



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

May 18, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Children are invited to Sunday School at 10:00 a.m., joining 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

PRELUDE *Maiden and the Nightingale*, by Granados YeeJin Yuk, *piano*

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

INTROIT *For the Beauty of the Earth*

*CALL TO WORSHIP written by Rev. Christine Sobania Johnson on her blog,
Freshly Squeezed Liturgy Ronnie Cunningham

One: This new day is fresh with possibility to encounter the Living Christ.

All: With bright eyes, let us search.

One: This new day is fresh with possibility to understand the Living Christ.

All: With engaged minds, let us ponder.

One: This new day is fresh with possibility to be moved by the Living Christ.

All: With compassionate hearts, let us feel.

One: This new day is fresh with possibility to respond to the Living Christ.

All: With solid devotion, let us follow.

One: This new day is fresh with possibility to serve the Living Christ.

All: With humble intention, let us act.

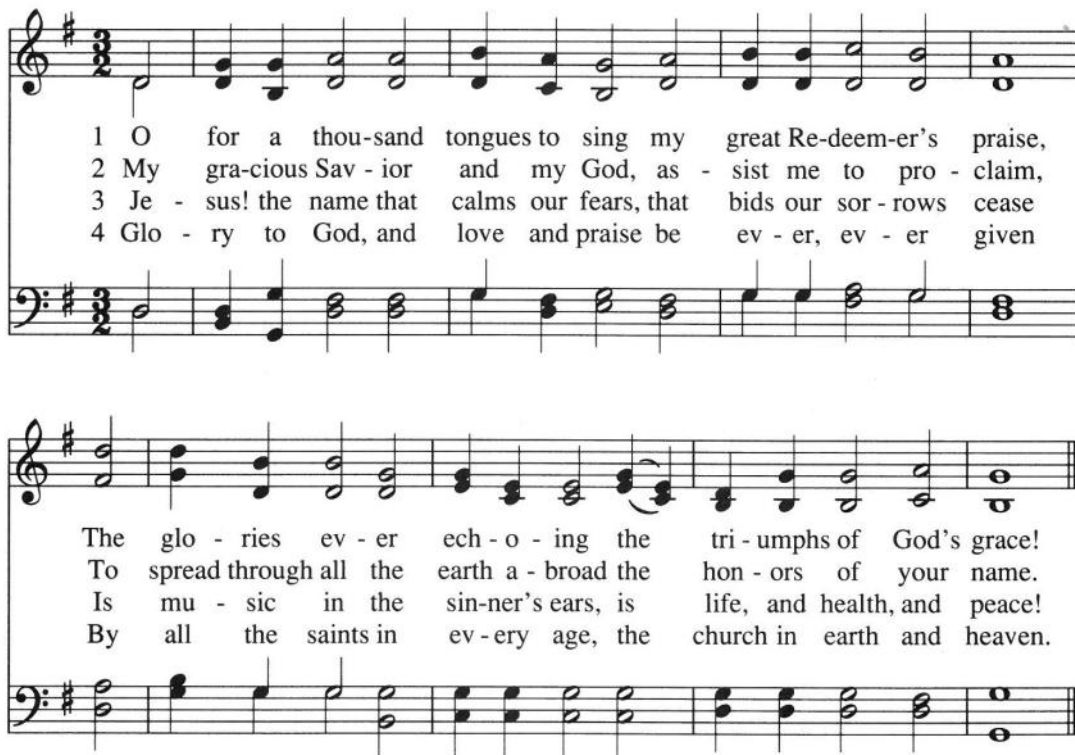
One: This new day is fresh with possibility to praise the Living Christ.

All: With strong voices, let us sing.

*HYMN

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

New Century Hymnal



1 O for a thou-sand tongues to sing my great Re-deem-er's praise,
 2 My gra-cious Sav - ior and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim,
 3 Je - sus! the name that calms our fears, that bids our sor - rows cease
 4 Glo - ry to God, and love and praise be ev - er, ev - er given

The glo - ries ev - er ech - o - ing the tri - umphs of God's grace!
 To spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.
 Is mu - sic in the sin-ner's ears, is life, and health, and peace!
 By all the saints in ev - ery age, the church in earth and heaven.

The hymn is a cento from a longer poem of eighteen stanzas written by Charles Wesley on the first anniversary of his conversion. The present form of the hymn is one edited by John Wesley for The Wesleyan Hymn Book, 1780.

Tune: AZMON C.M.
 Carl G. Gläser, 1828
 Adapt. in L. Mason's Modern Psalmody, 1839
 Alternate tune: RICHMOND

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

CONTEMPORARY READING *My Bright Abyss*, by Christian Wiman

Liza Catino

My God my bright abyss
 Into which all my longing will not go
 Once more I come to the edge of all I know
 And believing in nothing believe in this:

AN ACT OF REMEMBRANCE AND CELEBRATION FOR THE LIFE OF
NORMA JEAN STACKHOUSE

Introduction / *Litany

Pastor Brent & Liza Catino

One: We gather in this place to encounter the mysteries of life and death.

