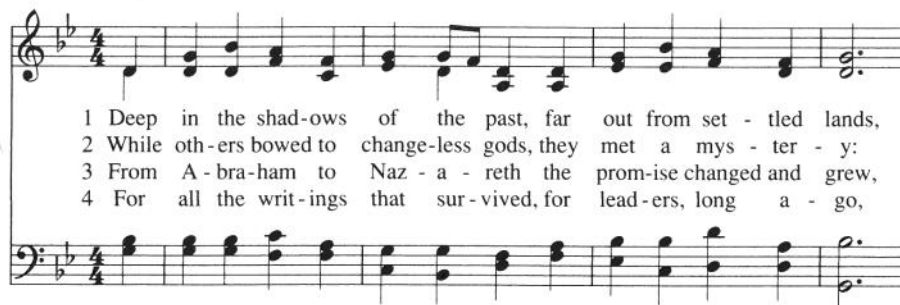
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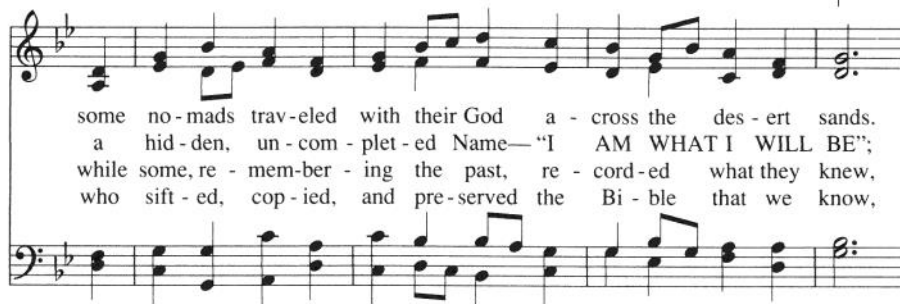
Deep in the Shadows of the Past

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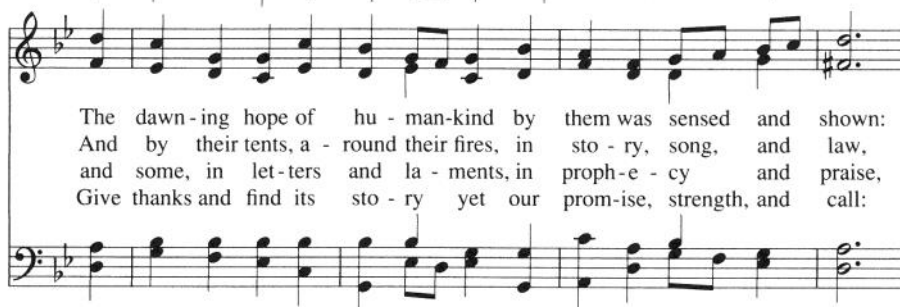
Brian Wren, 1973; rev. 1993



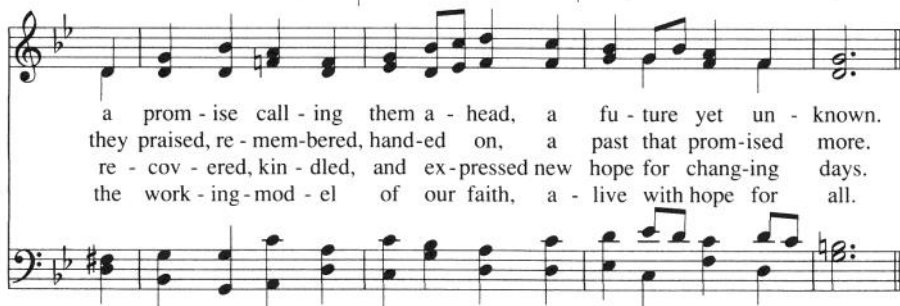
1 Deep in the shad-ows of the past, far out from set - tled lands,
2 While oth - ers bowed to change-less gods, they met a mys - ter - y:
3 From A - bra-ham to Naz - a - reth the prom-ise changed and grew,
4 For all the writ - ings that sur - vived, for lead - ers, long a - go,



some no - mads trav - eled with their God a - cross the des - ert sands.
a hid - den, un - com - plet - ed Name—"I AM WHAT I WILL BE";
while some, re - mem - ber - ing the past, re - cord - ed what they knew,
who sift - ed, cop - ied, and pre - served the Bi - ble that we know,



The dawn - ing hope of hu - man-kind by them was sensed and shown:
And by their tents, a - round their fires, in sto - ry, song, and law,
and some, in let - ters and la - ments, in proph - e - cy and praise,
Give thanks and find its sto - ry yet our prom-ise, strength, and call:



a prom - ise call - ing them a - head, a fu - ture yet un - known.
they praised, re - mem - bered, hand - ed on, a past that prom-ised more.
re - cov - ered, kin - dled, and ex - pressed new hope for chang - ing days.
the work - ing - mod - el of our faith, a - live with hope for all.

Brian Wren has commented: "The hymn tries to tell the story of the Bible in a manner acceptable to different beliefs about its inspiration." Wren credits James Barr's *The Bible in the Modern World* for the idea of the Bible as a "working-model" of our faith.

