

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

EASTER SUNDAY

April 20, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Welcome! We invite you to turn off cell phones, unplug, and prepare for worship.

We welcome families of all types and kids of all personalities. Today there is no Sunday School as we invite all ages to experience the joy the joy of worship. We do have a nursery where you may accompany your youngest children if they need a space to be, well...children. The nursery, bathrooms and changing stations are all through the front doors of the Sanctuary and straight ahead.

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

***All who are able, please stand.**

PRELUDES

Selections by the Berkshire Brass

Now the Green Blade Rises, arr. Burkhardt, with Tracy Wilson, organ

Toccata, by Bonelli, for brass and organ

The Berkshire Brass: Jeff Stevens, Allan Dean, trumpets

Ron Barron, David Wampler, trombones

OPENING THE TOMB Timpani

John Demler

*EASTER PROCLAMATION

Rev. Brent Damrow

Leader: Christ is Risen

People: **He is Risen indeed!**

*HYMN

Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Verses 1-3: in parts. Verse 4: unison.

1. Je - sus Christ is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
 2. Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
 3. But the pains which He en - dured, Al - le - lu - ia!
 4. Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - le - lu - ia!

Our tri - um - phant ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Un - to Christ, our heaven - ly King, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Our sal - va - tion have pro - cured; Al - le - lu - ia!
 Praise e - ter - nal as God's love; Al - le - lu - ia!

Who did once up - on the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Who en - dured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Now a - bove the sky He's King, Al - le - lu - ia!
 Praise our God, ye heaven - ly host, Al - le - lu - ia!

Suf - fer to re - deem our loss. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Sin - ners to re - deem and save. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Where the an - gels ev - er sing. Al - le - lu - ia!
 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia!

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We are afflicted in every way ...

Many: But not crushed.

One: Struck down ...

Many: But not destroyed.

One: For we are persuaded that neither death, nor life ...

Many: Nor angels, nor principalities ...

One: Nor things present, nor things to come ...

Many: Nor powers, nor height, nor depth ...

One: Nor anything else in all creation ...

**Many: Will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ
Jesus our Savior.**

One: For on Easter, God defeated death.

Many: On Easter, life wins!

One: Christ is risen.

Many: He is risen indeed.

WELCOME

Pastor Brent

TIME WITH CHILDREN *The Cross*

SONG *In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

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CONFESSION

Ronnie Cunningham

One: Gracious God, we have heard the good news: how on the third day, Christ rose again.

Many: Still we look for the living among the dead.

One: You rolled away the stone from the tomb.

Many: Still we look for the living among the dead.

One: You sent messengers to proclaim the gospel.

Many: Still we look for the living among the dead.

One: You are faithful to your promise; you have done wonderful and amazing things!

Many: Still we look for the living among the dead.

(Time for silent prayers of confession.)

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Pastor Brent

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor Brent

One: The Peace of Christ be with you...

Many: **And also with you!**

SOLO *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*, Handel Amy Shake, soprano

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

GOSPEL READING Luke 24:1-12

Margo Davis

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

REFLECTION

Expectations...Wonder...Life

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

The Strife is O'er
Verses 1-3, in parts. Verse 4: unison

Refrain (before st. 1 and after st. 4)

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

1 The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done, the vic - to -
2 The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their
3 The three sad days are quick - ly sped, Christ ris - es
4 Christ, by your wounds on Cal - va - ry from death's dread

ry of life is won; The song of tri - umph
le - gions has dis - persed: Let shouts of ho - ly
glo - rious from the dead: All glo - ry to our
sting your ser - vants free, That we may live e -

has be - gun. Al - le - lu - ia!
joy out - burst. Al - le - lu - ia!
ris - en Head! Al - le - lu - ia!
ter - nal - ly. Al - le - lu - ia! to Refrain

A seventeenth-century Jesuit collection published in Cologne, Germany, is the earliest known source of this Latin hymn. The hymn is firmly associated with this musical setting from a Magnificat by the Italian composer Palestrina.

Tune: VICTORY 8.8.8, with alleluias
Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina, 1591
Arr. William H. Monk, 1861

EASTER PRAYER

Not the Kingdom of Death

Rich Geiler

written by Walter Brueggemann

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.**

RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES AND OUR GIFTS

INVITATION TO GIVE

Pastor Brent

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Worthy is the Lamb*, Handel

Choir

*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.

*OUR PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, take these expressions of our labor and turn them into:

Hope for the weary,

Liberation for the oppressed,

Power for those who are dispossessed;

And take us flawed creatures and manifest in us:

Your love that knows no end,

Your faith that can do all things,

Your service that spares no cost

And your patient endurance that hopes to the last. Amen.