All: We gather in the presence of God who says do not fear for I am with you.

One: We gather in this place to bring our loss, our grief, and the emptiness we encounter.

All: We gather in the presence Of Christ who longs to shelter us under his wings and hold us close.

One: We gather in the place to remember love, to celebrate life, and abide in grace.

All: We gather in the presence of the Holy Spirit our support, our lamplighter, our breath.

One: We gather to remember Norma Jean Stackhouse, beloved child of God; treasured member of our church family,

All: Devoted spouse, mother, grandmother, and friend; gifted pianist and teacher.

One: We gather together to do the holy work of love.

All: And we do not gather alone.

Celebrating Memories

Mary Hoeltzel & Terry Wise

Sung Response

Bist du bei Mir (Be Thou with me)

Jack Brown, soloist

If you are with me, then I will go gladly

unto death and to my rest.

Ah, how pleasing were my end,

if your dear hands then shut my faithful eyes!

*Prayer of Commendation / 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.

Closing

The Swan, Saint-Saëns

YeeJin Yuk, *piano*

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Acts 15:1-9

Ronnie Cunningham

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the gentiles and brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."

The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us, and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us.

REFLECTION *Mystery & Unity*

Pastor Brent

*HYMN *We Limit Not the Truth of God*

(The choir will sing verse 1; please join for verses 2 and 3.)

1 We limit not the truth of God
to our poor reach of mind,
to notions of our day and place,
crude, partial, and confined:
No, let a new and better hope
within our hearts be stirred:
O God, grant yet more light and truth
to break forth from your Word.

continued

**2 Who dares to bind to one's own sense
the oracles of heaven,
for all the nations, tongues, and climes
and all the ages given?
That universe, how much unknown!
that ocean unexplored!
O God, grant yet more light and truth
to break forth from your Word.**

**3 Eternal God, incarnate Word,
Spirit of flame and dove:
enlarge, expand all living souls
to comprehend your love;
And help us all to seek your will
with wiser powers conferred:
O God, grant yet more light and truth
to break forth from your Word.**

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

(Prayers to be lifted must be submitted in writing and can be handed to a
Deacon or placed in the offering plate.)

OFFERTORY *O Day of Peace, Carl P. Daw, Jr.*

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.

***BLESSING OF THE GIFTS**

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE

O Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying



WORDS: Ken Medema
MUSIC: Ken Medema
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CHILDREN PRAYING
98.99

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

KIDS CHOIR

Rain Down

See page 7

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Church Meetings

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

TRAVELING MUSIC

Passapied from English Suite in E minor, J.S. Bach

David Anderegg

During the traveling music, please go to the JE Room and bring back coffee/snacks. Take a seat near the front and center of the sanctuary so that the Annual Meeting can begin promptly.

Rain Down

CONGREGATION

Based on Psalm 33

Jaime Cortez
Arranged by JOHN CARTER

REFRAIN:

The musical notation for the Refrain is written on three staves in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your peo - ple. Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life._____



Music Notes ~ Tracy Wilson

Yeejin Yuk studied piano with Jean Stackhouse at the Berkshire Music School when he was in junior high school, and continued throughout high school with some additional studies when he returned on college breaks. At the time, I was the Executive Director of BMS and was very pleased to provide scholarships for his studies through the BMS and donations from Jeannene Booher, Claire Williams and Ingrid Richardson in recognition of this young man's ability. Because of Jean's Boston connections and mentoring, Yeejin received additional coaching with A. Ramon Rivera at New England Conservatory and eventually enrolled and completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Houston, Texas. This church has been the beneficiary of several performances by Yeejin in our Music on Main series. Thank you, Yeejin, for playing for us and for helping us honor Jean Stackhouse's memory.

Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including pianist David Anderegg; Deacons Sarah Conly and Drea Pecor; readers Liza Catino and Ronnie Cunningham; usher Susan Moor; fellowship Donna Jacobs; greeter Carl Bradford; storytellers Elisabeth Bellows and Martha Floyd. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery. Thanks to Cathy Clark for the flowers.

Memorial for Hannah Peabody

Friday, May 30, 2:00pm

Service at The First Congregational Church. Then, at 4:00pm, there will be a lively celebration with food, and stories of Hannah's life, at the park pavilion on Frederic Lane, Sheffield. Please RSVP for the 4:00pm celebration by texting Maryphena at 413- 673-1439.

Book Club

How Firm a Foundation - Book Club
Haven't read the new history of the church, or you've read it and want to know more? Join co-author Michael Lynch for a three-week book club series, May 29, June 5 & 12. Let Will know if you're interested. Copies are available in the church office.



Pride Sunday – June 1.

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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