Tune: SHEPHERDS' PIPES C.M.D.
Annabeth McClelland Gay, 1952

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

(How Can I Keep from Singing)

Ps. 46:1-7; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:17

Anon. in Bright Jewels for the Sunday School,
ed. Robert Lowry, 1869; alt.
St. 3, Doris Plenn, c. 1957

1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -

ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since

hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - mult
new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes

and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing; When
fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing; All

finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing-ing?
 Love com-mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?
 friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing-ing?
 things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing-ing?

The New Century Hymnal (1995)



Thank you to all who have helped with today's service, including Deacons Sarah Conly, Gary Cilley and Elizabeth Young; readers Holland Eaton and Susan Moor; usher Jo Ann Levitt; fellowship Donna Jacobs; greeter Carl Bradford.

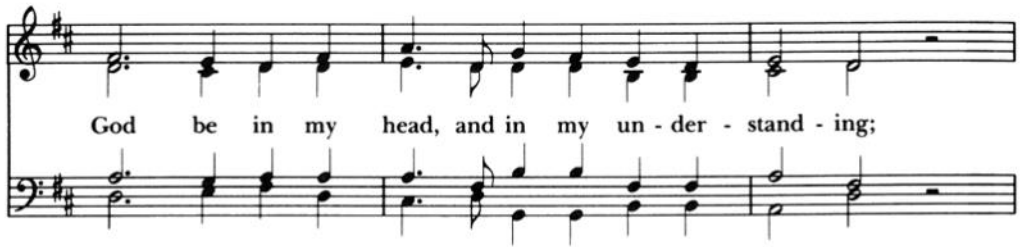
Active Prayer of Thanksgiving

Today we continue the practice of bringing food or money for a local pantry as an act of gratitude for the gift of communion. We encourage you to bring non-perishable food items/ toiletries and/or cash or check today for our congregation's Pop Up Pantry. To contribute by check, make payable to The First Congregational Church, memo line: Pop Up Pantry.

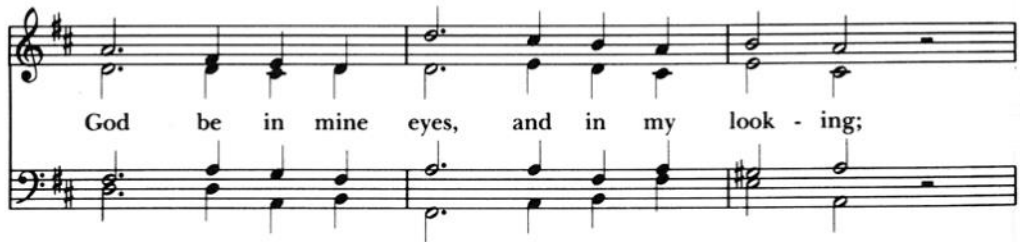
New Pew Bibles

We have new Bibles for the sanctuary, and you have the opportunity to leave your mark (so to speak!) on one of them. We encourage you to consider sponsoring a Bible with a donation of \$15 to cover the cost of the book, and we will gladly make a bookplate to go in a Pew Bible in memory or in honor of someone you name. We anticipate blessing the Bibles at the worship service on September 15. We have 60 Bibles, and while they don't all have to have a bookplate by September 15, we encourage you to submit your request and donation soon. Please contact the church office. ~ The Board of Deacons (David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, Sarah Conly, and Drea Pecor.)

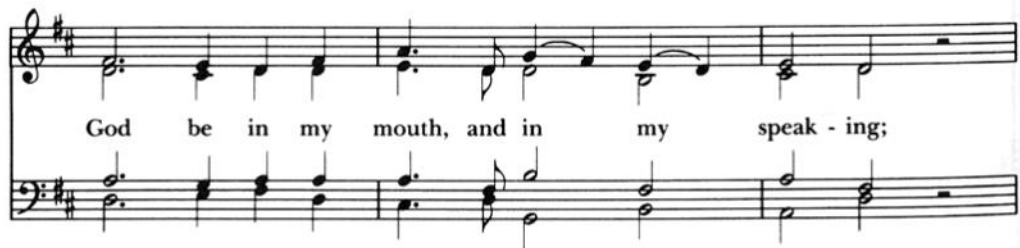
God Be in My Head



God be in my head, and in my un - der - stand - ing;



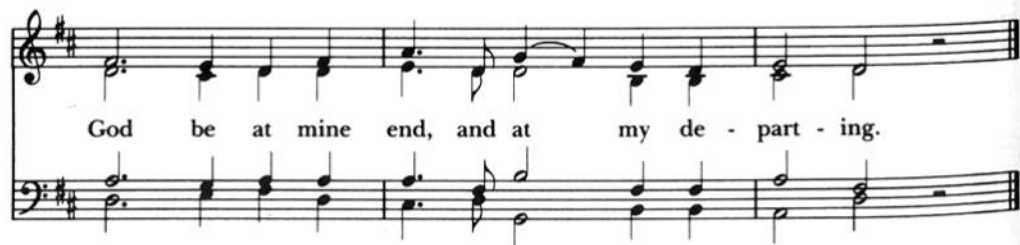
God be in mine eyes, and in my look - ing;



God be in my mouth, and in my speak - ing;



God be in my heart, and in my think - ing;



God be at mine end, and at my de - part - ing.

Words: Sarum Primer, 1514
Music: Lytlington, Sydney Hugo Nicholson (1875-1947)

Irr.