



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

PARABLES IN MARK SUNDAY

January 28, 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.

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

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Tracy Wilson

PRELUDE

Noël Nouvelet Trad. French, arr. Jennings/Oltman

Tis Winter Now; the Fallen Snow

Samuel Longfellow/R. Vaughan Williams

FRAMING WORDS

Pastor Brent Damrow

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

*GATHERING SONG *In the Bulb There Is a Flower* vss. 1-2 See page 5

*CALL TO WORSHIP Tim Bosworth

One: What mysteries there are in God's world!

All: We, with all we know, yet stand in awe at the wonders of the natural world.

One: We look at the tiniest of seeds and wonder what will happen

All: From that small seed will grow a large shrub.

One: Although we consider our gifts to be small and insignificant,

All: God will use our gifts in miraculous ways.

Praise the God of small seeds and mighty power. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor Brent

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Parables

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 *My Son Learns the Lord's Prayer*, by Hannah Fries

Through the gums of his front-tooth gap,
he turns the prayer in his mouth like a song
in another language, words
tumbling into one another: *hallowedbethy*,
trespassesagainstus. Clarity rings
in Father, name, earth, bread.

Some nights we stroll through the quiet
of Psalm 23: *Green pastures. Still waters.*
We walk down the road to watch cows
graze on wildflowers.
He troubles a puddle with a stone.

Is God the word or the thing inside
trying to speak its own name?
Inside *forever*, a murmuration of starlings
swoops in a shifting shape that slips
like liquid through dusk.

"Mama, will the universe die?"
For a moment, he worries. He picks leaves,
rubs them on his hands to turn them green.

We are made of mud and stars and
Earth is the mother of all our metaphors.
Through her we trip and slide into *mercy*,
skip our way to *kingdom come*.

*HYMN

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

See insert

WELCOME

Pastor Brent

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 4:21-29

Drea Pecor

He said to them, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!' And he said to them, 'Pay attention to what you hear; the

Verses

1 & 2

Unison

1 In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;
 2 There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;
 3 In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;

in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise: but - ter - flies will soon be free!
 there's a dawn for ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.
 in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.

In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,
 From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,
 In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,

un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.
 un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

Natalie Sleeth composed her "Hymn of Promise" first as a choral anthem and then adapted it to this version for congregational singing. It was dedicated to her husband, Ronald Sleeth, who died shortly after she completed it.

Tune: PROMISE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Natalie Sleeth, 1985

The New Century Hymnal (1995)

Now the Green Blade Rises

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John M. C. Crum, 1928; alt.

Matt. 27:57-28:7; Luke 23:50-24:12

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain;
2 In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,
3 Christ came forth at Eas - ter, like the ris - en grain,
4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

Wheat that in dark earth for man - y days has lain;
Think - ing that their Love would nev - er wake a - gain,
Je - sus, who for three days in the grave had lain,
Christ's warm touch can call us back to life a - gain,

Love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been:
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen:
Quick from the dead the ris - en One is seen:
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

Refrain
Love is come a - gain like wheat that ris - es green.

John M. C. Crum, an English priest who was canon of Canterbury for fifteen years, wrote these words for this ancient French Christmas carol tune when it was included in the Oxford Book of Carols (1928).

Tune: NOËL NOUVELET 11.10.10.11.
French noel, 15th century
Harm. Martin F. Shaw, 1928

News and Announcements

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. In-person discussions continue at the church on Thursdays through Feb 8, 5:45-6:45pm. There will be an online discussion on Tuesday, Feb 6, 5-7pm. Questions? reach out to Kim Ruffing or Vicky Cooper.

"Warm Up the Winter"

Construct Fundraiser

On February 18 and 25, Mission and Action invites the congregation to consider donating to this fundraiser. There will be a giving table at fellowship hour on those two days, staffed by Tristan Osgood. Donations should be made only in the form of checks, made payable to "Construct Inc." with memo line "Warm Up the Winter."

Children's Special Music

The 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

Ash Wednesday

February 14

As Lent begins, we gather to remember who we are and to whom we belong.

Individual Imposition of Ashes

Noon until 2:00pm in the Sanctuary

Worship Service

5:30pm, at the West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church.

Music Notes

Thank you to Tracy Wilson, organ/piano, and Jack Brown, bass, for sharing their talents this morning. The selection "Tis Winter Now" is from the New Century Hymnal with text by Samuel Longfellow, brother of Henry Wadsworth, who served as a Unitarian minister in Fall River, MA, among other places. Ralph Vaughan Williams arranged this traditional hymn tune "Darby."

What is Land Acknowledgement?

Definition: A Land Acknowledgment includes, but is not limited to, a formal, public statement recognizing the Indigenous people who occupied this land prior to European colonization. It recognizes the Indigenous people who were stewards of this land, were driven from this land, and continue to have a relationship with this land as sacred homeland.



Our Land Acknowledgment would be an expression of appreciation to the tribe whose territory we worship on. When making a Land Acknowledgment, it is essential to understand the role our early church played in the colonization of this community and subsequent displacement of what is now called The Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Tribe. It is, also, essential to understand that this is a community living in Wisconsin and maintaining deep ties to the Stockbridge area.

Land Acknowledgment is an ongoing process and so requires a commitment to education, equity and inclusion, and the development of an action plan to address these topics.



As an example, the following is excerpted from the Stockbridge-Munsee tribal website, www.Mohican.com.

“Publicly acknowledging us as the original stewards of the land you are on is a way of showing respect, resisting the erasure of our history, and a starting point for further action.

Here is our Tribal Council-approved land acknowledgement that you can adapt for your particular context:

It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are learning, speaking and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the [Insert as appropriate:

Muhheaconneok or Mohican people or Munsee Lenape 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.

Some important components are to specifically name our Tribe (not just *the Native Americans*) and ensure that you include not only historical reference to our people but to make it contemporary and state that our Tribe continues to exist today. Including action steps in your land acknowledgement is also crucial. Without action, the land acknowledgement doesn't mean anything, and you end up with empty words on paper. Action is imperative.”