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

*INVITATIONS

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Jesus Shall Reign Where're the Sun

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*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John, arr. Francis Bonney

Berkshire Brass

We welcome our visitors this morning and invite you to a time of food and fellowship following worship where we hope to greet you personally.

Easter Egg Hunt

Christ is risen! Using eggs as a reminder of rebirth and resurrection, all children are invited to participate in our annual Easter Egg Hunt outside the church immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Cathedral of the Beloved

Thank you to our team of volunteers (including our youth!) that shopped for, cooked, and served a meal outdoors in Pittsfield on April 6th. Thank you for being love in action to all those who are hungry. For more information on our service programs, please contact Beth Ciley.

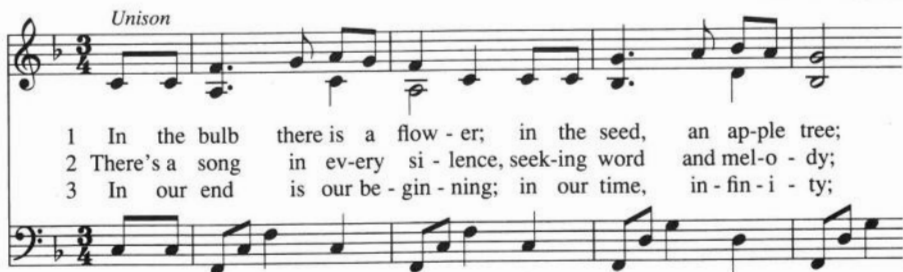
Stockbridge Festival Chorus

Congratulations on the jam-packed Mozart Requiem concert last weekend. Thank you for bringing beauty to our community. Enjoy your rest before beginning work on the Christmas concert in the fall. For more information on how to become part of the choir or to support their work, please contact Tracy Wilson.

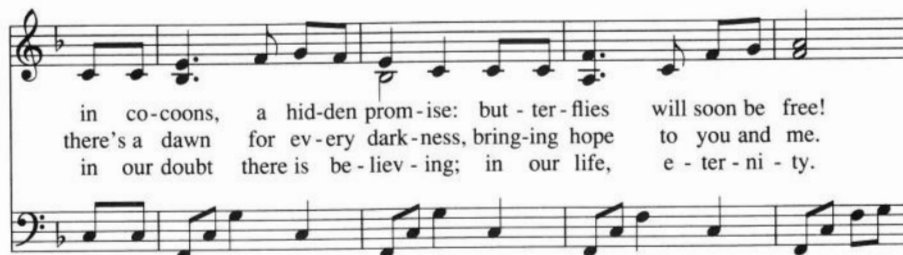
In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Natalie Sleeth, 1985

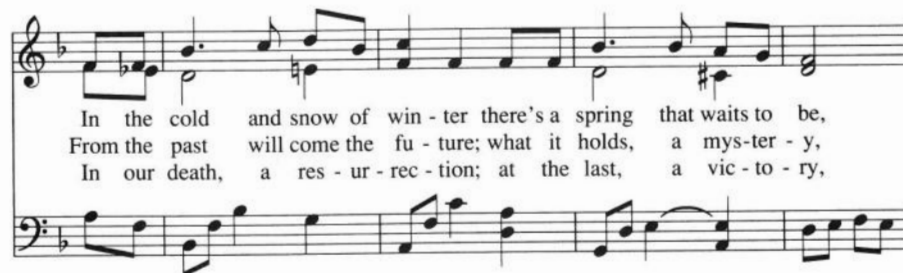
Unison



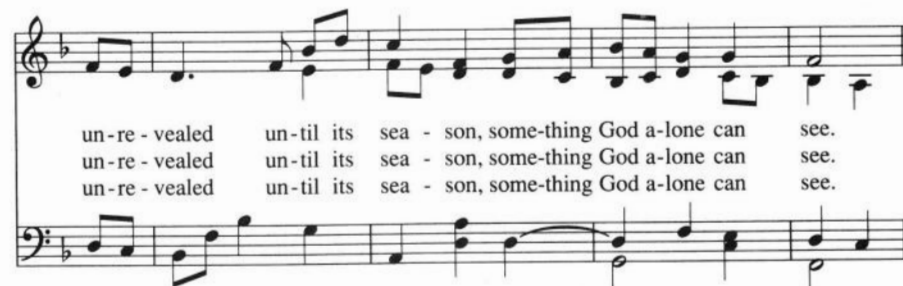
1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;



in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be free!
 there's a dawn for ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.
 in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.



