



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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY

June 4, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

For those worshipping at home: you are invited to text the names of those attending to 413-644-6435 that we might welcome you. Please also include prayers of joys and concerns as we will name them in worship.

For those in church: Masks are optional, but masking is always welcome. A section of the first floor is designated as masking required.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

PRELUDE

Spirit Song, arr. Wagner

Bell Choir

FRAMING WORDS

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING IN WORSHIP

INTROIT

Come Down, O Love Divine, arr. Ryan

Bell Choir

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Psalm 57 David Anderegge:

I love this psalm because it is so specific: it is attributed to a person, David, and a place and time: "in the cave, when he fled from Saul." But is also universal, like all the psalms: David is beset by enemies, but he has faith that God will deliver him. Indeed, he is so animated that he decides to sing! David says, "I will sing and make melody. Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn." This is not prudent for someone in hiding, but David cannot help himself. This psalm might be an early version of, and an inspiration for, another beloved hymn: David says, in essence, "How can I keep from singing?"

*CALL TO WORSHIP based on Psalm 57

Ryleigh Fillio

One: Be kind to me O God, be kind!

All: For in you my soul takes refuge.

One: I cry to God Most High to save me,

All: God will send forth love and faithfulness.

One: Sometimes I feel like lions surround me

All: Sometimes I feel like traps are set for me

One: They dug a pit for me,

All: But they, not me fell in!

One: My heart remains true –

All: I will keep singing.

One: I will give thanks to you O God

All: For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens and your faithfulness extends to the clouds.

*HYMN

My Life Flows On in Endless Song vss. 1&2

See page 6

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Ruth Wheat

WELCOME

Pastor Brent

CELEBRATING OUR YOUTH GROUP / BRINGING PRAYERS

Terry Wise

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

THANKING THE TEACHERS

Kim Ruffing

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Ted Randolph

The 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.

THANKING JULIAN VALLEN

Elizabeth Young

SINGING IN JOY

Rise & Shine

CE Choir

SCRIPTURE READING 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 Elisabeth Bellows

This year three different small groups enjoyed reading and discussing Inspired by Rachel Held Evans. Evans brought Bible passages to life and encouraged us to see these texts not as answers or endings, but rather as the beginning of conversation, exploration, and journey. Our passage for today has been re-written in that Spirit. This summer a small group is convening to read her final work Wholehearted Faith and we look forward to sharing any ways we hope to use it in the year to come.

So, my family in faith, as my time with you closes, a new chapter for you is opening!

Remember the way! Share life fully. Live in love and peace and the source of love and peace will be with you.

When you see each other – be full of joy. When you feel the embrace of each other, keep in mind that you are likewise held by all the faithful of all times and places.

Finally, remember that you never go alone for Christ's grace, God's love, and the Spirit's presence will always be with you.

REFLECTION *Acts & Spiritual Direction* Linda Hoddy

*HYMN *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* vss. 1&4 See page 7

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING Jo Ann Levitt

Jo Ann led two wonderful sections of *Spiritual Path of Aging* this year. She will share some quick reflections before inviting you to give.

OFFERTORY *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*, arr. Stokes Bell 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

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth & Gary Cilley Claudia Cooke Martha Noyes & Timothy Bosworth

STATEMENT OF OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH

Pastor Brent

Our purpose as a Church is to carry on the mission and ministry that God initiated in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we recognize as the Christ. Our purpose is to represent Christ, God's saving and healing love, both locally and in the wider world.

LITANY OF INTENT

Miles Wheat

One: Friends in Christ, we are all received into the church through the sacrament of Baptism. These people have found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ.

Many: They have been led by the Spirit to affirm his Baptism and to claim in our presence their covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the Christian church.

One: They are here as we are here, to endeavor to love God with all our hearts, and all our souls and all our minds. God help us.

Many: They are here, as we are here to endeavor to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. God help us.

One: You who are joining, we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place.

Many: We give thanks for every community of faith which has been your spiritual home and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES AND CONGREGATION

*CONGREGATIONAL STATEMENT OF COVENANT

As we strive to fulfill our purpose, we covenant:

To worship together on a regular basis;

To strive to grow spiritually;

To open ourselves to follow God's leading in our lives both individually and as a community of faith;

To give support to and receive support from one another through life's trials and transitions;

To support and participate in the wider Christian community; and to support the institution of this church with our time, resources, and skills.

GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

Miles Wheat

On behalf of this church family we welcome you. We look forward to our journey of faith together. We give thanks for the chance to learn with you and grow with you – to deepen our faith, to broaden our minds and open our hearts. May God bless and enrich our time together.

SUNG RESPONSE

Here I Am, Lord

**I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have
heard My people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin My
hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?**

Refrain

**Here I am, Lord, Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the
night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my
heart.**

