

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH “Center Church”



United Church of Christ - ONA
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We, the congregation of the First Congregational Church of South Hadley, MA, UCC, also known as Center Church, declare ourselves to be Open and Affirming. Our congregation is welcoming to all, embracing those of differing sexual orientation, transgender/gender identity and expression, marital status, age, mental and physical health and ability, racial and cultural background/identity, and educational/socioeconomic status. We are open to all to share in Christ's bountiful love through life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys. In the spirit of Paul in Galatians, we celebrate the diversity in which God has created us!



**** The two center sections of the sanctuary are equipped with a hearing loop.
Turn on the T-coil in your hearing aid and sit in one of these sections
for better hearing**

October 5, 2025

We are all different. Don't judge, understand instead.

Roy T. Bennett, *The Light in the Heart*

PRELUDE

*Servant Song
Hyfrydol*

D. Maxwell
D. Cherwien

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
PASSING OF THE PEACE
CHORAL INTROIT**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Love divine, all loves excelling,

People: Joy of heaven, on earth be found.

Leader: Fix in us a humble dwelling,

People All your faithful mercies crown.

Leader: Jesus, you are all compassion,

People: Pure, unbounded love impart.

All: Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.

***HYMN**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

black # 43

At the conclusion of the hymn, the children will leave to go to "The Promised Land " as the congregation sings the first verse of On River Jordan's Banks I Stand.

*On River Jordan's banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye,
Upon the fair and happy land where my possessions lie;
I am bound for the promised land, I am bound for the promised land,
Oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land.*

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession (unison)

O Holy God, we come in confession for our lack of love. We have neither loved ourselves nor our neighbors. We have passed by suffering and misfortune because of fear or busyness or preoccupation. We have held prejudices against people as deep as those against the Samaritans. Heal our pains. Amend our faults, and guide us in ways of danger and compassion.

Assurance of Forgiveness

There is no greater joy in the heart of God than the moment when a child opens to the gift of forgiveness. God's Spirit reaches out to assure us we are all welcome in Christ. Amen

Pastoral Prayer

Silence

Lord's Prayer (debts)

Our Creator/Father/Mother, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Congregational Response



READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 10:25-37

page 902

SERMON

THE CALL FOR COMPASSION

*HYMN

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

black # 331

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

Lead Us from Death to Life

Satish Kumar and Marty Haugen

This is hymn #581 in the black Hymnal; you are encouraged to follow along with the text.

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low,

Praise Holy Spirit evermore,

One God triune whom we adore. Amen

Prayer of Dedication

*HYMN

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant

black # 539

COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

Distribution of the Bread and Cup

*It is our tradition to hold each of the elements until all are served
so that we may partake together.*

[Rice cake pieces are offered for those with allergies to gluten.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

**We give you thanks almighty God, that you have refreshed
us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ.
Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send
us forth into the world with courage and peace, rejoicing in the
power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ. Amen**

***HYMN**

In Christ There Is No East or West black # 394

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Threefold Amen

POSTLUDE

Fanfare on McKee

M.H. Corl

We invite you to remain quietly and celebrate the conclusion of worship in the postlude.

**Please stand if you are comfortable.*



*We hope that you find your worship experience meaningful.
If you are new to the community, we invite you to make this your church home.*

*Please stay after worship for refreshments and fellowship
downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. Join the Stewardship Team
for lunch and presentation.*

In our Service Today

Preacher:	Samuel Pontes
Liturgist:	Rev. Lori Souder
Scripture Reader:	Annabelle Burke
Organist:	Larry Schipull
Choir Director	Ben Coakley
Deacon:	Karen Anderson



If you are visiting with us today, **WELCOME**. At the close of the service, please take a small welcome gift found in the baskets located at the sanctuary narthex and crossway doors. It is our token of saying "thank you for sharing worship with us, we truly feel blessed and we hope to see you again soon."

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

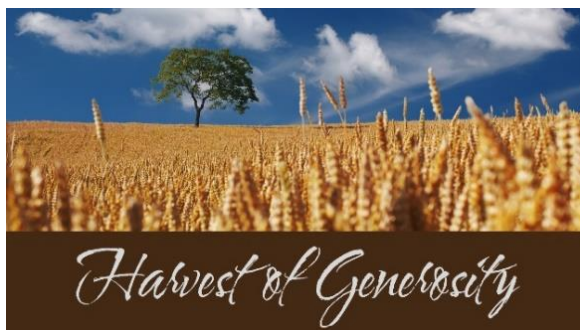
Continual:

Joan Duffy
Martha Guild's mother, June
Eileen Halkyard
Tom Hazen
Eunice Howes
Leila Mulder, attending boarding school
Fay Paquette
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter
Those struggling with addiction
Those struggling with cancer

If you have submitted one of these requests for prayer, please let us know when it is time to remove someone's name from the list.

