



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP April 6, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Children are invited to Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. returning to worship for Children's Time. Nursery care is available during worship. **Today prayers to be lifted must be submitted in writing and can be handed to a Deacon or placed in the offering plate.**

## PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC      Solemn Prelude, C. Callahan  
*Fac me vere tecum flere*, from *Stabat Mater*, Dvorak  
Rich Geiler and choir tenor & bass sections

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME      Rev. Brent Damrow

## GATHERING IN WORSHIP

\*CONGREGATIONAL INTROIT *O Lamb of God Most Holy!* vs. 1      Pew #82

\*SCRIPTURE READING      Luke 18:31-34      Rich Geiler

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the gentiles, and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again." But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

\*CALL TO WORSHIP      Rich Geiler  
from the Lutheran Church of Australia's Worship Planning Page

One: God forbid that I should boast of anything

**All: but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

continued

One: In him is salvation, life, and resurrection from the dead;

**All: by him we are redeemed and set free.**

One: May God be gracious to us and bless us,

**All: and make his face shine upon us.**

\*HYMN

*My Song is Love Unknown*, vss. 1-3

Pew hymnal #76

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 18:35-43

Joanne Conroy

As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him, and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God, and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

TIME OF UNBURDENING/CONFESSION

*You are invited into a time of silent reflection and confession. Once the choir begins to sing, you are invited to bring your slate-colored glass bead and place it at the base of the cross as a symbol of your prayer.*

MUSIC

Chorale, J.S. Bach

choir

\*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

\*SUNG RESPONSE *My Song is Love Unknown* vs. 5

**Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine:**

**Never was love, dear King,**

**Never was grief like Thine.**

**This is my Friend,**

**In whose sweet praise I all my days**

**Could gladly spend.**



short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

## CONTEMPORARY READING

David Anderegg

### From a Window

Poem by [Christian Wiman](#)

Incurable and unbelieving  
in any truth but the truth of grieving,

I saw a tree inside a tree  
rise kaleidoscopically

as if the leaves had livelier ghosts.

I pressed my face as close

to the pane as I could get  
to watch that fitful, fluent spirit

that seemed a single being undefined  
or countless beings of one mind

haul its strange cohesion  
beyond the limits of my vision

over the house heavenwards.  
Of course I knew those leaves were  
birds.

Of course that old tree stood  
exactly as it had and would  
(but why should it seem fuller now?)  
and though a man's mind might endow

even a tree with some excess  
of life to which a man seems witness,

that life is not the life of men.

And that is where the joy came in.

## SERMON

*Happy to Welcome Him*

Pastor Brent

## \*HYMN

*What Wondrous Love Is This*

Pew hymnal #85

## PRAYER OF GRATITUDE Anne Lamott's two favorite prayers

“‘Help me, help me, help me’ and ‘Thank you, thank you, thank you.’”

## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

*Once the choir begins to sing, you may bring up your colorful glass bead and place it at the foot of the cross as a symbol of your gratitude.*

MUSIC                      Chorale, J.S. Bach                      choir

### \*LITANY OF GRATITUDE AND BLESSING FOR TRACY WILSON

One: Music maker, worship planner, choir director, person of faith.

**All: Kind and caring, joy creator, beauty revealer, child of God.**

One: For decades Tracy Wilson has shared her skills, heart, and faith with us.

**All: For the past eight months she has served as our Minister of Music Pro Tempore.**

One: For all of it we give thanks to God for Tracy Wilson.

**All: For all of it we express our gratitude to you, Tracy, too.**

One: Thank you for your hard work, guidance, leadership, and for the ways you have revealed the holy to us.

Tracy: Thank you for the ways you have supported me, for your guidance, feedback, participation, and love.

**All: On Easter, we will release you from this role. Forgive us for the ways we have fallen short and receive our full forgiveness likewise.**

Tracy: On Easter I will step down from this role even as I remain a part of our church family. Thank you for your forgiveness and I offer mine likewise to you.

One: For the ways you have glorified God through our music

**All: For the ways you have shown us a new dimension in sound**

One: For the ways you have born witness to truth in every tongue

All: For the ways you have tuned us for praise and given us a voice to raise

One: We cry forth alleluia!

