



*The First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ  
Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
Christian Education Sunday  
June 20, 2021 10:00 a.m.*

***This morning's service is prerecorded.***

*As part of a long-standing tradition, each year the church holds a worship service in honor and celebration of the educational programs of the past year.*

*We continue that tradition this year in a new way to fit these challenging times. We hope that you enjoy the leadership provided by teachers and learners of all ages. We are including some of the text of what is being said in case the audio portion is challenging to make out.*

*This bulletin will be a guide and contain the order of presentations. You may also simply sit back and take in all the beauty and grace of what you are about to witness! Blessings!*

*Thank you to Jill Wheat who has spearheaded this endeavor, to all who were part of this service, and all who were part of education this year.*

# PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

## GATHERING MUSIC

In honor of Black History month, the Board of Christian Education (CE) sponsored a video unit on Black Sacred music, from Spirituals to Gospel, Soul, Freedom Songs and Jazz. The full series is on the [Learning and Formation page](#) on the church website. Included in today's worship are some of our favorite clips.

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand* - Mahalia Jackson

The Father of Gospel, Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993), was the son of a Baptist preacher and a church organist in Atlanta. He left school at age 11 for a job in a local vaudeville theater. He left Atlanta for Chicago at age 17 as part of the Great Migration north and got work playing piano. For the next 12 years he struggled with mental health issues, traveled between Chicago and Atlanta, and wrestled between secular Blues music and sacred music. By 1929 he was exclusively writing sacred music but having trouble getting his music accepted by mainstream churches. Then, in 1932, his wife and son died in childbirth. He turned to his music and wrote "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," which, he says, came directly from God. In 1933 he co-founded The National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. He partnered with singer Mahalia Jackson (Queen of Gospel) six years later and together they ushered in what was known as the Golden age of Gospel Music. Below you will find a link to Jackson singing *Precious Lord*.

*Lift Every Voice & Sing* - (from the film *MLK / FBI*) by Preservation Hall Jazz Band

*Lift Every Voice and Sing* was initially a poem written by James Weldon Johnson in 1900 and was set to music by his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, in 1905 for the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. It is a hymn of suffering, strength, praise, and redemption and has come to be known as the African American National Anthem. This version is done by The Preservation Hall Jazz Band of New Orleans.

*Psalm from A Love Supreme* - John Coltrane

John Coltrane (1926-1947), jazz saxophonist, bandleader and composer, recorded "A Love Supreme" in 1965. He had struggled with addiction, which he eventually overcame. His comments on "A Love Supreme" note that he had experienced "by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life. At that time, in gratitude, I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music." Here is a short clip to one of the parts, "Psalm."

*David Danced Before the Lord* - Duke Ellington

An early innovator, Duke Ellington (1899-1974) pioneered orchestral jazz, both arranging and writing original music. Although his composing career began in the late '20s, he did not reach his international fame until the 1950s. In his later years, Ellington focused on sacred music, composing three Sacred Concerts in 1965, 1968 and 1973. An earlier piece, "Come Sunday" (1943) became a jazz standard and was incorporated into the Second Sacred Concert. (You may recognize it as something our own choir has performed). This same melody was used for "David Danced Before the Lord," here accompanied by tap dancing.

# GATHERING IN WORSHIP

INTROIT *Jesus Loves Me* Kids Bell Choir

WELCOME Rev. Brent Damrow

CALL TO WORSHIP (Written by Diane Piraino) Jacob Damrow

Jesus came to us as a baby and left the world as the risen Christ. He is our comforter and makes us whole. He teaches us: to be a bright light in the world, to care for our neighbors, to trust that God will take care of us, to believe in love. Listen while we tell his story

SONG *I Love to Tell the Story* (vss. 1 & 2) Jack Brown, *baritone*

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS (Written by Cindy Brown) Houghtling Family

This past Christmas season, in our online Sunday School lessons, we lit the candles of the Advent wreath. Advent is the four weeks before Christmas Day, and it's a time of waiting, as we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

One way we celebrate is with an Advent wreath, which is a table wreath with four candles. The candles represent HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE, and Christ.

The purple candles symbolize both repentance and royalty, and the pink candle represents joy. The white candle in the middle stands for the purity of Christ.

