



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

August 17, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Children start in worship with an optional activity after Time with Children. Nursery care is available during worship. **Prayer requests can be shared verbally during worship. Or you may give a prayer slip to a Deacon or place it in the offering plate.**

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

David Anderegg; Nellie Rustick, *soprano*

My life flows on in endless song (Quaker hymn)

Now (lyrics W.E.B. DuBois; music David Anderegg)

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

*INTROIT *Be Thou My Vision*, verses 1 & 2

Pew hymnal #339

*CALL TO WORSHIP by Rev. Christine Sobania Johnson

Rich Geiler

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.

continued

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 *I Love to Tell the Story* vss. 1-2 see pages 4-5

CONTEMPORARY READING Rich Geiler
From *Inspired*, by Rachel Held Evans

The church is not a group of people who believe all the same things; the church is a group of people caught up in the same story, with Jesus at the center... 'I am a Christian, because the story of Jesus is still the story I'm willing to risk being wrong about.'

*HYMN *I Love to Tell the Story* vss. 3-4 see pages 4-5

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Hebrews 11:29-34 Ronnie Cunningham

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Faith & Stories*

*SHARING OF THE PEACE (Children may participate in an activity.)

SCRIPTURE Hebrews 12:1-2 Ronnie Cunningham

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

SERMON

Therefore

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

For the Faithful Who Have Answered

see page 6

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Feldeinsamkeit

Nellie Rustick

(lyrics Hermann Allmers; music Johannes Brahms)

*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

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

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*HYMN

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

see page 7

*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

That lucky ol' sun (lyrics Haven Gillespie; music Beasley Smith)

Music Notes ~ David Anderegg

Today's vocal selections, "My life flows on in endless song," "Now," and "That lucky ol' sun," were selected because they reflect three different aspects of "let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1) "Feldeinsamkeit" by Brahms is the ultimate late-summer art song. The text in English is as follows:

I rest at peace in tall green grass
And gaze steadily aloft,
Surrounded by unceasing crickets,
Wondrously interwoven with blue sky.

The lovely white clouds go drifting by
Through the deep blue, like lovely silent dreams;
I feel as if I have long been dead,
Drifting happily with them through eternal space.



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I Love to Tell the Story

Katherine Hankey, 1866; alt.

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove.
2 I love to tell the sto - ry; more won - der - ful it seems
3 I love to tell the sto - ry; it's pleas - ant to re - peat
4 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

Born in Clapham, England, Katherine Hankey belonged to the Clapham Sect of Evangelicals and established a Bible class for girls in London's West End. This hymn is drawn from her extended poem on the life of Jesus, which also contains "Tell me the old, old story."

Tune: HANKEY 7.6.7.6.D. with refrain
William G. Fischer, 1869

Of Je - sus' ra - diant glo - ry, of Je - sus' end - less love.
 than all the gold - en vi - sions of all our gold - en dreams.
 what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet.
 seem hun - ger - ing and thirsting to hear it, like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
 I love to tell the sto - ry, I tell it now to you
 I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
 And when I sing in glo - ry, I know the new, new song

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else can do.
 be - cause I want to share it, be - cause I know it's true.
 the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly Word.
 will be the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

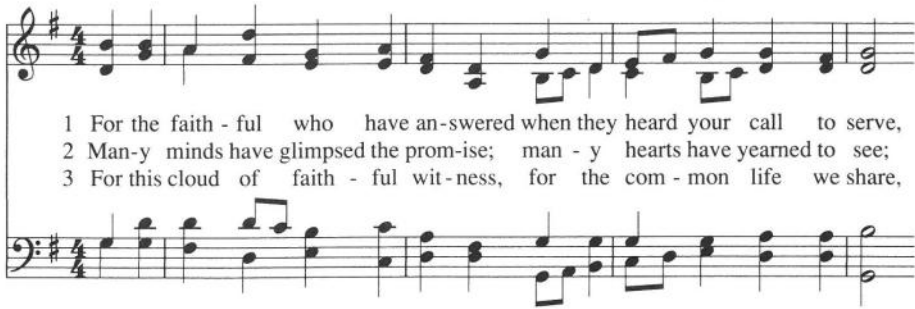
Refrain

I love to tell the sto - ry; and when I am in glo - ry

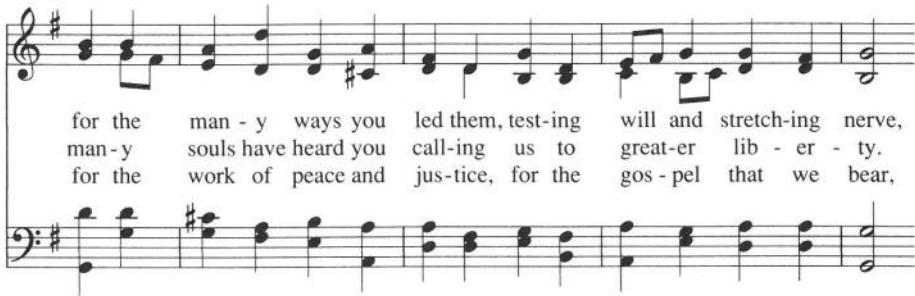
I'll tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus' end - less love.

