



*The First Congregational Church  
of the United Church of Christ  
Stockbridge, Massachusetts*  
**JESUS' MINISTRY BEGINS SUNDAY**  
*January 21, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.*

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

Nursery care is available during the worship service; please ask an usher if you need directions.

### **PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Frost

PRELUDE

*Le Bouquet*, by Joseph Franck

FRAMING WORDS

The Rev. Dr. Richard Floyd

INTROIT

*What a Friend We Have in Jesus* (Erie) Scriven/Converse

### **GATHERING FOR WORSHIP**

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

\*GATHERING SONG

*Not My Brother, nor My Sister*, vss. 1 & 4

1 Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me,  
O Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer;  
Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O  
Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer.

4 Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it's  
me, O Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer;  
Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it's  
me, O Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer.

*Refrain:*

It's me, it's me, O Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer;  
It's me, it's me, O Lord,  
standing in the need of prayer.

[*Refrain*]

\*CALL TO WORSHIP by Joanna Harader, on *Spacious Faith*

Liza Catino

One: We come as seekers,

**All: Unsure of exactly what we seek.**

One: We come as followers,

**All: Not fully understanding the One we follow.**

One: We come to worship,

**All: Even though we don't know quite how.**

One: Holy One, by your grace,

**All: Meet us where we are. Meet us here. Meet us now. Amen.**

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Floyd

TIME WITH CHILDREN

based on Mark 1:35-38

Diane Piraino

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

*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 *The Possibility of a Miracle* by Frederick Buechner

Tim Bosworth

Like most theology, most fiction is of course also at its heart autobiography. In the case of this scene I, as the novelist, was being quite direct. In just such a place on just such a day I lay down in the grass with just such wild expectations. Part of what it means to believe in God, at least part of what it means for me, is to believe in the possibility of miracle, and because of a variety of circumstances I had a very strong feeling at that moment that the time was ripe for miracle, my life was ripe for miracle, and the very strength of the feeling itself seemed a kind of vanguard of miracle. Something was

going to happen—something extraordinary that I could perhaps even see and hear — and I was so nearly sure of it that in retrospect I am surprised that by the power of auto-suggestion I was unable to make it happen. But the sunshine was too bright, the air too clear, some residual skepticism in myself too sharp to make it possible to imagine ghosts among the apple trees or voices among the yellow jackets, and nothing like what I expected happened at all.

This might easily have been the end of something for me — my faith exposed as superstition which in part I suppose it is, my most extravagant hope exposed as childish which in part I suppose it is — but it was not the end. Because something other than what I expected did happen. Those apple branches knocked against each other, went clack-clack. No more. No less. "The dry clack-clack of the world's tongue at the approach of the approach of splendor." And just this is the substance of what I want to talk about: the clack-clack of my life. The occasional, obscure glimmering through of grace. The muffled presence of the holy. The images, always broken, partial, ambiguous, of Christ. If a vision of Christ, then a vision such as those two stragglers had at Emmaus at suppertime: just the cracking of crust as the loaf came apart in his hands ragged and white before in those most poignant words of all Scripture, "He vanished from their sight" — whoever he was, whoever they were. Whoever we are.

\*HYMN *In Solitude* See page 5  
WELCOME Rev. Floyd

## THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Mark 1:40-45 Tim Bosworth

A man with a skin disease came to him, and kneeling, he said to him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.' But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

SERMON *The Healing Touch* Rev. Floyd  
\*HYMN *Jesus Heard with Deep Compassion* See pages 6-7

## OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Rev. Floyd

Remember to place your prayer slips in the offering plates if you would like them lifted. They will be read as written. **Note:** only written prayers will be read out loud.

OFFERTORY *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*, by Issac Watts/Virgil Thomson

\*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

Rev. Floyd

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

David Anderegg and Rev. Floyd

PRAYER RESPONSE *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* (Erie) The FCC Quartet

## GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

\*SENDING CHARGE adapted from the Narrative Lectionary

**Healing Lord Jesus, you found your grounding in prayer and you performed miracles that helped followers become aware of your presence.**

**Meet us in prayer today and surprise us with your healing touch that we might, like the man you healed, go forth to proclaim your good news.**

**Amen.**

\*HYMN

*This is a Day of New Beginnings* vss. 1-4

See page 8

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Floyd

POSTLUDE

*Fugue in D*, by William Selby

Please return to the sanctuary for a lecture by Joshua Hall, "Indian Town to Exodus: Stockbridge from the time of colonial settlement to the departure of the Stockbridge Indians."

*Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 5:18-20**Ruth Duck, 1983*

1 In sol - i - tude, in sol - i - tude, I come to God in prayer.  
 2 When-e'er the world is troub-ling me, and stress is all a - round,  
 3 In sea - sons of per - plex - i - ty, in times of deep de - spair,  
 4 And when my heart is bur - dened down with cares for those I love,  
 5 With psalms and hymns and songs of praise be - fore my God I'll come,

In si - lence and sim - plic - i - ty, my spir - it blos - soms there.  
 I seek the pres - ence of my God, and heal - ing light is found.  
 I light a can - dle in the night and turn to God in prayer.  
 too deep for words, with groans and sighs, de - scends the ho - ly dove.  
 till death it - self is past and gone, and I ar - rive at home.

*Ruth Duck has commented that "these words were inspired by a pentatonic melody which came to me as I taught myself to play the mandolin." They are an expression of her "deep-rooted southern spirituality."*

Tune: LAND OF REST C.M.  
 Traditional United States melody  
 Harm. Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938  
 The New Century Hymnal (1995)

*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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# 12 Jesus Heard with Deep Compassion

1. Je - sus heard with deep com - pas - sion pleas for heal - ing,  
2. Je - sus touched the lives of out - casts, weak or sin - ful,  
3. Je - sus, Lord, our true ex - am - ple, you have shown how

cries of pain, cured the lame and cleansed the lep - er, gave the  
scorned or poor, gave them self - re - spect and cour - age, trust and  
we must live. Teach us how to share with oth - ers ev - ery -

blind their sight a - gain. At his voice tor - ment - ing spir - its  
faith and hope se - cure. Tru - ly hear - ing, tru - ly see - ing  
thing we have to give. Let our days be spent in serv - ice;

fled a mad - man's tor - tured mind; clothed and sane, he  
deep with - in each trou - bled soul, Je - sus healed their  
bring us by your grace to know heal - ing is the

WORDS: Joy F. Patterson  
MUSIC: Cyril Vincent Taylor, 1941

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ABBOT'S LEIGH  
8.7.8.7.D.

continued



## News and Announcements

Pastor Brent is up at the First Congregational Church of Dalton today. He is preaching, helping lead worship, and participating in a panel discussion after their worship service as they are engaging the Open and Affirming process. It is one way we help support our fellow churches and engage our covenant with them.

### 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. Thursdays: Jan 18, 25; Feb 1, Feb 8, 5:45-6:45pm in person. Tues, Feb 6, 5-7pm online. Questions? Reach out to Kim Ruffing or Vicky Cooper.

### Children's Special Music

Our 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

Our new Alto Soloist/Section Leader Carolyn Mielke is a mezzo-soprano and currently works for M&T Bank. She recently graduated from Williams College where she sang in the Concert and Chamber Choirs under the direction of Dr. Anna Lenti. While at Williams, she was a featured soloist with the Williams Choirs, Schola Cantorum of Oxford, and the University of Oxford's Exeter College Choir. Carolyn was the music director of Good Question (GQ) a cappella at Williams and was a winner of the 2023 Berkshire Symphony Soloist Competition for her performance of "Una Voce Poco Fa" from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, Carolyn is thrilled to be joining the community at First Congregational Church, and looks forward to meeting the choir and members of the congregation.

Verses  
1-4

417

# This Is a Day of New Beginnings

2 Cor. 5:16-17

Brian Wren, 1978; rev. 1983

*Unison*

1 This is a day of new be - gin - nings, time to re -  
 2 For by the life and death of Je - sus, God's might - y  
 3 Then let us, with the Spir - it's dar - ing, step from the  
 4 Christ is a - live, and goes be - fore us to show and  
 \* In faith we'll gath - er 'round the ta - ble to taste and

mem - ber and move on, time to be - lieve what love is  
 Spir - it, now as then, can make for us a world of  
 past and leave be - hind our dis - ap - point - ment, guilt, and  
 share what love can do. This is a day of new be -  
 share what love can do. This is a day of new be -

bring - ing, lay - ing to rest the pain that's gone.  
 dif - ference, as faith and hope are born a - gain.  
 griev - ing, seek - ing new paths, and sure to find.  
 gin - nings— our God is mak - ing all things new.  
 gin - nings— our God is mak - ing all things new.

\*Alternate fourth stanza for Holy Communion

Brian Wren wrote this hymn in 1978 for a New Year's Day service in Oxford, England. The music is by the editor of two hymnals of the United Methodist Church and was composed for the original Wren text.

Tune: BEGINNINGS 9.8.9.8.  
 Carlton R. Young, 1987