



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

**NEW COVENANT SUNDAY**

*November 24, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.*

Children are invited to Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. returning to worship after the offering. Nursery care is available during worship; 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 *Adagio Cantabile* from Sonata, Opus 13, Beethoven

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME Rev. Brent Damrow

## **GATHERING IN WORSHIP**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

\*HYMN *Now Thank We All Our God* See page 5

\*CALL TO WORSHIP by Moira Laidlaw (adapted) Gary Cilley

One: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant... it will not be like the old covenant:

**All: written on stone.**

One: This will be a radically new covenant, my laws will be within you

**All: Written on hearts.**

One: That new covenant enfleshed in Jesus of Nazareth

**All: Child of the manger, child of the cross**

One: Prince of peace, purveyor of possibility

**All: Lord of All who chose to be Servant of All**

\*HYMN

*What a Covenant, verse 1*

**What a covenant, what a joy divine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.  
What a blessedness, what a peace is  
mine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

*Refrain:*

**Leaning, leaning,  
safe and secure from all alarms;  
leaning, leaning,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

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

Danish Amen

## THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Jeremiah 31:31-34

David Anderegg

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

*Written on Our Hearts*

Pastor Brent

\*HYMN

*O Christ Jesus, Sent from Heaven*

See page 6

## OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Come Thou and With Us Dwell*, William Byrd

\*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

## **GATHERING AT THE TABLE**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION / WORDS OF ASSURANCE

\*SHARING OF THE PEACE

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor Brent

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.*

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*We invite you to support our neighbors in need. This month we are supporting the People's Pantry. Tubs are available for any food items you have brought.*

## **GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD**

CONTEMPORARY READING

Sarah Conly

Look how long  
the weary world waited,  
locked in its lonely cell,  
guilty as a prisoner.

As you can imagine,  
it sang and whistled in the dark.

continued

It hoped. It paced and pattered about,  
tidying its little piles of inconsequence.

It wept from the weight of ennui,  
draped like shackles on its wrists.  
It raged and wailed against the walls  
of its own plight.

But there was nothing  
the world could do  
to find its own freedom.  
The door was shut tight.

It could only be opened  
from the outside.

Who could believe the latch  
would be turned by a pink flower –  
the tiny hand of a newborn baby?

~ “An Open Door” by Pamela Cranston (used with permission)  
On a theme by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

*HYMN	<i>Who Would Think That What Was Needed</i>	See page 7
INVITATIONS	Advent Party and Potluck, Christmas Skit	
*BENEDICTION		
SEND OFF	<i>Rise Up Shepherds and Follow</i>	Kids Choir

**Music Notes** ~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem

Thank you to Rich Geiler this morning for sharing his voice on the offertory anthem and during communion. Thank you to the Kids Choir for offering their voices to send us into Advent!

## Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6

Martin Rinkart, c. 1636

Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1858; alt.

Stanza 3, *Rejoice in the Lord*, 1985

Johann Crüger, 1648

Harm. adapt. *Lobegesang*, Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

1. Now thank we all our God With heart and hands and voic - es,  
 2. O may this boun - teous God Through all our life be near us,  
 3. All praise and thanks to God, Who reigns in high - est heav - en,

Who won-drous things hath done, In whom this world re - joic - es;  
 With ev - er joy - ful hearts And bless - ed peace to cheer us;  
 To Fa - ther and to Son And Spir - it now be giv - en.

Who, from our moth - ers' arms, Hath blessed us on our way  
 And keep us in God's grace, And guide us when per - plexed,  
 The one e - ter - nal God, Whom heav - en and earth a - dore,

With count-less gifts of love, And still is ours to - day.  
 And free us from all ills In this world and the next.  
 The God who was, and is, And shall be ev - er - more.

# O Christ Jesus, Sent from Heaven

47

James W. Crawford, 1994

John 17:17-23

1 O Christ Je - sus, sent from heav-en, Love E - ter - nal,  
2 O Christ Je - sus, our sal - va - tion, Shep-herd kind, life's  
3 O Christ Je - sus, Fa - ther - Moth-er, Spir - it, Tri - une  
4 O Christ Je - sus, preached down a - ges, in the womb of

cru - ci - fied, wel - come Sav - ior, mis - sion bear - ing,  
Bread and Wine, Word Made Flesh, God's Bless - ed Ser - vant,  
Source of all, claim our wound-ed, halt - ing wit - ness;  
God be - gun, pray re - store your bro - ken Bod - y,

dwel a - mong us, now re - side. Al - le - lu - ia!  
wash - ing feet shows your de - sign. Al - le - lu - ia!  
we sur - ren - der to your thrall. Al - le - lu - ia!  
born when Cal - vary's work was done. Al - le - lu - ia!

Way of An - guish, sow your peace, with us a - bide.  
Liv - ing Wa - ter, slake our hearts with grace di - vine.  
Truth In - car - nate, stir us with your ser - vant call.  
Life for Oth - ers, hear our plea: "May all be one!"

James W. Crawford served as minister of the Old South Church in Boston for more than twenty years. His text uses imagery from the Gospel of John to indicate that the church's unity lies in the risk and hope of loving service.

Tune: WESTMINSTER ABBEY 8.7.8.7.8.7.  
Henry Purcell, c. 1680  
Arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1842  
Alternate tune: REGENT SQUARE

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

# 153 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

Isa. 11:1-6; Matt. 2:1-11; Luke 2:8-14

John Bell and Graham Maule, 1990; alt.

1 Who would think that what was need-ed to trans-form and save the earth  
 2 Shep-herds watch and sag-es won-der, mon-archs scorn and an-gels sing;  
 3 Cen-tu-ries of skill and sci-ence span the past from which we move,

might not be a plan or ar-my proud in pur-pose, proved in worth?  
 such a place as none would reck-on hosts a ho-ly, help-less thing;  
 yet ex-per-ience ques-tions wheth-er with such prog-ress we im-prove.

Who would think, de-spite de-ri-sion, that a child should lead the way?  
 Sta-bled beasts and pass-ing strang-ers watch a ba-by laid in hay:  
 In our search for sense and mean-ing, lest our hopes and hu-mor fray,

God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.  
 God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.  
 God sur-pris-es earth with heav-en, com-ing here on Christ-mas Day.

*This song was written by The Iona Community in Scotland, which frequently develops hymn texts through a collaborative process, often employing traditional tunes from the British Isles such as "Scarlet Ribbons."*

Tune: SCARLET RIBBONS 8.7.8.7.D.  
 English traditional melody  
 Arr. John Bell and others, 1990

## **Advent Potluck Lunch and Craft Party – December 1**

Lunch and the crafts are open to all ages. The event will go from 11:15 to 1:30, beginning with the Potluck lunch, then the crafts. See the sign-up sheet in your weekly email or on the JE Room bulletin board.

## **The Giving Tree**

Pick a tag or three for our neighbors so that they have a Merry Christmas. We need the packages wrapped and returned by Sunday December 15. Thank you!

## **Holiday Centerpiece Design and Construction – December 4**

Come help make evergreen decorations to be sold at the Holly Fair on December 7. Bring gardening shears. Sign-up on J.E. Room bulletin board or call or text Anne Hutchinson (413-854-7798).

## **Donate Toys and Games**

Lightly used and loved toys and games are needed to stock the Children's Shop at the Holly Fair. Young people under 12 may shop in their own room for friends and family. All items are 50 cents. (This room is staffed by youth over 12).

**Thank you** to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, and Sarah Conly; fellowship Jake and Brent Damrow; greeter Carl Bradford; storytellers Elisabeth Bellows and Rich Geiler. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are 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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