Our next song is about three of these candles: PEACE like a river, LOVE like an ocean, and JOY like a fountain!

SONG *Peace Like a River* Kids Choir

PASSING OF THE PEACE Ted Randolph

One: A child is born to us, the Prince of Peace.

**All: The peace of Jesus be with you.**

One: Who is the greatest among us?

**All: The peace of Jesus be with you.**

One: Blessed are the peacemakers.

**All: The peace of Jesus be with you.**

One: There is a storm all around me.

**All: The peace of Christ be with you.**

One: We feel alone, terrified, and afraid.

**All: The peace of Christ rule in your heart.**

One: They say 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace.

**All: May Jesus, who is our peace, be with you.**

One: And also with you.

# THE GIFT OF THE WORD

## *Touch the Hem of His Garment*

By the 50s and early 60s, another genre, Soul, had developed out of Gospel, Blues, and Rhythm and Blues. The King of Soul, Sam Cooke (1931-1964) had a highly successful secular career, but also made numerous Gospel recordings. Here Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers perform “Touch the Hem of His Garment,” which tells the story of a woman’s faith that Jesus would heal her.

**Life of Jesus**

*Jesus Rap* (Written by Diane Piraino)

Conor Hall

Jesus is both God and man. He can do what no one else can.

John baptized him in the River. The clouds then parted, the water quivered.

A dove came down upon his head. This is what the Creator said:

“I am pleased. He’s my son. Listen to him everyone.”

Thousands came to hear him speak. They didn’t think ‘bout what they’d eat.

Jesus blessed some fish, some bread. Then the multitude was fed.

He will calm the storm. Don’t doubt! He will drive your demons out.

Believe in him and touch his hem. He will make you whole again.

Testify! Testify! Spit and dirt and mud on an eye!

He just made a blind man see. Everyone said, “Can it be?”.

Listen to his every word. Be more like a lily or a bird.

The truth is going to make you free: God takes care of all you need.

Do not cover up your light! Let it shine both day and night.

Jesus taught us how to pray. This is what he said to say:

Lord’s Prayer

Wheat Family

**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.**

SONG

*This Little Light of Mine*

Kids Choir

## SCRIPTURE READINGS/STUDIES

**Riverbrook Bible Study**                      Introduced by Jeremy Ridenour

**Bible Passage** – John 12:46              Susan Booth

“Jesus said, ‘I am the light that has come into the world. No one who believes in me will stay in the dark hiding anymore.’” - John 12:46, paraphrase

### **Disciple Year-Long Study Group Reflections**

The video includes participants Mindy Dow, Susan Moor, David Anderegg, Patty Strauch (who will also be sharing thoughts from Marilyn Strauch).

Participants not shown in the video include Ken LaBresh, Marilyn Strauch, Steve Hassmer, and Casey Jones

**Bible Passage** – John 3:16              Susan Booth

“Jesus said, ‘God loved the people of the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that anyone who believes in him will have eternal life.’”

### **Covenant Year-Long Study Group Reflections**

This video represents the experience of one of the groups. The other group will be part of an upcoming worship. The video is done by Niti Martin including some thoughts from her small group which included Elizabeth Young, Ron Hanft, Don Rodgers and Jo Ann Levitt.

The second Covenant Group included Jeremy Ridenour, Marion Pomeroy, Charlotte Rodgers and Vicky Cooper.

**Bible Passage** – Revelation 22:13    Beth Rodgers

“Jesus said, ‘I am the Beginning and the Ending.’”

## SONG

*For the Beauty of the Earth*

Jack Brown and Kids Choir

### **Meditation Group**

Another of the small groups that took place this year was instruction on meditation led by Jo Ann Levitt. Elizabeth Young shares a reflection of that experience.

Other participants included: Sibylle Baier, John Canning, Barb Kershner, Ray Bergmann, Mary Jane Dunlop, and Mindy Dow.

