



*The First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts*
BAPTISM OF CHRIST SUNDAY
January 14, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

Each week in worship we welcome people to share their prayers. If you like for a worship leader to read your prayer, please fill out a prayer slip.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Frost

PRELUDE *I'm Going to Sing when the Spirit says Sing*, arr. Krug Bell Choir

FRAMING WORDS

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

*GATHERING SONG To the tune of "Jesus Loves Me."

Jesus heard a gentle call, meant for him and yes for all.

In that river long ago, came a truth that we must know.

We are be-love-ed, We are be-love-ed

We are belove-ed, The Bible tells us so!

That call echoes still today, as we go forth on our way.

Lifting us that we might give, light and love to all who live.

We are be-love-ed, We are be-love-ed

We are belove-ed, The Bible tells us so!

*CALL TO WORSHIP Adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual* 2006

David Anderegg

One: We are gathered to worship our God.

All: Send your Spirit upon us.

One: We come from many places, with many burdens.

All: Send your Spirit upon us.

One: We turn our hearts to you, O God.

All: Send your Spirit upon us, and make us your beloved family.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor Brent

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:1-8

Ron Hanft

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

TIME WITH CHILDREN

The Baptizer

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.

Children may go to music / story time.

CONTEMPORARY READING Sonnet 7, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Holland Eaton

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this... this lute and song... loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear,
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

*HYMN

O Radiant Christ, Incarnate World

See page 5

WELCOME

Pastor Brent

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:9-11

Ron Hanft

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

SERMON

The Baptized

Pastor Brent

*HYMN

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

See page 8

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Remember to place your prayer slips in the offering plates if you would like them lifted. They will be read as written.

OFFERTORY *We Shall Overcome*, 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

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS Pastor Brent

SENDING CHARGE Sarah Conly

Heavenly God, when Jesus was baptized by John in the wilderness you claimed him as your beloved child by speaking that truth into his heart. Speak that same truth into ours that we, like Jesus, might live into the fullness of your grace, truth, and possibility for our lives and for the world too. Amen

*HYMN *Mark How the Lamb of God's Self-Offering* See pages 6-7

*BENEDICTION Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE *Let There be Peace on Earth*, arr. Sherman

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.

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O Radiant Christ, Incarnate Word

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Ruth Duck, 1989

Isa. 60:19–20; Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11

1 O ra - diant Christ, in - car - nate Word, e - ter - nal
2 Our bar - tered, bus - y lives burn dim, too tired to
3 Your glo - ry shone at Jor - dan's stream, the font where
4 O Light of Na - tions, fill the earth; our faith and

love re - vealed in time: Come, make your home with - in our
care, too numb to feel. Come, shine up - on our shad - owed
we were born a - new. At - tune your church to know you
hope and love re - new. Come, lead the peo - ples to your

hearts, that we may dwell in light sub - lime.
world: your ra - diance bathes with power to heal.
near; il - lu - mine all we say and do.
peace, as stars once led the way to you.

Commissioned by the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Ruth Duck's text provides a fitting center for Epiphany celebrations, with its sense of wonder at the incarnation and petition that through Christ's revelation our lives may be changed.

Tune: DICKINSON COLLEGE L.M.
Lee Hastings Bristol, Jr., 1962
Alternate tune: WAREHAM

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Matt. 3:13-17; 4:1-2; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:21-22;
Acts 10:34-38; 2:38-42

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1990

1 Mark how the Lamb of God's self - of - fering our hu - man
2 From this as - sur - ance of God's fa - vor Je - sus goes
3 Grant us, O God, the strength and cour - age to live the

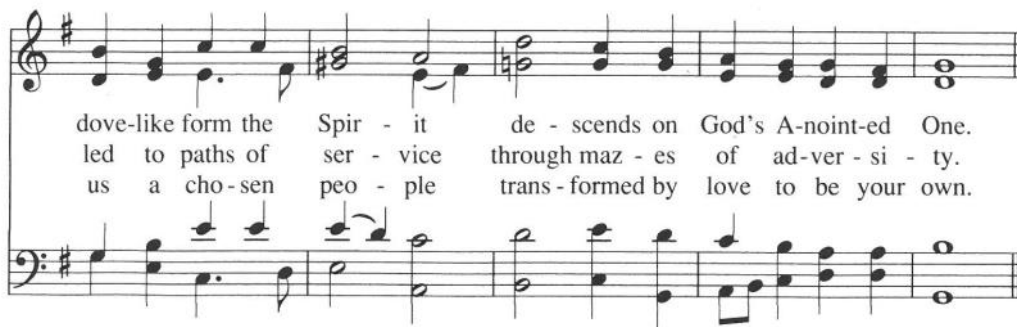
sin - ful - ness takes on In the birth - wa - ters of the Jor - dan
to the wil - der - ness, There to en - dure a time of test - ing
faith our lips de - clare; Bless us in our bap - tis - mal call - ing;

as Je - sus is bap - tized by John. Hear how the voice from heav - en
that read - ied him to teach and bless. So we, by wa - ter and the
Christ's roy - al priest - hood help us share. Turn us from ev - ery false al -

thun - ders, "Lo, this is my be - lov - ed Son." See how in
Spir - it bap - tized in - to Christ's min - is - try, Are of - ten
le - giance, that we may trust in Christ a - lone: Raise up in

Regarding this hymn for the first Sunday after the Epiphany, hymnwriter Carl P. Daw, Jr., writes that "the Baptism of Christ is one of the regular occasions for baptisms and for the making and renewing of baptismal vows."

Tune: RENDEZ À DIEU 9.8.9.8.D.
Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510-c. 1561)
Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551



News and Announcements

Justice Task Force News

Joshua Hall will be speaking after church on Sunday, January 21. His topic is "Indian Town to Exodus: Stockbridge from the time of colonial settlement to the departure of the Stockbridge Indians."

Winter Book Discussion

In *Rough Sleepers*, Tracy Kidder tells the story of Dr. Jim O'Connell, who invented a community of care for Boston's unhoused population. This book is a modern-day example of someone who lives a life of compassion and gentleness. Vicky Cooper and Kim Ruffing will lead two discussion groups,

one in person and one online:

Thursdays: Jan 18 – Feb 8, 5:45-6:45pm – in person. Tuesday, February 6, 5:00-7:00pm – online. Questions? Reach out to Kim Ruffing or Vicky Cooper.

Children's Special Music

Rehearsal Sunday, January 21, 9:15-9:55
We are weaving in one more thread to the incredible children & families programming at our church. This children's singing group will rehearse from 9:15-9:55 before church on most Sundays, preparing to participate in the February 11 worship service.

For more information, contact Jill Wheat 413-274-5108

Music Notes

On April 4, 1968, at 6:01 p.m., the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot while standing on the second floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, surrounded by friends and associates. As he lay dying, he spoke his last words to his friend and musician Ben Branch, who was to perform at the event King was scheduled to attend that night. King said, "Ben, make sure you play 'Take My Hand, Precious Lord' in the meeting tonight. Play it real pretty."

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

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Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932; alt.

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
2 When my way grows drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger near,
3 When the shad - ows ap - pear and the night draws near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
when my life is al - most gone,
and the day is past and gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:
At the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:

Refrain

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Thomas A. Dorsey was known as "Georgia Tom" when he played piano for blues singer Ma Rainey. He started writing gospel songs after what he called "a definite spiritual change." This inspirational song, composed following the deaths of his wife, Nettie, and a newborn child, derives from the tune Maitland.

Tune: PRECIOUS LORD Irr. with refrain
Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932