**All: We say Thank You!**

*Prayer of Blessing and Sending*

\*HYMN                      *When in Our Music God is Glorified*                      Pew hymnal #264

\*SHARING OF THE PEACE

## GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

\*SENDING SONG *Lift High the Cross*, verse 5

*Refrain:*

**Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim;**

**Let all the world adore that sacred name.**

**5 So shall our song of triumph ever be:**

**praise to the Crucified for victory. [*Refrain*]**

POSTLUDE

*The Lord Bless You and Keep You*, Lutkin  
(Congregation is invited to sing along.)

choir

Following worship, all are invited to the Jonathan Edwards Room to continue the celebration of Tracy Wilson. On the way the JE Room, Tracy will be there to greet and welcome you.



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

Today the choir will sing a few of my favorite pieces for choir: Behold the Lamb of God from The Messiah, and Lutkin's The Lord Bless You and Keep You (please feel free to sing along with them!). The choir will also sing a beautiful piece from Dvorak's Stabat Mater for tenor soloist (Rich Geiler) and tenors and basses. Stabat Mater is a 13-century Christian hymn to the Virgin Mary that portrays her suffering as a mother during the crucifixion of her son Jesus Christ. The text is in Latin and is translated as "Let me weep beside thee, mourning the crucifixion, for as long as I live".

I want to thank the wonderful choir and its section leaders, and the entire congregation for being so gracious and supportive of my work as the Minister of Music Pro Tempore. My last official Sunday is Easter Sunday, so I'm not done yet!

# Holy Week & Easter 2025



## **Palm/Passion Sunday – April 13<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m.**

Join the crowd to welcome Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. We will tell the full story of the week including a Palm Processional, gathering in the Upper Room for Communion and watching events unfold all the way to the cross.

## **Maundy Thursday – April 17<sup>th</sup> – Tenebrae/Foot Washing – 7:00 p.m.**

Gather for John's account of Thursday as Jesus gathered with his disciples, washed their feet and gave them a new commandment of love. Witness service, love, prayer, betrayal, and denial. The Deacons will offer an optional foot washing experience following worship.

## **Good Friday – April 18<sup>th</sup> – 12:15 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.**

### **Worship Service 12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

We take our place at the foot of the cross to bear witness to the fateful events of the trial, beating, crucifixion, and burial. We will have the chance to confess the ways we continue to betray or deny Christ. We will face truth in love.

### **Stations of the Cross – National Shrine of Divine Mercy (Stockbridge) - 6:30 p.m.**

We meet on Eden Hill to walk the Stations. This flat course winds through the scenes from the trial to the tomb. Along the way we will use a beautiful prayer liturgy from Australia that tells the story of each station and offers a prayer. We walk it together as family and community.

## **Easter Sunday – April 20<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**

### **Sunrise Service 6:00 a.m. – The Jonathan Edwards Room**

Christ is Risen! We will gather facing the sunrise to celebrate the Easter truth of life and resurrection. A time of simple food and fellowship will follow.

### **10:00 a.m. – Festival Worship**

With special music, the flowered cross and cries of Alleluia we will sing, pray, and celebrate! Stay after for the **Egg Hunt for children** and a time of food and fellowship.

**Thank you** to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, Sarah Conly, and Drea Pecor; readers Joanne Conroy and Rich Geiler; ushers Ronnie Cunningham and Jo Ann Levitt; fellowship Board of Music; greeter Carl Bradford; storytellers Kim Ruffing and Charlotte Rodgers. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery. Thanks to Cathy Clark for the flowers.

### **Palm Sunday**

There will be donkeys! They will be on the front lawn of the church at 9:00am on Sunday, April 13. Kids will be invited to sit on and ride briefly, with a grownup walking alongside. Also at 9:00am is fellowship with light breakfast items. Then, for those who are able, we will gather for worship outside at 10:00.

### **Stockbridge Festival Chorus**

Saturday, April 12, 3:00pm

The Chorus will perform, here in the church sanctuary, Mozart's *Requiem* plus a piece composed in 2015 by David Stone, *In the Darkest Hour*. A reception will be held after the concert.

Admission is a \$20 donation at the door, \$10 for local community choir members, and free for people aged 18 and under.

*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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