Situational:

Rick Anderson, recovering from knee surgery
Cynthia Baker
Dennis Banks, friend of Karen and Estelle Anderson, with cancer
Barbara Blank, on Hospice at Reeds Landing
Brittany Bryan's Mother
Christopher Hoffman, heart issue
Elisa Morrison's mother Sandy and brother Car, with heart issues
Elisa's young friend Elija, for addiction recovery
Mary Nelsons father, with cancer
Nancy Perman's cousin Katherine, now in rehab
Kendall Johnson-Smith, Preston Smith's daughter, with cancer
MHC student, injured on Mountain Day



Today, following worship, is our annual generosity lunch. Please attend!
We'll take a look at all of Center Church's programs and how your generosity makes our ministry happen.

This Week at Center Church

Tuesday	Church Council 7pm
Thursday	AA 1:30pm Dance Lessons 6pm
Friday	Church Office Closed
Sunday	Worship 10am Deacons meeting following service



Center Church Announcements

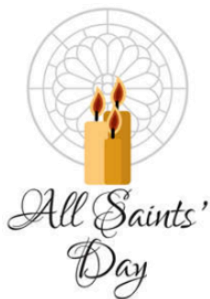
Please sign up to read Scripture during Sunday worship. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Bock Crossway. Also, please consider being a greeter as folks come into the Sanctuary – signup sheet also in the Crossway.

This morning, we welcome Samuel Pontes, Senior at Ludlow High School, to the Pulpit. Sam attended an Iftar with other Center Church members (Breaking of the Fast, during Ramadan) and related it to how we can all foster enhanced communication and compassion.

In the next weeks we will be drawing from the lectionary and concentrating on one word. A week ahead of time, you will learn what that word or words are, and are invited to contemplate on the word or phrase throughout the week. This week is Compassion. Next week will be Trust.

Join Lori **this coming Wednesday, October 8th at 8am in Fellowship Hall for Breakfast Conversation:** Freedom of Speech will be our topic. Please share what you have read and how it settled with you. An article will be made available and will be sent to those who have attended the Breakfast Conversations before, but you can pick up a copy from the table at the Church St. entrance. A light breakfast will be available (donations welcome). All views will be heard. What would Jesus say about Freedom of Speech?

Church Safety – On October 28th at the end of the church service, we will be shortening the worship service to go over our procedures for Church Safety.



On **All Saint's Sunday, November 2nd**, we will lift up the names of those who have died in the last year (between Nov 1, 2024 and October 31, 2025). In celebration of each life, we read their name and a brief commemoration. If your loved one has died, please send in a few sentences about him/her/them to be read by Rev. Souder and a deacon. If you wish to include a family member or a friend, we invite you to do so. All Saints Day is sacred and made holy by your loved ones.

Please submit the names/commemoration by October 27

centerchurch@verizon.net

Growing a Harvest of Generosity! Funding Center Church's Ministry!

It is generosity season at Center Church! It is a season for you to consider how Center Church is a blessing to you and the world around us; A season to prayerfully consider your annual financial pledge to Center Church.

Consider 2Corinthians 9: 10-12

One who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us, 12 for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

As we begin our annual pledge drive, consider the ways that sharing some of your harvest (money), enriches you and enriches the ministry of Center Church. In the coming weeks we will be providing you with resources to inform and inspire your annual financial gift to Center Church.

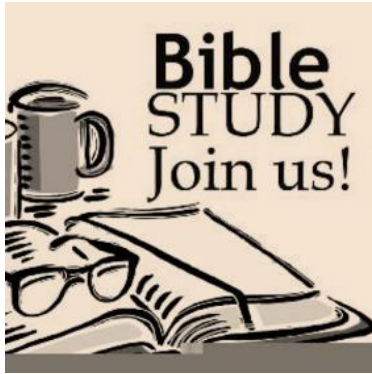
Please attend our "Generosity Lunch" after worship TODAY. We'll take a look at what is being planned for Center Church's program year and show how important your financial pledge is to Center Church's operation & ministry here and throughout the world. There will be sandwiches & a great time together as a church community!

In early/mid-October, you will receive your pledge packet in the mail, with information on how to make your financial pledge. **November 9 is Generosity Sunday**, when we commit and consecrate our financial pledges in worship.

Your gift to Center Church "not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God."

We are thankful to you for sharing your harvest so generously with Center Church!

Center Church Stewardship Team



On 16, and 23 (no gathering on the 9th!) we will discuss passages from **the Gospel of Thomas**. Ever heard about this gospel? It never made it into the Canon (the authorized Bible) but is still considered Holy and reveals aspects of Jesus' life. Join us at **11am in the Conference Room at Loomis**. What we will read will be emailed to you, dropped off in your Loomis mailbox, or available on the table inside the Church St door. **All are welcome**



On **November 7 from 5pm - November 8, 6pm**, people are invited to Center Church to **share their story about their roots**. This is a non- partisan event, meant to celebrate the rich voices that have informed our country and honor our ancestors. *Our Roots, Our Voices* provides a platform for adults and youth age 16+ from all walks of life to talk about their roots, their passions and dreams, and the futures they see for themselves and our country. As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, this is an opportunity to give voice to our own unique perspectives, and share stories of the courage and tenacity of our ancestors. When individual voices can be heard, respected, and valued, we learn and understand more about each other and our shared humanity.



