The First Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ Stockbridge, Massachusetts **GIVING SUNDAY** *March* 10, 2024 – 10:00 *a.m.*

We welcome people to share their prayers. If you would like your prayer read aloud, fill out a prayer slip. Nursery care is available during worship.

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

PRELUDE

*HYMN

Meditation, by Flor Peeters

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

TOLLING OF THE HOUR / BRINGING OF THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending see page 6

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In a world that cries out, "Fear me!"

All: We will listen to Jesus' words, "Don't be afraid!"

One: In a world that wants us to hate the other...

All: We will live Jesus' call to, "Love God. Love your neighbour, as you love yourself."

One: In a world that radicalizes...

All: We, too, will be radical. Radical with our hospitality. Radical with our hope. Radical with our love.

One: Then come to this place, ready to be who we are called to be.

All: Let us gather together and worship God.

KIDS SPECIAL MUSIC Shine, Jesus, Shine

Pastor Brent Damrow

Peter Frost

Jon Geldert



Jill Wheat, *director*

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Based on Mark 12:41-44

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.

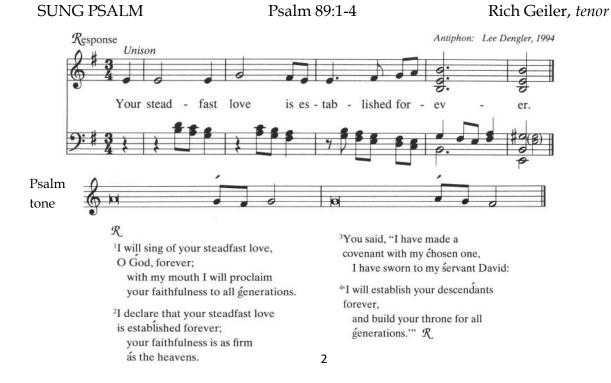
INTROIT

Cantilena by John Scriveyner

CONTEMPORARY READING

Gandhi: "Scientists tell us that, without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist; and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate, and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction." (YI, 5-5-1920, p. 7)

Liza Catino



PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, your faithful love toward us never ends!

It is as sure and dependable as the sky over our heads.

In the midst of that sureness we gather.

In that dependability we lift to you the prayers of our hearts -

To declare who we are to the depth of your love.

Receive the prayers of our hearts and lives in the silence of these moments.

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE / PASSING THE PEACE

TESTIMONIAL

Vicky Cooper

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING SERMON	Mark 12:28-40 <i>Giving</i>	Charlotte Rodgers Pastor Brent

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Today we also welcome gifts for *One Great Hour of Sharing*. Please place any gifts for OGHS in designated envelopes (see page 8).

OFFERTORY

When Jesus Wept, arr. by Peter Frost (2023)

DOXOLOGY A Lenten Doxology, by G.W. Dub Shepherd Old 100th

Praise God throughout these forty days.

Praise Christ, our Lord, who God did raise.

And praise the spirit who imparts

God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of the wilderness, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves; May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen ~ written by Joanna Harader

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

PRAYER RESPONSE *Reflection* by Flor Peeters

GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN

Take My Gifts

See page 5

Pastor Brent

INVITATIONS

Church World Service Hygiene Kits

SENDING SONG

O Savior, Let Me Walk with Thee, vs. 4

In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way, In peace that only you can give, with you, O Savior, let me live.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Voluntary in d minor by William Herschel (18thc.)

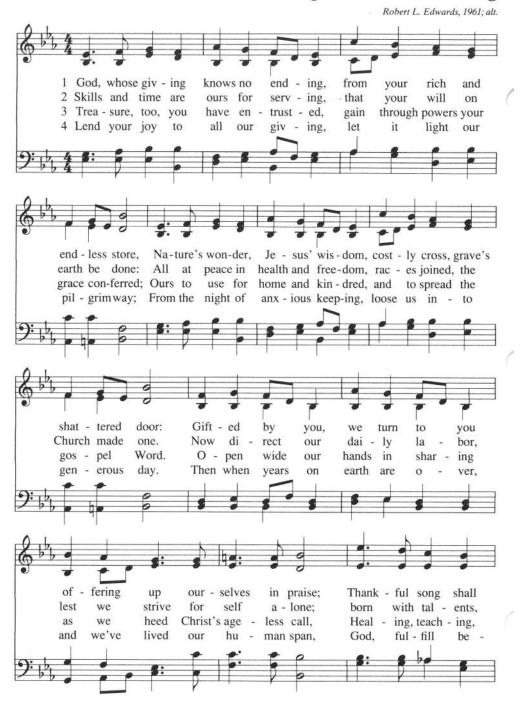
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The community supper resumes! All are welcome to a shared meal on March 13 at the church. The food will be ready at 5:30pm, available until 6:45pm. People may arrive whenever is best for them and stay as long as they like. The main course will be chili, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. No one is obligated to bring anything. Those who wish to contribute, help cook, or bring a dish can. We will begin prepping at 4:30, stop by if you would like to help.



this tune for her stewardship text "almost instantaneously." Gibson has served as professor at the University of Otago, as well as organist and choir director in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Colin Gibson, 1991 Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending





Music Notes ~ Peter Frost

When I set the beautiful William Billings (1770) canon *When Jesus Wept* for piano, I focused primarily on the opening line; *When Jesus wept the falling tear, in mercy flowed beyond all bound*. In two sections of the music you will hear descending scales in the bass as I attempt to bring out this text. Some discordance towards the end might harken the second and last phrase: *When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear seized all the guilty world around*.

News and Announcements

Easter Flowers

The sanctuary will be filled with beautiful pots of flowers for Easter. You may order a plant in memory of or in honor of a loved one; the deadline is March 24. The recommended donation is \$20 per plant. There are forms and a drop-box in the JE Room.

"One Great hour of Sharing"

Offering and CWS Kits: Today we will be taking an offering for OGHS, one of the UCC's special mission offerings. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United

Church of Christ. Checks may be made payable to First Congregational Church, memo line: OGHS. At coffee hour we will put together hygiene kits which Church World Service uses around the world to help those facing natural disasters, homelessness, or other difficult situations. A free will donation basket will also be available to help defray the costs.

Children's Special Music

Rehearsals most Sunday mornings from 9:15-9:55. Children from around age 6 and up through middle school are welcome to raise up sweet music together! After today, CSM's next appearance is at Easter. Questions? Contact Jill Wheat (413-274-5108).

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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