In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,
 From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,
 In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,



un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

Natalie Sleeth composed her "Hymn of Promise" first as a choral anthem and then adapted it to this version for congregational singing. It was dedicated to her husband, Ronald Sleeth, who died shortly after she completed it.

Tune: PROMISE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Natalie Sleeth, 1985

Verses 1 and 3 in parts; verses 2 and 4 unison.

423 Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

DUKE STREET LM

John Hatton (d. 1793)

Desc. David McKinley Williams, 1959

Descant

5. Let ev - ery crea - ture rise and bring Hon - ors pe -

1. Je - sus shall reign where - e'er the sun Does its suc -
 2. To Him shall end - less prayer be made, And prais - es
 3. Peo - ple and realms of ev - ery tongue Dwell on His
 4. Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er He reigns; The pris - oners

cu - liar to our King; An - gels de - scend with

ces - sive jour - neys run, His king - dom stretch from
 thron - to crown His head; His name, like sweet per -
 love with sweet - est song, And in - fant voic - es
 leap to lose their chains, The wea - ry find e -

songs a - gain, And earth re - peat the loud A - men!

shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
 fume, shall rise With ev - ery morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
 shall pro - claim Their ear - ly bless - ings on His name.
 ter - nal rest, And all who suf - fer want are blest.

Hymns, Psalms, & Spiritual Songs (1990)

Music Notes ~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tempore

Today we welcome the Berkshire Brass to help us celebrate Easter. I also offer a special thank you to our wonderful choir and section leaders Amy Shake, Rich Geiler and John Demler, the kids choir led by Liza Catino, and the bells led by Mary Jo Erickson Connor for the wonderful music making these past nine months in my interim position.

The arrangement of Jesus Christ is Risen Today (EASTER HYMN) for bells, brass, choir, congregation, organ and timpani is a combination of arrangements by James Biery, Douglas Benton and myself.

The Strife is O'er (VICTORY) is an arrangement by David Johnson, and Jesus Shall Reign (DUKE STREET) is arranged by Walter Pelz.

Spring Fair

Sat., May 10, 2025
10 am – 1 pm

Grandma's Attic
Baked Goods • Crafts
Plant Starts • Tea Room

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
4 Main St., Stockbridge, MA



**The Flowers in the Sanctuary are in honor
or in memory of loved ones.**

- ◇ Joanne Conroy, in memory of Aleva & Bob Henderson
- ◇ David Anderegg, in memory of my mother, Anita Anderegg
- ◇ Linda Hoddy and John Tracy, in memory of David Shawn Hoddy
- ◇ Helen McCormick, in memory of family
- ◇ Jane McCormick, in memory of my husband Gil
- ◇ Ron Hanft, in memory of Anna Mae Rensberger
- ◇ Ron Hanft, in honor of Tracy Wilson
- ◇ Mary Jo Erickson Connor, in memory of Philip Connor and Jo & Stan Erickson
- ◇ Brian J. Hyatt, in memory of Anne T. Hyatt & Arthur A. Hyatt
- ◇ Rodgers Family, in memory of Grandma & Grandpa Wood and Mom Mom & Pop Pop Rodgers
- ◇ Fay Parker, in memory of David Parker and Lin Moore
- ◇ Terry and Jay Wise, in memory of dear friends Ann & Andy Kantra
- ◇ Jeannene Booher, in memory of Rynn Booher
- ◇ Cathy Clark, in memory of my siblings, Carol and David
- ◇ Michael and Mary Behnke, in memory of Lawrence Hager
- ◇ Joe and Liza Catino, in memory of Joe & Eadie Catino and Paul & Meta Ukena
- ◇ Mary Hoeltzel, in memory of Gretchen Hoeltzel
- ◇ Lisa Johnson, in memory of Wm. Orville and Lola Belle Johnson
- ◇ Janet and John B. Canning, in memory of Kay and John A. Canning
- ◇ Janet and John B. Canning, in memory of Martha and Bill Scovill
- ◇ Patricia Strauch, with gratefulness for all the blessings in my life

We are an Open and Affirming Church 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, 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.

The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor

Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tempore

Will Garrison, Administrator | Marion Pomeroy, Financial Secretary
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Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg, Sarah Conly, Helen McCormick, and Drea Pecor; readers Ronnie Cunningham, Margo Davis, and Rich Geiler; usher Jo Ann Levitt; greeters Carl and Stephanie Bradford; fellowship Donna Jacobs. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher & Rae Geddes are in the nursery.