



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 22, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

A reminder: children are invited to Sunday School starting at 10:00 a.m. and will come to worship after the offering. Nursery care is available during the worship service; please ask an usher.

Note: We will lift prayers of joy and concern this morning in worship. If you would prefer to submit a prayer to be read, please write it on one of the prayer slips in the folders in each pew and return it to the prayer box in the Narthex or give it to a Deacon before our prayer time.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

David Anderegg

PRELUDE *Sympathy*, music by Florence Price; text by Paul Laurence Dunbar
Amy Shake, *soprano*

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

*INTROIT (Congregation invited to join.) *Gather Us In*, verse 3

**Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.**

**Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP adapted from Thom Shuman

Elizabeth Young

One: Here, in this place,

All: God welcomes all the dreamers, as well as the doubters:

One: here, the worriers and wanderers can call on God by name.

All: Here, in this time,

One: we can remember all the ways God has graced us:

All: here, in these moments, we are reminded that God is with us, always!

One: Here we gather to hear stories of those daring enough to step out of comfort into the unknown:

All: here, in this hour, we will find the courage to follow their example.

One: Here we come to join with faithful souls our song of faith to raise.

All: One family in heart are we, and one the God we praise.

*HYMN

Come, Let Us Join with Faithful Souls

See page 5

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

CONTEMPORARY READING *The Child-Angel* by Rabindranath Tagore

Susan Moor

They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end to their wrangling.

Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence.

They are cruel in their greed and their envy, their words are like hidden knives thirsting for blood.

Go and stand amidst their scowling hearts, my child, and let your gentle eyes fall upon them like the forgiving peace of the evening over the strife of the day.

Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the meaning of all things; let them love you and thus love each other.

Come and take your seat in the bosom of the limitless, my child. At sunrise open and raise your heart like a blossoming flower, and at sunset bend your head and in silence complete the worship of the day.

SUNG RESPONSE *Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive*, by Rosamond Herklots

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 50:15-21 Drea Pecor

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

SERMON *Purpose and Possibility* Pastor Brent

*HYMN *Your Ways Are Not Our Own* See page 6

MOMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT Board of Deacons Sarah Conly & Drea Pecor

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 *Amen*, by David Anderegg

CALL TO THE OFFERING Pastor Brent

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *My Shepherd will Supply My Need*, by Virgil Thompson

*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 *Favorites*

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*HYMN *Savior, Again to Your Dear Name* See page 7

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

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

POSTLUDE *Hold Fast to Dreams*
music by Florence Price; text by Langston Hughes

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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Come, Let Us Join with Faithful Souls

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William G. Tarrant, 1892; alt.

Rev. 5:11-14

1 Come, let us join with faith-ful souls our song of faith to raise;
2 Faith - ful are all who love the truth and per - fect truth pro - claim,
3 And faith-ful are the gen - tle hearts to whom the power is given
4 O God of hosts, our faith re - new, and grant us, in your grace,

One fam - i - ly in heart are we, and one the God we praise.
Who stead-fast stand at God's right hand and glo - ri - fy God's name.
Of ev - ery hearth to make a home, of ev - ery home a heaven.
To join the songs sung by the saints in ev - ery time and place.

A leader of the Unitarian Church in England, William Tarrant edited a Unitarian weekly and for thirty-seven years ministered to the Unitarian Christian Church in London. This hymn was one of many he wrote for use by that congregation.

Tune: AZMON C.M.
Carl G. Gläser, 1828
Arr. Lowell Mason, in *Modern Psalmody*, 1839

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

Music Notes ~ David Anderegg

Florence Price (1887-1953) was an African-American composer of over 300 works, including symphonies, concertos, and art songs. Her musical style features a blend of classical harmonies and jazz, gospel and blues progressions. She often collaborated with other notable African-American artists, including the poets who provided the lyrics for the songs we perform today. The poem "Sympathy" contains the famous line "I know why the caged bird sings," which was used by the poet Maya Angelou as the title of her 1969 memoir.

Your Ways Are Not Our Own

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Lavon Bayler, 1988, rev. 1993

Luke 6:17-38; Rom. 12:9-21

1 Your ways are not our own, O gra-cious God most high,
2 Christ teach-es us to bless the ones who curse and harm,
3 Yet, we can-not ex-cuse a-buse in an-y form,
4 How shall we show your love, your par-don to be-lieve?
5 For-give-ness is our joy, re-ceive-ing, giv-ing, too.

Yet we would fol-low in your paths and on your love re-ly.
To turn the oth-er cheek when struck, at-tack-ers to dis-arm.
For all are chil-dren of your care, and love must be our norm.
You bid us share as we are blessed and give as we re-ceive.
Keep us from judg-ments hard and cruel, that we may dwell with you.

Lavon Bayler has served on the Illinois Conference staff of the United Church of Christ beginning in 1979. She maintains a faithful practice of writing worship materials as part of her daily spiritual discipline and has published several books of resources.

