



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

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS SUNDAY

October 20, 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

PRELUDE *Preludio and Fughetta in D Major, J.S. Bach* Tracy Wilson
Preludio and Fughetta in G Major, J.S. Bach

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

CHOIR INTROIT *Lead Me Lord, Samuel Wesley*

*CALL TO WORSHIP Drea Pecor

One: Come and worship, all you who love and serve the Lord –

All: outsiders and insiders,

One: old-timers and new-comers,

All: the young, old, and the in-between

One: Come as you are,

**All: for this is God's house – a house of prayer for all people, and God
welcomes each one who comes.**

*HYMN *Come, Let Us Join with Faithful Souls* See page 5

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Joanne Conroy, Hannah Fries & Adam Brown, Lisa Johnson, Randy Johnson

STATEMENT OF OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH

Pastor Brent

Our purpose as a Church is to carry on the mission and ministry that God initiated in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we recognize as the Christ. Our purpose is to represent Christ, God's saving and healing love, both locally and in the wider world.

LITANY OF INTENT

David Anderegg

One: Friends in Christ, we are all received into the church through the sacrament of Baptism. These people have found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ.

All: **They have been led by the Spirit to affirm their Baptism and to claim in our presence their covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the Christian church.**

One: They are here as we are here, to endeavor to love God with all our hearts, and all our souls and all our minds. God help us.

All: **They are here, as we are here to endeavor to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. God help us.**

One: You who are joining, we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place.

All: **We give thanks for every community of faith which has been your spiritual home and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.**

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES AND CONGREGATION

*CONGREGATIONAL STATEMENT OF COVENANT

As we strive to fulfill our purpose, we covenant:

To worship together on a regular basis;

To strive to grow spiritually;

To open ourselves to follow God's leading in our lives both individually and as a community of faith;

To give support to and receive support from one another through life's trials and transitions;

To support and participate in the wider Christian community; and to support the institution of this church with our time, resources, and skills.

*GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

Sarah Conly

CHORAL SUNG RESPONSE

We Are Your People, text: Brian Wren

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Samuel 7:1-17 (The Message)

Susan Moor

And they did. The men of Kiriath Jearim came and got the Chest of God and delivered it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. They ordained his son, Eleazar, to take responsibility for the Chest of God. From the time that the Chest came to rest in Kiriath Jearim, a long time passed – twenty years it was – and throughout Israel there was a widespread, fearful movement toward God. Then Samuel addressed the house of Israel: “If you are truly serious about coming back to God, clean house. Get rid of the foreign gods and fertility goddesses, ground yourselves firmly in God, worship him and him alone, and he’ll save you from Philistine oppression.”

They did it. They got rid of the gods and goddesses, the images of Baal and Ashtoreth, and gave their exclusive attention and service to God. Next Samuel said, “Get everybody together at Mizpah and I’ll pray for you.” So everyone assembled at Mizpah. They drew water from the wells and poured it out before God in a ritual of cleansing. They fasted all day and prayed, “We have sinned against God.”

When the Philistines heard that Israel was meeting at Mizpah, the Philistine leaders went on the offensive. Israel got the report and became frightened – Philistines on the move again! They pleaded with Samuel, “Pray with all your might! And don’t let up! Pray to God, our God, that he’ll save us from the boot of the Philistines.”

Samuel took a young lamb not yet weaned and offered it whole as a Whole-Burnt-Offering to God. He prayed fervently to God, interceding for Israel.

And God answered.

While Samuel was offering the sacrifice, the Philistines came within range to fight Israel. Just then God thundered, a huge thunder-clap exploding among the Philistines. They panicked – mass confusion! – and scattered before Israel. Israel poured out of Mizpah and gave chase, killing Philistines right and left, to a point just beyond Beth Car. Samuel took a single rock and set it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He named it “Ebenezer” (Rock of Help), saying, “This marks the place where God helped us.”

The Philistines learned their lesson and stayed home – no more border crossings. God was hard on the Philistines all through Samuel’s lifetime. All the cities from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored. Israel also freed the surrounding countryside from Philistine control. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel gave solid leadership to Israel his entire life. Every year he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah. He gave leadership to Israel in each of these places. But always he would return to Ramah, where he lived, and preside from there. That is where he built an altar to God.