Heb. 11:4–12:2

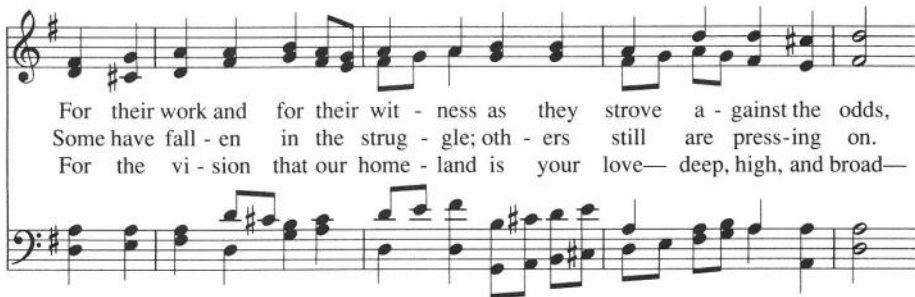
Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1986; alt.



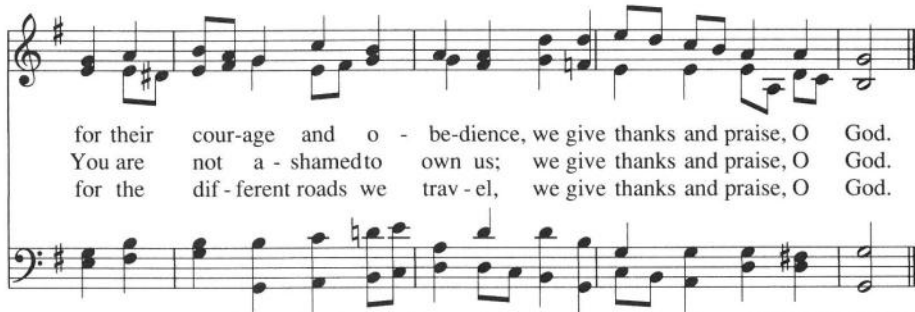
1 For the faith - ful who have an - swered when they heard your call to serve,
 2 Man - y minds have glimpsed the prom - ise; man - y hearts have yearned to see;
 3 For this cloud of faith - ful wit - ness, for the com - mon life we share,



for the man - y ways you led them, test - ing will and stretch - ing nerve,
 man - y souls have heard you call - ing us to great - er lib - er - ty.
 for the work of peace and jus - tice, for the gos - pel that we bear,



For their work and for their wit - ness as they strove a - gainst the odds,
 Some have fall - en in the strug - gle; oth - ers still are press - ing on.
 For the vi - sion that our home - land is your love— deep, high, and broad—



for their cour - age and o - be - dience, we give thanks and praise, O God.
 You are not a - shamed to own us; we give thanks and praise, O God.
 for the dif - ferent roads we trav - el, we give thanks and praise, O God.

In commissioning a hymn for the fiftieth anniversary of women's ordination in 1986, the United Church of Canada specified that it should concentrate on all people's faithful response to God's call. Sylvia Dunstan selected Hebrews 11 and 12 as her primary reference.

Tune: OMNI DIE 8.7.8.7.D.
 German melody, 1625
 Trier Gesangbuch, 1695

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

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GO TELL IT 7.6.7.6 with refrain

African-American spiritual

Arr. John W. Work III, 1940

Stanzas, John W. Work II (1872–1925)

Harm. and adapt. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987

Refrain

Go, tell it on the moun - tain O-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

Fine

Go, tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! a - bove the earth,
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger The hum - ble Christ was born,

D.C.

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons Gary Cilley, Jo Ann Levitt, and Helen McCormick; readers Rich Geiler and Ronnie Cunningham; ushers Joanne Conroy and Linda Hoddy; outside greeter Don Rodgers; fellowship Megan Kolano and Jeremy Ridenour. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery. Thanks to Terry Wise for the flowers.

Please help build a new directory!

On Sept 7, Rally Sunday, we will put new church directories into the hands of our congregation. The Connections Committee has been working with the staff to design a new format that will be both efficient and easy to use. But we need your help updating contact information and photographs.

Here is how you can help: During Fellowship today, stop by the Connections table to check your information.

- Make sure that phone numbers and emails are correct.
- Make sure we have both a mailing and a physical address (looking at you, Stockbridge residents!)

(Please note: marital status and birthdates are helpful, but will not be printed in the directory.)

Stop by the office during the week to have your photo taken. Or you can attach your individual and family photos to an email sent to office@stockbridgeucc.org.

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.

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