



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 15, 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.

Children will begin in Sunday School, joining worship after the offering.

Nursery care is available during the worship service; please ask an usher.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Ron Hanft

PRELUDE

Meditation in Blue, William Gillock

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

INVOCATION

Don Rodgers

*INTROIT (Congregation invited to join.) *Gather Us In*, verse 2

**We are the young – our lives are a myst'ry,
we are the old – who yearn for your face,
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry,
called to be light to the whole human race.**

**Gather us in – the rich and the haughty, gather us in
the proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP written by Mary J. Scifres, posted on Ministry Matters
Don Rodgers

One: Gather us in, the brokenhearted and the joyful.

All: Gather us in, the weak and the strong.

One: Gather us in, the fearful and the brave.

All: Gather us in, the young and the old.

One: Gather us in, to sing of God's works.

All: Gather us in, to praise Jesus Christ.

One: Gather us in, to worship and wonder.

All: Gather us in, to know of God's love.

*HYMN *If You But Trust in God to Guide You* See page 5

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

CONTEMPORARY READING Elizabeth Young

"But, today, the idea of faith returns to me. Faith defies logic and propels us beyond hope because it is not attached to our desires. Faith is the centerpiece of a connected life. It allows us to live by the grace of invisible strands. It is a belief in a wisdom superior to our own. Faith becomes a teacher in the absence of fact."

~ Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW BIBLES

MUSICAL RESPONSE *Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil* Steve Hassmer, soloist
by Handt Hanson

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 15:1-6 Elizabeth Young

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able

to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

SERMON *Faith and Righteousness* Pastor Brent

*HYMN *The God of Abraham Praise* vss. 2 & 3 See page 6

MOMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT Christian Education
Elisabeth Bellows and Vicky Cooper

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

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 *Everyone Prays*, by Duke Ellington

CALL TO THE OFFERING Pastor Brent

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Yes Indeed*, by Sy Oliver

*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

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Counting the Stars*

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*HYMN	<i>Rejoice, You Pure in Heart</i> vss. 1 & 4	See page 7
*BENEDICTION		Pastor Brent
SENDING SONG	<i>Go Now in Peace</i> , by Joyce Eilers	



POSTLUDE	<i>Steppin' Out in Joy</i> , by Henry Mancini
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Music Notes ~ Ron Hanft

We enthusiastically welcome back Steve Hassmer as our soloist today. Many of us recall Steve as a wonderful singer and performer. Today he is not "performing"; he is here to worship with us in song.

As we anticipate our new pew Bibles, we know that God speaks in many ways and genres. Our music today is drawn from blues and jazz compositions of 1930-60 by William Gillock, and from more recent composers: Henry Mancini, Duke Ellington and Sy Oliver. Using a variety of sources for music in worship is an old practice. The tune to J. S. Bach's "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" began as a secular love song by Hans Leo Hassler. Martin Luther also used secular melodies for his hymns; reportedly saying, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes." Yes, indeed.

If You But Trust in God to Guide You

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Georg Neumark, 1641

Ps. 55:22

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

1 If you but trust in God to guide you, with hope-ful heart through
 2 On - ly be still, and wait God's plea - sure in cheer-ful hope, with
 3 Sing, pray, and keep God's ways un - swerv-ing; of - fer your ser - vice

all your ways, you will find strength, with God be - side you,
 heart con - tent, trust-ing that grace which knows no mea - sure
 faith - ful - ly, and trust God's word, though un - de - serv - ing,

to bear the worst of e - vil days; For those who trust God's
 will by un - bound - ed Love be sent; Nor doubt our in - most
 there find the truth to set you free; God will not fail to

change-less love build on the rock that will not move,
 wants are clear to One who holds us al - ways near.
 guide and bless those who em - brace God's faith - ful - ness.

The comforting words of Psalm 55:22 inspired this beautiful hymn by Georg Neumark, who wrote both words and music. Neumark was a German poet who suffered much during the Thirty Years' War.

Tune: NEUMARK 9.8.9.8.8.8.
 Georg Neumark, 1657

Daniel ben Judah, 1404
Trans. Max Landsberg and Newton Mann, 1885; alt.

Hebrew melody
Adapt. Thomas Olivers
and Meyer Lyon, 1770

1. The God of A-braham praise, Who reigns en-throned a - bove;
2. Your spir - it still flows free, High surg - ing where it will;
3. You have e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;

The an - cient of e - ter - nal days, The God of love!
In proph-et's word You spoke of old And You speak still.
Your love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.

The Lord, the great I Am, By earth and heaven con - fessed,
Es - tab - lished is Your law, And change-less it shall stand,
We praise You, liv - ing God! We praise Your ho - ly name;

We bow be - fore Your ho - ly name, For - ev - er blest.
Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.
The first, the last, be - yond all thought, And still the same!

Verses
1 & 4

Rejoice, You Pure in Heart

55

Edward H. Plumptre, 1865; alt.

Ps. 20:5; Phil. 4:4

1 Re - joi - ce, you pure in heart; lift prais - es to the sky;
2 Bright youth and sea - soned age, strong souls and spir - its meek,
3 With voice as full and strong as o - cean's surg - ing praise,
4 Yes, on through life's long path, still chant - ing as you go,
5 Praise God who rules all worlds, the ris - en Christ a - dore,

Your fes - tal ban - ner wave with joy, the cross of Christ raise high!
Raise high your free, ex - ult - ing song, God's won - drous prais - es speak.
Send forth the hymns the saints have loved, the psalms of an - cient days.
From youth to age, by night and day, in glad - ness and in woe:
Praise God the Spir - it, Ho - ly Fire, one God for ev - er - more!

Refrain

Re - joi - ce, re - joi - ce, re - joi - ce, give thanks and sing.
Re - joi - ce Re - joi - ce

This hymn, inspired by Philippians 4:4, was written for the Choral Festival held at Peterborough Cathedral in England. The author was an Anglican priest and a professor of theology at Oxford University.

Tune: MARION S.M. with refrain
Arthur H. Messiter, 1883
For an alternate setting, see 71
Alternate tune: CHRISTPRAISE RAY

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; reader Don Rodgers; fellowship Charlotte Rodgers; greeter Carl Bradford; storytellers Kim Ruffing and Diane Piraino.

Sunday School & Youth Group

After the service, parents are encouraged to grab some refreshments on their way to the classroom for an information session. Kids and youth may go to Room #4 for additional snacks.

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. Please consider sponsoring a Bible (donation of \$15) and we will gladly make a bookplate to go in a Bible in memory or in honor of someone you name. While they don't all have to have a bookplate by today, we encourage you to submit your request and donation soon. There will be a table in the JE Room during fellowship. ~ The Board of Deacons

Connections

New Date: September 29, 11:15am
Have you been visiting this church and thinking about calling it home? Then you are invited to come to a gathering we call Connections! Lunch and childcare provided. Questions? Contact Pastor Brent or the church office.

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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