SERMON *All In* Pastor Brent
*HYMN *Christ of the Upward Way* See page 6
MOMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT Stewardship Rick Floyd

SUNG RESPONSE (please remain seated)

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples, verse 2

**God made the world and at its birth ordained our human race
To live as stewards of the earth, responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud, we sow not peace but strife,
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud that threatens all of life.**

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 *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*
tune: Tamworth; arr. Alice 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

TIME WITH CHILDREN

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

*INVITATIONS

*HYMN

Lead on, O King Eternal

See page 7

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

Preludio in C Major, J.S. Bach

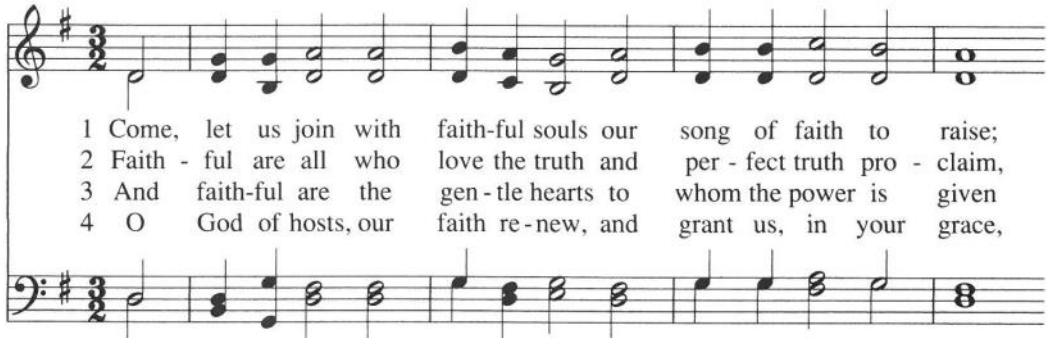


Come, Let Us Join with Faithful Souls

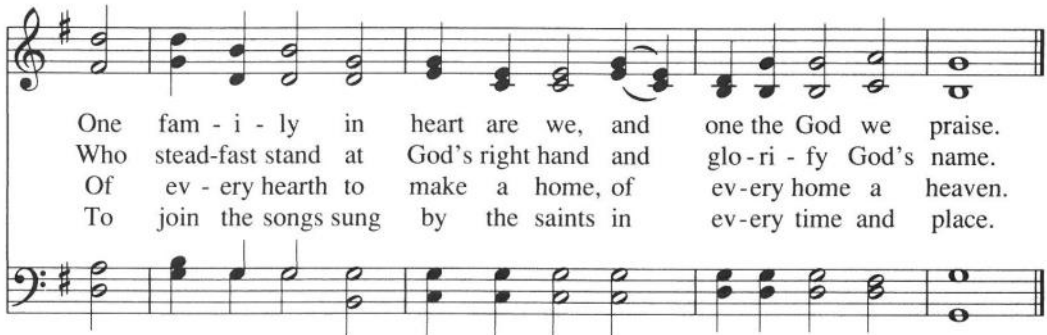
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William G. Tarrant, 1892; alt.

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

Christ of the Upward Way

SURSUM CORDA (Lomas) 6.4.6.4.10.10

Walter John Mathams, c. 1915; alt.

George Lomas, 1876

1. Christ of the up - ward way, My guide di - vine,
 2. Give me the heart to hear Your voice and will,
 3. Christ of the up - ward way, My guide di - vine,

Where You have set Your feet May I place mine;
 That with - out fault or fear I may ful - fill
 Where You have set Your feet May I place mine;

And move and march wher - ev - er You have trod,
 Your pur - pose with a glad and ho - ly zest,
 And when Your last call comes se - rene and clear,

Keep - ing face for - ward up the hill of God.
 Like one who would not bring less than the best.
 Calm may my an - swer be, "Lord, I am here."

Lead On, O King Eternal

LANCASHIRE 7.6.7.6 D

Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1888

Henry Thomas Smart, c. 1835

1. Lead on, O King e - ter - nal, The day of march has come;
 2. Lead on, O King e - ter - nal, Till sin's fierce war shall cease,
 3. Lead on, O King e - ter - nal: We fol - low, not with fears;

Hence - forth in fields of con - quest Thy tents shall be our home:
 And ho - li - ness shall whis - per The sweet a - men of peace;
 For glad - ness breaks like morn - ing Wher - e'er Thy face ap - pears;

Through days of prep - a - ra - tion Thy grace has made us strong,
 For not with swords' loud clash - ing, Nor roll of stir - ring drums;
 Thy cross is lift - ed o'er us; We jour - ney in its light:

And now, O King e - ter - nal, We lift our bat - tle song.
 With deeds of love and mer - cy The heav - en - ly king - dom comes.
 The crown a - waits the con - quest; Lead on, O God of might.

Music Notes ~ Tracy Wilson

Our offertory anthem this morning is Alice Parker's arrangement of the wonderful hymn tune Tamworth. This tune comes from Harmonia Sacra, a collection of hymn tunes assembled by Joseph Funk in 1832. Alice used this collection to create Melodious Accord: A Concert of Praise, which was performed in its entirety by the Festival Chorus this past spring, in honor of Alice Parker, who passed away December 2023. Words were written by William Williams, who was called the "Watts of Wales", born in 1717 and died in 1791. His hymns were largely composed in the Welsh language although he selected this hymn tune by an English composer. We are more used to Cwm Rhondda, a true Welsh tune, for this familiar text.

Thank you to all who have helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, Sarah Conly, Drea Pecor; reader Susan Moor; fellowship Donna Jacobs; greeters Jake Damrow and Carl Bradford; storytellers Elizabeth Young and Jeremy Ridenour. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher is in the nursery.

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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