Tune: SCHUMANN S.M.
Cantica Laudis,
Lowell Mason and G. J. Webb, 1850

Thank you to all who have helped with today's service, including Deacons Sarah Conly, Drea Pecor, and Elizabeth Young; reader Susan Moor; usher Jo Ann Levitt; fellowship Donna Jacobs and Charlotte Rodgers; greeter Don Rodgers; storytellers Ted Randolph and Diane Piraino.

Ps. 141:3-4a; 139:11-12; John 14:27

John Ellerton, 1866; alt.

1 Sav - ior, a - gain to your dear name we raise
 2 Grant us your peace up - on our home - ward way;
 3 Grant us your peace, as day turns in - to night;
 4 Grant us your peace through - out our earth - ly life,

with one ac - cord our part - ing hymn of praise;
 with you be - gan, with you shall end the day;
 stay with us till the com - ing of the light;
 our balm in sor - row, and our stay in strife;

We join to bless you ere our wor - ship cease,
 Guard all the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
 Keep safe all those who call up - on your name,
 Then, when your voice shall bid our con - flict cease,

then, in the si - lence, wait your word of peace.
 that in this house have called up - on your name.
 for dark and light to you are both the same.
 call us, O God, to your e - ter - nal peace.

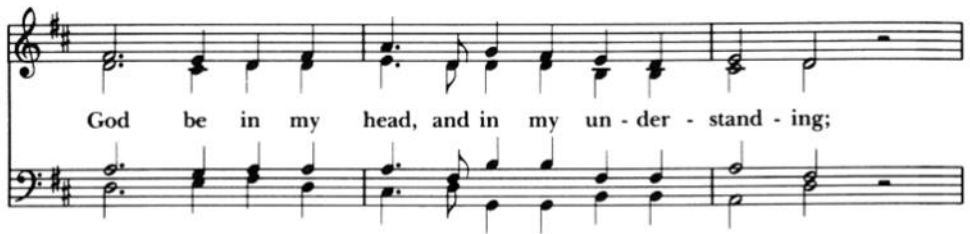
John Ellerton, a priest of the Church of England, wrote this hymn for a choral association festival. The final stanza was sung at his funeral. Ellerton edited and contributed to numerous hymnals.

Tune: ELLERS 10.10.10.10.
 Edward J. Hopkins, 1869

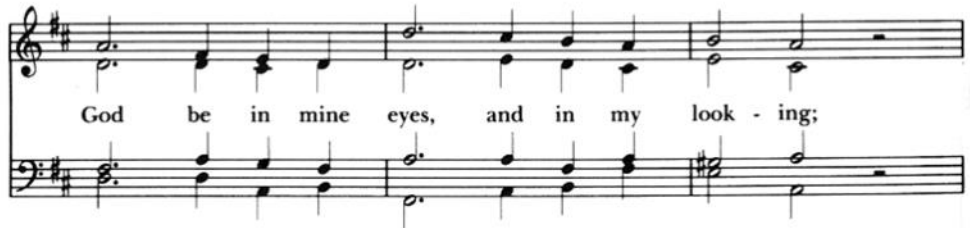
The New Century Hymnal (1995)

God Be in My Head

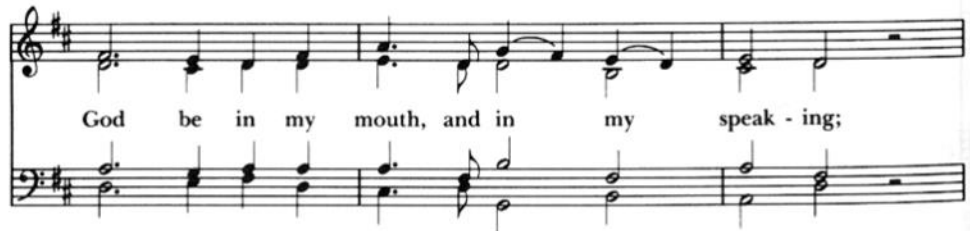
from *The Hymnal 1982* (1985)



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



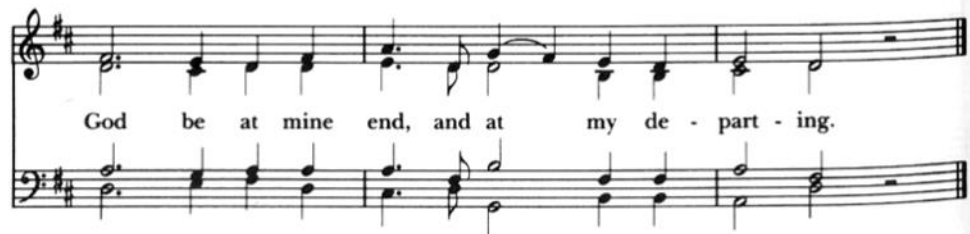
God be in mine eyes, and in my look - ing;



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.