



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

LOVE SUNDAY

*May 5, 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.

Children are welcome to begin in the classroom with music and storytelling.

**PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

GATHERING MUSIC

PRELUDE                      *On Wings of Love* (Mendelssohn) arr. by Lani Smith

FRAMING WORDS / WELCOME    Pastor Brent Damrow

**GATHERING FOR WORSHIP**

BRINGING OF THE LIGHT / TIME OF GRATITUDE

INTROIT                      *O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free* (Deo Gracias)

\*CALL TO WORSHIP    Jo Ann Levitt

One: We are called to bring a new understanding of God:

that God so loves the world.

**All: We are the salt of the earth.**

One: We are called to bring a new hope in God: that God gives us new life.

**All: We are the light of the world.**

One: We are called to follow the commandments and the law.

**All: The Law of God is to love God and to love one another.**

One: Come, let us be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

**All: Come, let us love one another with the love of God.**

**Let us join together in our love of God to worship and follow Jesus.**

~ written by Rev Mindi, and posted on *Rev-o-lution.org*

\*HYMN

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* vss. 1-3

See page 6

\*UNISON OPENING PRAYER FOR PEACE from *The New Century Hymnal*

**O God it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace to your church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, peace in our hearts, and peace in this time of worship. Amen**

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

## OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

INVITATION TO GIVING

*You may write a prayer on a slip and put in the plate; they will be read as written.  
Or you will have opportunities to lift prayers verbally later in the service.*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Hear Our Prayer*, by Moses Hogan

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

Pastor Brent

CONTEMPORARY READING *Logos*, by Mary Oliver, from Devotions (2017)

Why wonder about the loaves and the fishes?  
If you say the right words, the wine expands.  
If you say them with love  
and the felt ferocity of that love  
and the felt necessity of that love,  
the fish explode into many.  
Imagine him, speaking,  
and don't worry about what is reality,  
or what is plain, or what is mysterious.  
If you were there, it was all those things.  
If you can imagine it, it is all those things.  
Eat, drink, be happy. Accept the miracle.  
Accept, too, each spoken word spoken with love.

SUNG RESPONSE (please remain seated)

**Be Present at our table, Lord;  
Be here and everywhere adored;  
Thy Creatures bless and grant that we  
May feast in paradise with thee.**

## THE GIFT OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE Psalm 145:8-9 (NIV)

Michael Deegan

The Lord is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all;  
he has compassion on all he has made.

SHARING

SUNG CALL TO PRAYER *God Loved the World* (Rockingham)

Choir

PRAYERS OF JOY AND BLESSING

SUNG RESPONSE (please remain seated)

**What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!**

PRAYERS OF BURDEN OR CONCERN

SUNG RESPONSE (please remain seated)

**Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged: Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful, Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer!**

SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (*The Voice*)

Drea Pecor

What if I speak in the *most elegant* languages of people or in the *exotic* languages of the heavenly messengers, but I live without love? Well then, anything I say is like the clanging of brass or a crashing cymbal. <sup>2</sup>What if I have the gift of prophecy, am blessed with knowledge and insight to all the mysteries, or what if my faith is strong enough to scoop a mountain *from its*

continued

*bedrock, yet I live without love? If so, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>I could give all that I have to feed the poor, I could surrender my body to be burned as a martyr, but if I do not live in love, I gain nothing by my selfless acts.*

SHARING

Pastor Brent

\*SUNG RESPONSE

*I Come with Joy*, vss. 1 & 2

See pew hymnal #507

## GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

INVITATION AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor Brent

PASSING OF THE BREAD

*The bread will be passed from person to person. Deacons will be on hand to assist if there is too large a gap to imagine how to pass the bread to the next person. As you offer the bread to the next person you are invited to say, "In love Christ gave his body for us, in love I share this bread with you."*

SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:7-11 (NKJV)

Sarah Conly

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

INVITATION TO ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SHARING OF THE CUP

*The cup will be passed from person to person. Deacons will be on hand to assist if there is too large a gap to imagine how to pass them to the next person. As you offer the cup to the next person you are invited to say, "In love Christ poured out his blood for us, in love I share this cup with you."*

\*SUNG RESPONSE

*I Come with Joy*, vss. 4 & 5

See pew hymnal #507

# GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

## INVITATIONS

### \*SENDING CHARGE / BENEDICTION

Don Rodgers

One: Go now, and love one another, because love is from God.