There will be 15 minute segments (10 minutes speaking) with over 100 different people speaking during the 25 hours. We are co-hosting it with the DTC. In addition to be willing to speak regarding your own roots, we will need volunteers to help with refreshments and to serve as hosts during the 25 hours. Lori is committed to being present during the "wee hours." This is our opportunity to bring community together peacefully. If you are interested, please talk to Rev Lori Souder.



Holiday Bazaar NOVEMBER 22 and 23

Donations: Donations will be accepted **Sundays after church services in October, and October 28th - 31st, (Tuesday - Friday), from 9am to noon.**

In November donations will be accepted on Sundays - the 2nd and 9th, after services. Then, during set up times November 3 - 7, Monday through Friday, from 9am to noon, you may bring your donations to Fellowship Hall. The VERY LAST day for donations is November 9th. If these dates do not work for you, call the office, and leave a message. An Activities Team member will call you back to make arrangements. Please respect the November 9th cut off for donations. There is only so much time in the day for the volunteers to do the work.

**Donations accepted: Christmas merchandise Winter merchandise
Toys Puzzles Jewelry Books Unused gifts that need a new home**

Questioning your items? kindly ask. Donations need to be clean and in working order. We sincerely appreciate all the donations. This is what makes the Bazaar successful!!!

To make the bazaar happen, **set up** needs to happen. In all honesty, a crew is truly needed. Getting ready starts 4 weeks out. What needs to be done is setting up tables and shelving in Fellowship Hall, unpacking and sorting merchandise to put into categories, then displaying, pricing, food preparation, wreath making, and continual cleaning as we move along. All of this takes time. **Volunteers make the difference at getting the bazaar ready. You are needed. Please consider lending a hand.**

Work Schedule Time:

October 28 to 31, 9am to noon

November 3 to 7, 9am to noon

November 10 to 15, 9am to 4pm


November 17 to 21, 9am to 4pm

None of these times work? Only available evenings and weekends? That can happen. Please contact either Karen Anderson (413-374-9156) or Corinne Chartrand (413-219-6563) with the times you are going to help or would like to help. Come and enjoy working and getting to know fellow parishioners


For the **Holiday Bazaar November 22-23**, we will host talented crafters, as we did last November. We want to **open the invitation to crafters to plan to join us for the weekend of November 22-23**, and I will forward an application as soon as crafter inquiries arrive. Let us know if you have any contacts I should reach out to.

Corinne


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-nings; 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

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

331

George Herbert, 1633; alt.

John 8:12; 14:1-7; 15:11

Unison

1 Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: such a way as gives us
 2 Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength: such a light as shows a
 3 Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: such a joy as none can

breath; Such a truth as ends all strife;
 feast; Such a feast as mends in length;
 move; Such a love as none can part;

such a life as con - - - quers death.
 such a strength as makes . . . a guest.
 such a heart as joys . . . in love.

Shortly before his death, the poet George Herbert entrusted his manuscript of *The Temple* (including this hymn) to a friend for publication. The musical setting by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams is from *Five Mystical Songs* from George Herbert.

Tune: THE CALL 7.7.7.7.
 Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1911

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

539

Richard Gillard, 1977; alt.

Rom. 12:9-18; Col. 1:24-29

1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as Christ to you?
 2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - elers on the road;
 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shad - ow of your fear;
 4 I will weep when you are weep-ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
 5 When we sing to God in heav - en we shall find such har - mo - ny,

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser - vant, too.
 We are here to help each oth - er go the mile and bear the load.
 I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
 I will share your joy and sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.
 Born of all we've known to - geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.
 (repeat stanza 1)

Richard Gillard was born in England and later made his home in New Zealand. Largely self-taught, Gillard has described his musical style as "folk." This is the best known of his many songs in the United States.

Tune: SERVANT SONG 8.7.8.7.
 Richard Gillard, 1977
 Arr. Betty Carr Pulkingham, 1977; adapt.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

394

In Christ There Is No East or West

1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-22

John Oxenham, 1908; alt.
St. 3, Laurence Hull Stookey, 1987

1 In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North;
2 In Christ shall true hearts ev-ery-where their high com-mu-nion find;
3 In Christ is nei-ther Jew nor Greek, and nei-ther slave nor free;
4 In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North;

But one com-mu-ni-ty of love through-out the whole wide earth.
God's ser-vice is the gold-en cord close-bind-ing hu-man-kind.
For men and wom-en live in God, and all are kin to me.
One joy-ous, true com-mu-ni-ty through-out the whole wide earth.

Singer and composer Harry T. Burleigh studied at the National Conservatory of Music from 1892 to 1896. He is recognized as the first African-American composer to employ spirituals in concert arrangements. This tune is named after the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City, where Burleigh served as baritone soloist for more than fifty years.

Tune: McKEE C.M.
African-American melody
Arr. Harry T. Burleigh, 1939
Alternate setting: ST. PETER