



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP

September 14, 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

Sean Lewis

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

Rev. Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

INTROIT Psalm 139 (Pete)

*CALL TO WORSHIP *Monthly Prayers*, Christian Aid website Elizabeth Young

One: O God, you are the gathering one who calls us into community with each other

Women: to love and work,

Men: to support and heal.

One: You are the gathering one who calls us into community with all people;

Younger: to bring justice and hope,

Older: freedom and truth.

One: You are the gathering one who calls us into community with the whole creation;

Tired: to live in harmony,

Awake: to cherish and renew.

One: Let us worship the God

All: who makes us one.

*SHARING OF THE PEACE

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Timothy 1:14

and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

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.

(Children may participate in an activity.)

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 15:1-10

Brian Farrell

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

SERMON

Coming Home

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Softly and Tenderly

see pages 6-7

PRAYER OF CONFESSION adapted from Christina Longhurst

One: Jesus said, *Come to me, all you who are tired, who are worn out from carrying heavy burdens. Put down the heavy load that you are carrying, and you will find rest for your souls. Come let us come home bringing our confessions before the love of God.* (based on Matthew 11:28)

All: God, we confess that we don't always understand our own actions.

We know what is right – what you expect of us – but we don't always do it. We also know what is wrong – the thoughts and actions that hurt others and offend you – but we do these things anyway.

Forgive us! Through Jesus Christ our Lord, bring us home, set us free from the sin that causes us to wander. (based on Romans 7)

One: People of God, know this: Our God is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry, and filled with unfailing love.
When we stumble, God is there to catch us;
when we are weighed down, God is there to lift us up.
So be at peace: your sins are forgiven. (based on Psalm 145:8, 14)

SUNG RESPONSE *Softly and Tenderly* (refrain)

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

How Can I Keep From Singing?

*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
UNISON PRAYER
PRAYER RESPONSE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

*HYMN	<i>There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit</i>	see pew hymnal #398
*BENEDICTION		Pastor Brent
POSTLUDE		Sean Lewis



Mark your calendar

Sunday, September 21

A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of
the Rev. Dr. Rick Floyd and the dedication of the solar
panels.

I've Got Peace Like a River

2145

1. I've got peace like a riv-er, I've got peace like a

riv-er, I've got peace like a riv-er in my

soul. I've got riv-er in my soul.

2. I've got joy like a fountain ... 3. I've got love like an ocean ...

WORDS: African American spiritual
MUSIC: African American spiritual

PEACE LIKE A RIVER
77.11 D

The Faith We Sing (2000)

Softly and Tenderly

Will L. Thompson, 1880; alt.

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 Time is now fleet - ing, the mo - ments are pass - ing, pass - ing from
 4 O for the won - der - ful love Je - sus prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me; See at the por - tals Christ wait - ing and
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not God's
 you and from me; Shad - ows are gath - er - ing, death - beds are
 you and for me; Though we have sinned Je - sus of - fers us

Refrain
 watch - ing, watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies, mer - cies for you and for me? Come home, come
 com - ing, com - ing for you and for me. Come home,
 par - don, par - don for you and for me.

home, come home, All who are wea - ry, come home;

Will Thompson established publishing firms in Chicago and East Liverpool, Ohio, the community to which he left a legacy of song. Dwight L. Moody once remarked that he would rather have written "Softly and Tenderly" than anything he had ever done.

Tune: SOFTLY AND TENDERLY
 11.7.11.7. with refrain
Will L. Thompson, 1880

The New Century Hymnal (1995)



Please join us for a screening of


HEAR ME


a documentary film

**Conversations with experts on the root causes of gun violence —
seven young people from the front lines.**

Featuring seven young people from Berkshire County.

produced by **JENNY HERZOG** directed by **DAVE SIMONDS**



 **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH** Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Sunday September 28
12 - 2pm
Berkshire Waldorf High School
6 Main Street, Stockbridge
Free

Sponsored by the Stockbridge Congregational Church

Please join us after the screening for a discussion on the root causes of gun violence in The Berkshires, and possible strategies for a way forward.

Thank you to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons Gary Cilley and Helen McCormick; readers Brian Farrell and Elizabeth Young; usher Ronnie Cunningham; fellowship Linda Colvin; Sunday School leaders Jeremy Ridenour, Megan Kolano, Rich Geiler, and Martha Floyd. Will Curtis is running the Livestream. Mari Brennan is in the nursery. Thanks to Patty Fadding for the flowers.

Adult Christian Education Studies

The Board of CE invites you to two different studies - the first focusing on "The Parables of Jesus" with the second exploring "Great Characters of the Bible." These studies will take place on Thursday evenings at the church beginning at 6:00pm.

Exploring the Parables of Jesus Thursdays 6:00 - 7:00pm (in person) September 11 & 25, October 9 & 23, November 6 & 20.

Led by Rick Floyd and Jeremy Ridenour

Each session will stand alone and there is no sign up. It should be fun; hope you will come!

The Great Characters of the Bible

Thursday 6:00 - 7:15pm (in person) Sept 18, Oct 2, 16, and 30, Nov 13. A separate online section available on the same Thursdays 12 - 1:15

Led by Brent Damrow. We will get to know some of the great characters of the Bible including Jonah, Elijah, Moses, David, Hannah, Caleb, and Joshua.

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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