



*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*

1. In Christ there is no east or west, In Him no south or north;
2. In Christ shall true hearts ev-ery-where Their high com-mu-nion find;
3. Join hands, dis-ci-ples of the faith, What-e'er your race may be.
4. In Christ now meet both east and west, In Him meet south and north;

But one great fel-low-ship of love Through-out the whole wide earth.
His ser-vice is the gold-en cord Close-bind-ing hu-man-kind.
All chil-dren of the liv-ing God Are sure-ly kin to me.
All Christ-ly souls are one in Him Through-out the whole wide earth.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Holland Eaton

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

Liza Catino

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 7:36-50

Don Eaton

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

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 *In the Morning* Steve Hassmer
 Traditional spiritual, arr. Charles Ives

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

Thomas Ken, 1637-1711 William Farley Smith, 1941-

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise Him, all crea - tures
here be - low; Praise Him a - bove, ye heav - en - ly host; Praise
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Copyright © 1975 by William Farley Smith.

*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Forgiveness* Pastor Brent

KIDS CHOIR *I'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

*HYMN *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* See page 7

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE *Somebody's knockin'* Noah Hassmer
Traditional spiritual, arr. L. Woodard



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

Ps. 36:7-9

Robert Robinson, 1758; alt.

1 Come, O Fount of ev-ery bless-ing, tune my heart to sing your grace;
 2 Here I pause in my so - journ-ing, giv-ing thanks for hav-ing come,
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I am drawn a - new!

streams of mer - cy, nev-er ceas - ing, call for songs of end-less praise.
 come to trust, at ev-ery turn - ing, God will guide me safe-ly home.
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to you.

Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a - bove.
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God,
 Prone to wan - der, I can feel it, wan-der from the love I've known:

Praise the mount; I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un - fail - ing love.
 Came to res - cue me from dan - ger, bless - ed bod - y, pre - cious blood.
 Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your ver - y own.

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)

240 LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

Rev. E. A. Hoffman

COPYRIGHT, 1887, BY A. J. SHOWALTER & CO.

A. J. Showalter

1. What a fel - low-ship, what a joy Di-vine, Lean-ing on the
 2. O how sweet to walk in this pil-grim way, Lean-ing on the
 3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear, Lean-ing on the

Ev - er - last - ing Arms! What a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine,
 Ev - er - last - ing Arms! O how bright the path grows from day to day,
 Ev - er - last - ing Arms! I have peace com-plete with my Lord so near,

REFRAIN

Lean - ing on the Ev - er - last - ing Arms! Lean - - ing,
 Lean-ing on Je - sus,

lean - ing, Safe and se-cure from all a-larms; Lean - ing,
 Lean-ing on Je - sus, Lean-ing on Je - sus,

lean - - ing, Lean-ing on the Ev - er - last - ing Arms.
 Lean - ing on Je - sus,

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 worshipping 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.

(413) 298-3137 | office@stockbridgeucc.org | stockbridgeucc.org

All hymns reprinted under OneLicense.net A-723107