### **A Child’s Prayer**

Ruth Wheat

# OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL FOR THE OFFERING (Written by Cindy Brown)

Ella Smith

God has given us so much! In the beginning, God gave us the earth and all the wonderful things in it. God gave us freedom when we were rescued from slavery in Egypt. Through Moses, God gave us rules to live by and love by. God's Never Stopping Love, Never Giving Up Love, Unbreaking Love, Always and Forever Love gave us Jesus, to lead us close to God's heart. God has given us so much, including our very breath. And so, in gratitude, it's only natural that we give back to God whatever we can of our time, talent, and treasure. I invite you now to offer some of your treasure to the work of this church. You can mail a check, or give online. The Offering will now be given and received.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Garden Song*

Jack Brown and Kids 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 (Written by Cindy Brown)

Parker Smith

Let us pray. Dear God, thank you for all that you give us every day. And thank you for the chance to give back to you. Bless these gifts for the work of the church. Help us to be your hands and heart. Amen

## GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

SHARING

**Fruit of the Spirit Sunday School Series**

Intro: Jill Wheat

**Bible Passage**—Galatians 5:22-23 Ruth, Tommy, and Betsy Wheat

SONG

*Fruit of the Spirit*

Kids Choir

THANKS AND RECOGNITION

Diane Piraino and Jill Wheat

SENDING CHARGE

Ken Ward

*This charge was inspired by "Choose to Bless the World" by Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker*

No matter how young or old we may be, no matter how weak or how frightened we may feel, we each have gifts that can make a difference in the world. In this coming week, may you do at least one thing to support the broken, to welcome the stranger; to celebrate what is worthy; to do the work of justice and love. Be strong. Be connected. Each day, act — so you may be a little more whole.

SONG

*I Love to Tell the Story* (vss. 3 & 4)

Jack Brown, *baritone*

BENEDICTION

Rev. Damrow



POSTLUDE

*The Glory Train*, by Wynton Marsalis

Wynton Marsalis is a trumpeter, composer, teacher and artistic director of Jazz at the Lincoln Center. This is from a 2015 NPR blog post “God is in the House: Five Sacred Jazz Recordings”:

‘Unlike many of his colleagues, trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis did not grow up performing in a church. But his awareness of such experience and its influence helped inspire him to write a sacred-jazz epic, 1993's *In This House, On This Morning*. "Listening to all of [his fellow players] made me want to put that feeling in a long piece and reassert out here the power that underlies jazz by constructing a composition based on the communal complexity of its spiritual sources," he said. Reverend Jeremiah Wright (he of 2008 presidential campaign fame) gave Marsalis a blueprint in the form of a 12-part African-American church service. In his structurally complex and blues-suffused emulation, Marsalis hits a variety of musical signposts along the way, illustrating calls to prayer, hymns, scripture readings and sermons.’

The piece is two hours long in its entirety. We are using a short excerpt: “Recessional- The Glory Train.” It’s fun, upbeat and a treat for the eyes as well as the ears. It will send you out into the world to do God’s work. Amen!



A special note from Jill Wheat:

It has been a wild and adventure filled year for all attempting Christian Education this year! From pandemic style Rally Day & video-d Sunday School teachers writing their own heartfelt lessons to Christmas Tree wreaths, virtual carols, to a vast array of African American sacred music history. There were pages and pages of Sunday School online lessons, email and Zoom communication and pea plants for Easter. Adult Christian Education thrived in small groups over Zoom. There was even a Children’s Sermon from North Carolina!

Now, in an effort to include the safety needs of our wonderfully diverse church here is a live streamed Christian Education Sunday Service representing most of the various aspects of Christian Education over the past year; adult education, online Sunday School, teachers, leaders, children making music and Christian education in the community.

The church family, teachers, leaders, the Board of Christian Education & Pastor Brent, we offer so many “Thank Yous” to you!

The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge is an Open and Affirming Church, inviting 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.

For information about us, please visit our website: [www.stockbridgeucc.org](http://www.stockbridgeucc.org) or contact Will at [office@stockbridgeucc.org](mailto:office@stockbridgeucc.org) | (413) 298-3137

*The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor*

*Dr. Sándor Szabó, Minister of Music (on leave)*

*Will Garrison, Administrator | Ron Hanft, Financial Secretary*

*Barbara Kershner, Worship Music Leader*

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**Join us on June 27 for our hymn-sing service on the lawn, featuring your favorite hymns, the Kids Choir, and all the traditional elements of worship. After the Children's Message, there will be activities available for school-age children (COVID protocols in place.)**



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH** UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
————— Stockbridge, Massachusetts —————