

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

SUNDAY WORSHIP February 23, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Children are invited to Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. returning to worship for the offering. Nursery care is available during worship; please ask an usher. All prayers to be lifted today must be submitted in writing, given to a deacon before worship or no later than the Offering.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Gospel Hymn Medley

David Anderegg

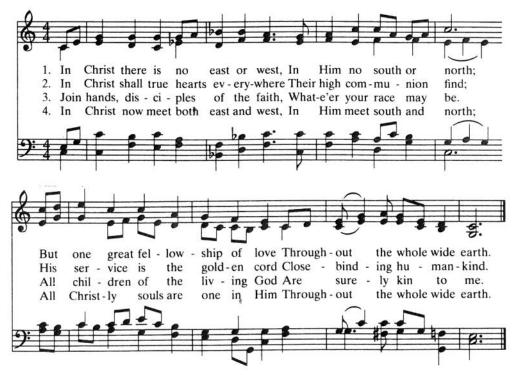
FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

*INTROIT

In Christ There is No East or West, vs. 4



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*CALL TO WORSHIP

by Seth A. Normington, Pastor at Linden Presbyterian Church in Linden, MI.

One: Mighty God, You welcome us into Your Kingdom as honored guests.

All: You give us water to wash our feet,

One: You give us a kiss of greeting,

All: and You anoint our heads with oil.

One: Merciful God, You welcome us even though we are sinners.

All: You forgive our debts and give us a seat at Your table.

One: Wondrous God, we have come here to give You our worship and praise.

All: May we make a joyful noise here in your house and home!

*HYMN

Jesus Lover of My Soul

Pew hymnal #303

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

CONTEMPORARY READING

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him - that she is a sinner.' Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Teacher,' he replied, 'speak.' 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?' Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with

Liza Catino

Don Eaton

Holland Eaton

ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

SERMON	Making it Clear	Pastor Brent
SUNG RESPONSE	<i>In the Morning</i> Traditional spiritual, arr. Charles Ives	Steve Hassmer

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(A bell will chime to invite us to continue after each silent reflection.) God of our parents' parents and our children's children, you loved this world so much that you sent your own son, Jesus Christ to live and die among us, in order that we might have life abundantly.

Forgive us when we forget that truth and turn inwards. (silent reflection)

Forgive us when we focus on the faults of others rather than bringing our sins before you love. (silent reflection)

Forgive us when we fail to love our neighbors or ourselves. (silent reflection)

Forgive us and teach us the costs and the joys of following in the ways of Christ. (silent reflection)

We pray these things in the most precious name of all, your incarnate love, Jesus. Amen.

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*HYMN

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

See page 6

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

The Lord's Prayer

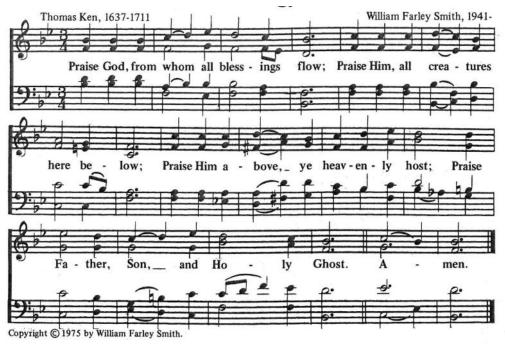
Our God, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE Choral Amen, by David Anderegg

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY *I want Jesus to walk with me* Steve and Noah Hassmer Traditional spiritual, arr. David Anderegg

*DOXOLOGY



*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

TIME WITH CHILDREN KIDS CHOIR

ForgivenessPastor BrentI've Got Peace Like a River, Traditional spiritual

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

MOMENT FOR MISSION Warm Up the Winter, Anna Smith & Tristan Osgood **INVITATIONS** See page 7 *HYMN Leaning on the Everlasting Arms *BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

Somebody's knockin' Traditional spiritual, arr. L. Woodard

Noah Hassmer

Thank you to all of the musicians for their musical offerings this Sunday: David Anderegg, Noah and Steve Hassmer, and the Kids Choir led by Liza Catino. ~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem

Music Notes

In today's Gospel reading, the unnamed woman shows great, uncomplicated love for Jesus. As we close out Black History Month, our music selections are spirituals which show the same profound, uncomplicated love. As Black theologian James H. Cone writes, "For Christological reflections, I turn to the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and Paul, and of the Spirituals and Gospel music, Fannie Lou Hamer and Martin Luther King, Jr. This Jesus of the Biblical and Black traditions is not a theological concept but a liberating presence in the lives of the poor in their fight for dignity and worth."

~ David Anderegg



Converted to Methodism at age twenty, Robert Robinson soon became a Calvinistic Methodist preacher and later gained great popularity. The melody, associated with this text since 1813, is an American folk tune. Tune: NETTLETON 8.7.8.7.D. John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 1813

The New Century Hymnal (1995)



j."

Church Service Hymns (1948)

Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons Drea Pecor, Helen McCormick, and Sarah Conly; readers Liza Catino, Holland Eaton, and Don Eaton; usher Jo Ann Levitt; greeter Carl Bradford; fellowship Charlotte Rodgers; storytellers Rich Geiler and Ted Randolph. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery.

Applause is a wonderful reaction to events that bring us joy, and is often given in recognition of being entertained. In church, where we are worshipping God, however, applause can be a distraction from the celebration of the Holy Spirit. To express appreciation for music that is part of worship, we ask that applause be saved until after the postlude (when worship is over). We do encourage applause as an expression of joyful approval following some activities that occur during church service, such as welcoming new members, recognizing significant milestones (birthdays, anniversaries), or appreciating a special gift to the congregation. At these moments, the pastor will encourage applause, or ask "Do I hear an Amen?"

We are pleased that you are with us today and are grateful for your presence during this worship service.

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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