Proclaim God's salvation to every generation.

Remain in Jesus Christ, and like branches of a vine, draw your life from him.

And may God the vine grower tend you and make you fruitful;

May Christ Jesus abide in you and give you life;

And may the Holy Spirit cast out all fear and fill you with God's love.

**All: In the name and way of Christ, we go in peace to love and serve. Amen.**

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

### \*HYMN

*Pass It On*

See page 7

POSTLUDE / TRAVELING MUSIC *Celebration* by James Denton

### **Music Notes** ~ Peter Frost

Moses Hogan (1957-2003) composed our anthem today. He is an American composer and arranger best known for his settings of spirituals. He enjoyed international renown as a conductor, pianist, and arranger. A number of his arrangements have become staples of our choral repertoire including the beautiful piece "Hear My Prayer" which the choir is singing today. Just one month shy of his 46th birthday, Moses Hogan died of a brain tumor.

Verses

1 - 3

43

# Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; Eph. 5:27

Charles Wesley, 1747; alt.

1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,  
 2 Breathe, O breathe your lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - ery trou - bled breast;  
 3 Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all your life re - ceive;  
 4 Fin - ish, then, your new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less may we prove;

Fix in us a hum - ble dwell - ing, all your faith - ful mer - cies crown;  
 Let us all in you in - her - it, let us find your prom - ised rest;  
 Sud - den - ly re - turn, and ne - ver, ne - ver - more your tem - ples leave.  
 Let us see your great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in you;

Je - sus, you are all com - pas - sion; pure, un - bound - ed love im - part.  
 Take a - way our love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;  
 You we would be al - ways bless - ing, love you as your an - gels love,  
 Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, till in heaven we take our place,

Vis - it us with your sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.  
 End of faith, as its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
 Pray and praise for your un - fail - ing, wound - ed arms out - stretched a - bove.  
 Crowned as saints, we ev - er shall be lost in won - der, love, and praise.

*This hymn is said to have been suggested by a "Song of Venus" from Dryden's King Arthur. It is one of 6,500 written by Charles Wesley, the "sweet singer of Methodism," who was skilled at interweaving literary and scriptural images.*

Tune: BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D.  
 John Zundel, 1855

Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL  
 For another harmonization, see 368, 495

# Pass It On

572

*Unison*

1. It on - ly takes a spark to get a fire  
 2. What a won - drous time is spring, when all the trees are  
 3. I wish for you, my friend, this hap - pi-ness that

go - ing, and soon all those a - round can  
 bud - ding; the birds be - gin to sing, the  
 I've found; you can de - pend on him, it

warm up in its glow - ing. That's how it is with  
 flow - ers start their bloom - ing. That's how it is with  
 mat - ters not where you're bound. I'll shout it from the

God's love once you've ex - pe - ri - enced it; you spread his love to  
 God's love once you've ex - pe - ri - enced it; you want to sing, it's  
 moun - tain - top; I want my world to know; the Lord of love has

ev - ery - one; you want to pass it on.  
 fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.  
 come to me, I want to pass it on.

WORDS: Kurt Kaiser, 1969  
 MUSIC: Kurt Kaiser, 1969

PASS IT ON  
 Irr.

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*The United Methodist Hymnal (1989)*

## **Strengthen the Church: Special Congregational Offering**

On May 19, (Pentecost Sunday) we will join with UCC churches across the country to give to the Strengthen the Church special offering. The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

## **Children's Special Music**

We rehearse from 9:15-9:55 most Sundays in preparation for the June 9 service. Make some spirited and soulful music! Questions? Email Jill Wheat for more information.

## **Call to Meeting - May 19**

To all members of The First Congregational Church of the UCC, Stockbridge, Massachusetts  
In accordance with the By-laws of the Church, we hereby call the Annual Congregational Meeting for Sunday, May 19 at 11:00am, following worship. Included will be votes to approve:

1. Recommendations from the Procter Hall Proceeds Working Group.
  2. Nominating slate for Officers, and Board and Committee members
  3. To act upon any other business that may legally come before the meeting.
- Jeremy Ridenour, Clerk  
Ron Hanft, Moderator

*Welcome! We are Open and Affirming, 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.*

*As followers of Christ and committed to Isaiah's charge to "maintain justice and do what is right," we acknowledge with gratitude and humility that we are learning, speaking, gathering, and worshipping on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican 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.*

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