*Chosen by Marty Noyes and Tim Bosworth,
who are joining the church today.*

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

*INVITATIONS

Pastor Brent

*SENDING PRAYER based on the Acts study

Vicky Cooper

*HYMN

I Come to the Garden Alone vss. 1&2

See page 8

*BENEDICTION

Jake Damrow



POSTLUDE

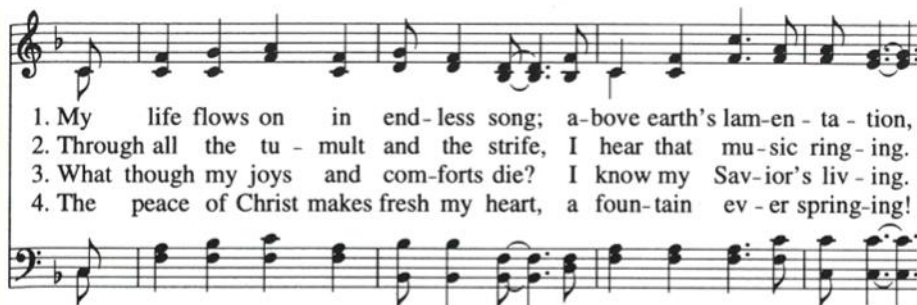
This is My Song, arr. Krug

Bell Choir

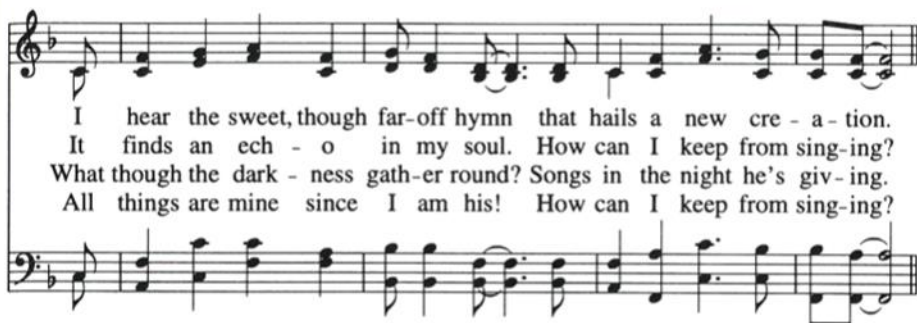
Welcome! We are an Open and Affirming Church which means that we invite persons of every sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, racial and cultural identity, age, physical ability, economic circumstance, faith background and family structure to share fully in the ministry, leadership and fellowship of this congregation's life in Christ.

The Rev. Brent Damrow, Pastor

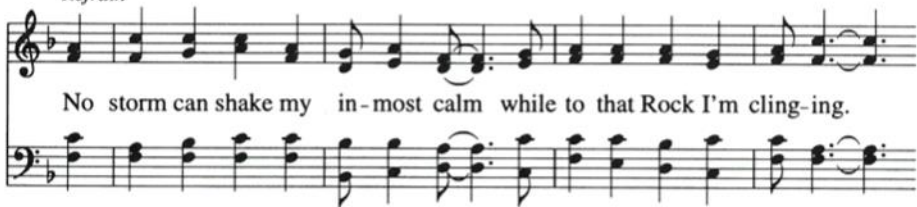
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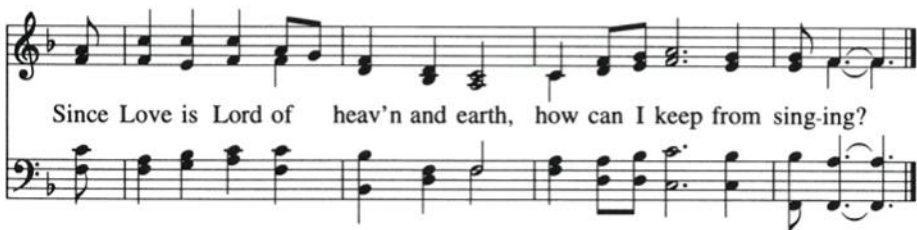
1. My life flows on in end-less song; a-bove earth's lam-en - ta - tion,
 2. Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu-sic ring-ing.
 3. What though my joys and com-forts die? I know my Sav-ior's liv-ing.
 4. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun-tain ev - er spring-ing!



I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
 It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
 What though the dark - ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he's giv-ing.
 All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

Refrain


No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.



Since Love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?

WORDS and MUSIC: Robert Lowry, 1869, alt.

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING
 87.87 w. refrain

Baptist minister and educator Lowry was editor of Sunday School song books for Biglow & Main, one of the largest publishers of hymnals.

Verses

1 & 4

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

1

Walter C. Smith, 1867; alt.

1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 36:6

1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 Your life is life - giv - ing— to both great and small;
 4 So per - fect your glo - ry, so bril - liant your light,

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 not want - ing, not wast - ing, but rul - ing in might;
 in all life you're liv - ing, the true life of all;
 your an - gels a - dore you, all veil - ing their sight;

Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 Your jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove,
 We blos - som and flour - ish as leaves and as flowers,
 All praise we now ren - der as your an - gels do:

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, your great name we praise.
 your clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
 then with - er and per - ish— but naught dims your powers.
 in awe at the splen - dor of light hid - ing you.

Walter C. Smith, minister of the Free Church of Scotland and later moderator of the Assembly, wrote poetry as a retreat from work and to say what could not be fully expressed in the pulpit.

Tune: ST. DENIO 11.11.11.11.
 Adapt. from a Welsh ballad in John Roberts' Caniadaeth y Cysegr, 1839

From *New Century Hymnal*. Chosen by Claudia Cooke, who is joining the church today.

John 20:14-18

C. Austin Miles, 1912

1 I come to the gar-den a-lone, while the dew is still on the
 2 He speaks, and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their
 3 I'd stay in the gar-den with him, though the night a-round me be

ros-es; And the voice I hear, fall-ing on my ear, the
 sing-ing; And the mel-o-dy that he gave to me with-
 fall-ing; But he bids me go; through the voice of woe his

Son of God dis-clos-es.
 in my heart is ring-ing. And he walks with me, and he
 voice to me is call-ing.

Refrain

talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, And the

joy we share as we tar-ry there, none oth-er has ev-er known.

C. Austin Miles wrote this hymn and its music to tell the story of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus at the tomb, when she recognizes him and calls him "Rabboni" ("Teacher").

Tune: GARDEN 8.9.5.5.7. with refrain
 C. Austin Miles, 1912

From the *New Century Hymnal*. Chosen by Gary and Beth Cilley, who are joining the church today.